

Christ's Mission in Southwest Los Angeles

A report by Monte Sahlin
on the Genesis Congregation
Senior Consultant
Center for Creative Ministry
July 2011

Who is Monte Sahlin?

- An ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister for 40 years who has done assessments of more than 1,000 local churches. He is currently employed by the Ohio Conference after spending two decades at the General Conference and union conference level directing research and development. He teaches in the Doctor of Ministry program at Andrews University and the urban studies program at Eastern Baptist University. He is the author of 20 books, 73 research monographs and many articles. He grew up in southern California.
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What is the Center for Creative Ministry?

- One of the research and information centers affiliated with the North American Division. It provides information, resource materials, training and consultants to help local churches develop new approaches to outreach, evangelism and church growth. It provides the *Sharing Scripture* small group Bible study guides, *Friend2Friend* training videos and other materials.
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Goals of this Study

- Provide an assessment of the Adventist mission in the Gardena area
 - Profile the life and vitality of the Genesis Congregation
 - Put information on the table for strategic planning
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Outline

- ❑ Background & statistics
 - ❑ The mission field (community assessment)
 - ❑ Congregational survey (church assessment)
 - ❑ Analysis & recommendations
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Background

- ❑ Genesis congregation began in 2006 with a focus on reaching young adults
 - ❑ In 2008 the group began to rent space on Sabbath afternoons at the Gardena Community Church
 - ❑ The current goal is to build up to an average worship attendance of 150
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Membership

- ❑ Attendance in the last quarter of 2010 was averaging 70
 - ❑ There are about 100 adults who attend at least once a month, although there is no official membership list
 - ❑ There are another 25 children who attend at least once a month
 - ❑ A third to half of the adults do not come from an Adventist background
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Gardena as a Mission Field

- A southwestern suburb of Los Angeles
 - 58,400 residents in 21,000 households
 - One Adventist for 111 people
 - USA: 1 to 305
 - New Guinea: 1 to 25
 - Zambia: 1 to 22
 - Jamaica: 1 to 14
 - Belize: 1 to 10
 - Antigua: 1 to 8
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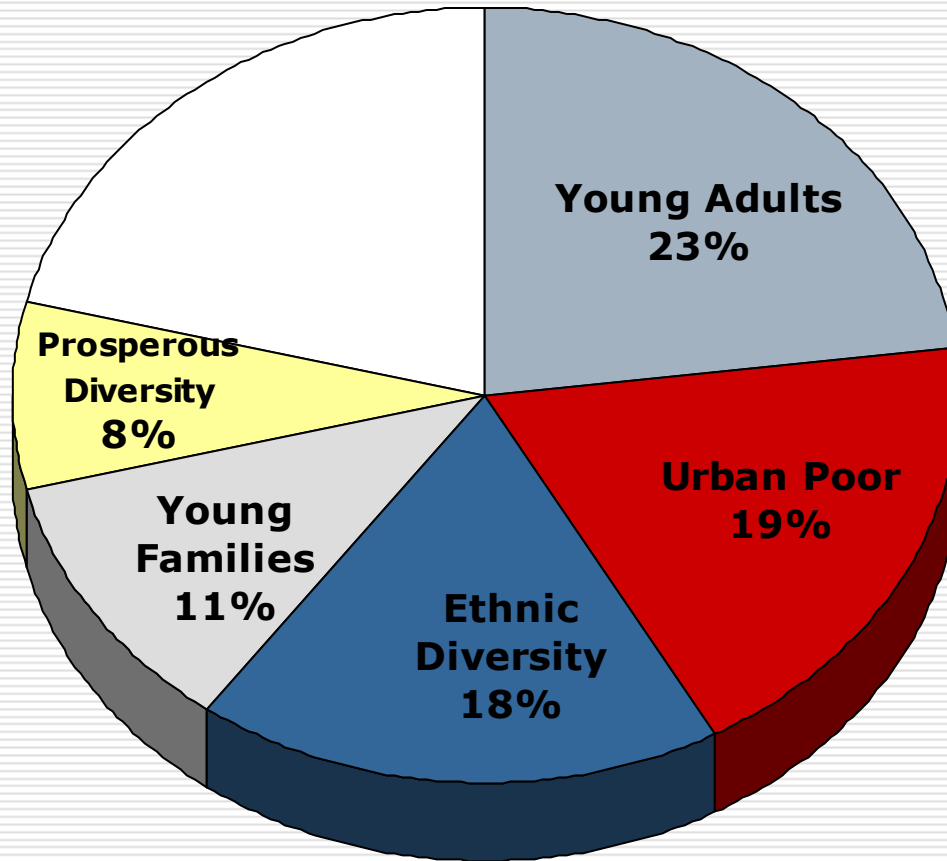
□ For the purposes of this study we have defined the community of Gardena to include these Zip Codes:

■ 90247

■ 90248

■ 90249

Who are the people living in this community?



Another 23 small segments make up 21% of the total

Young Adults (23%)

- ❑ Most are 25 to 34 years of age with a college education; renting, not buying a home.
 - ❑ **Key needs:** Finding a satisfying career, life direction, affordable housing, aging parents, worry about gangs, parenting skills
 - ❑ Involvement in religion is below average; above average interest in Judaism, Unitarian and Catholic faiths
 - ❑ **Want churches with:** recreation, music and the arts, support groups, spiritual retreats and contemporary worship style
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Urban Poor (19%)

- ❑ Racially diverse, high numbers of children, one in four are single-parent families, a third of adults have no high school diploma, and most live in apartments built before 1960.
 - ❑ **Key needs:** Dealing with ethnic prejudice, affordable housing, finding friends, child care and protection from gangs
 - ❑ Average level of religious involvement with higher interest in Eastern religions, Holiness, Episcopal, Baptist and Jewish faiths
 - ❑ **Want churches with:** Food pantry, parent training, parochial school, traditional architecture
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Ethnic Diversity (18%)

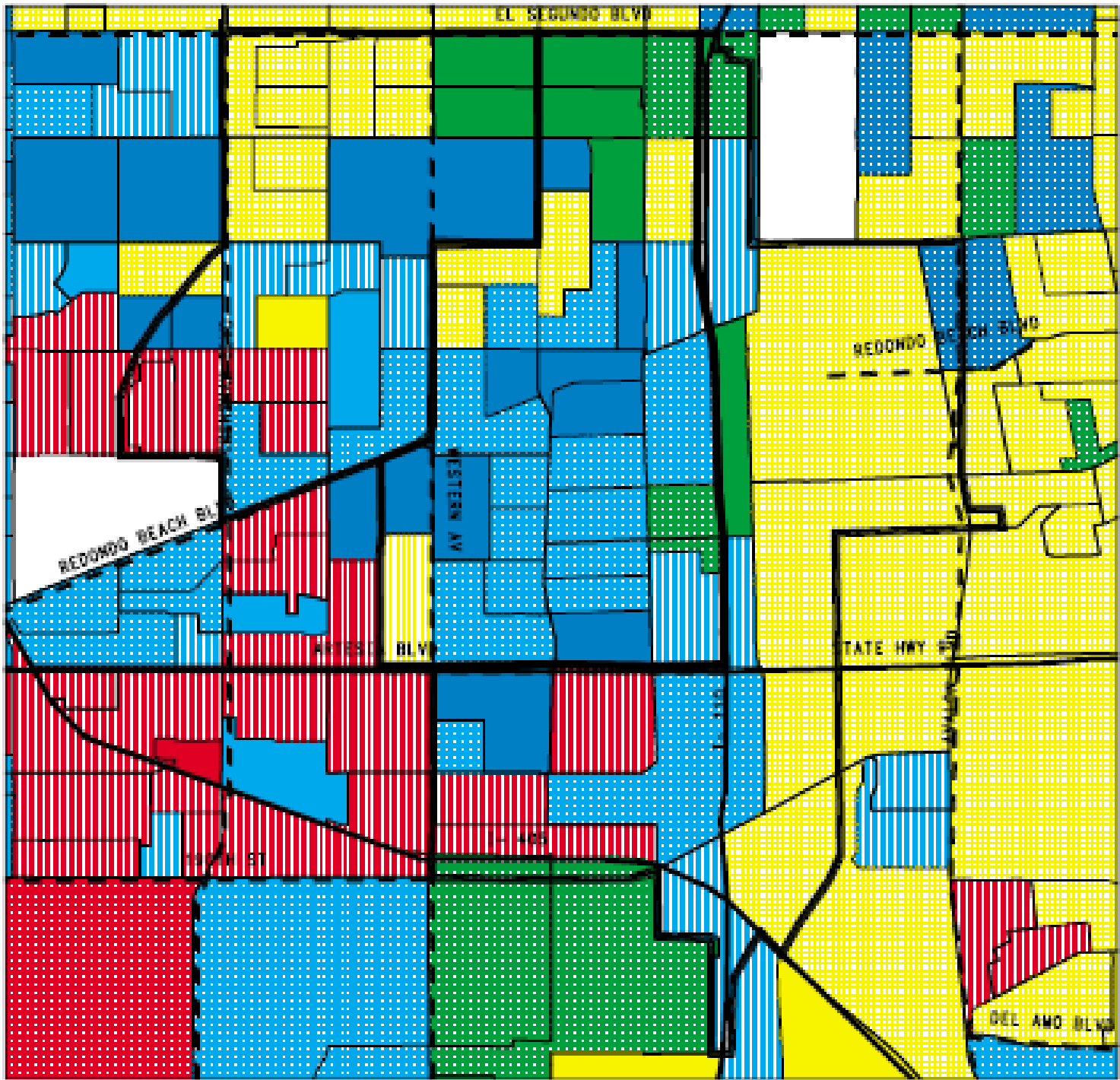
- ❑ No ethnic majority in this group; mainly adults in mid life; median income, but less education; high percentage of police and fire personnel; large families.
 - ❑ **Key needs:** Dealing with racial prejudice and working for social justice, crime and safety, finding spiritual teaching, substance abuse
 - ❑ Religious involvement is above average with high percentages interested in JWs, Adventist, Holiness, Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist faiths.
 - ❑ **Want churches with:** Small groups, 12-step program, youth group, family counseling
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Young Families (11%)

- ❑ Many children; most adults under 40; middle class incomes; many military households.
 - ❑ Key needs: Worry about gangs, parenting skills, finding spiritual teaching, finding enough food, day-to-day financial worries
 - ❑ Religious involvement is above average with high percentages interested in Mormon, Holiness, non-denominational churches, JWs
 - ❑ **Want churches with:** Parochial school, youth group, family ministries, day care
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Prosperous Diversity (8%)

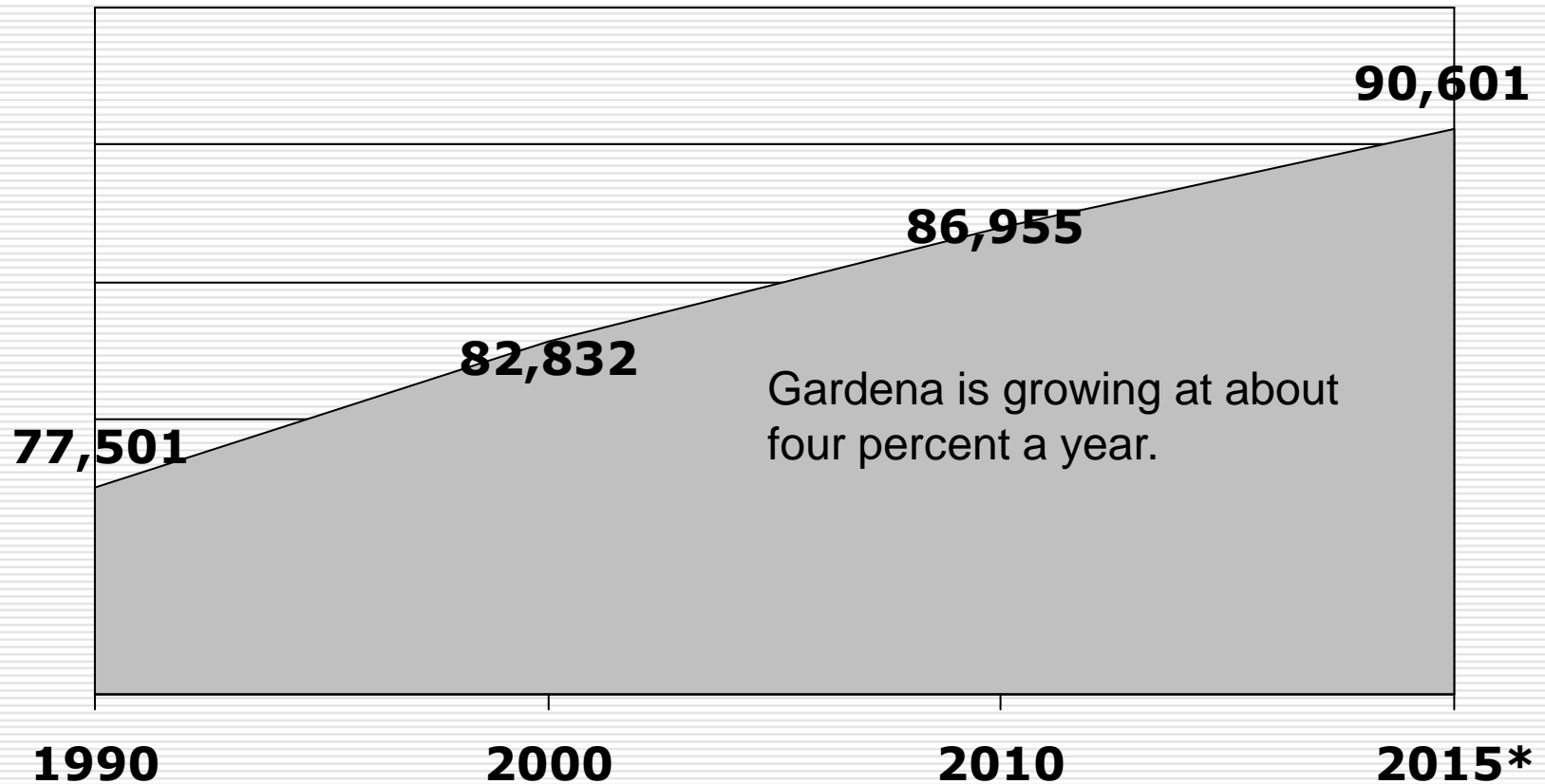
- ❑ Highest incomes in this community; primarily from ethnic minority groups.
 - ❑ **Key needs:** Parenting skills, fulfilling marriage, time for recreation, good schools, finding a satisfying career, child care
 - ❑ Religious involvement is below average with exceptional interest in Jewish, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Adventist and Catholic faiths
 - ❑ **Want churches with:** Parochial school, parent training, family ministries, and contemporary worship style
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Legend:

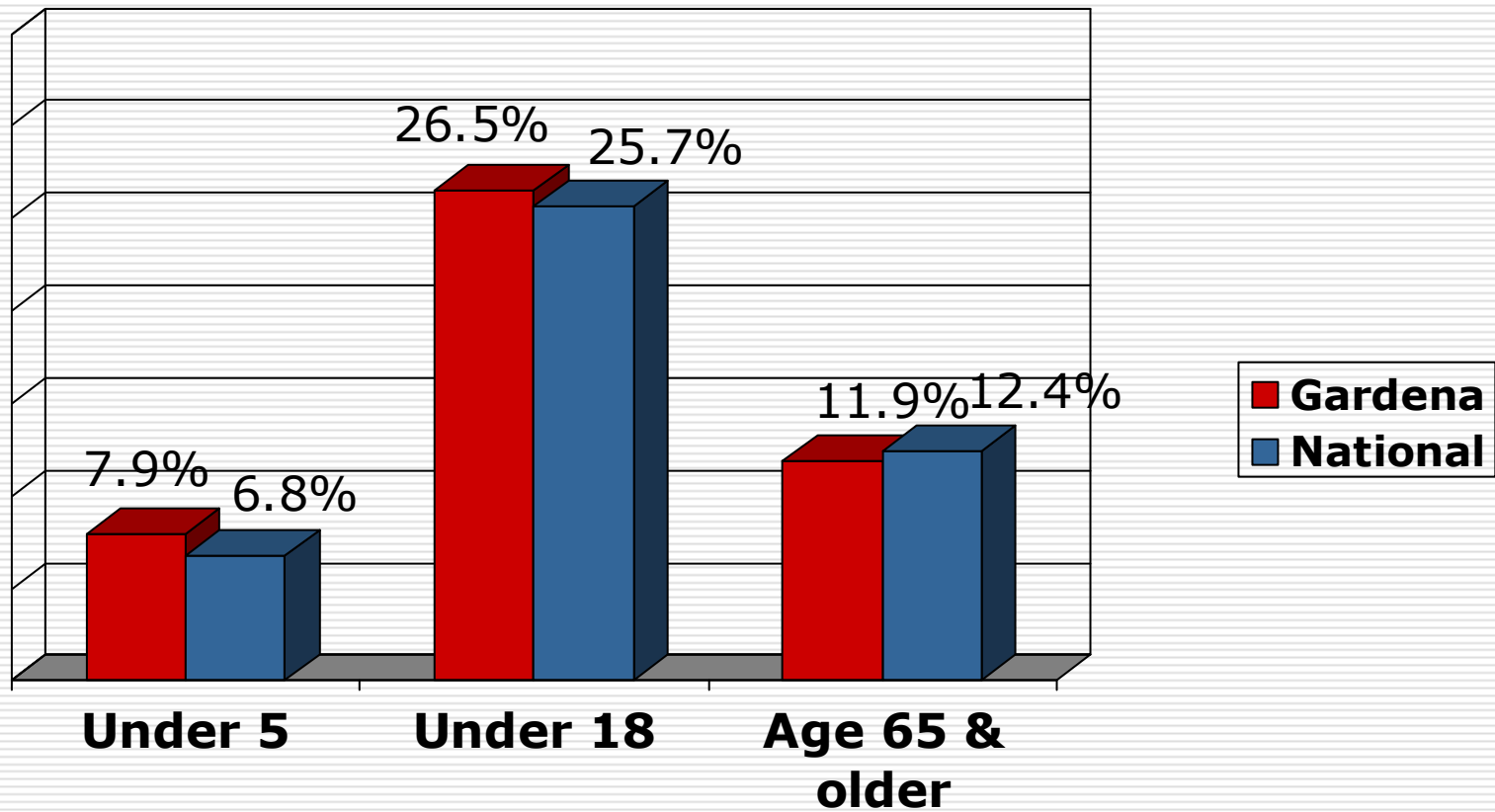
- Young Adults
Light blue cross-hatching
- Urban Poor
Solid blue
- Ethnic Diversity
Yellow cross-hatching
- Young Families
Light blue vertical lines
- Prosperous Diversity
Red vertical lines

Population Decline & Growth

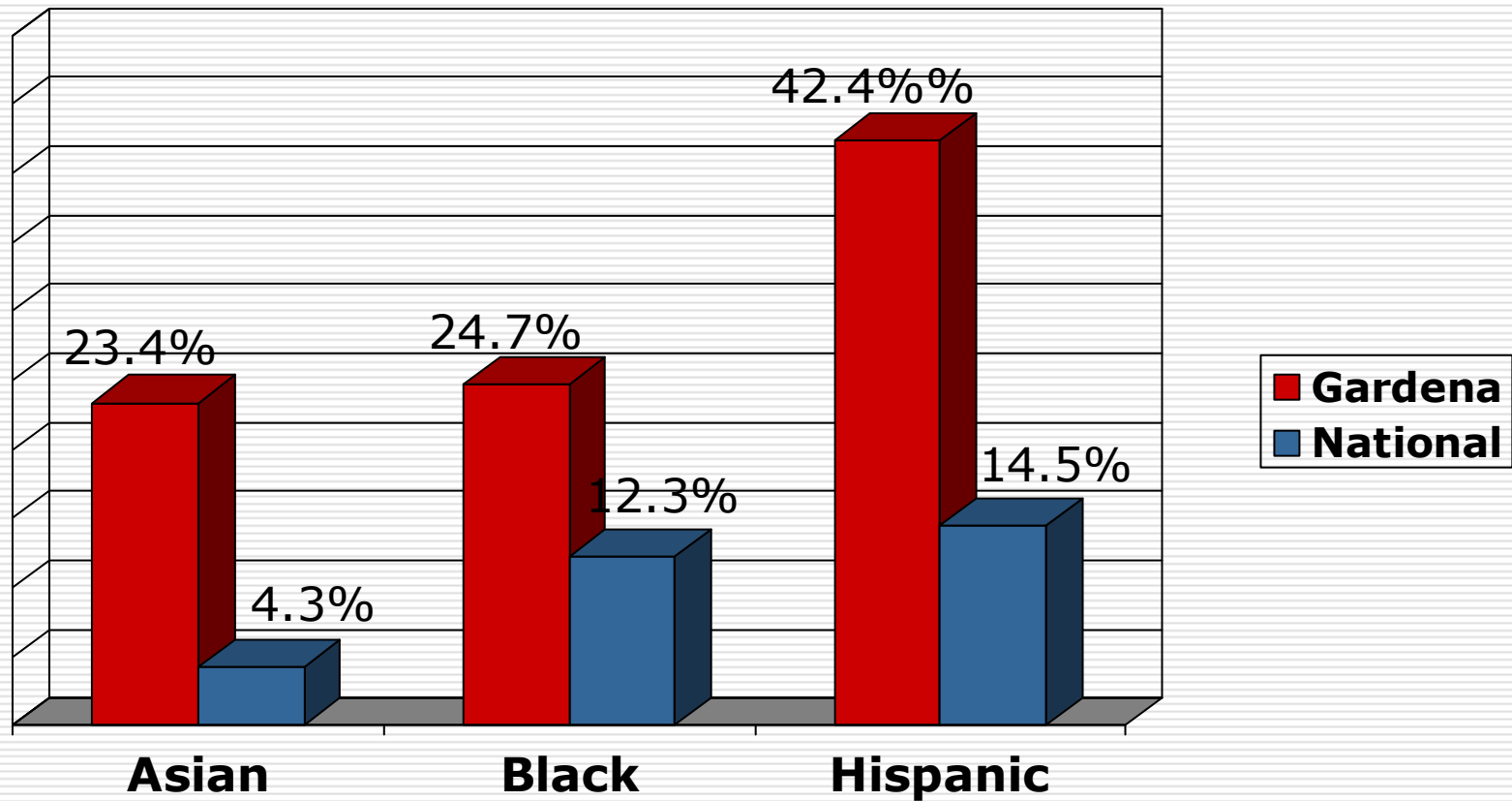


*Data for 2015 is projected.

