



ATTRACTING AND ENGAGING MILLENNIALS IN LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

**A qualitative study of the trends among
young people at Oakridge Adventist Church
and British Columbia Conference**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the trends among young adults at Oakridge Adventist Church in Vancouver, British Columbia and the wider British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in order to develop strategies to increase attendance and engagement of young adults in local church congregations around the world. Collecting 130 responses from a 62-question survey, this study compiles the revealed data to assess the key factors that attract young adults and keep them engaged. The study focuses on eight major areas: involvement of friends and family, church climate, outreach and community involvement, transformative experience, spiritual authenticity, Ecclesial Leadership, Adventist distinctives, and evangelism. This report outlines the thoughts, opinions, and behaviors of the church-engaged — young people who are actively attending and participating in the communal and spiritual life of their local church.



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**GOD WANTS
THE YOUTH TO
BECOME MEN
[AND WOMEN] OF
EARNEST MIND,
TO BE PREPARED
FOR ACTION IN HIS
NOBLE WORK, AND
FITTED TO BEAR
RESPONSIBILITIES.**

*Ellen White, Messages to
Young People, page 21*

”



INTRODUCTION

An unusual phenomenon is occurring at Oakridge Adventist Church (OAC) in Vancouver, Canada. The number of young adults, ages 18-35, is defying the typical trend of rampant decrease. Rather, the number of young adults is increasing as displayed not only by their attendance at weekly worship services, but also their active service in all areas of ministry at OAC. This trend has led denominational leaders to focus attention on OAC as they ask the question, “What attracts young people and keeps them engaged in church life?”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, like all other denominations, is experiencing a hemorrhaging of young adult membership. One study suggests that 50% of all young people begin leaving the church after age 15.¹ Another grimmer study found the percentage to be even higher, as high as 70%.² The research is clear; young people are leaving the church in droves.

These startling statistics have caused church administrators to pause and focus on this alarming

why young people are *leaving* the church. The two questions addressed in this particular study take a different approach. The following data collected seeks to ask why young adults are *attending* church and what keeps them *engaged* in the church community. As denominational administrations seek to empower local churches to reach young people more effectively, is it possible to pinpoint common trends that compel young adult attendance and involvement in their congregations?

is known as a rapidly growing secular society. *The Vancouver Sun* reported, "Only 41 per cent of Metro residents are Christian, compared to a national average of 67 per cent. British Columbia has the fewest Christians on average of any province or territory."³ Furthermore, more than 41% of metro Vancouver residents indicated that they have "no religion."⁴

The sturdy influence of secularization, globalization, and postmodernism is a well-known deterrent to proselytizing individuals. The other unique aspect of Oakridge Adventist Church is the diverse population in attendance. The congregation is representative of the surrounding community with a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational mix.

AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED YIELDING DATA SHOWING WHY YOUNG ADULTS ARE LEAVING THE CHURCH; HOWEVER, NOT MUCH EMPHASIS HAS FOCUSED ON WHAT KEEPS THEM ENGAGED.

trend, allocating more resources and time for further study. The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists asked researchers to study this issue and provide some insight on ways to address the problem. In recent years, the majority of research conducted has been focused on

This study focuses on Oakridge Adventist Church and provides a unique glimpse at Canadian young people. The church is located in the heart of one of the largest metropolitan centers in the nation. The urban environment of Vancouver, populated by a majority of foreign-born residents,

COMPARING A LARGER SAMPLE GROUP

While this study focuses on trends among young people at OAC, the British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (BC Conference) allowed the survey to be extended throughout the vast territory of British Columbia and

¹ The survey by the Barna Group highlighted that one out of every five Christians (59%) disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. This landmark survey was published in a book by David Kinnaman, President of Barna Group, entitled *You Lost Me: Why Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Faith* (Baker Books, 2011). See also Roger Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church* (Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1999).

² USA Today says seven in 10 Protestants ages 18 to 30 — who went to church regularly in high school said they quit attending by age 23, this is according to LifeWay Research. See [usatoday.com](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-08-06-church-dropouts_n.htm) March 6, 2007. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-08-06-church-dropouts_n.htm

³ "B.C. breaks records when it comes to religion and the lack thereof." Douglas Todd. May 8, 2013. http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2013/05/08/b-c-breaks-records-when-it-comes-to-religion-and-the-lack-thereof/?__federated=1

⁴ This study follows the Canadian Press standards for spelling and grammar.

the Yukon. The results of this study will feature the OAC data against the comparative and contrastive backdrop of the data gathered from the wider BC Conference survey. While the OAC results represent one particular church culture in a micro setting, the BC Conference results will serve to provide a broader view.

THE YOUNG ADULTS OF OAC

Young adults are attending Oakridge Adventist Church in large numbers. Many of these young people are serving in all areas of ministry; they are contributing to

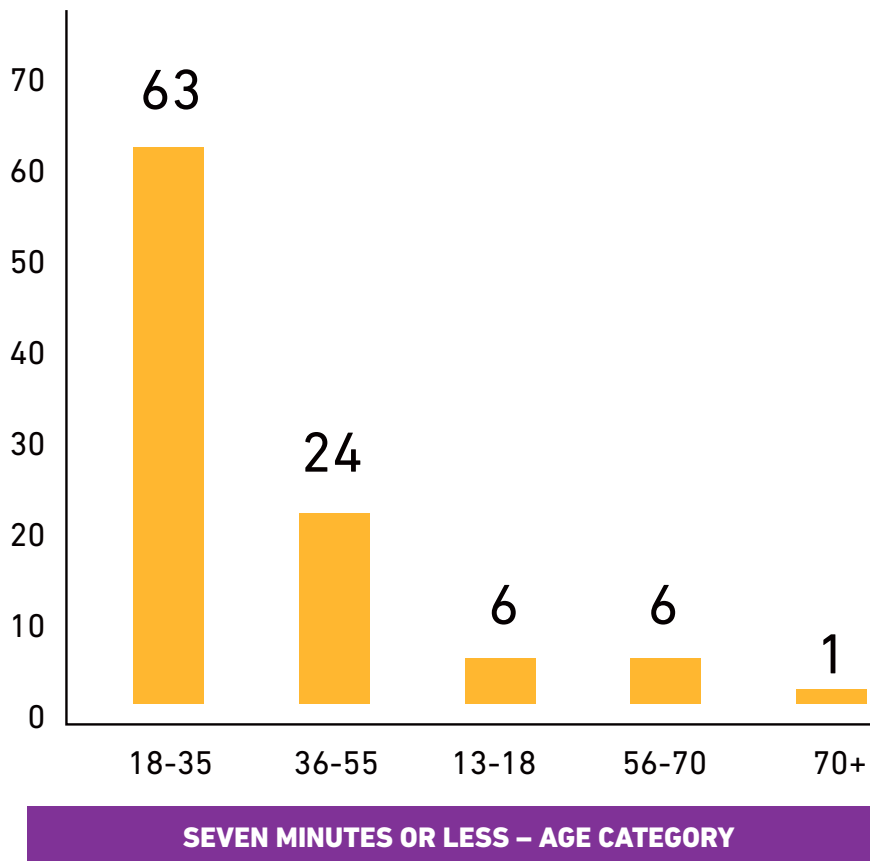
the life of the church as Sabbath School teachers, soundboard engineers, deacons, hospitality team leaders, etc. These OAC young adults are entrusted with great influence, representing approximately 50% of the church board.