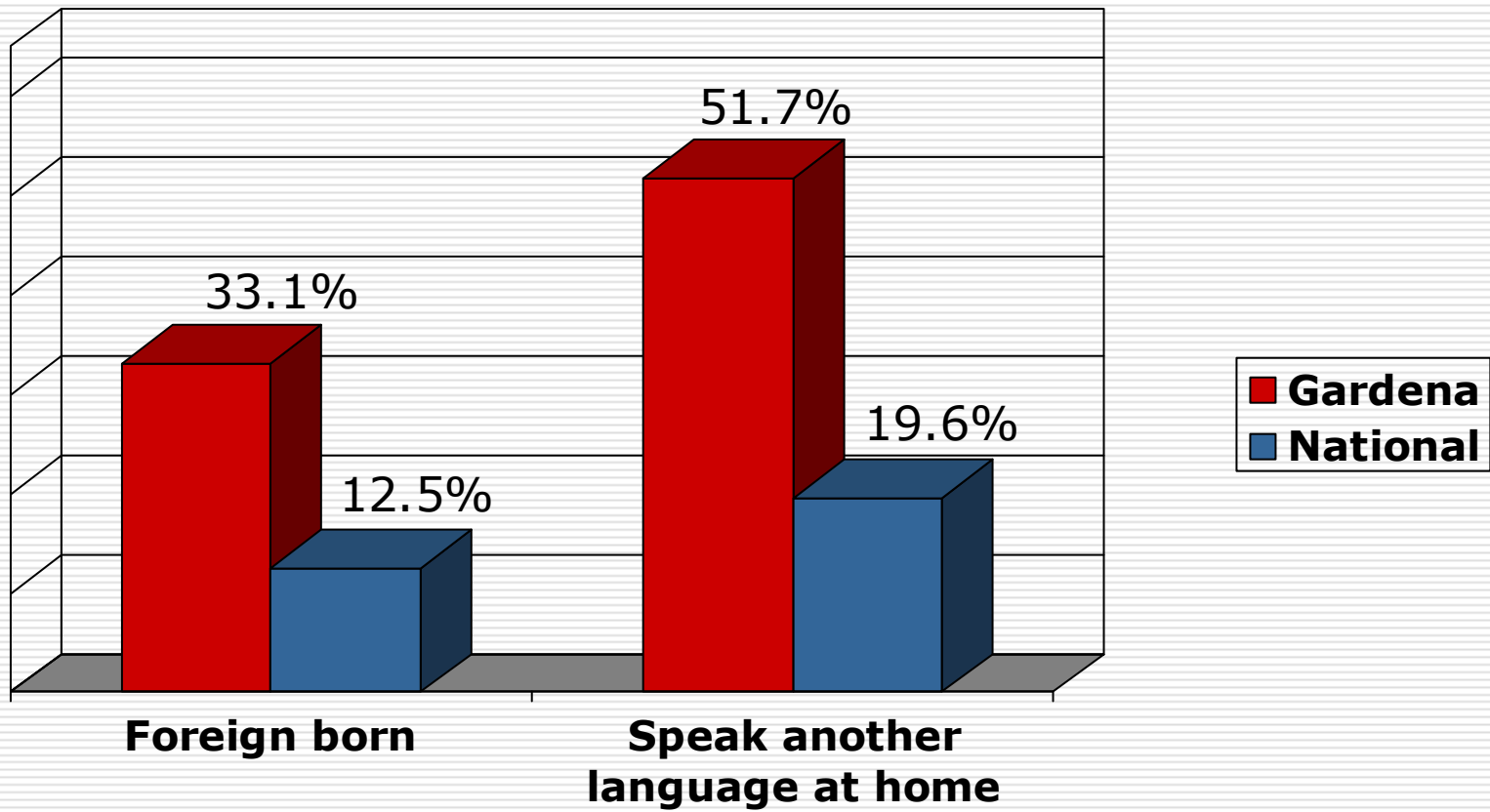
Age Groups



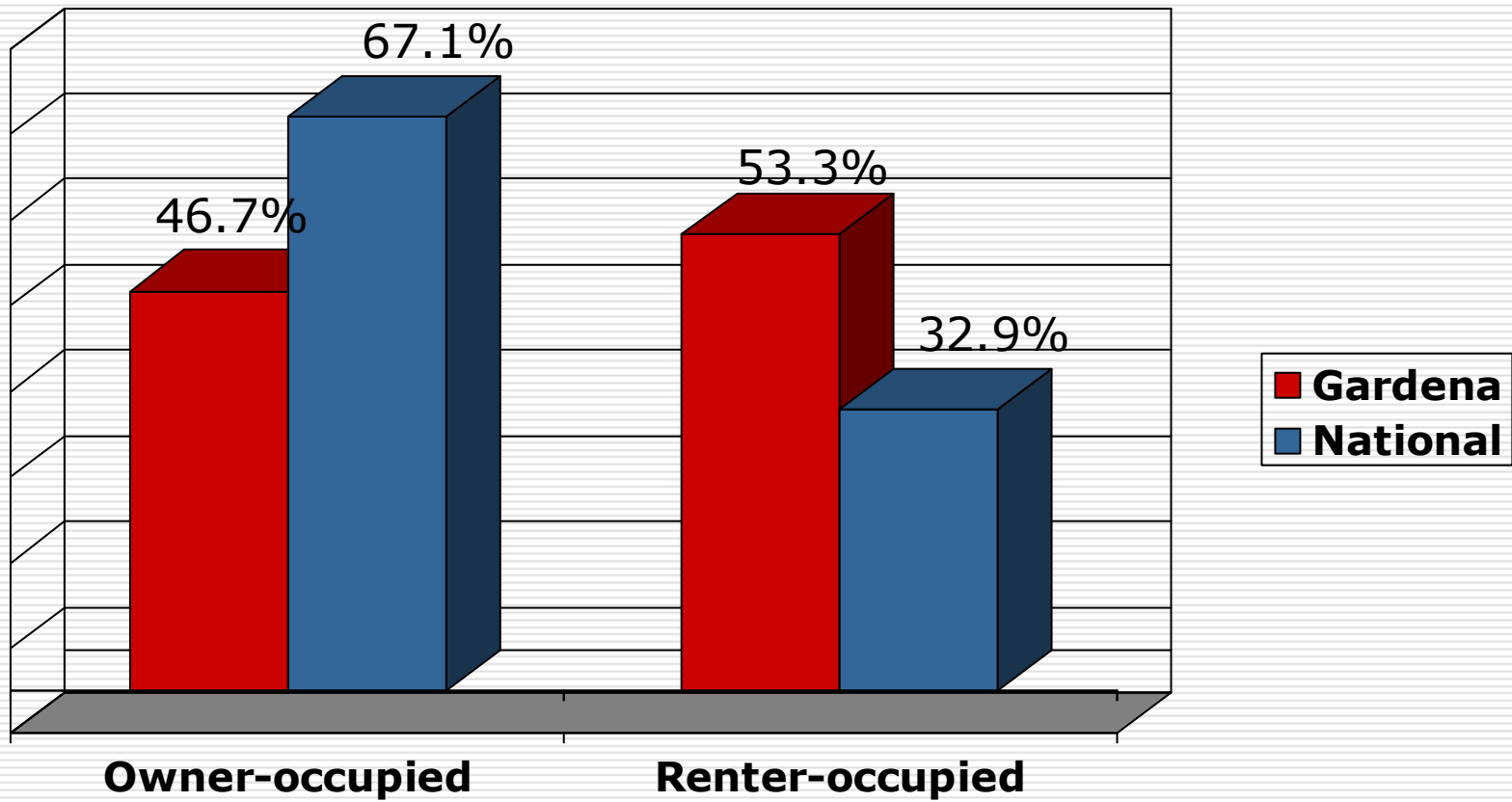
Ethnic Minorities



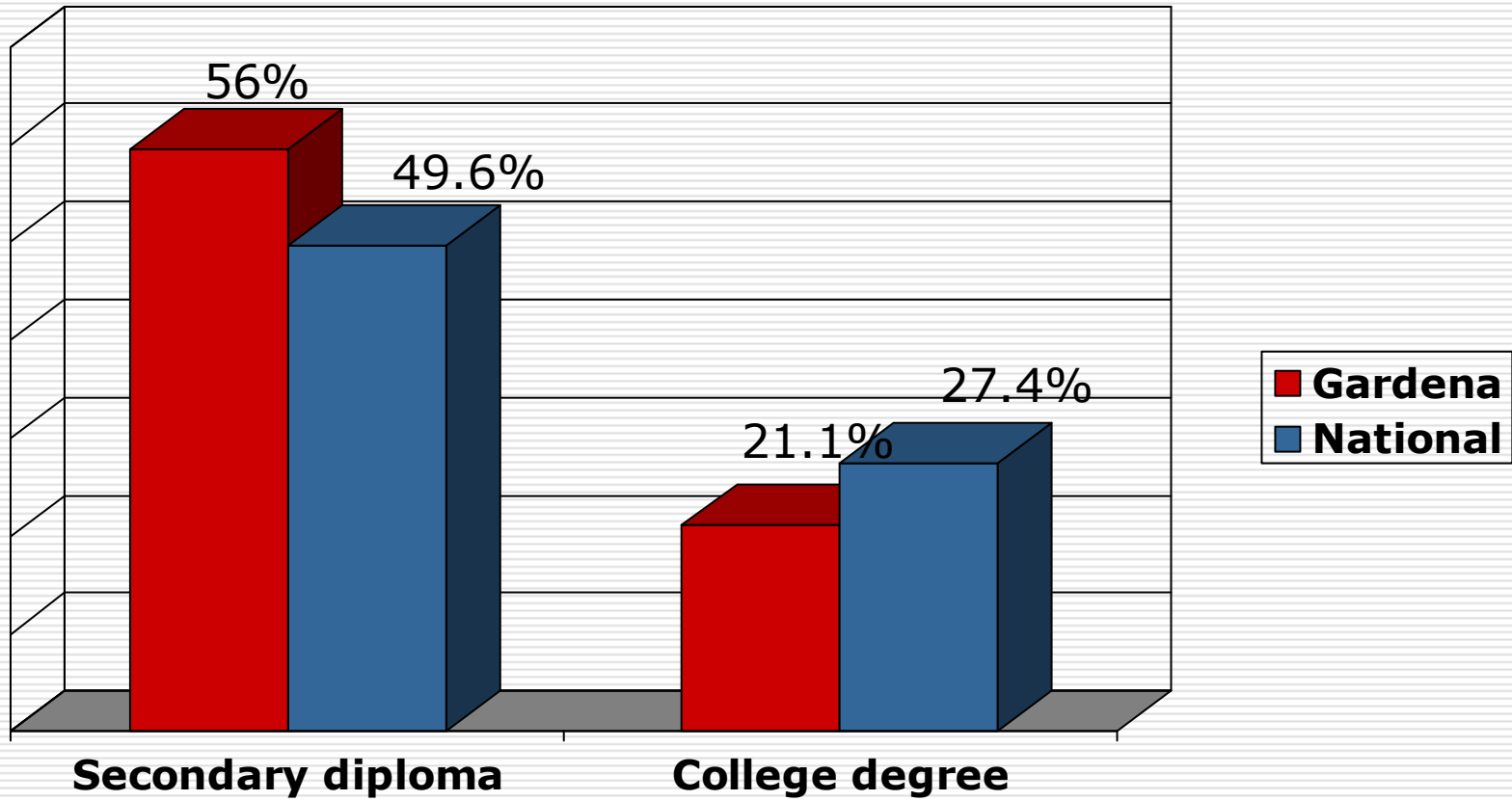
Immigrants



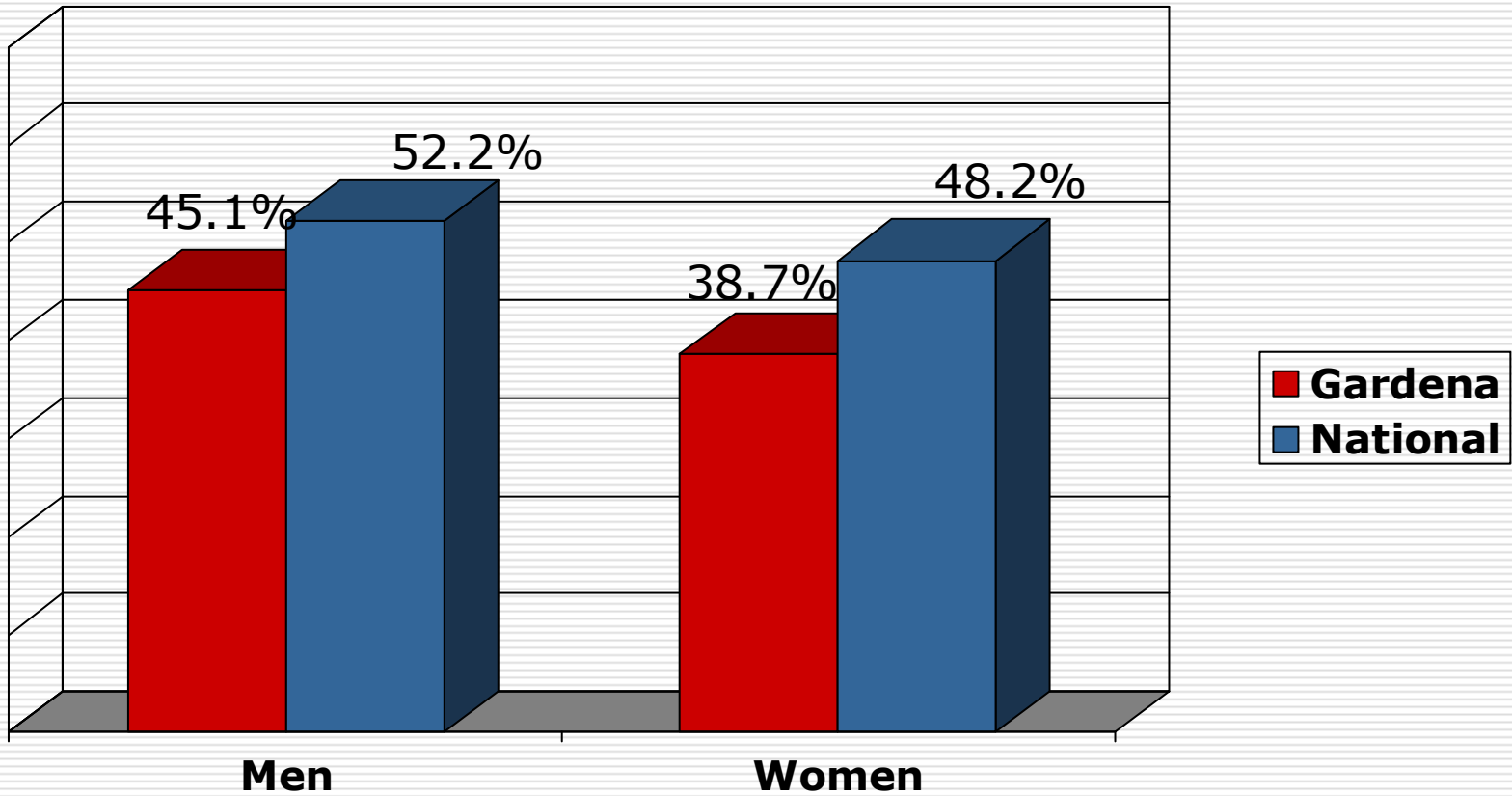
Housing



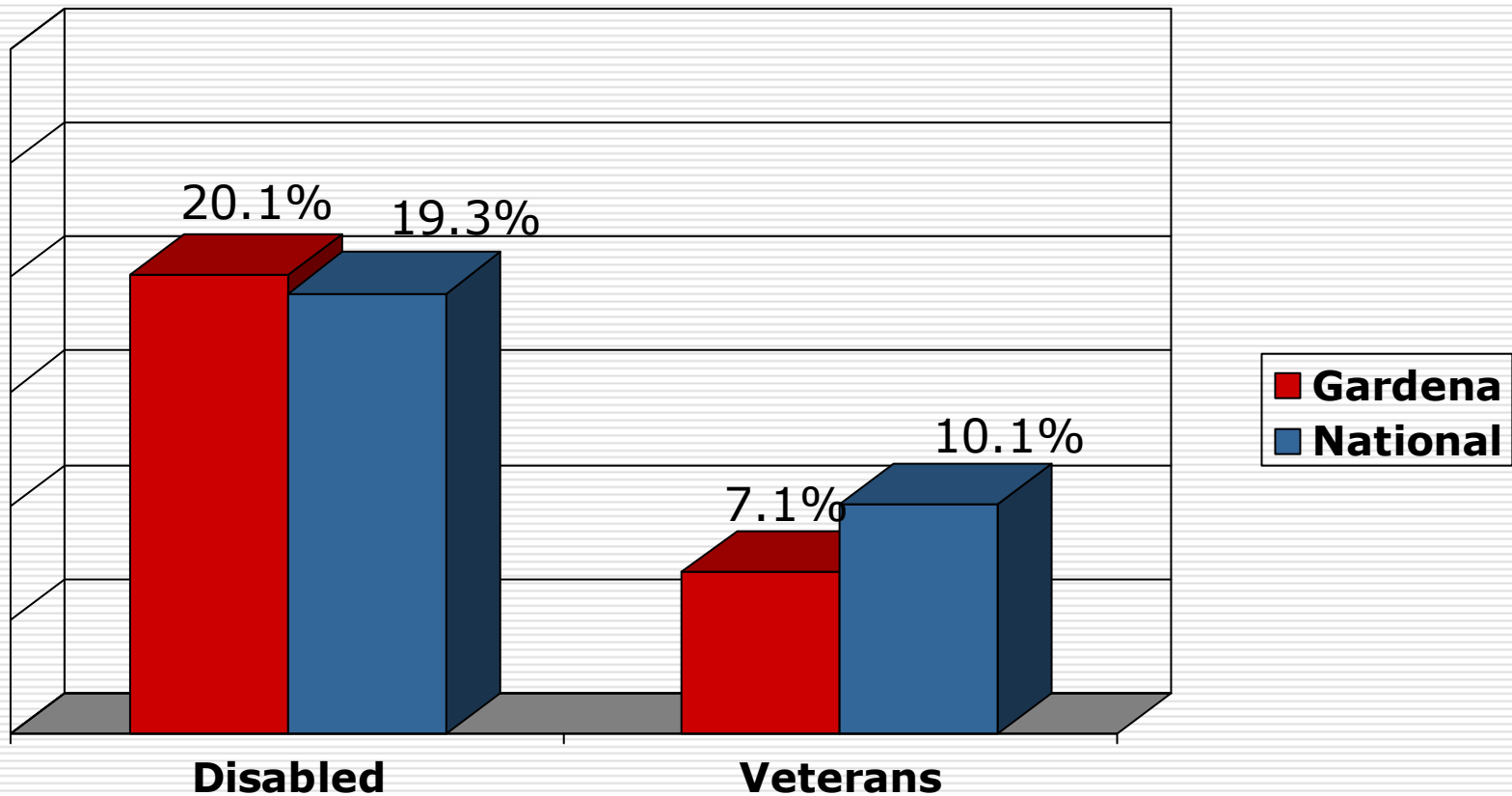
Education



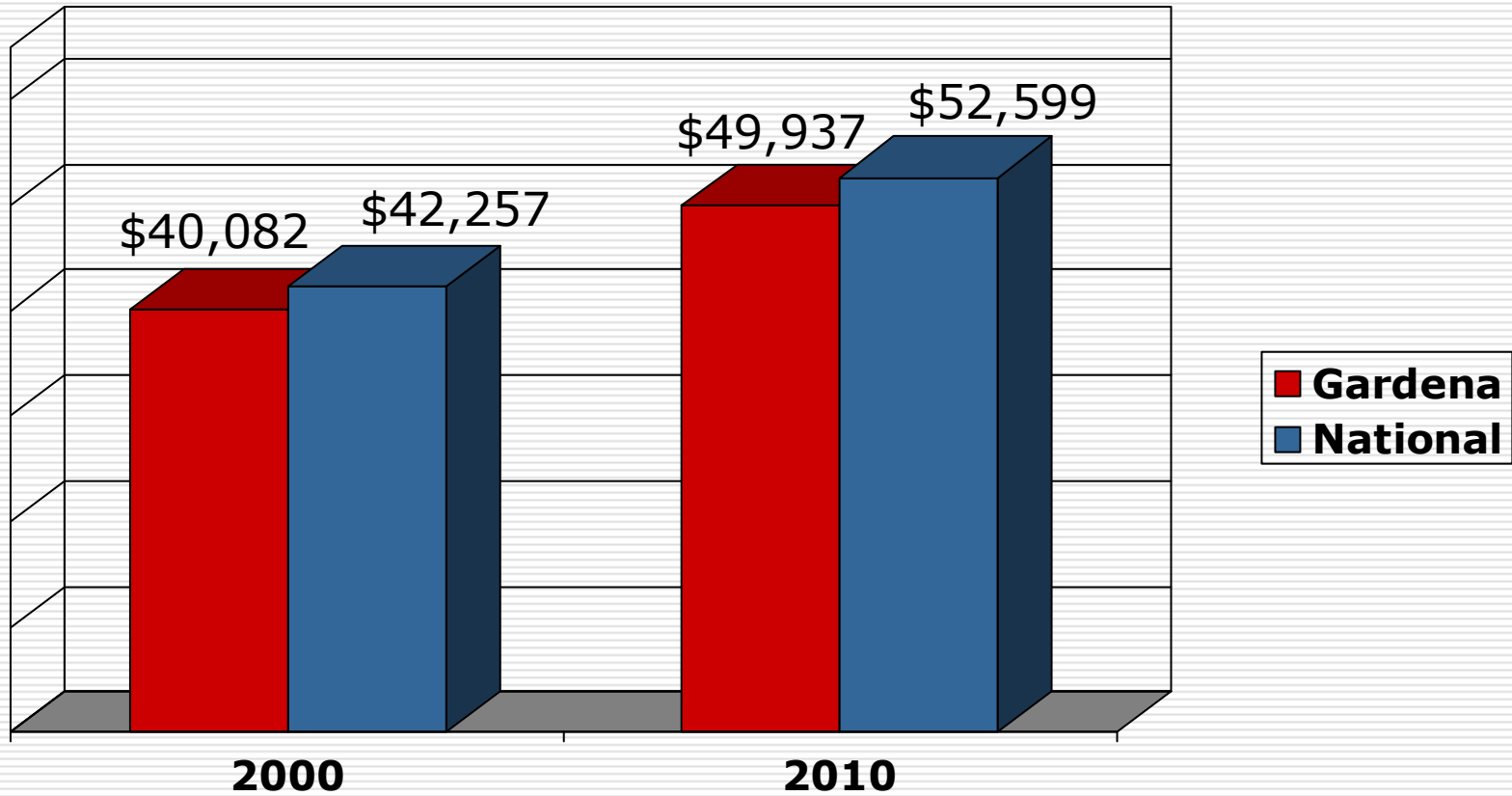
Married



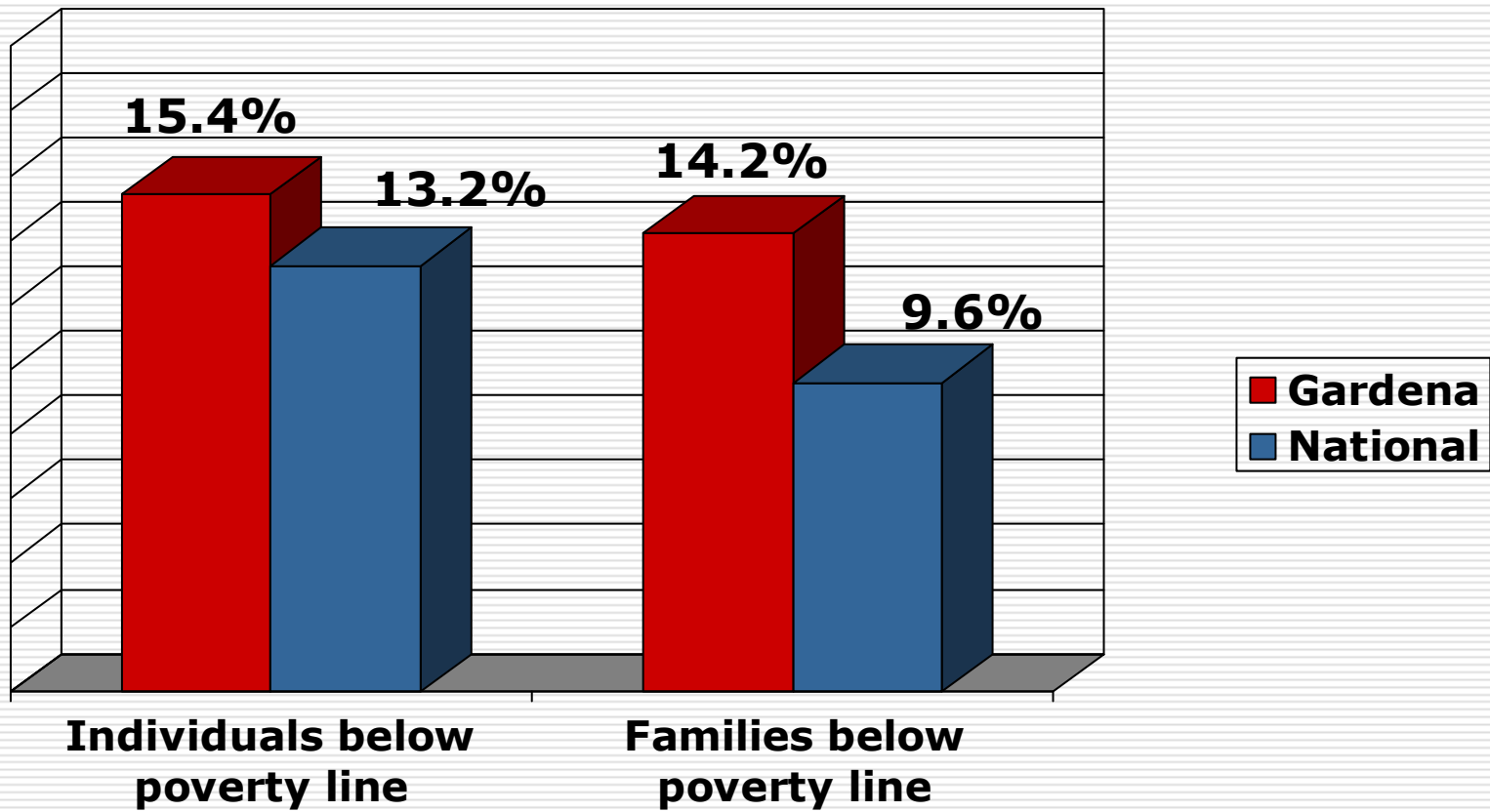
Special Needs



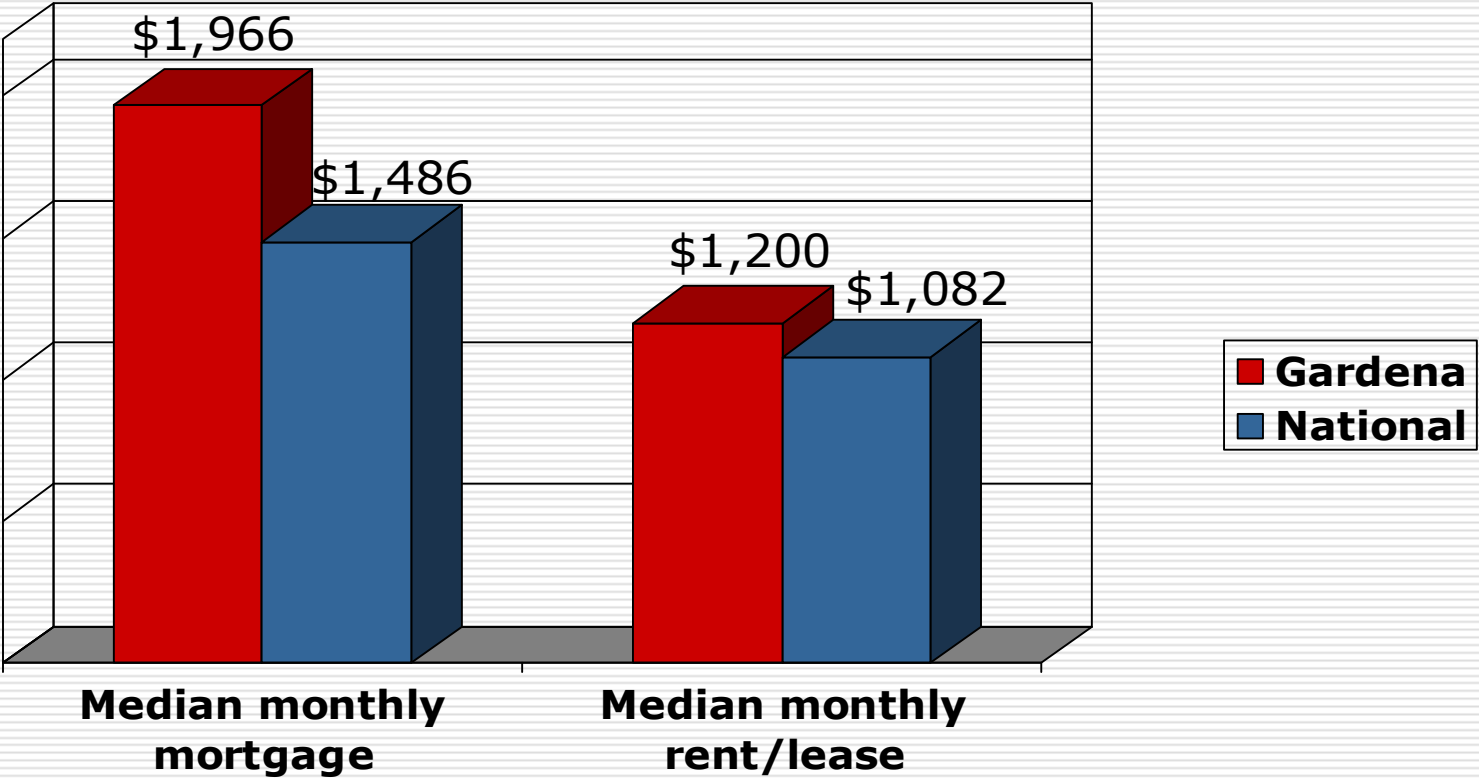
Median Household Income



Poverty

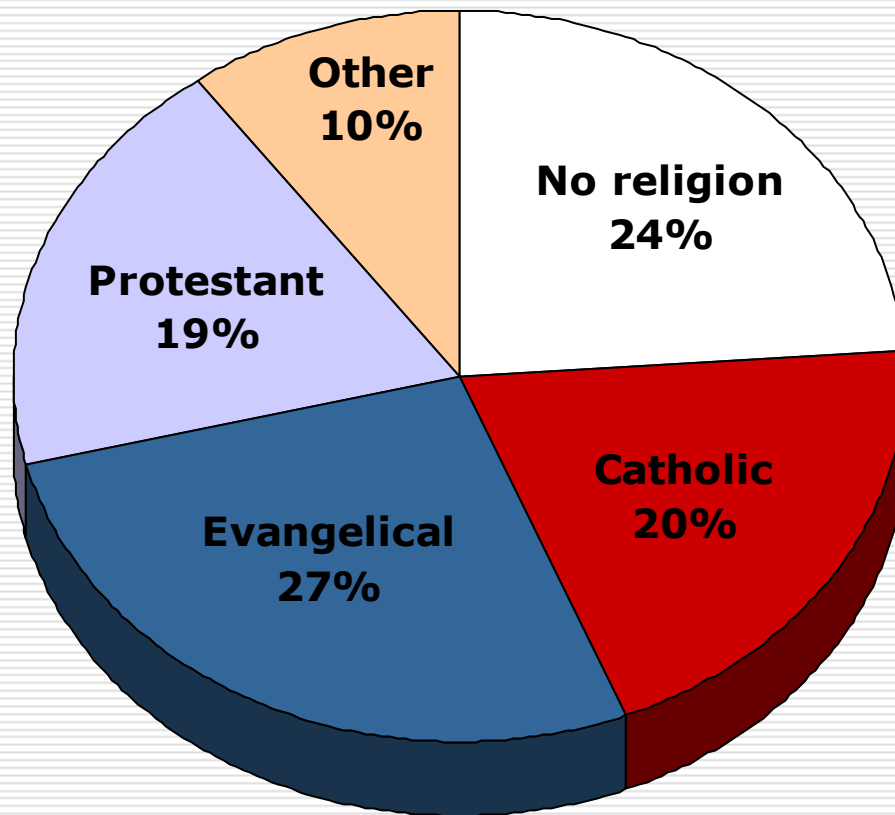


Cost of Housing

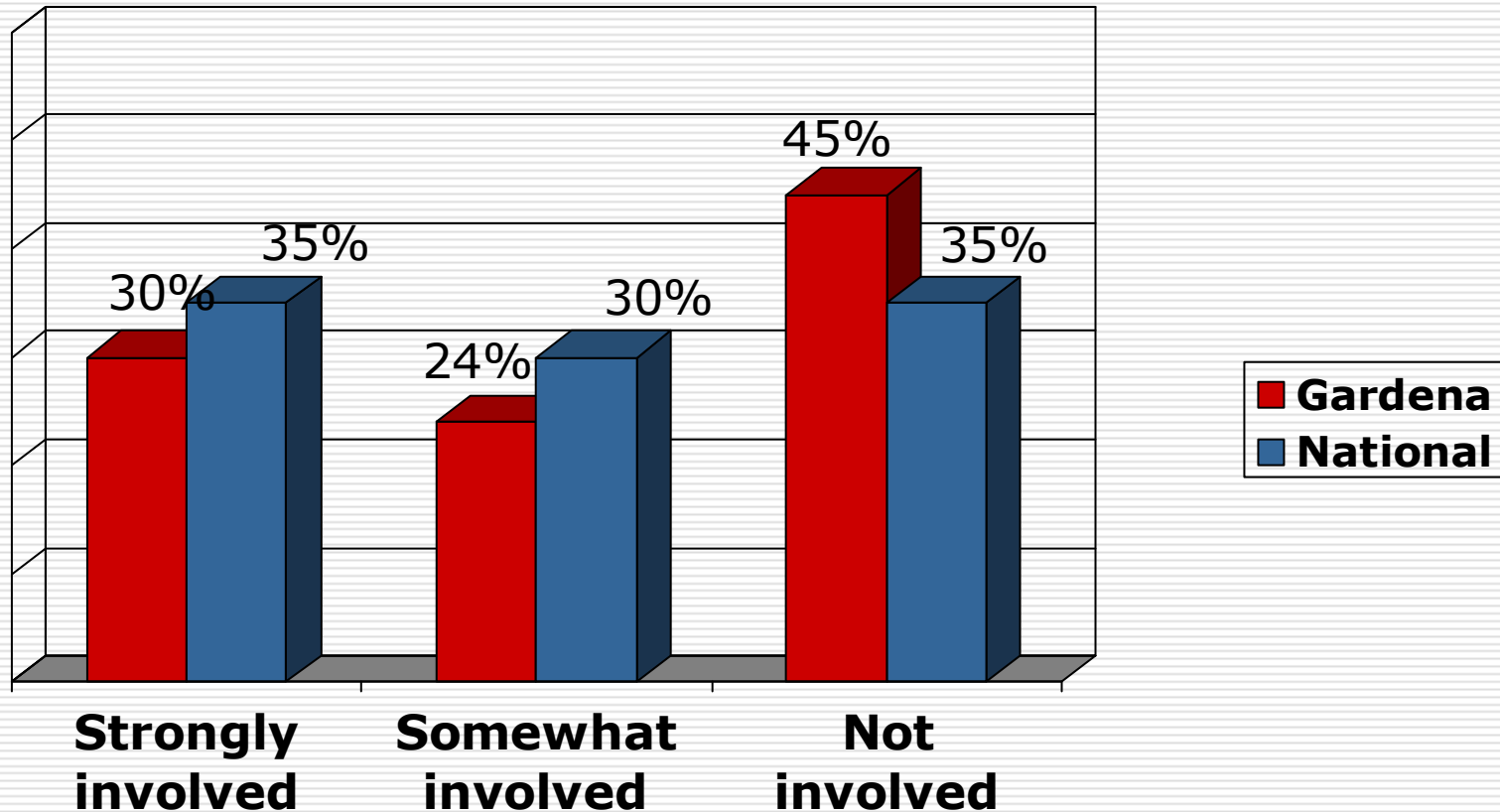