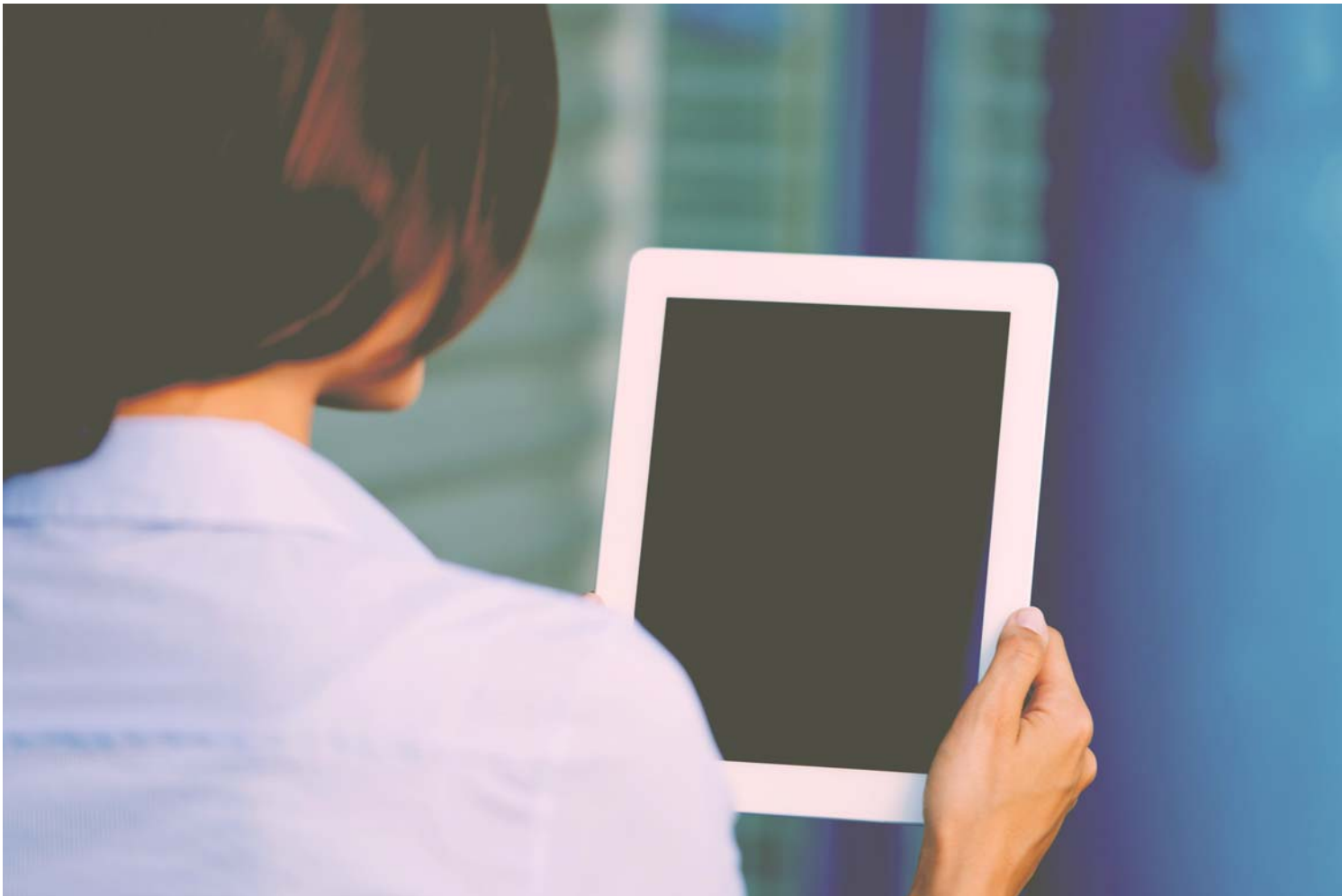
WHO ARE THE VISITORS?

OAC has gained a reputation as a safe haven for young people who are on a spiritual journey. As a result, the majority of the visitors attending on Sabbath are young adults. Each week, visitors are invited to the front two pews to receive a free gift bag during

a post-service element called “7 minutes or Less.”⁵ In less than seven minutes, a trained hospitality team member welcomes those who come forward and asks them to fill out a brief survey card in exchange for a gift bag.

The survey results provide church leaders with crucial information about the visitor’s experience along with key demographic information. This year (2014), the 7 Minutes or Less survey results revealed 63% of all visitors were between the ages of 18-35. A majority (56%) of the visitors were unmarried. We found that 43% of visitors came





to church with a friend or family member, and 42% found the church through an Internet search.⁶ In addition, 15% of the respondents claim to have no Seventh-day Adventist background, while 13% say they have no religious background whatsoever.

With the overwhelming majority of visitors being young adults, the congregation has intentionally positioned itself to reach this generation known as the millennials.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary tool for gathering the data in this study is a 62-question survey administered

through mobile devices (such as smartphones, laptop computers, and tablets) via polldaddy.com. OAC young adults were invited to participate in the survey after the worship service for two consecutive weeks. The same survey was administered at the BC Conference camp meeting in Hope, British Columbia during the week of July 26-August 2, 2014. The two pools were kept separate for contrastive analysis purposes. The results of both pools were then analyzed through a series of filters through polldaddy.com to investigate the relationship between different questions and the answers they provoked.

In addition to the survey results, several interviews were conducted privately with young adults in a confidential environment for the purpose of teasing out some of the trends in the survey. These young adults were chosen for interviews based on their church involvement, demographic information, and representative nature.

⁵ See Appendix A for a sample 7 minutes or Less information card.

⁶ OAC has a strong web presence through social media and is using strategic methods to maximize its ranking in Internet search engines. In 2014, the church changed its online brand presence to ChurchInVancouver.ca.



WHAT THE STUDY ▲ REVEALED

What are the key factors that attract young adults and keep them engaged? The respondents were asked 62 questions that reflected eight broad areas of church life. This report outlines the thoughts, opinions, and behaviours of the church-engaged (i.e. young people who are actively attending and participating in the communal and spiritual life of their local church).

CATEGORIES:

Beyond Individualism: Is there a greater likelihood that the church-engaged are attending church because their parents or friends are involved in church?

Church Climate: Is an accepting church more likely to attract young people?

Outreach and Community Involvement: Are young adults attracted to churches with an outward focus on the community?

Transformative Change: Do the church-engaged feel the church influences how their worldview is shaped?

Spiritual Authenticity: Do church-engaged young adults share a stronger commitment towards spirituality, such as prayer, daily bible reading, and personal devotions?

Ecclesial Leadership: What role do the church leaders, especially the pastor, play in creating an atmosphere of engagement?

Adventist Distinctives: Do the church-engaged have a deeper commitment to the Adventist Church and its distinctive message?

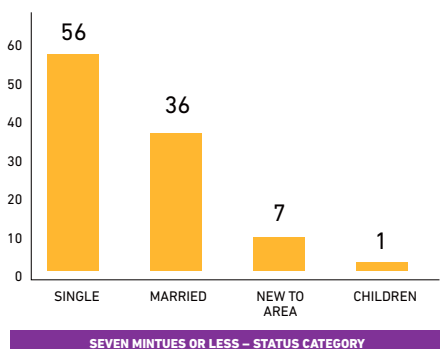
Evangelism: Are the church-engaged concerned for their unchurched friends and family members?

BEYOND INDIVIDUALISM

QUESTION: HOW DO RELATIONSHIPS MOTIVATE YOUNG ADULTS TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR LOCAL CHURCH?

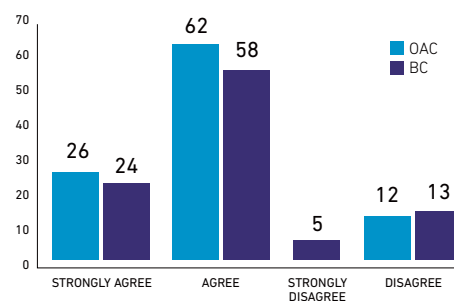
SURVEY QUESTIONS: 02, 03, 22, 23, 33

Family connections are important to the makeup of a congregation. Do church-engaged young adults attend church because a family member attends with them? In other words, are they active due to family influence? When asked whom they attend church with, 48%



of respondents said they attend with a parent, sibling, or family member (54% BC young adults). An additional 9% (13% BC young adults) said they attended church with a spouse or significant other; 28% stated they attend church with a friend (22% BC young adults), whereas only 15% said they attend church alone (11% BC young adults). Putting all that together, 85% of respondents (89% BC young adults) reported they attend church with somebody they were in a relationship with.⁷

Relationships are a critical element to church attendance for millennials. This drive for community can be seen in the shifting structures of workplaces. Unlike other generations who are accustomed to working alone in private cubicles, millennials thrive when working in teams.⁸ The correlation between personal relationships and church engagement is firmly intertwined. Today's young adults do not compartmentalize their lives to the extent seen in previous generations.



13 – THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE LIKE ME AT CHURCH

Their approach to life is holistic — religion, politics, and career all intersect. They are, therefore, less likely to be secretive about their faith, and they will more than likely choose to live out their spirituality within a community. This idea is also supported by the question of self-identification and relatability. When given the statement, “There are other people like me in church,” 88% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (82% BC young adults).⁹ Young adults are attracted

⁷ Question #3

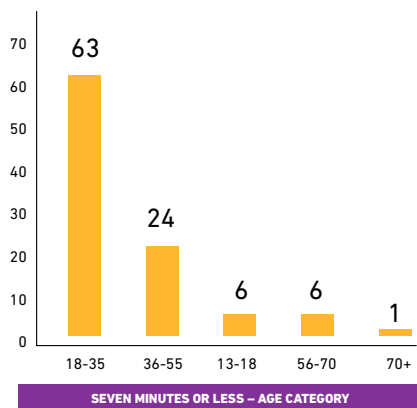
⁸ See “Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials’ Organizational Relationships and Performance” by Karen K. Myers and Kamyab Sadaghiani. March 5, 2010, published online at Springerlink.com.