Source for rental data is U.S.
Board of Realtors

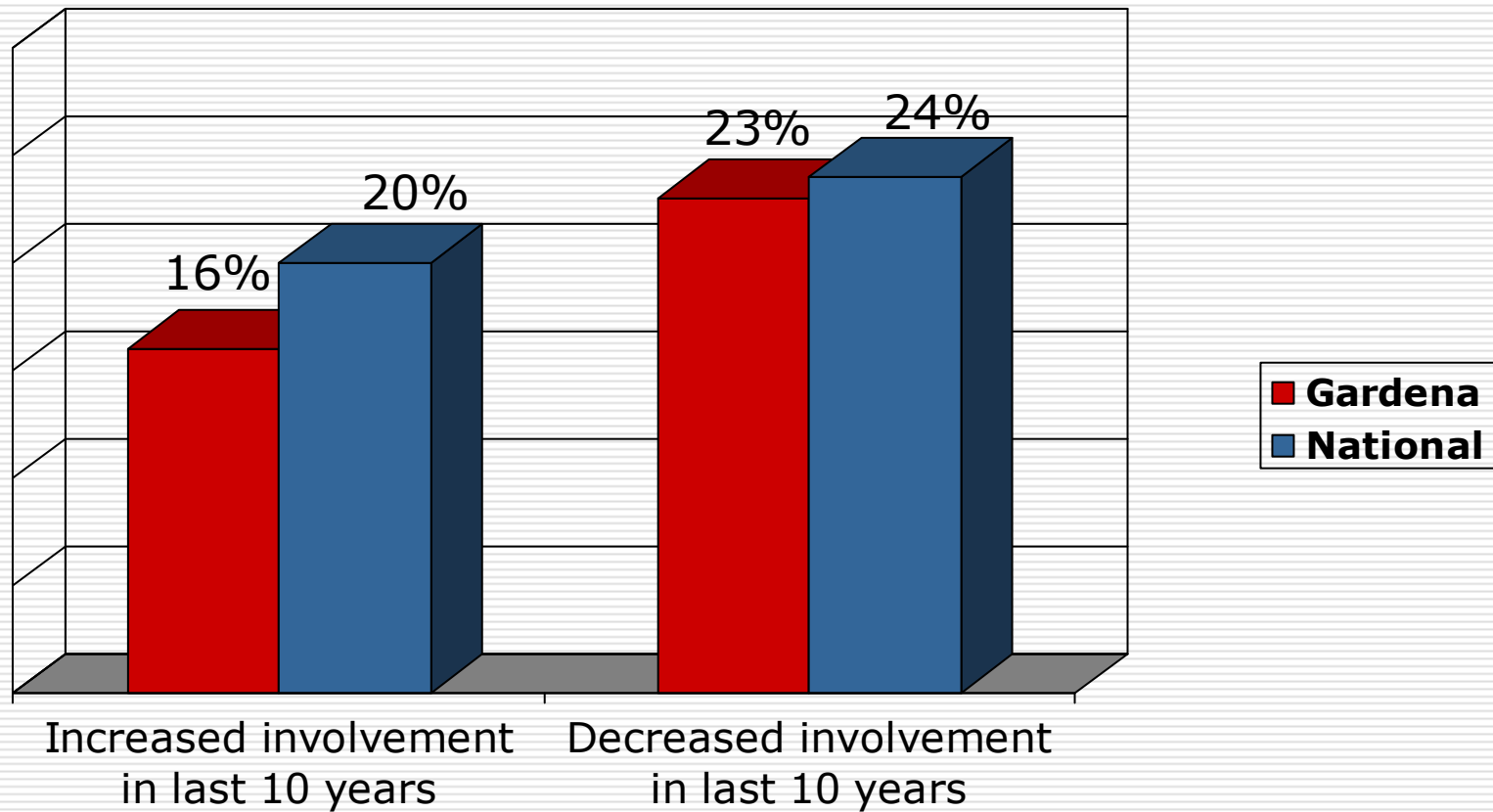
Religious Preferences of Gardena Residents



Religious Involvement of Gardena Residents

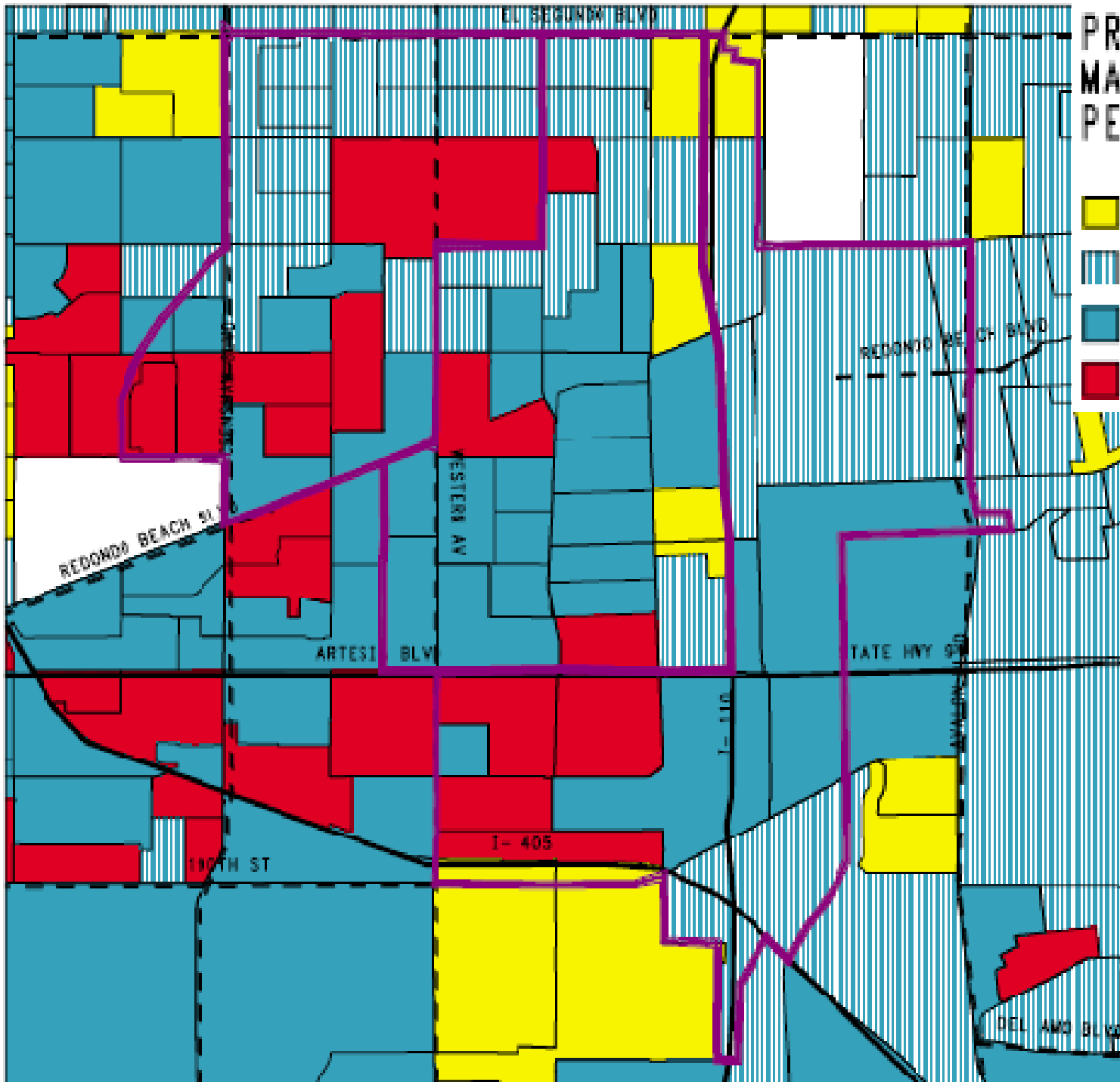


Religious Involvement of Gardena Residents







Top Needs in the Community

- ❑ 51% Achieving financial security
 - ❑ 40% Maintaining personal health
 - ❑ 40% Neighborhood crime & safety
 - ❑ 33% Day-to-day financial worries
 - ❑ 27% Dealing with stress
 - ❑ 24% Finding time for recreation
 - ❑ 24% Finding health insurance
-