⁹ Question #13

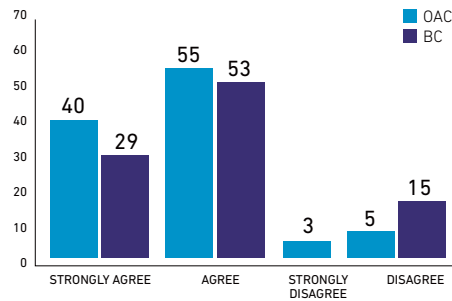
to people who are similar in age and life stage, people who they feel can understand and relate to them.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF THE PARENT

Our data confirms that a significant relational factor influencing the attendance and engagement of young adults relates to a consistent religious parental upbringing. The importance of the witness of a Christian parent cannot be overstated. In a major study called the National Study of Youth and Religion, one of the key revelations was “the young person’s parents practiced the faith in the home and in daily life, not just in public or church settings.”¹⁰



When asked if, “One or both of your parents attends a church” an overwhelming 81% of the respondents (92% BC young adults) said yes.¹¹ The spiritual influence



17- MY CHURCH IS HOSPITABLE TO VISITORS

and consistency of a Christian parent is a critical element to the future success of their child’s activity level in church.

CHURCH CLIMATE

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF AN ACCEPTING CHURCH THAT WELCOMES THE CHURCH-ENGAGED?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 15, 16, 17, 26, 48

One of the most important indicators of engagement relates to how young people *feel* towards their church. Most Seventh-day Adventist young people remain committed to denominational doctrines. Rarely do they break ties with the church over theology; their motives almost always have to do with church climate. When asked, “I am proud of my church,”

an overwhelming 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (85% BC young adults).¹² When asked if “My church cares about its members,” 95% agreed or strongly agreed (87% BC young adults).¹³ Again, the vast majority (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that, “My church is hospitable to visitors (82% BC young adults).¹⁴

Our study reveals that the church-engaged share positive feelings towards their church. Additionally, it reveals that the local church is a safe place to bring their unchurched friends. When asked, “I look forward to attending worship services at my local church, 93% agreed (80% BC young adults).¹⁵ These statistics are surprisingly positive compared to another study conducted by LifeWay.¹⁶ In a survey of Protestants ages 18-30, only 51% of respondents saw church members as “caring.” Other positive descriptors, such as “welcoming” (48%) or “authentic” (42%), fared just as poorly.¹⁷

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ARE YOUNG ADULTS ATTRACTED TO CHURCHES WITH A STRONG IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 24, 25, 42, 44, 52

Millennials have a strong commitment to social responsibility, championing social justice within the church. Rabbi Joshua Stanton

¹⁰ Andrea Palpant Dille, “Trying to attract the young: church should change carefully and wisely.” FaithandLeadership.com July 16, 2013.

¹¹ Question 2

¹² Question #15

¹³ Question #16

¹⁴ Question #17

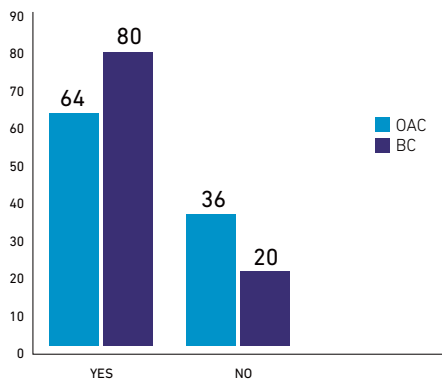
¹⁵ Question #26

¹⁶ See <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Lifeway-Research-finds-reasons-18-to-22-year-olds-drop-out-of-church>

¹⁷ The LifeWay study surveyed 1,023 Protestants ages 18-30 who said they attended church at least twice a month for at least one year during high school. See Young adults aren’t sticking around with church. USA Today.com August 2007.

¹⁸ Joshua Stanton, “Social Justice in the Millennial Generation.” The Huffington Post. February 17, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joshua-stanton/social-justice-in-the-mil_b_2708224.html

¹⁹ Question #24



44 - I HAVE FOUND A CAUSE OR ISSUE AT CHURCH THAT MOTIVATES ME

explains the millennial outlook in a *Huffington Post* article. He writes, "Instilled with a dedication to social justice, perhaps in good measure by our parents, we seek to collaborate when possible to resolve social problems."¹⁸ The church-engaged at Oakridge Adventist Church resonate with this strong attraction to community engagement. They believe the church should reach outward by serving the needs of the community.

Oakridge Adventist Church has a strong reputation for connecting with the surrounding neighbourhood and partnering with community organizations. Over the years, the congregation has led numerous

events such as block parties, blood drives, food drives, community garden projects, and many other such initiatives. When given the statement, "My church serves the community," 95% agreed or strongly agreed, (85% BC young adults.)¹⁹ When asked if, "my church is making an impact in the neighborhood/ community," 91% agreed or strongly agreed (74% BC young adults).²⁰

Although young adults are attracted to the idea of community outreach, this does not necessarily correlate to their engagement in service projects. Only 55% said yes to the statement "I've served the poor through my church" (93% BC young adults).²¹ When survey participants were asked if they have "found a cause or issue at church that motivates [them]," 64% of the respondents said yes (80% BC young adults).²² A report by *The Journal of Higher Education* compared millennials to Gen Xers and Boomers, finding that millennials have a lower commitment to civic interests.²³ Even engagement in community service, where millennial

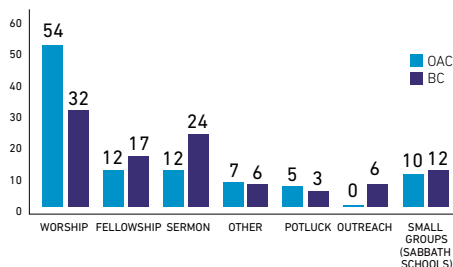
involvement rose slightly, was not the result of genuine altruism. Rather, the study found millennials were required to earn community service hours to fulfill academic requirements. A surprising response was discovered in our study when respondents were asked to choose their favourite part of church. Out of the six options listed, zero respondents chose "outreach" (6% BC Young Adults).²⁴

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

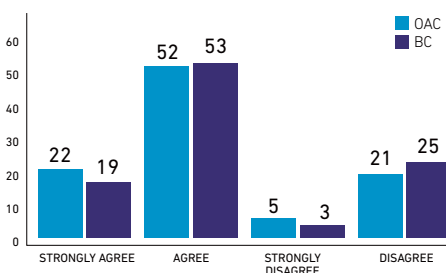
DO THE CHURCH-ENGAGED FEEL THE CHURCH INFLUENCES THEIR WORLDVIEW?

SURVEY QUESTION 29, 36, 37, 39, 41

Is the church making a real, transformative change in the lives of its members? Recent studies have revealed few differences between the values and lifestyles of Christians and non-Christians. American theologian and activist Ronald Sider reports that in all instances — from divorce, sexual promiscuity, materialism, and physical abuse — Christians are either no different from non-Christians or, in some cases, even worse off.²⁵ Does church life, worship, and spiritual discipline shape the worldview of its young



23 - MY FAVOURITE PART OF CHURCH IS...



41 - THROUGH CHURCH, I'VE LEARNED HOW THE BIBLE APPLIES TO MY FIELD OR CAREER INTERESTS

²⁰ Question #25

²¹ Question #42

²² Question #44

²³ Chau, Joanna. "Millennial's Are More 'Generation Me' Than 'Generation We,' Study Finds." *The Journal of Higher Education*, March 15, 2012. See also Jean

M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled--and More Miserable Than Ever Before*. Atria Books, 2007.

²⁴ Question #23

²⁵ Sider, Ronald. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* Baker Books, 2005.

people, thereby making a positive impact in society?

We asked a series of questions in the survey relating to transformative change. The results were telling. The statement, "At church, I learn about how Christians can positively contribute to society," evoked agreement or strong agreement from 95% of respondents (85% BC young adults).²⁶ When asked, "I better understand my purpose in life because of church," 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (82% BC young adults).²⁷ The survey revealed 74% (72% BC young adults) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Through church, I've learned how the Bible applies to my field or career interests."²⁸