**PRIMARY CONCERN:
MAINTAINING
PERSONAL HEALTH**

	32% to 37%
	37% to 39%
	39% to 42%
	42% to 44%

Needs in the Community 2

- ❑ 22% Better quality health care
 - ❑ 22% Finding good schools
 - ❑ 20% Dealing with child/teen problems
 - ❑ 20% Dealing with ethnic prejudice
 - ❑ 19% Finding friendship
 - ❑ 18% Achieving a fulfilling marriage
 - ❑ 18% Affordable housing
 - ❑ 18% Concern about gangs
 - ❑ 17% Finding a job
 - ❑ 17% Finding a satisfying career
-

More Needs in the Community 3

- 16% Finding retirement opportunities
 - 15% Dealing with substance abuse
 - 15% Dealing with social injustice
 - 13% Care for aging parents
 - 13% Finding direction in life
 - 12% Domestic violence & abuse
 - 12% Developing parenting skills
 - 12% Problems in the schools
-

Low-priority Community Needs

- 11% Finding a good church
 - 11% Finding spiritual teaching
 - 9% Obtaining an education
 - 8% Providing adequate food
 - 6% Finding child care
 - 3% Dealing with divorce
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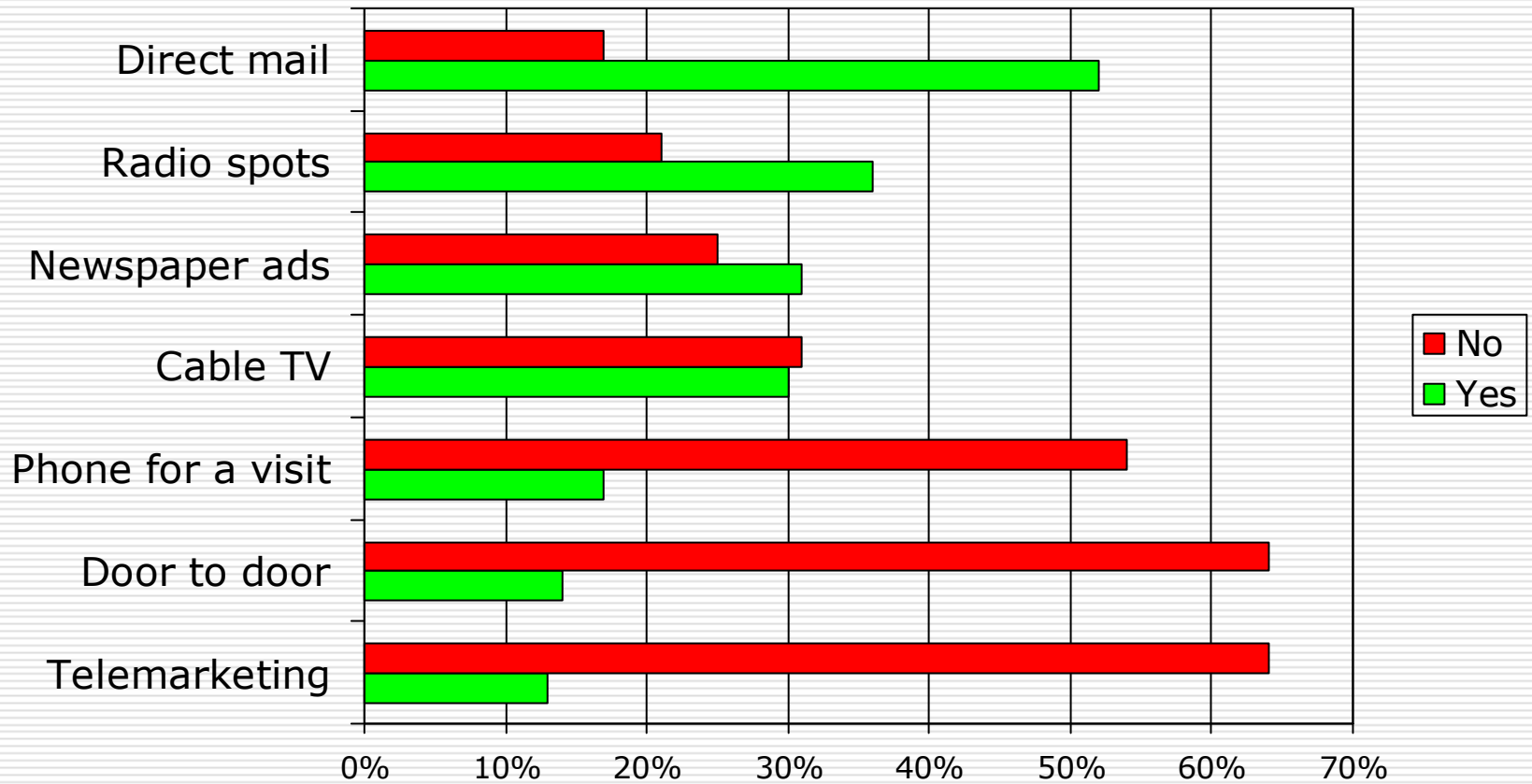
Church Programs People Want

- ❑ 41% Bible study & prayer group
 - ❑ 31% Family activities & outings
 - ❑ 29% Youth activities
 - ❑ 26% Active retirement program
 - ❑ 24% Family counseling
 - ❑ 21% The arts, music, drama, etc.
 - ❑ 21% Doctrinal classes
 - ❑ 17% Care for the terminally ill
-

Church Programs People Want

- 15% Marriage enrichment events
 - 14% Spiritual retreats
 - 9% Food & clothing resource center
 - 8% Parent training classes
 - 6% Sports or camping
 - 6% Day care for children
 - 6% Church-sponsored school
 - 5% 12-step group
 - 2% Divorce recovery
-

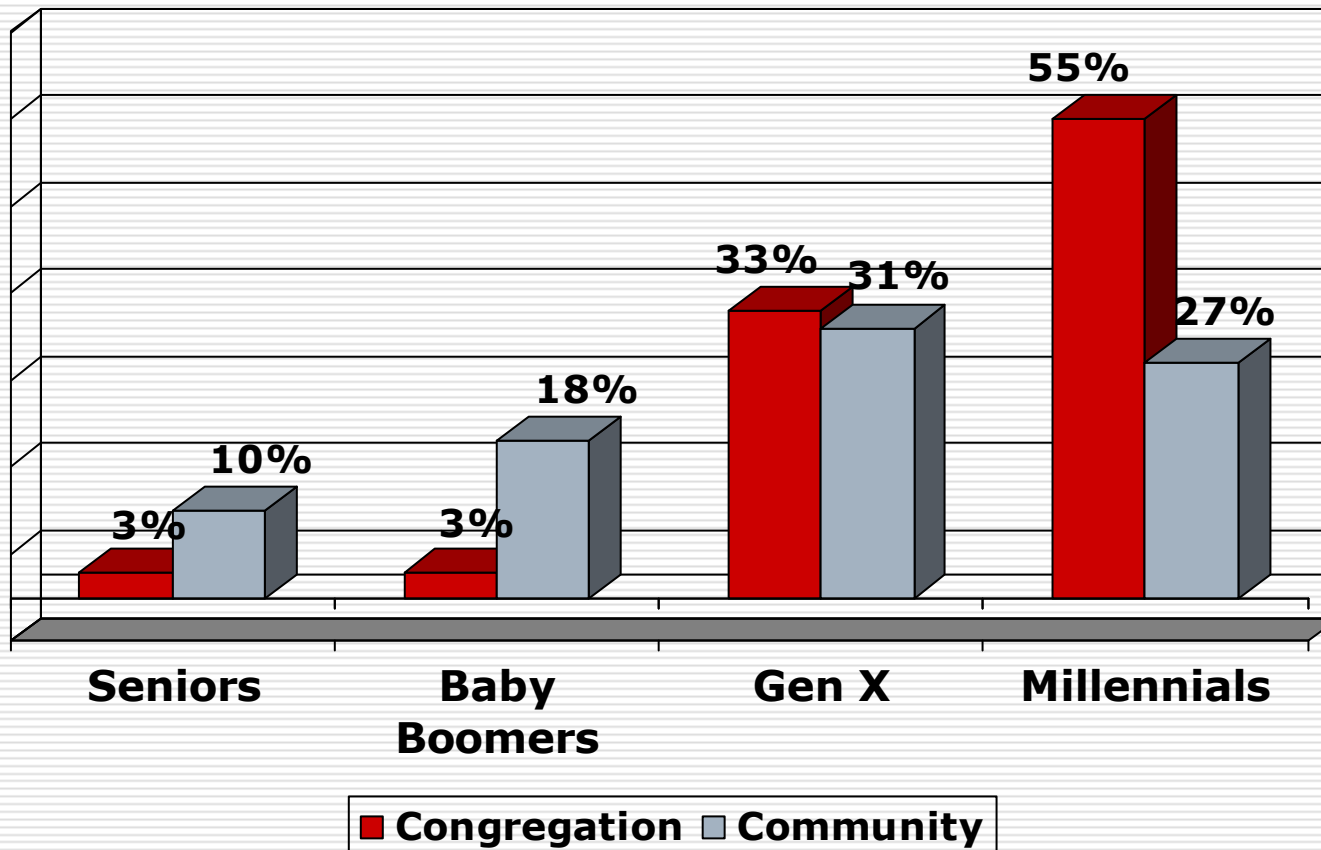
How I prefer for churches to contact me ...



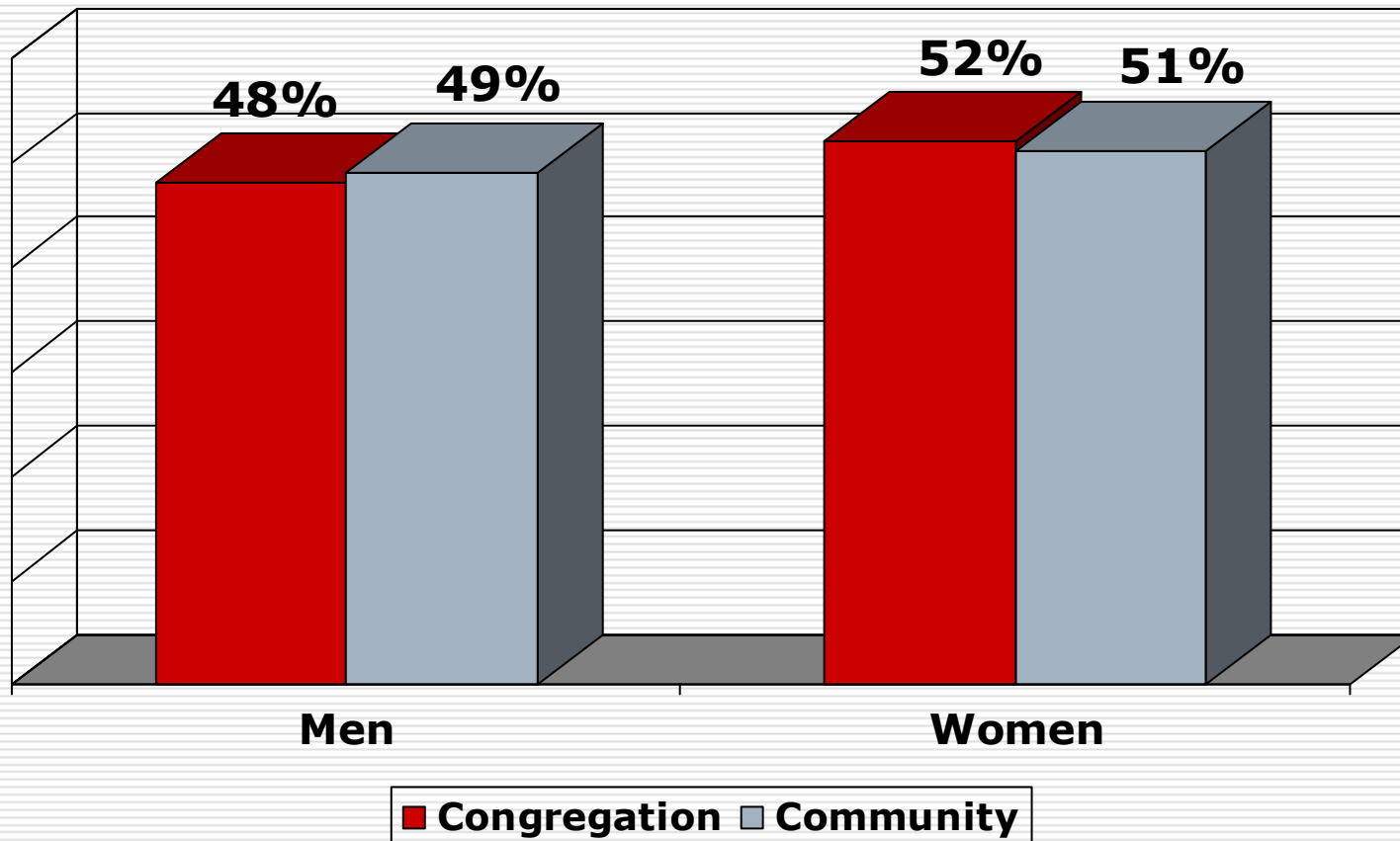
Survey of Congregation

- A standard questionnaire was distributed during each worship on several Sabbaths in the first quarter of 2011.
 - A total of 58 usable questionnaires were returned which represents 83% of average attendance—a very good response rate well within minimum professional standards—thus indicating a reliable sample.
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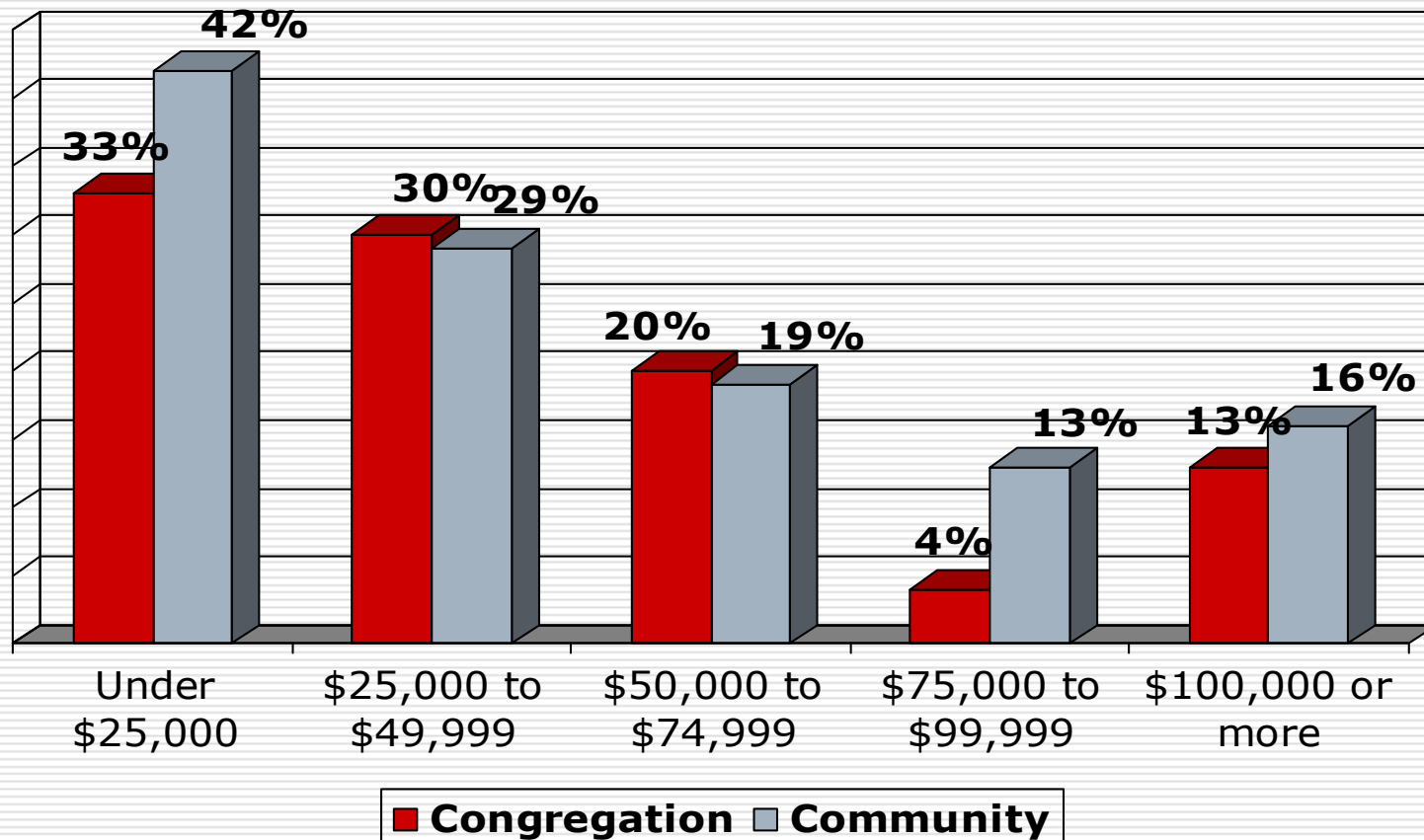
Age by Generation



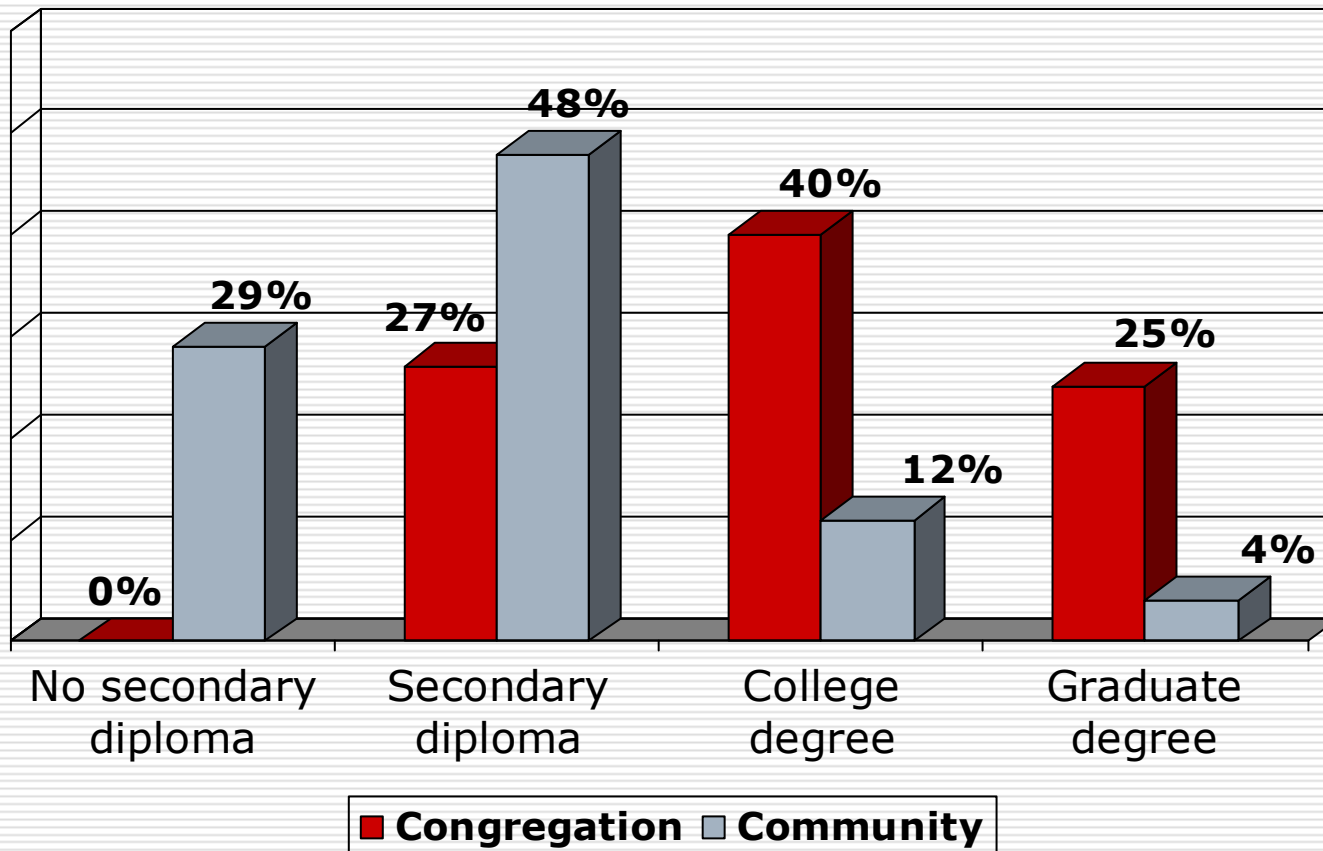
Gender



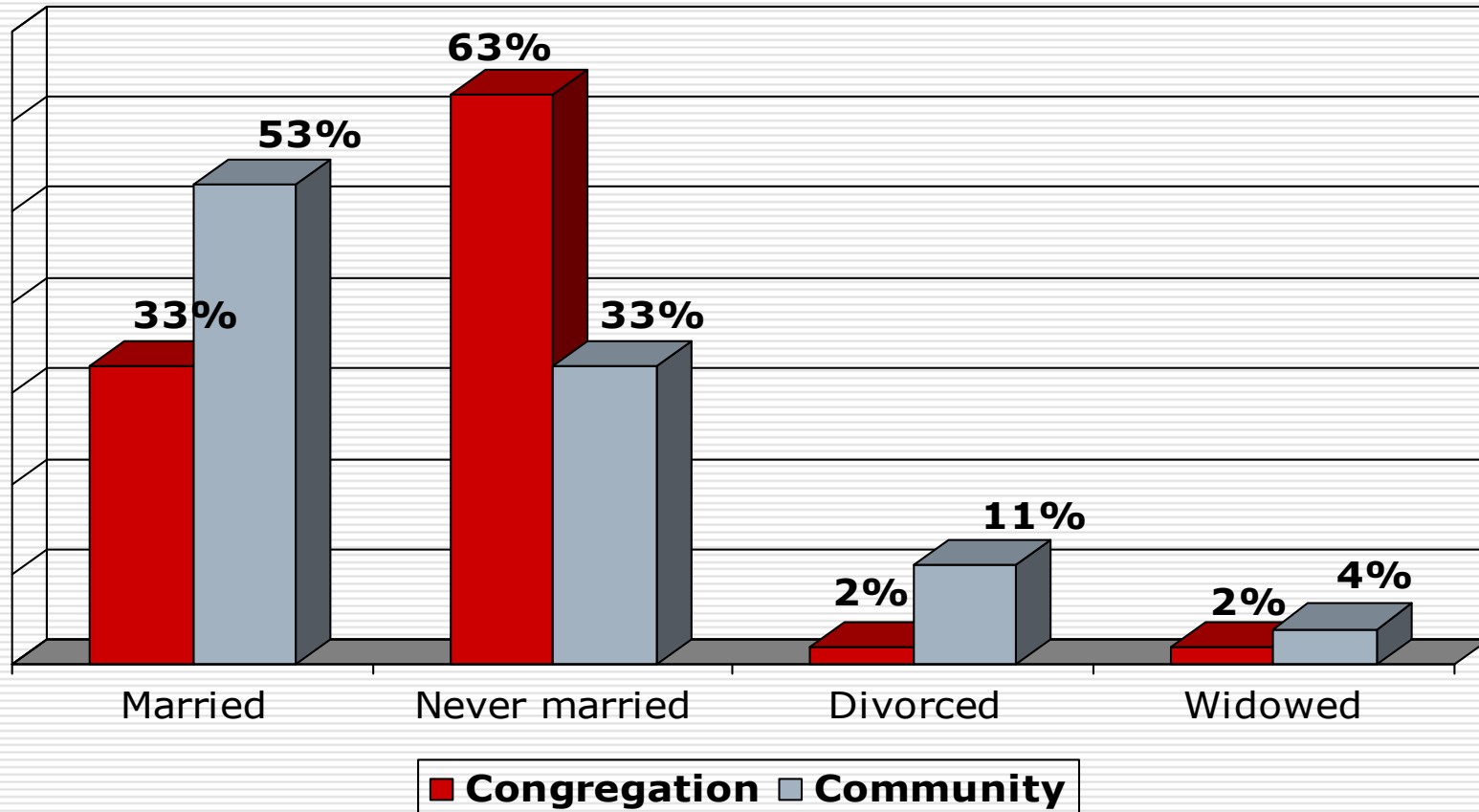
Annual Household Income



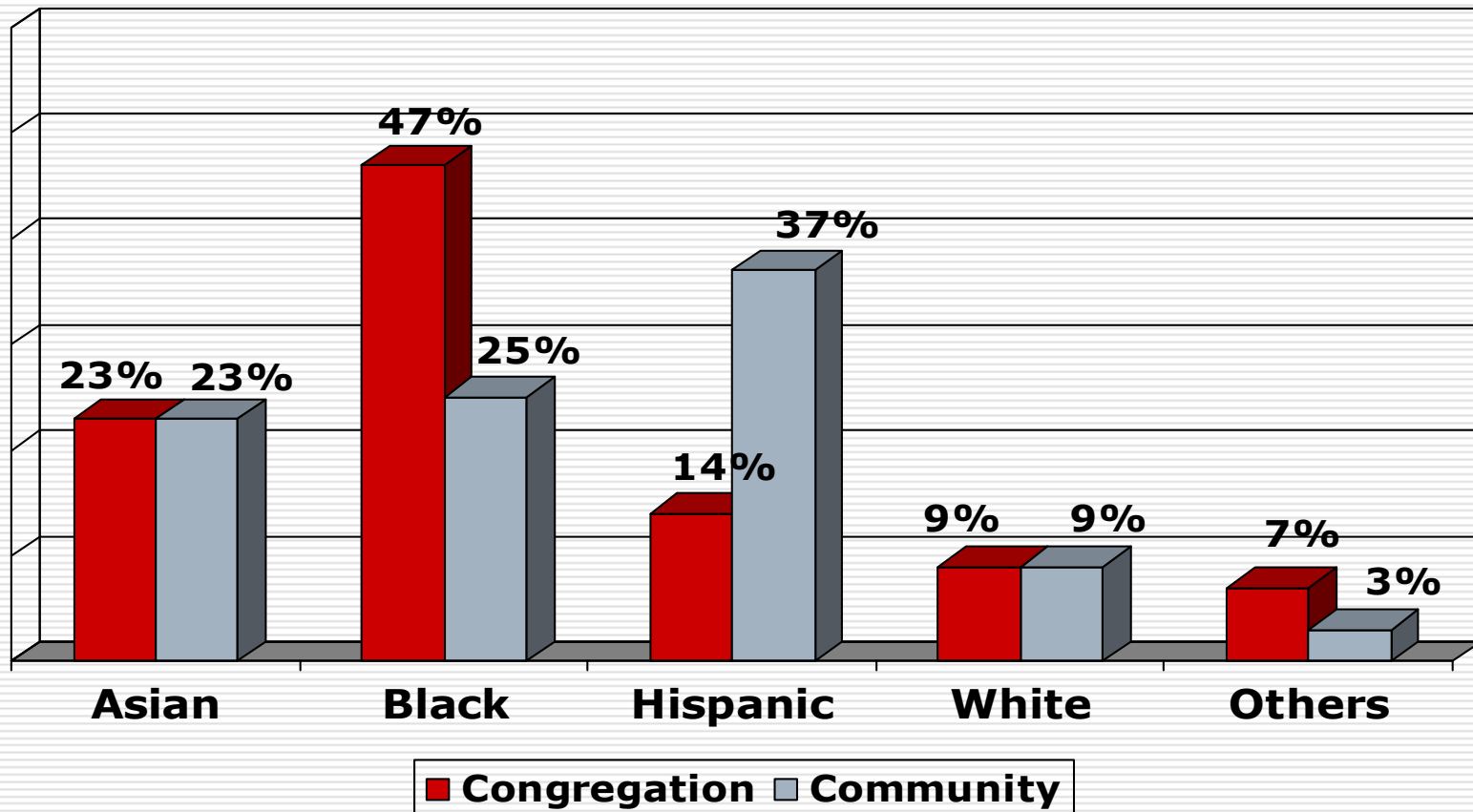
Education



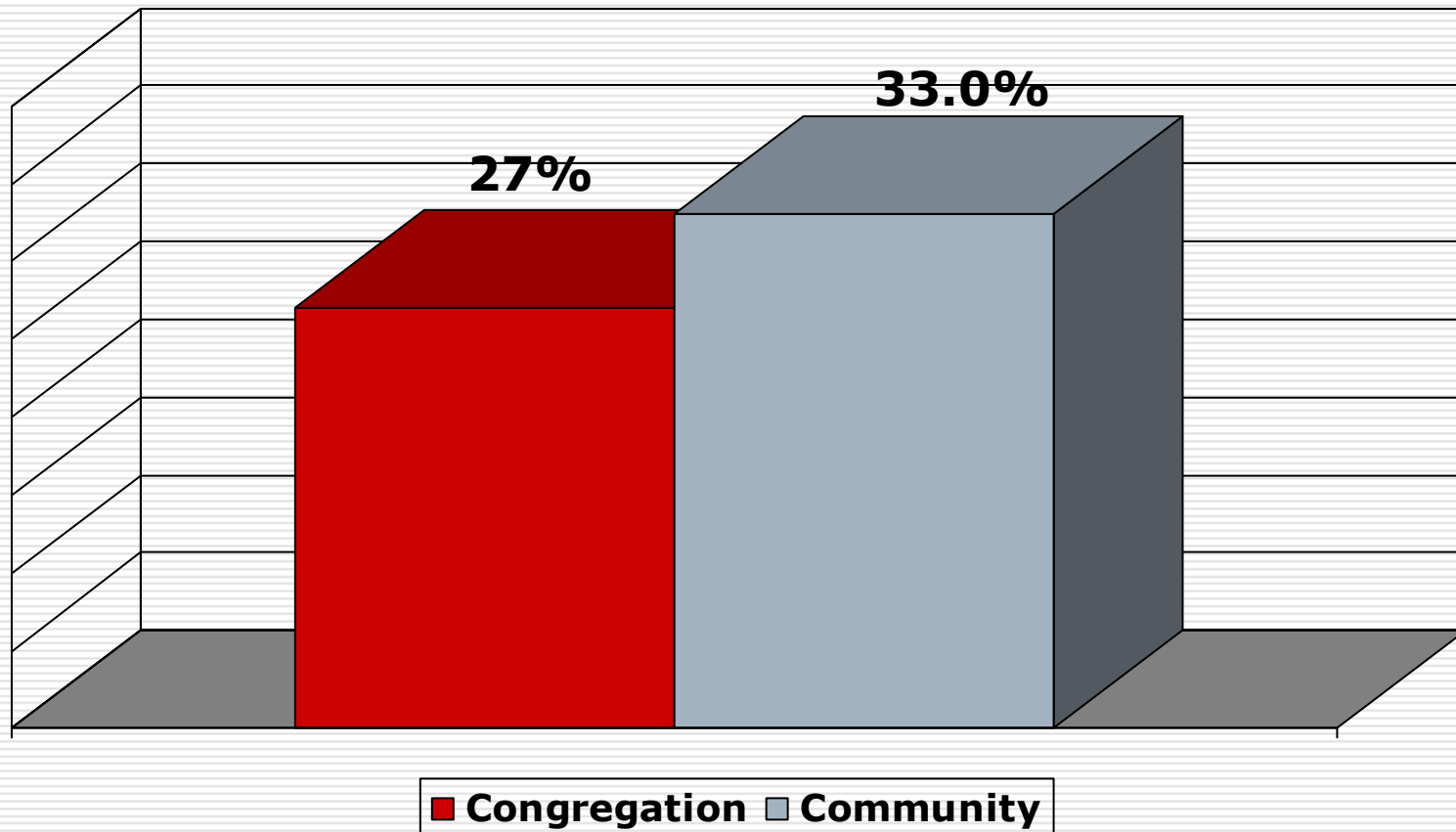
Marital Status



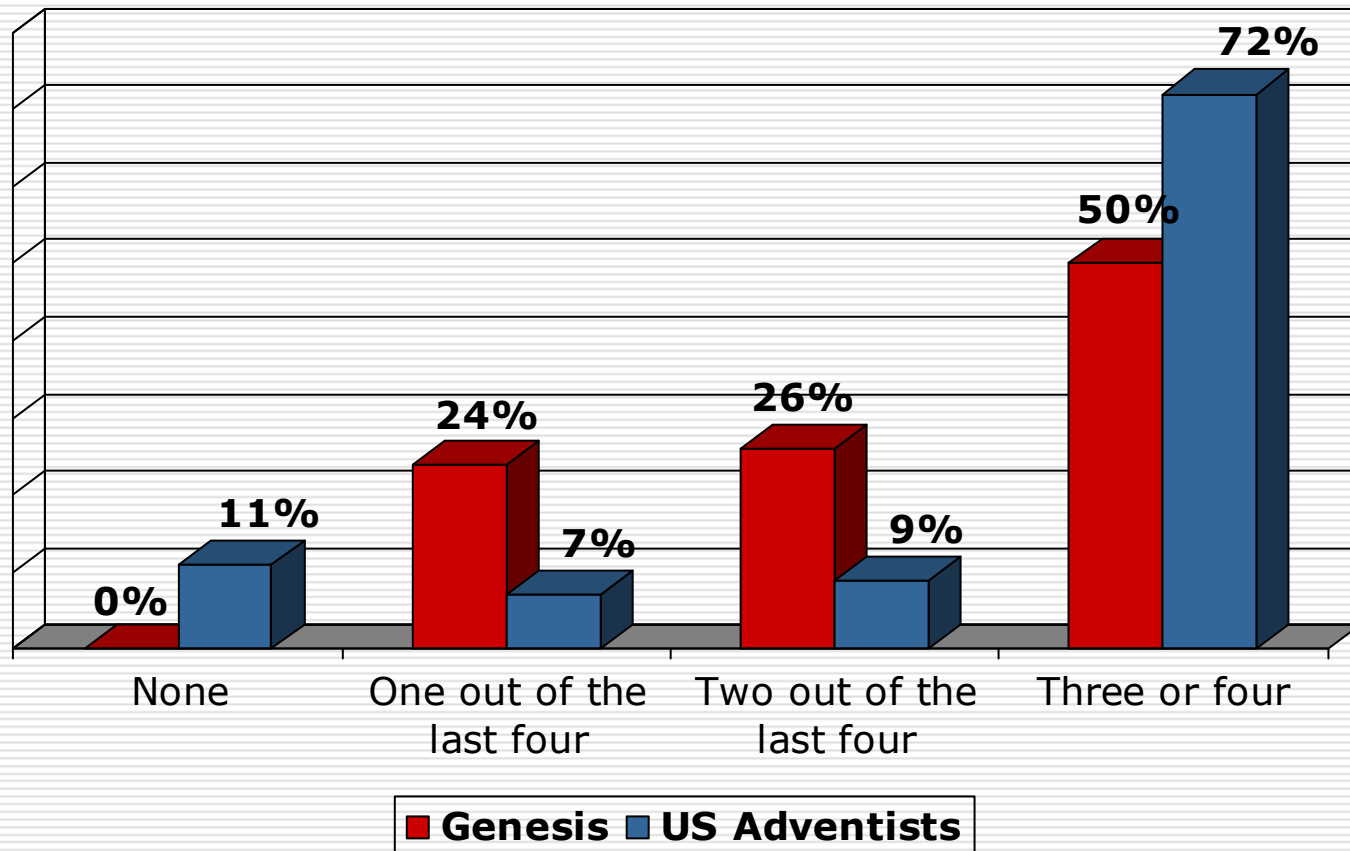
Ethnicity



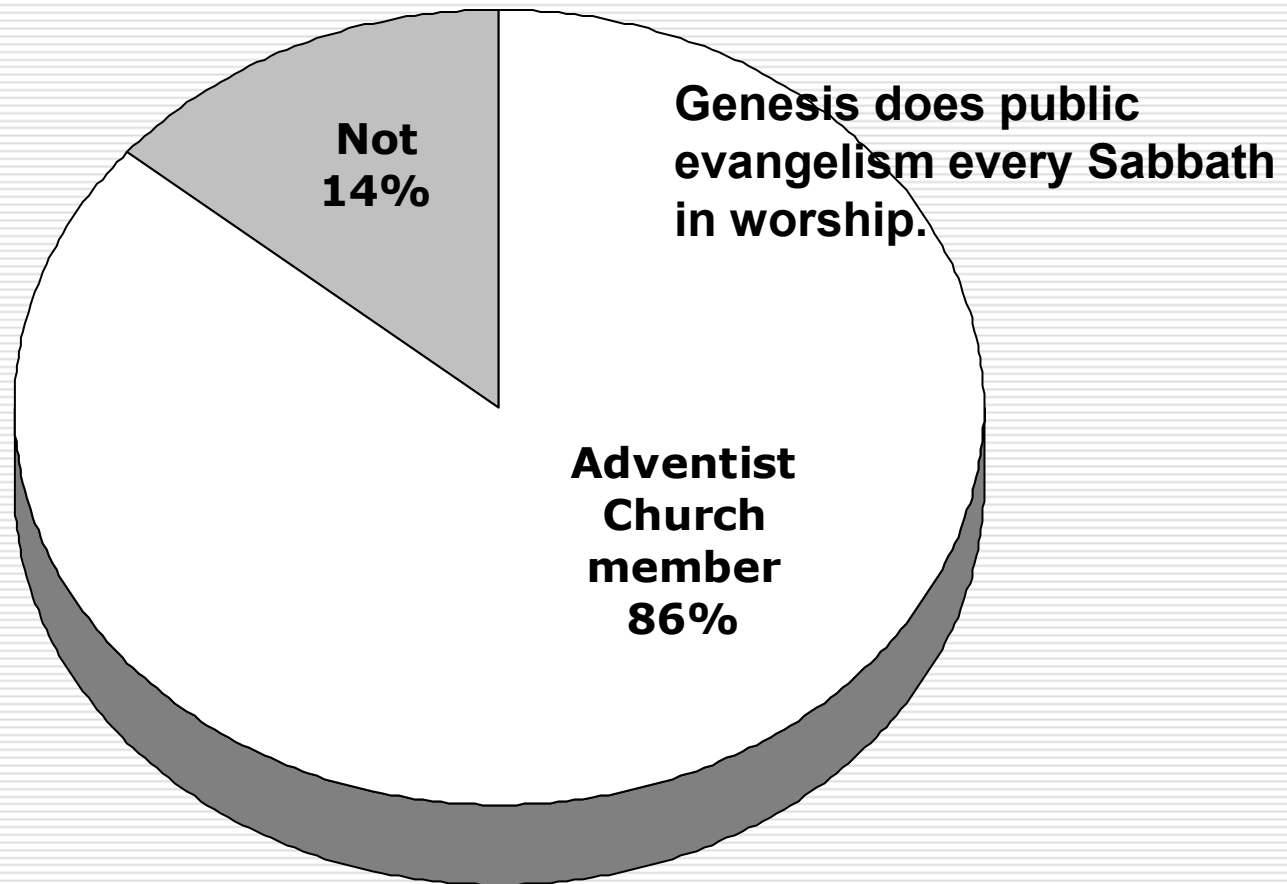
Immigrants



Attendance Pattern

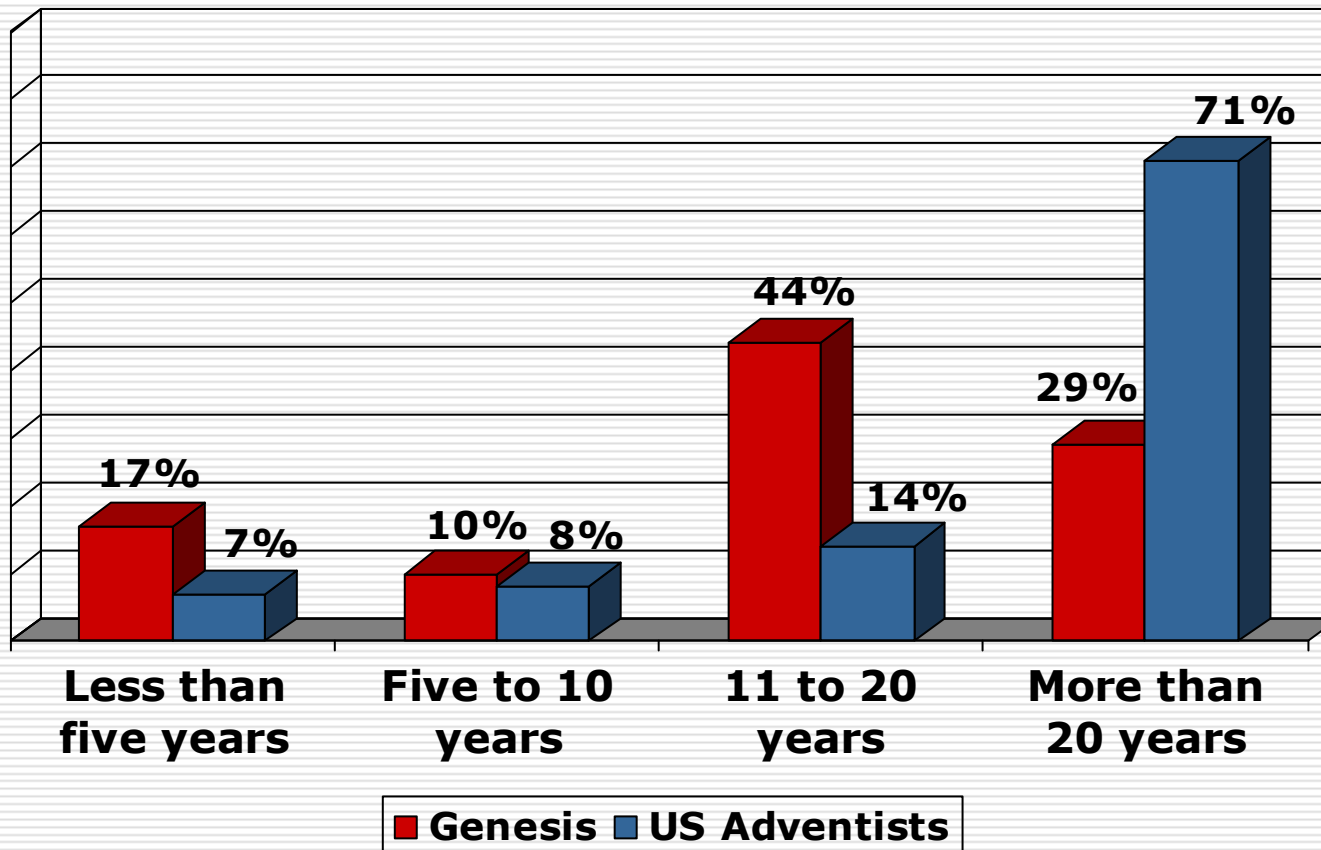


Church Membership

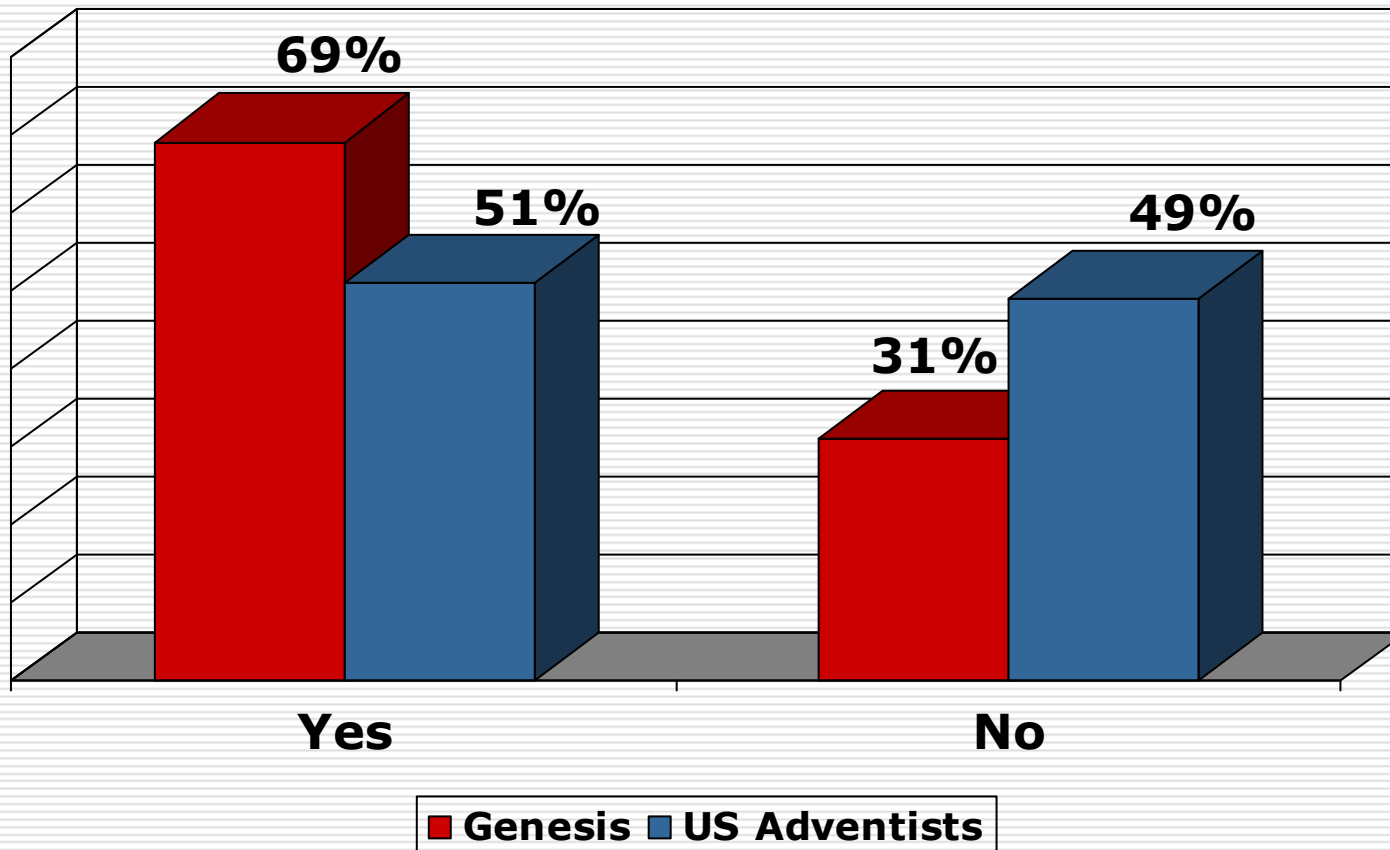


Two thirds of those not baptized members are over age 30.