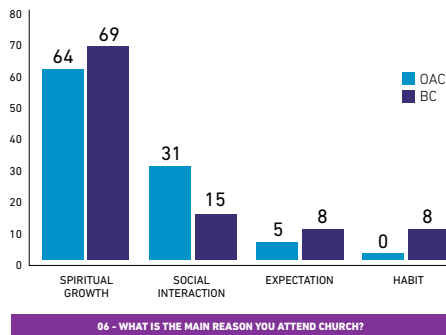
According to the 2011 Barna survey on American Christianity, one of the reasons young adults leave the church is their perception of Christianity as shallow, lacking a deeper connection to their everyday life. They struggle with a lack of relevance and conviction as they seek to combine their spiritual quest with the reality of day-to-day living. A third of the respondents said, "Church is boring" (31%). A quarter said, "Faith is not relevant to my career or interests" (24%) and "The Bible is not taught clearly or often enough" (23%).²⁹

SPIRITUAL AUTHENTICITY

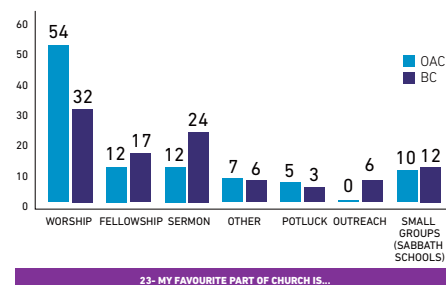
DO CHURCH-ENGAGED YOUNG ADULTS SHARE A STRONGER

COMMITMENT TOWARDS SPIRITUAL PRACTICES SUCH AS PRAYER, DAILY BIBLE READING, AND PERSONAL DEVOTIONS?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 6, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30, 32, 38,



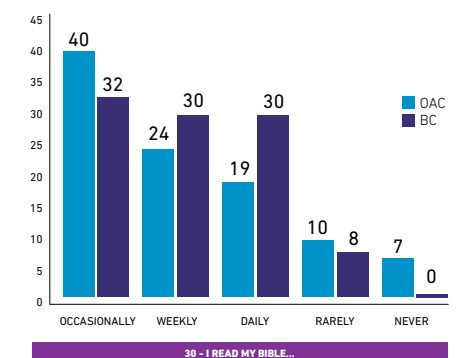
It can be easy to assume that church-engaged young people have a stronger spiritual commitment. Unlike their formerly church-dropped friends who may have dropped out of the religious community, these church-engaged have remained within the walls of a spiritual congregation. While it might be presumed they would have a more intense spirituality, our findings call this assumption into question. We asked numerous questions to determine the spiritual commitment and maturity of the church-engaged. When asked, "What is the main reason you continue to attend



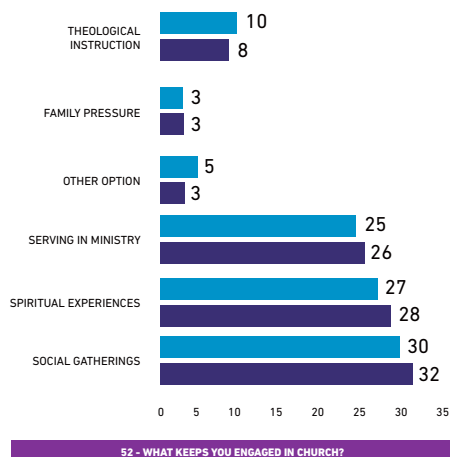
church?" 64% responded with the answer "spiritual growth" (69% BC young adults).³⁰ The second highest response, "social interaction," was given by 31% (15% BC young adults). A surprising insight was that 8% of British Columbia young adults indicated "habit" as the main reason for regular church attendance (compared to 0% of OAC young adults).

When asked what their favourite part of church is, the church-engaged gave some revealing explanations: 54% of respondents said "worship," (32% BC young adults), whereas "fellowship" and "sermon" were the next highest responses each with 12% of respondents (17% and 24% BC young adults, respectively).³¹

The practices of the Christian tradition communicate important theology to believers and embed vital attributes of discipleship. The statement, "The Lord's Supper (communion) is an important part of my spiritual life," incited agreement or strong agreement among 64% of respondents (77% BC young adults).³² In addition, when faced with the assertion, "Connecting with historical Christian traditions through my



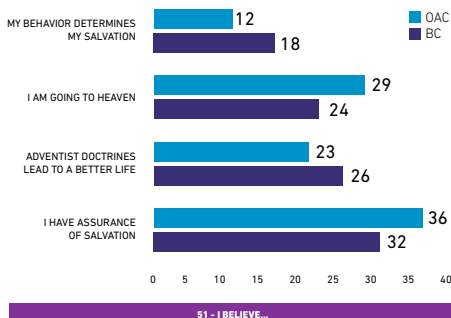
IN ORDER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY ENGAGED, THEY MUST FIRST HAVE A GENUINE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE WITH GOD.