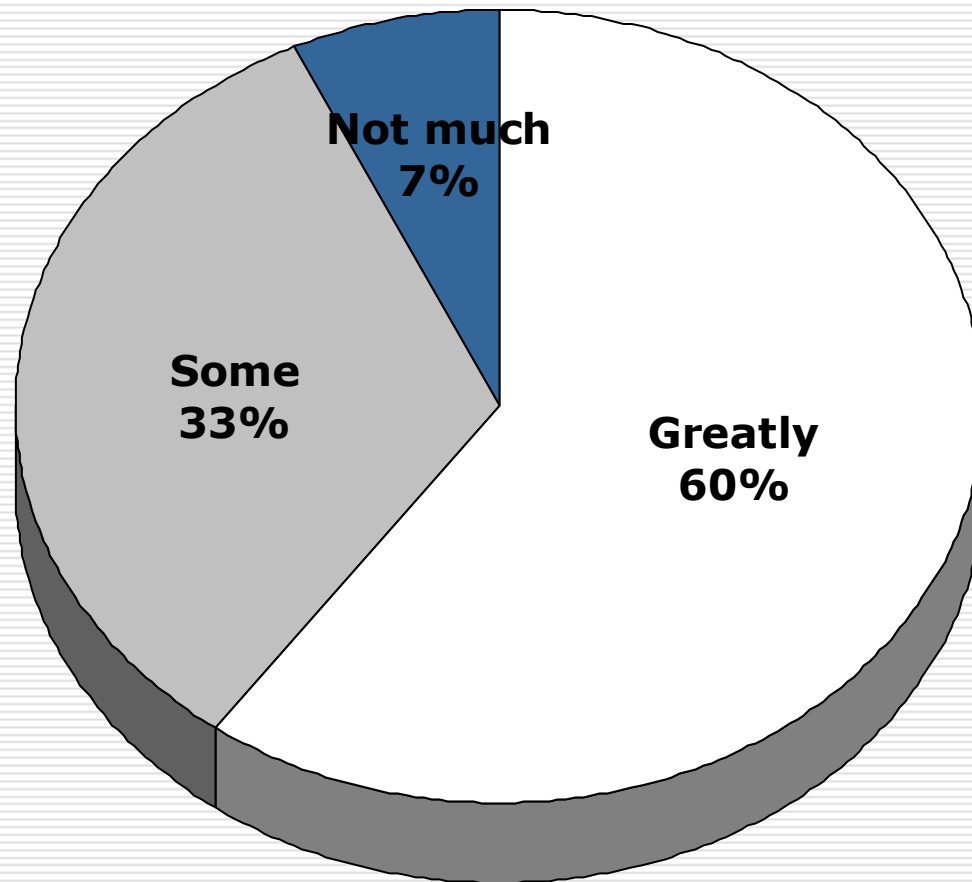
Tenure as a Baptized Adventist



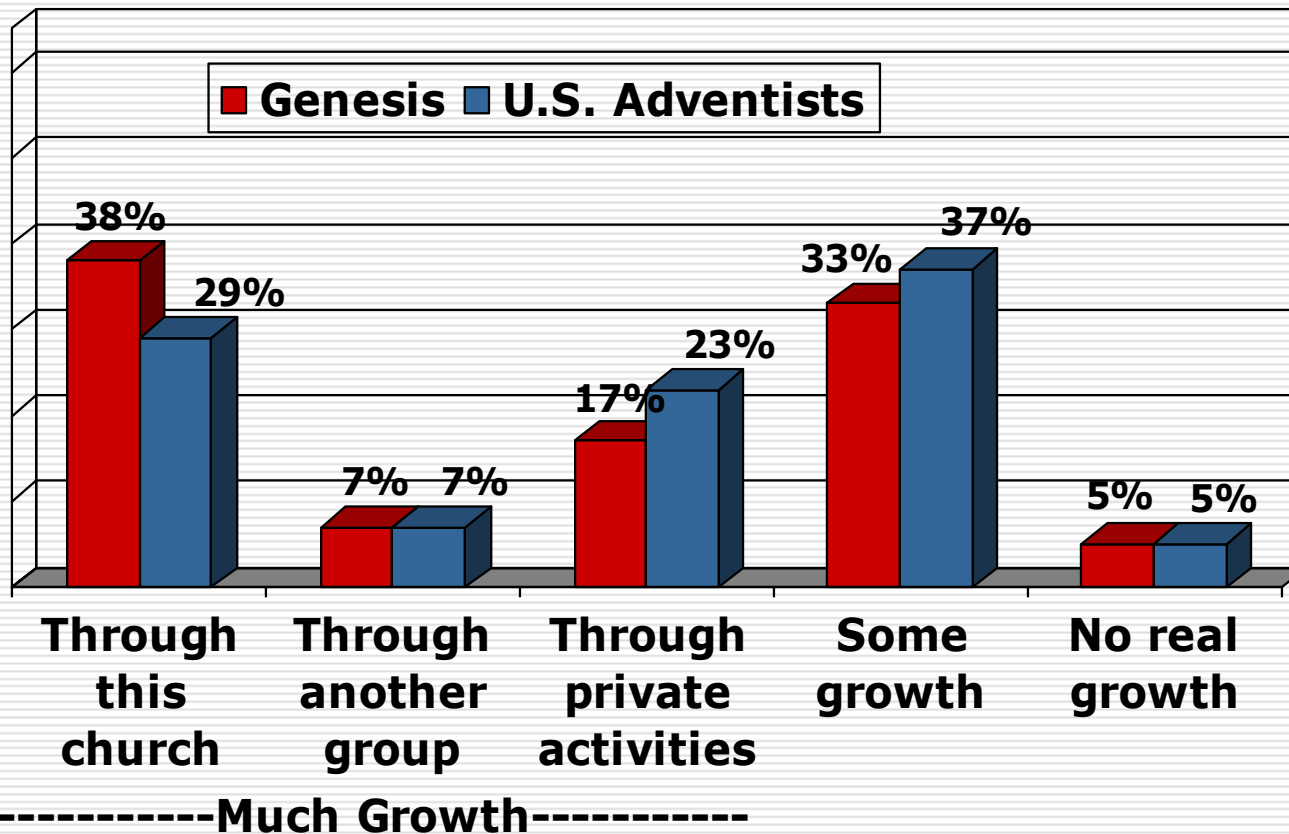
Raised by Adventist Parents



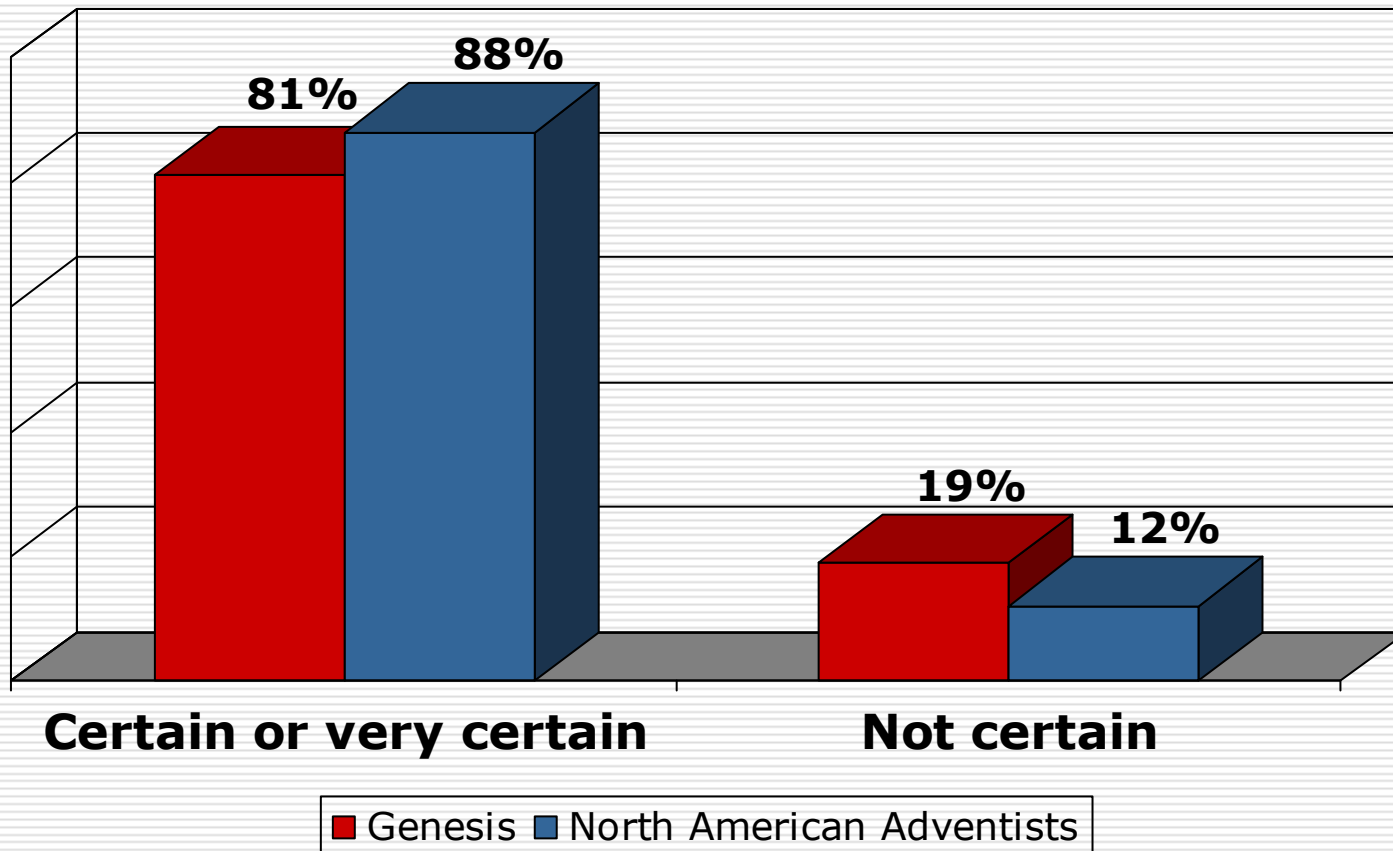
How much does worship at this church help you with everyday life?



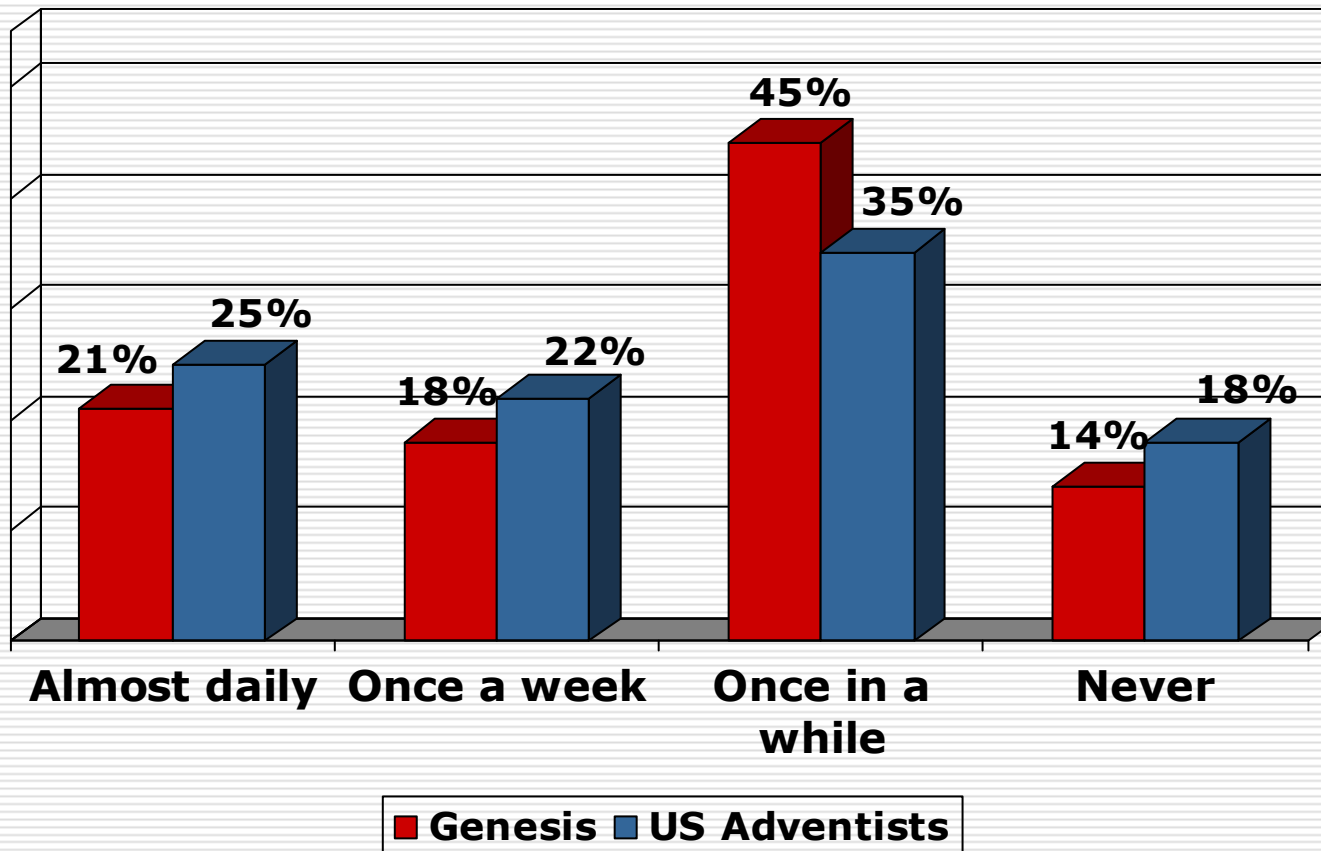
How much have you grown in your faith in the last year?



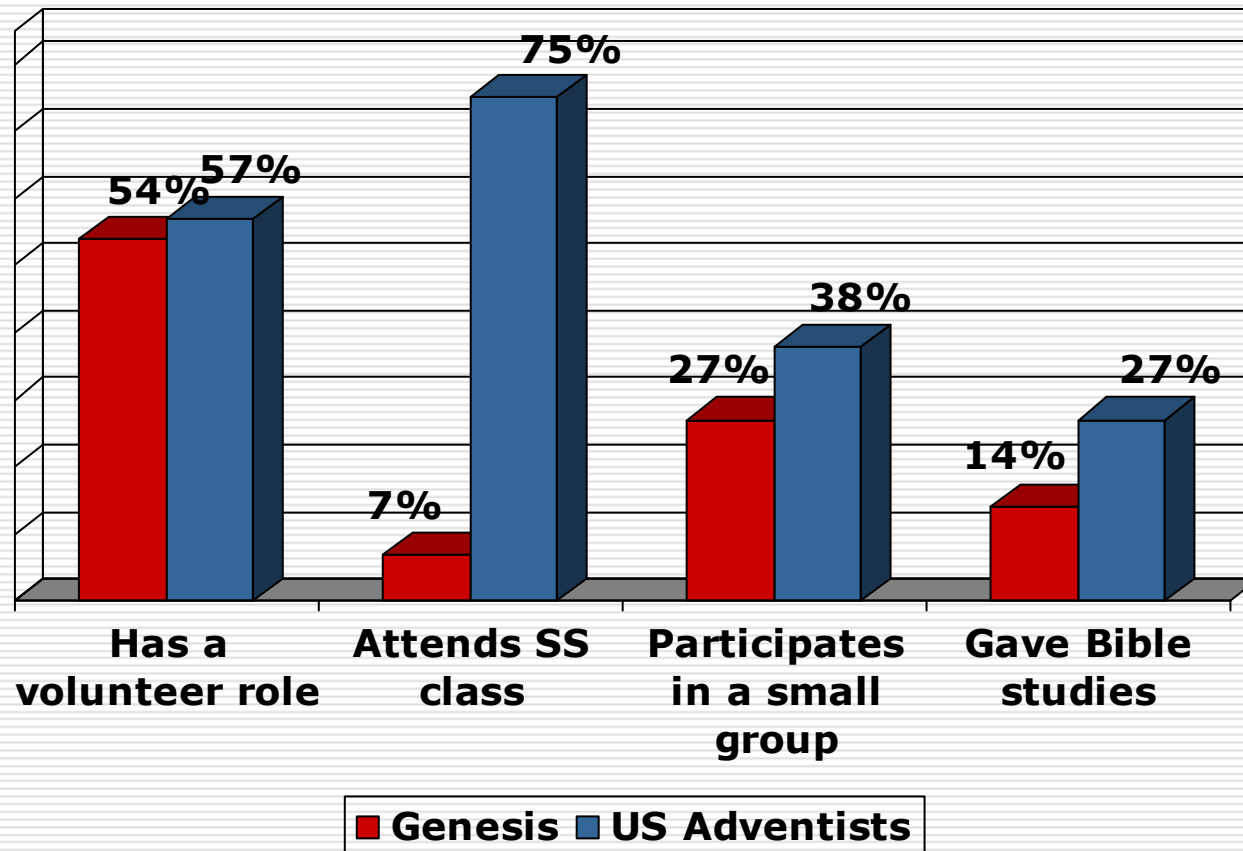
Assurance of Eternal Life



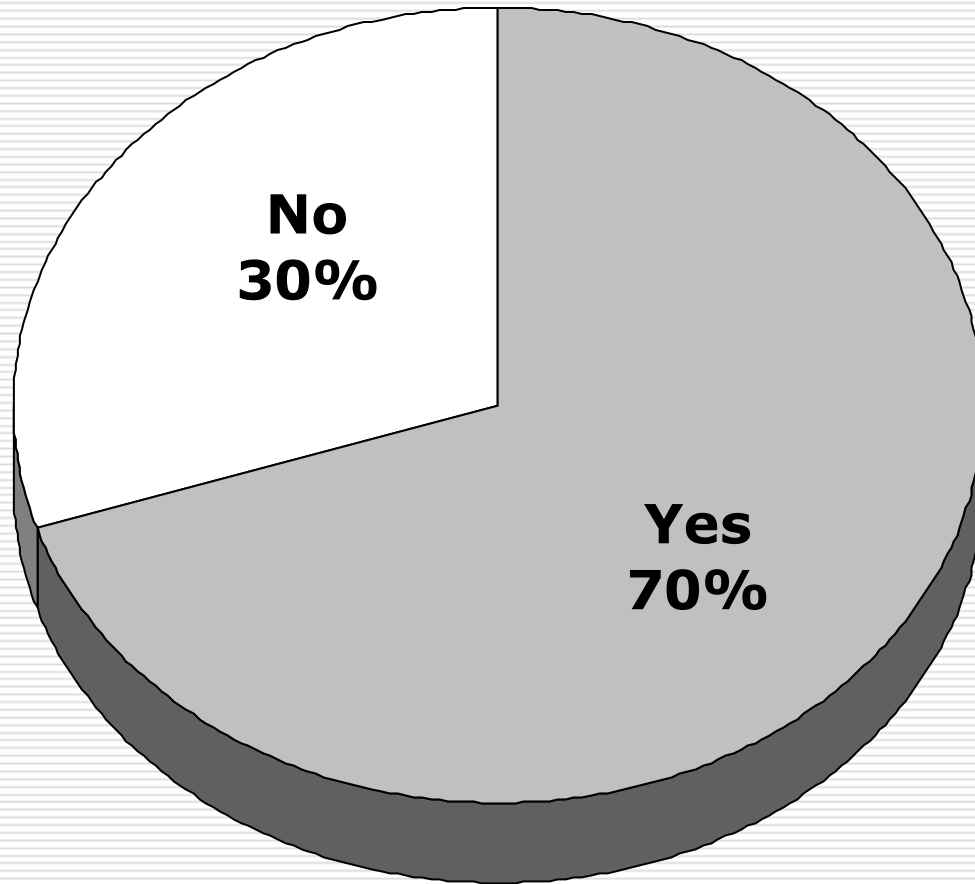
Conversations with Coworkers about their Personal or Family Needs or Spiritual Topics



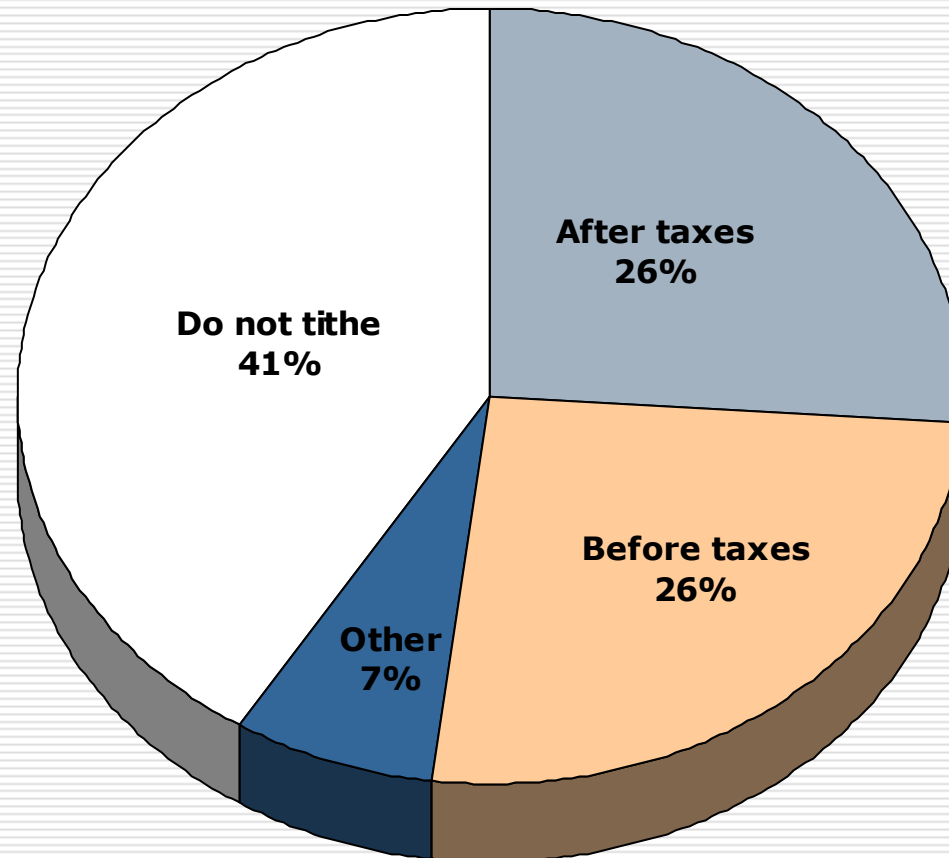
Church Involvement



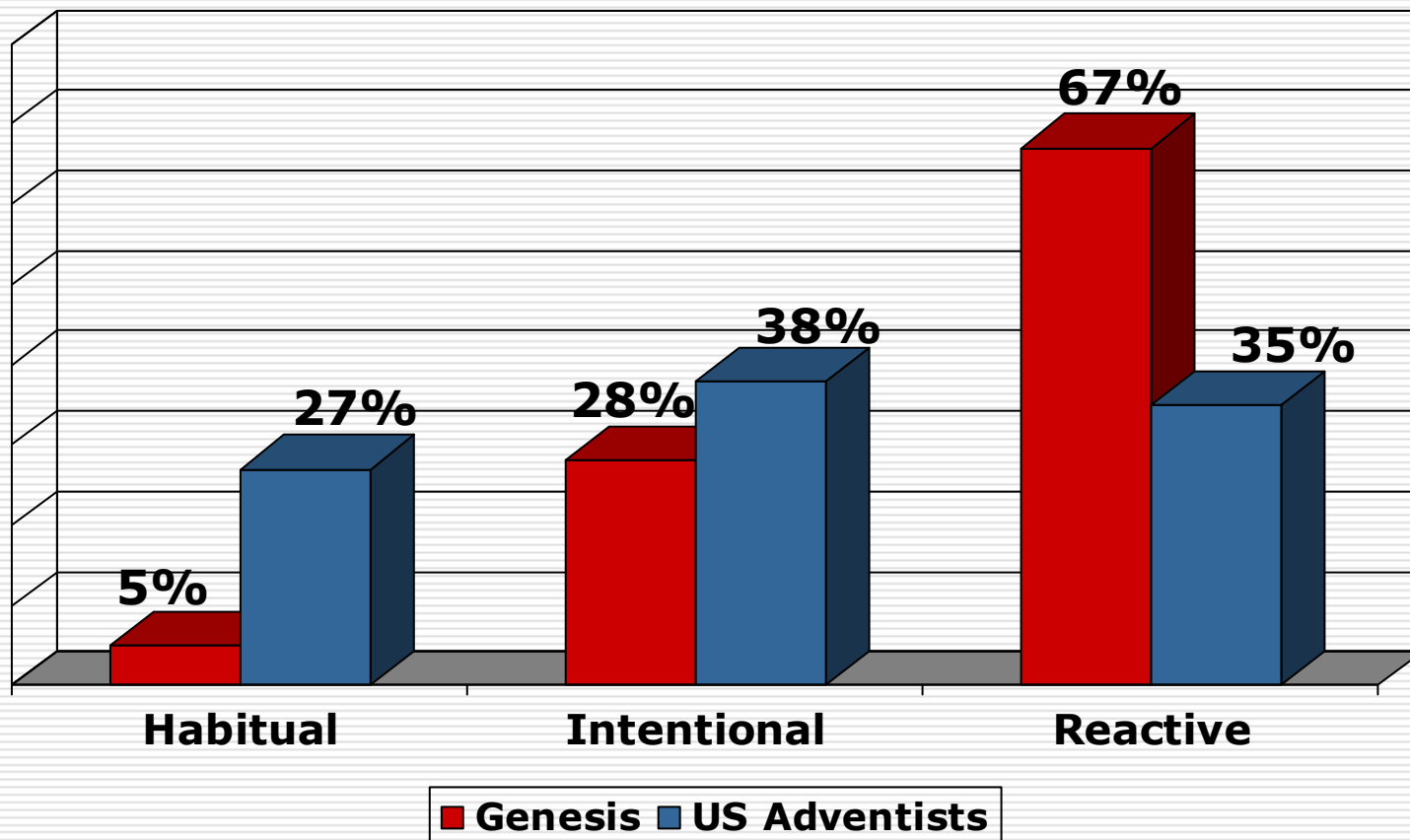
Has anyone asked you personally to volunteer time in the last year?



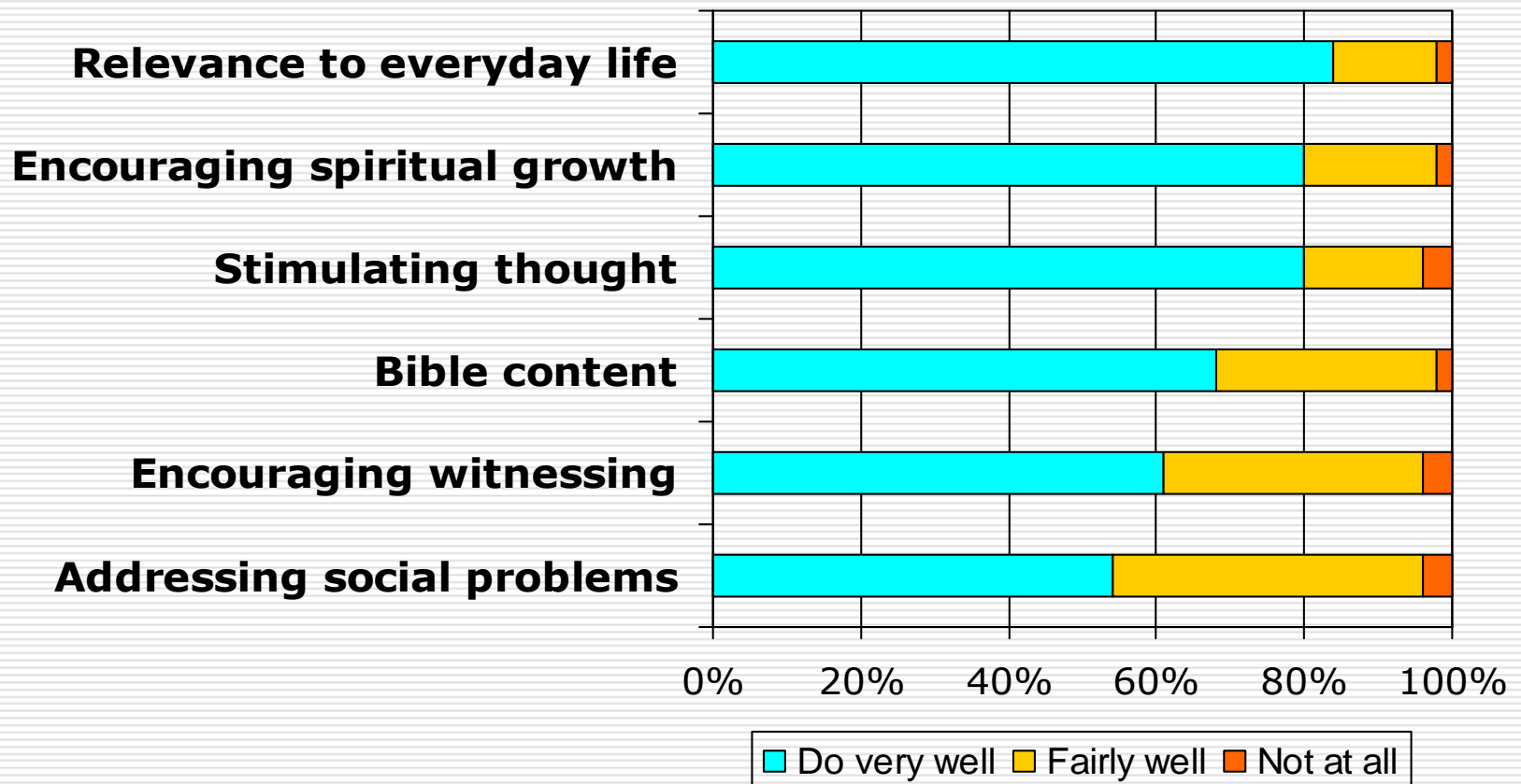
How Do You Calculate Tithe?



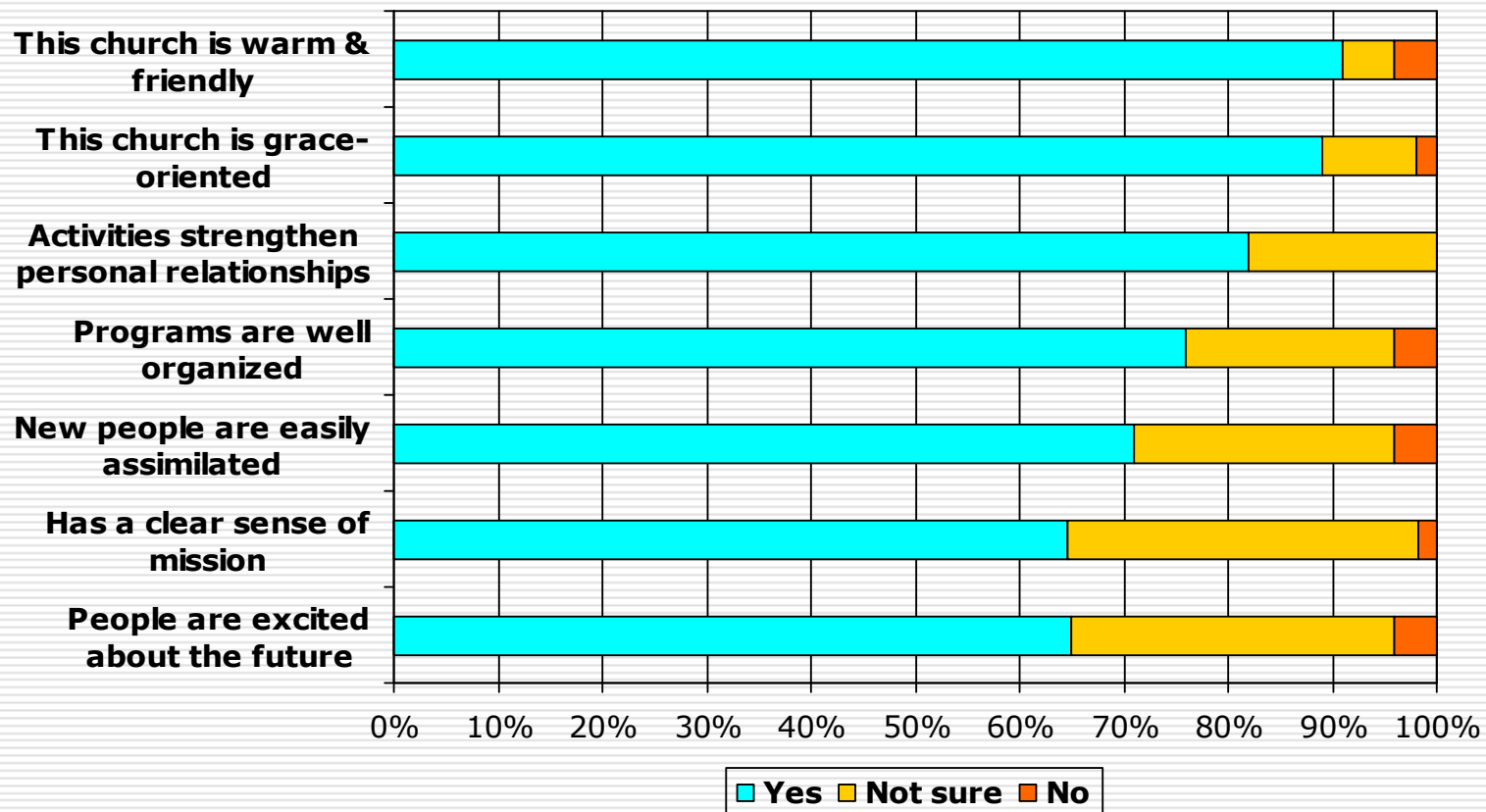
Giving Styles



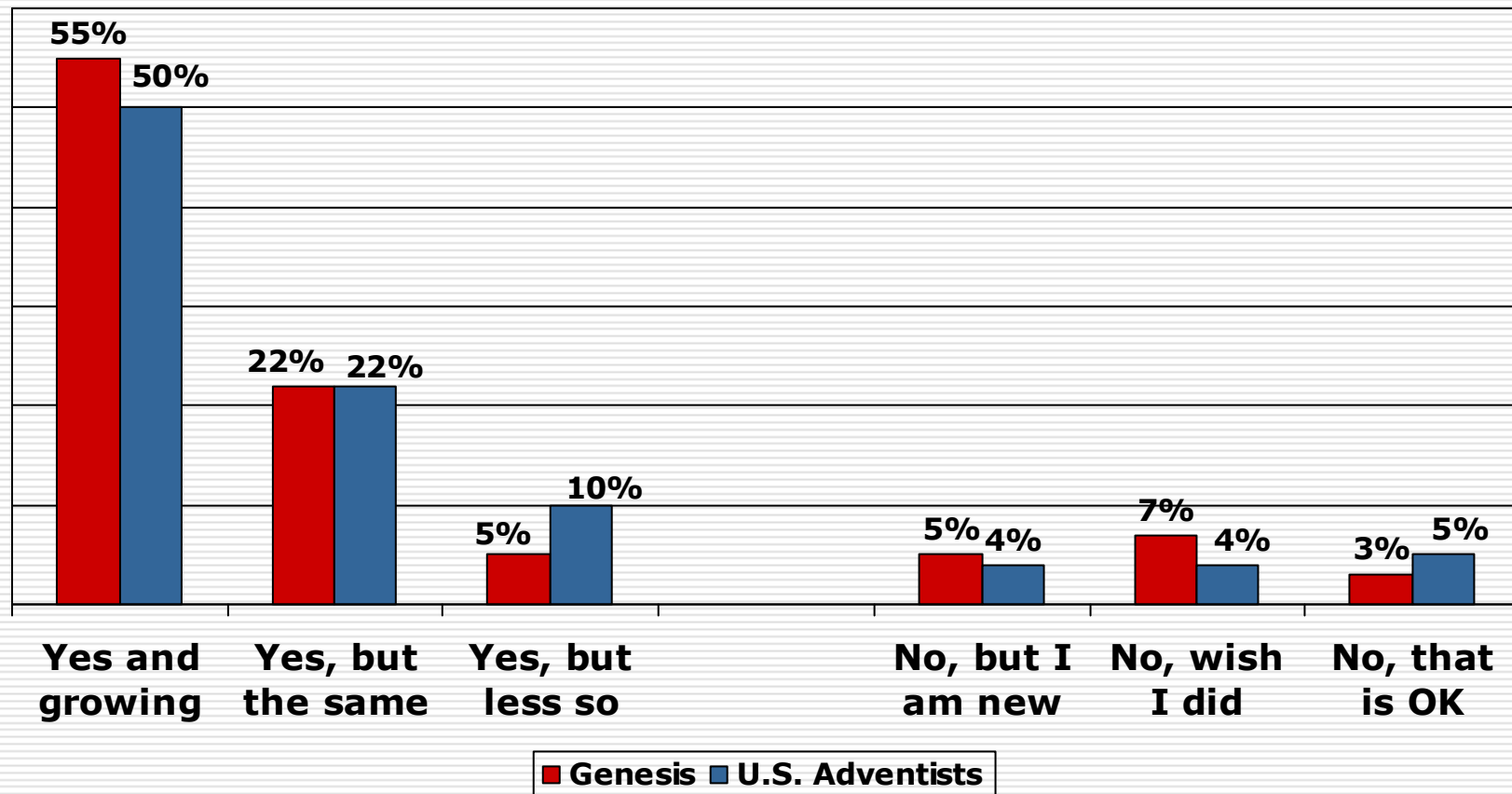
Evaluation of Sermons



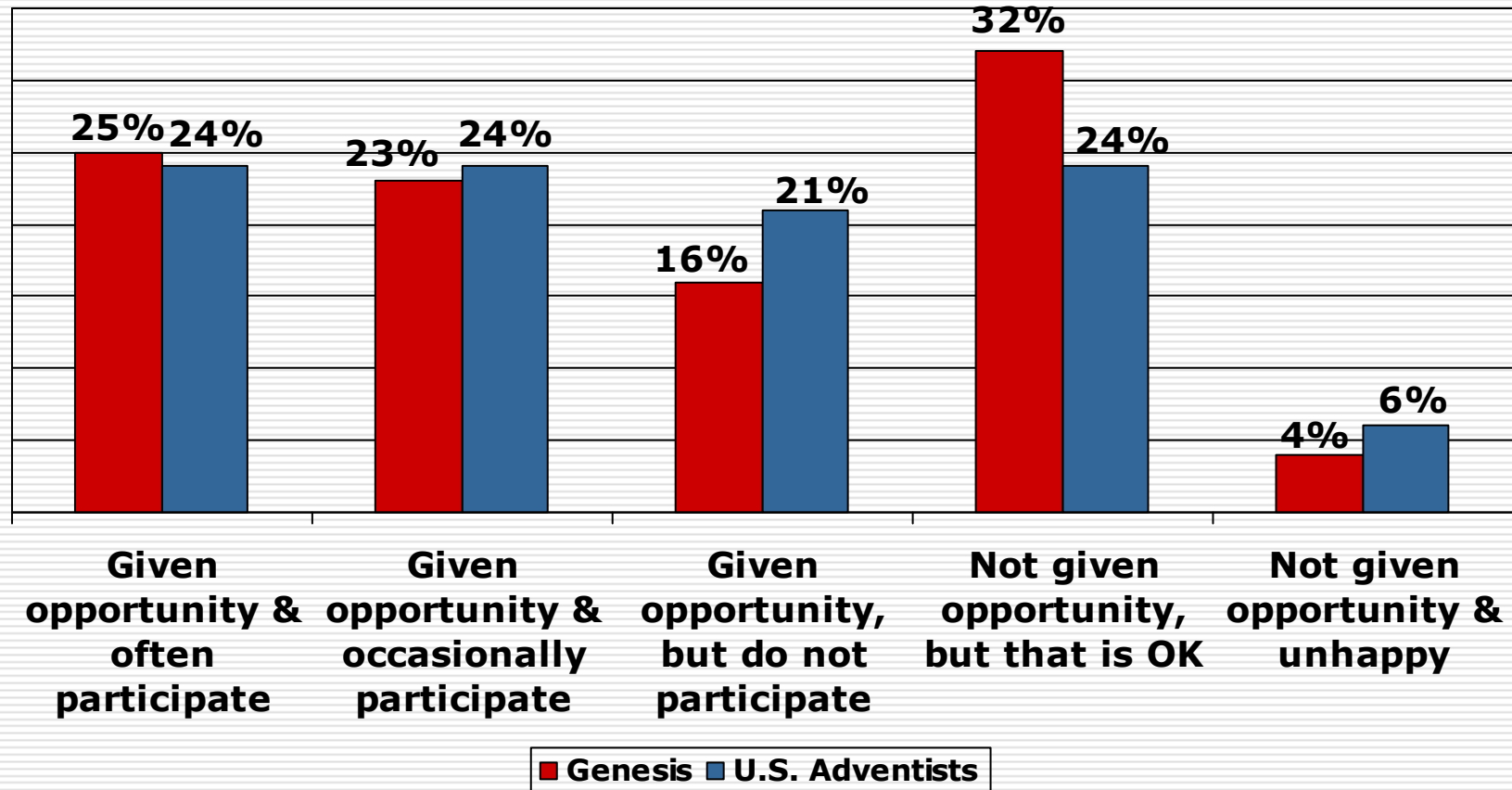
Perceptions of Genesis Church



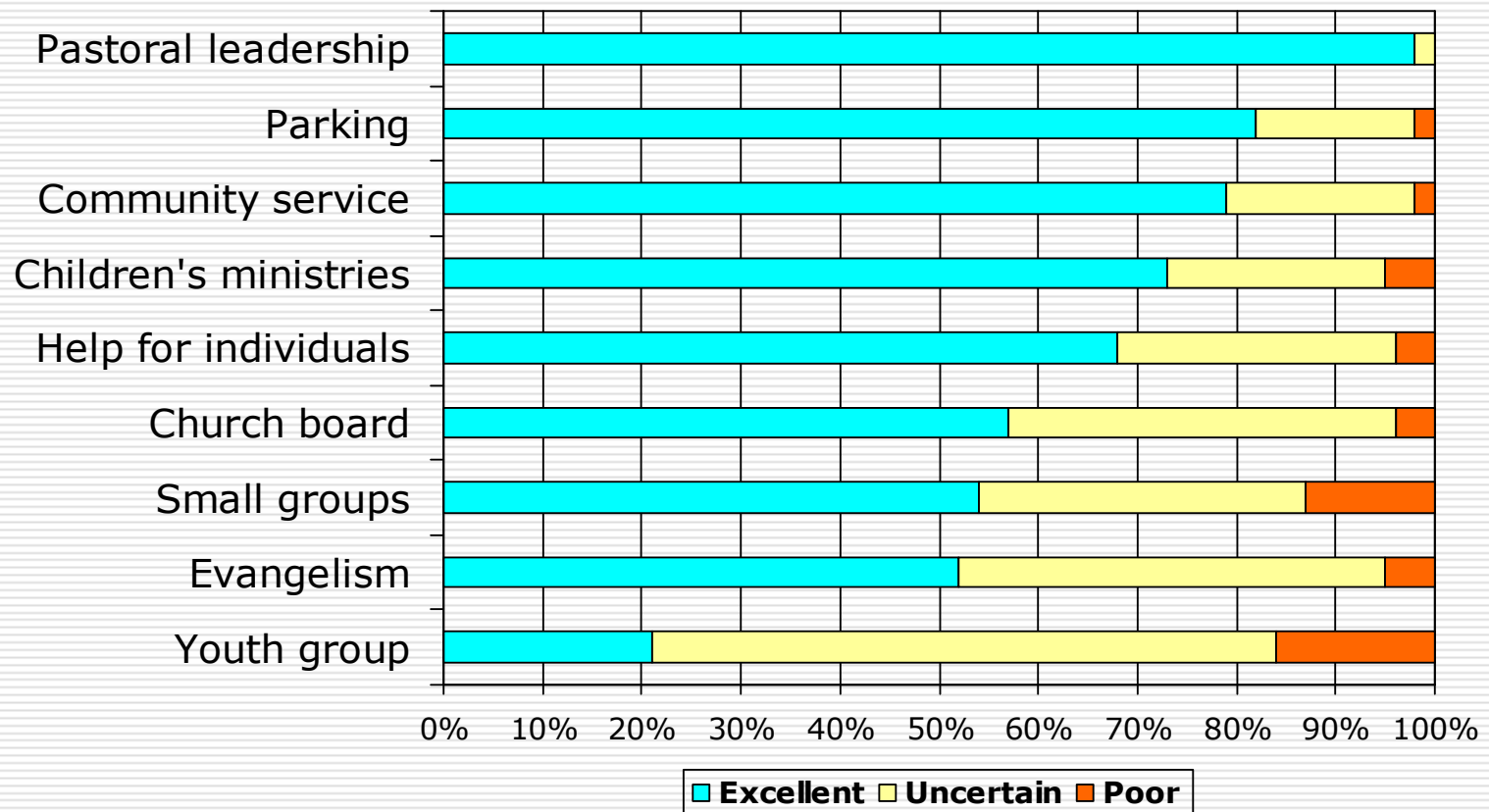
Strong Sense of Belonging



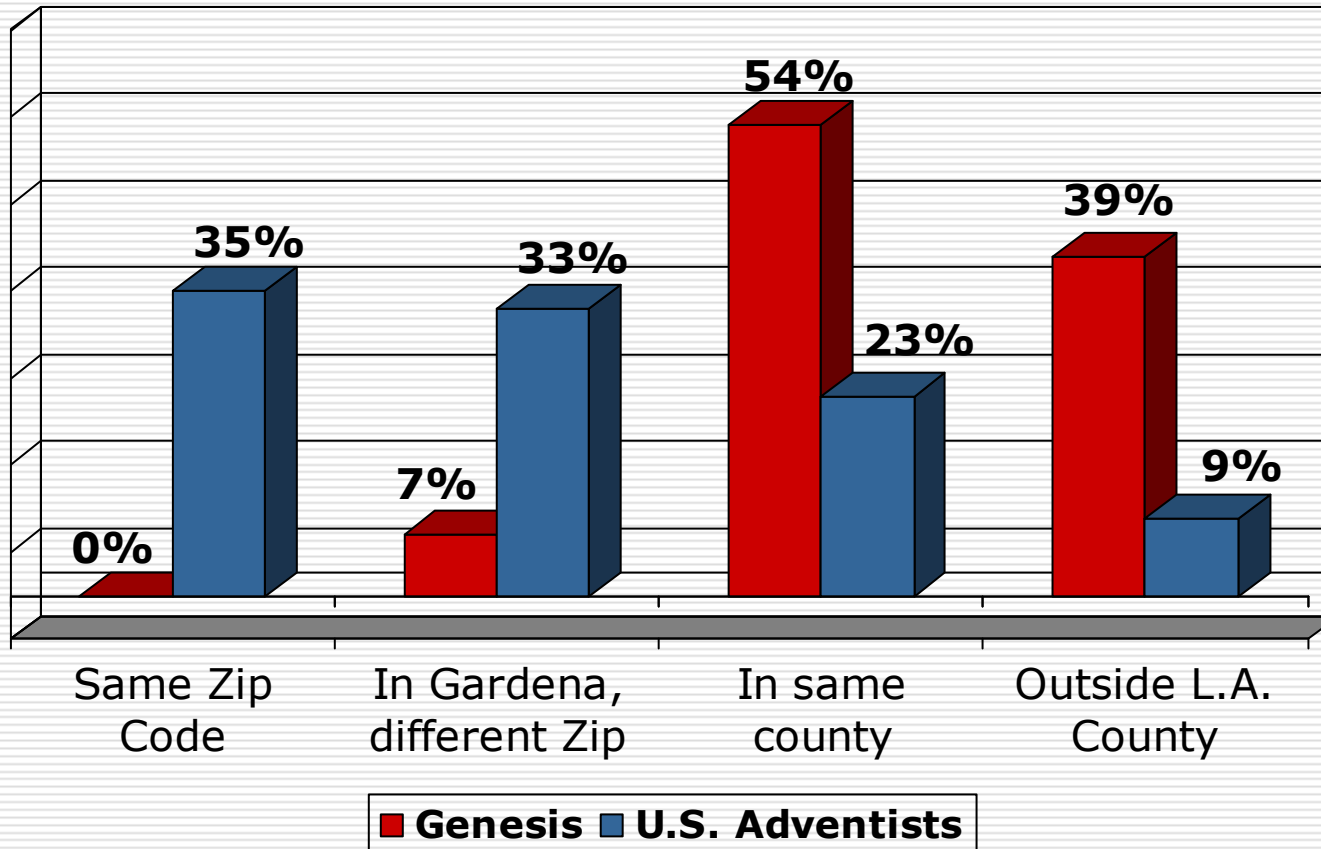
Involvement in making important decisions



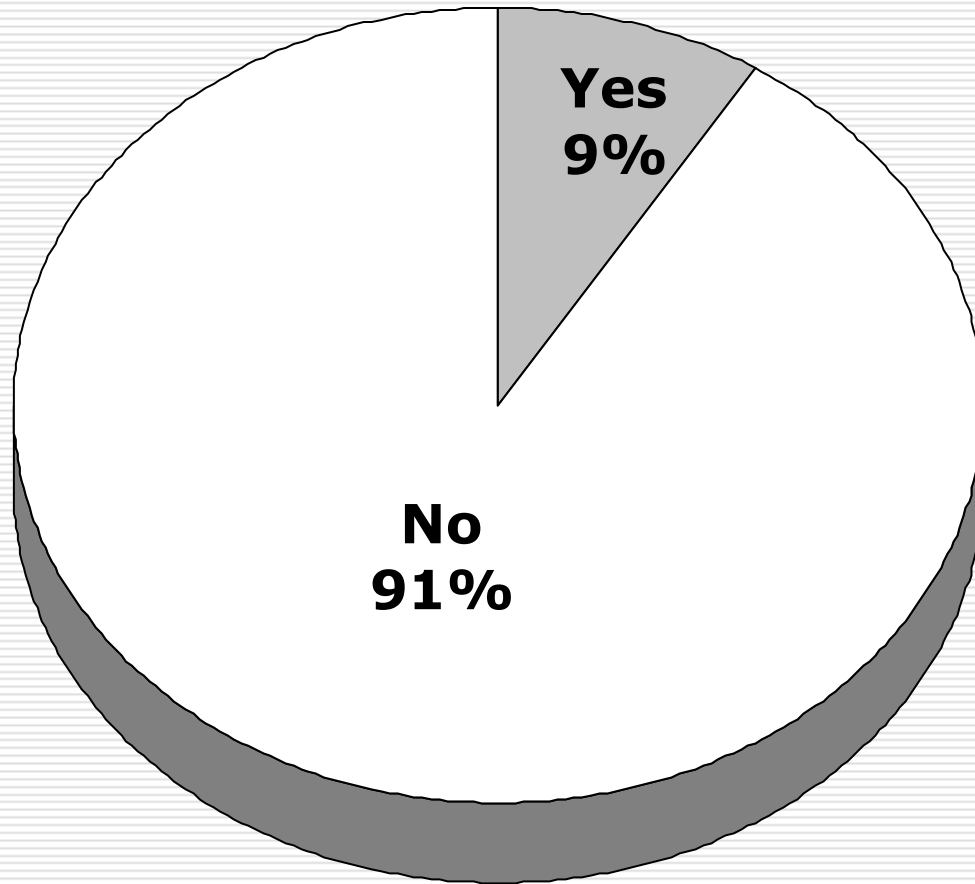
Overall Evaluation



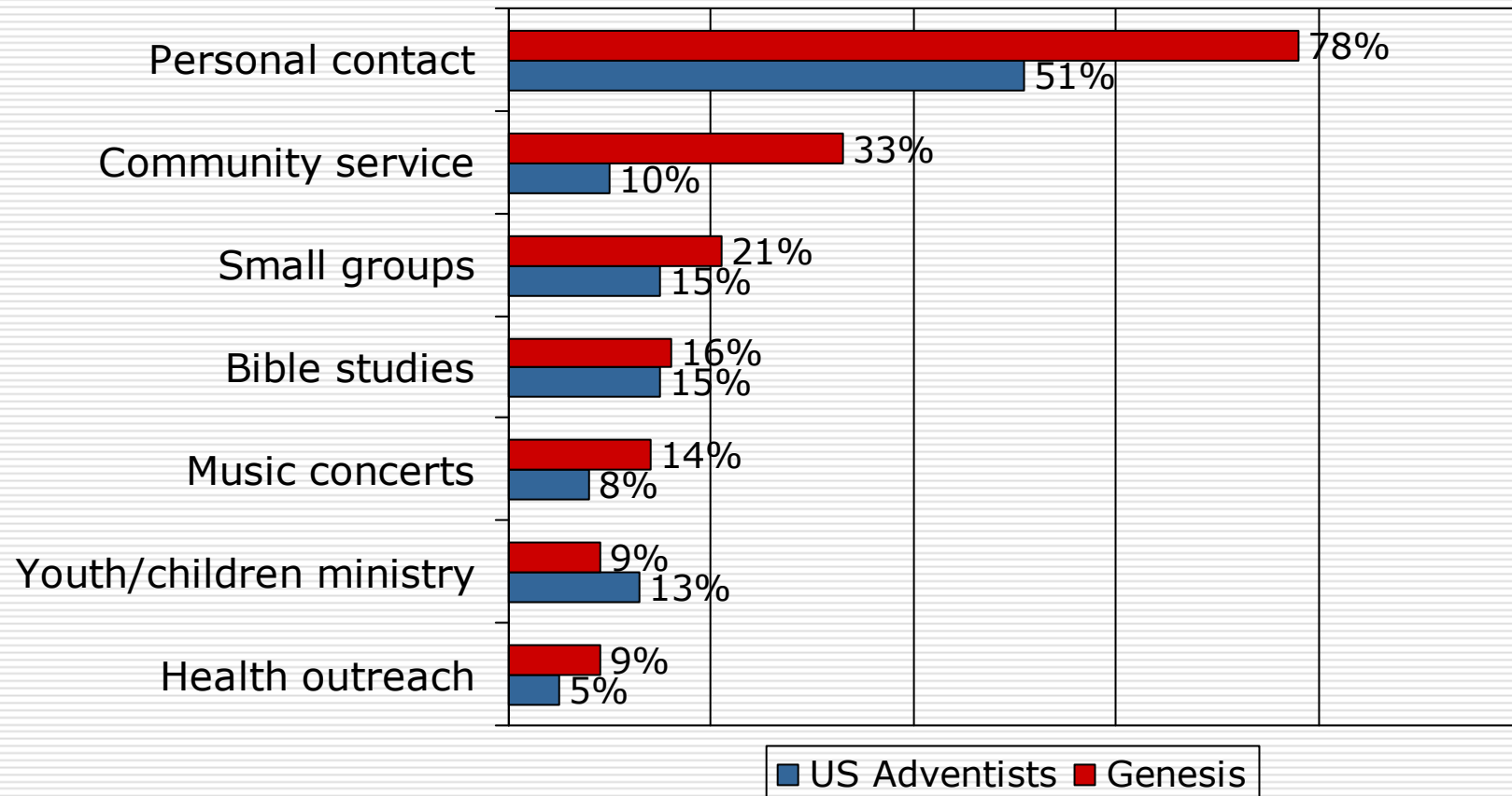
How far is your home from Genesis Church?



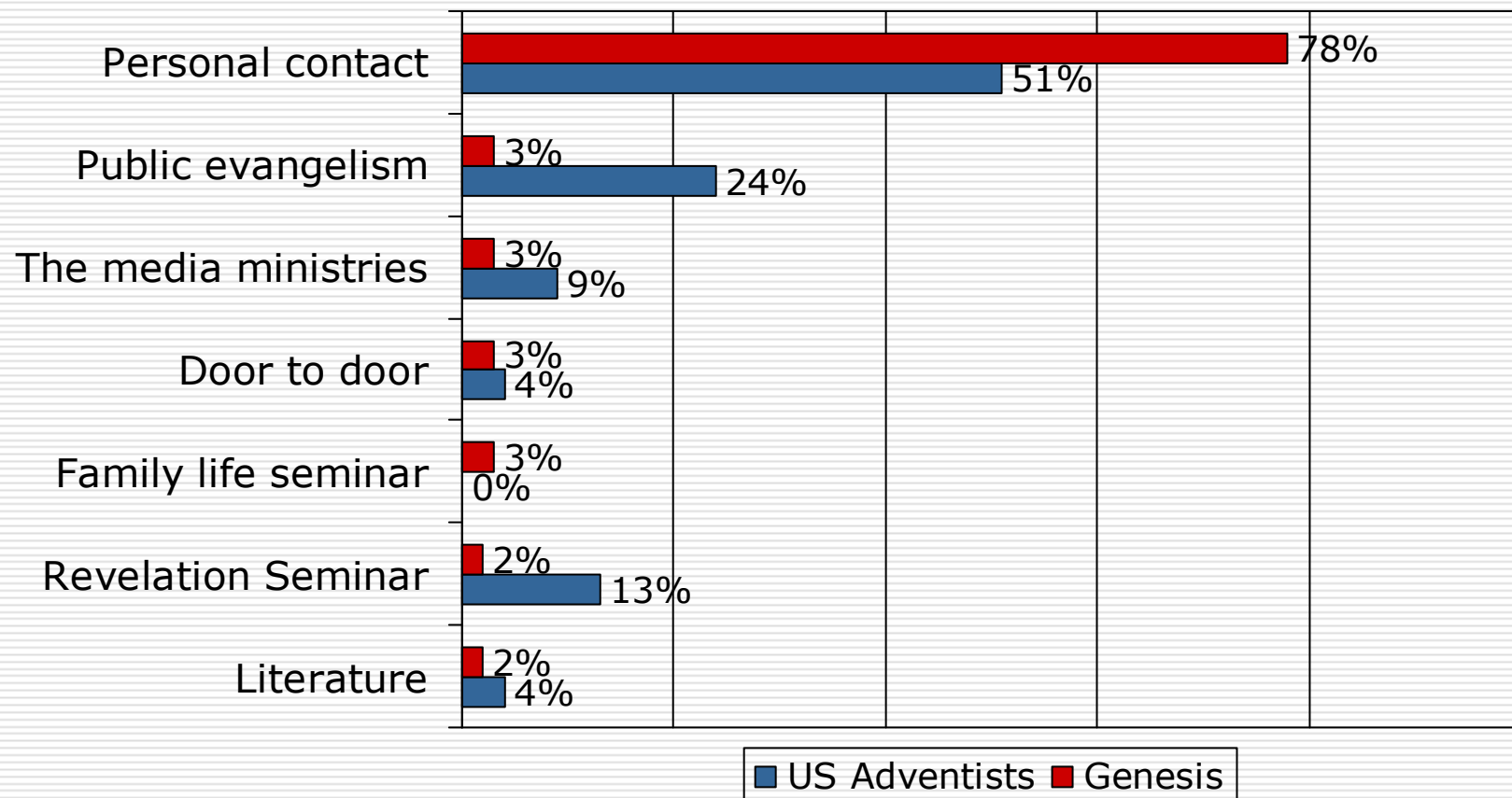
Do you belong to a service club or civic group?



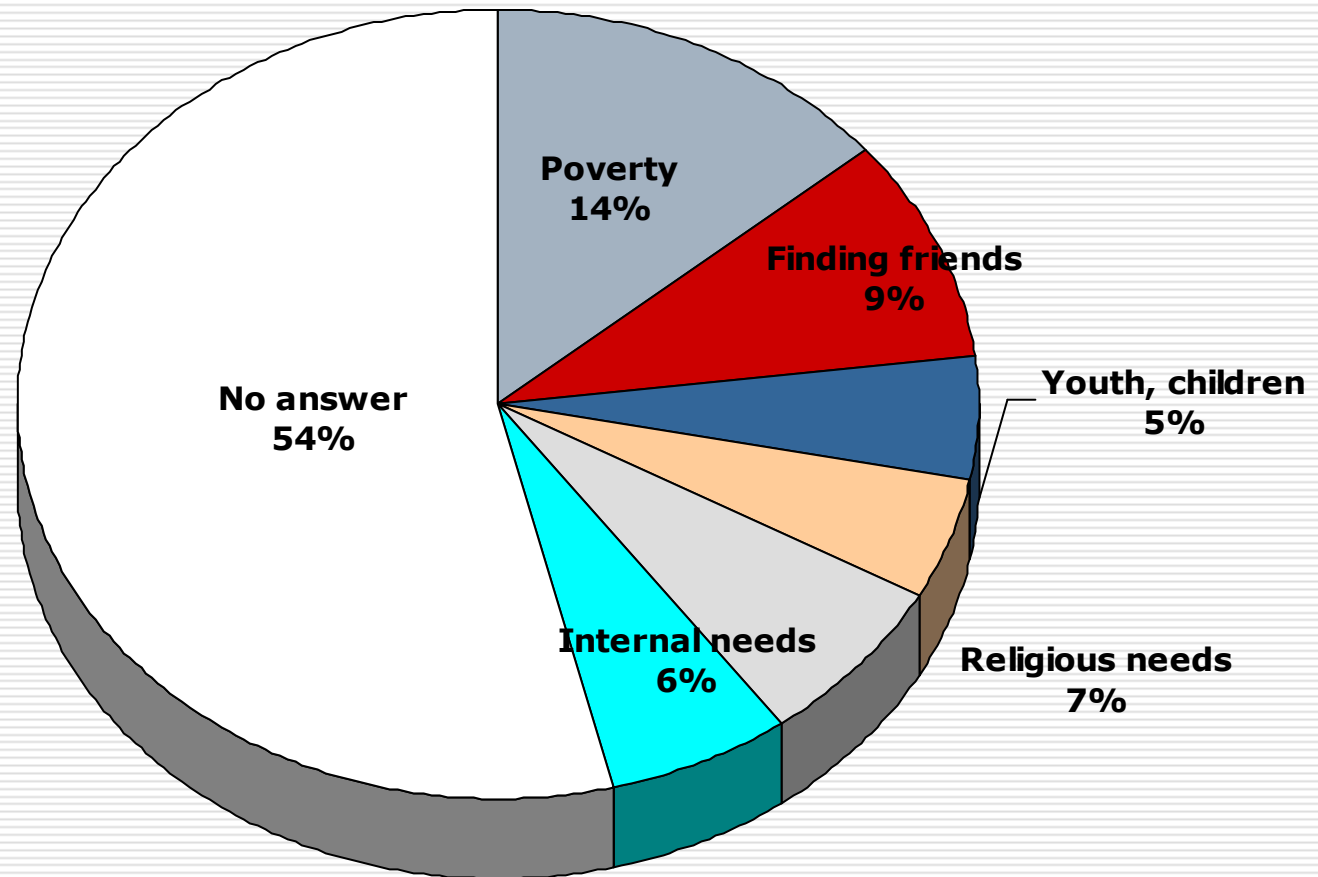
Observed to be Most Effective Methods in Bringing in New Members



Observed to be Most Effective Methods in Bringing in New Members



Community Needs that Genesis Church Should Address



Genesis Members Willing to Help with ...

- 39% Start a homeless shelter
 - 35% After-school tutoring program
 - 33% Drop-in center for youth
 - 33% Job training classes
 - 30% Health education classes
 - 28% Weight reduction group
 - 28% Health screening events
-

Genesis Members Willing to Help with ...

- 26% Start a free medical clinic
 - 26% Stress management seminar
 - 26% Disaster response team
 - 25% Help people find jobs
 - 23% Operate a thrift store
 - 18% Family counseling services
 - 18% 12-step group for addictions
 - 16% Parenting classes
 - 9% Diabetes support group
-

Analysis

- Research has shown that growth in Adventist churches comes from:
 - Community involvement
 - Rich spirituality
 - Intentionality (goals, planning)
 - Positive atmosphere in the congregation
 - Activities for the unchurched on Sabbaths
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Recommendations

- ❑ Appoint a task force to conduct a more in-depth community study, meet with civic leaders and explore possibilities for expanding Genesis' impact on the community.
 - ❑ Provide training for members on Friendship Evangelism (non-formal witnessing). Do this during regular church time.
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More Recommendations

- ❑ Expand the number of small groups and consider providing a community Bible study on Sabbaths, perhaps over lunch and using the *Sharing Scripture* materials.
 - ❑ Have a Vision for Mission workshop to develop a strategic plan for the coming decade.
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To Contact Monte Sahlin

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