local church is important to me,” 60% agreed or strongly agreed, (77% BC Young Adults).³³ The failure to follow some of the key traditions of the historical church has resulted in the loss of some fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Calvin College professor James K.A. Smith has long argued that the mystery of religion can be found in the liturgy and traditions. “Smith suggests that without participation in a rich liturgy, Christian education only stuffs minds full of unapplied doctrinal points.”³⁴ Perhaps in an effort to contemporize liturgy and worship, the church — on occasion — has eradicated

important customs and traditions, thereby erasing the memory and eroding the value of theological understandings that the tradition was meant to evoke.

We examined the basic elements of personal worship that constitute Christian discipleship such as prayer and bible study. When respondents read the statement, “My church has taught me how to pray well,” 62% agreed or strongly agreed (67% BC young adults).³⁵ When asked how often they read the Bible, the most common answer was “occasionally” with 40% of respondents (whereas the most common answer among BC young adults was “weekly” with 30% of respondents).³⁶ When asked how often they pray, 81% said “daily” (76% BC young adults).³⁷



When asked, “What keeps you engaged in church?” social interaction outranked spiritual experiences: 32% of the respondents chose “social gatherings” (30% BC young adults) compared to 28% who chose “spiritual experience” (27% BC young adults). Only 8% of OAC church-engaged asserted theological instruction to be an indicator (10% BC young adults).³⁸

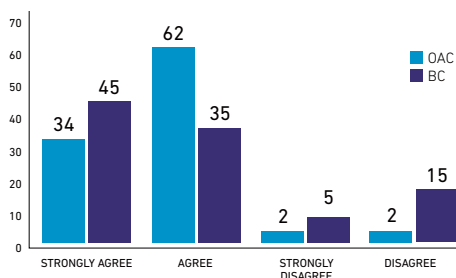
One of the most important factors of transformational growth is a healthy understanding of God’s transformative grace. Seventh-day Adventist youth have historically had a poor grace orientation. The ValueGenesis and ValueGenesis II studies have consistently addressed this challenge. In the ValueGenesis II study, when faced with the assertion, “There is nothing I can do to earn salvation,” 58% of high school, and 32% of grade 6-8 “strongly agreed” with the statement.³⁹ When we asked similar questions related to a person’s understanding of God’s grace, the results were surprising. The statement, “I have assurance of my salvation,” was only affirmed by 32% of church-engaged respondents (36% BC young adults).⁴⁰ The assertion, “I am going to heaven,” was only affirmed by 24% (29% BC Young Adults).

²⁶ Question #36
²⁷ Question #37
²⁸ Question #41
²⁹ Peter Enns. “Barna Survey on Young Adults Leaving the Church.” Patheos.com. December, 23, 2011. Also see, <https://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church>.
³⁰ Question #6
³¹ Question #23

³² Question #27
³³ Question #28
³⁴ Kirsten Guidero. “We Need More Liturgy.” *Christianity Today*. Web version. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/august-web-only/we-need-more-than-liturgy.html>. See also, James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Cultural Liturgies), Baker Academic, 2009.

³⁵ Question #29
³⁶ Question #30
³⁷ Question #32
³⁸ Question #52
³⁹ The study’s authors surmised that as students grow older with more biblical instruction and maturity, they understood grace better.
⁴⁰ Question #51

In order for young people to stay engaged, they must first have a genuine conversion experience with God. Their faith experience cannot hang on the coattails of their parents or the strong programming of their local church. Author Andrea Dilley aptly says, “No program, camp, mission trip, youth group, worship style, musical trend, Sunday school, church reform, updated pastoral style, modernization, or even catechetical class will make a statistically significant difference.”⁴¹ Jason K. Allen, President of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, suggests that one of the reasons young adults leave the church is because of their lack of spiritual commitment. He comments, “Many young adults leave the church because they were never truly converted to Christ in the first place.”⁴² In a popular CNN opinion blog, Rachel Held Evans summarizes her generation’s desire for the Gospel: “We’re not leaving the church because we don’t find the cool factor there, we’re leaving the church because we don’t find Jesus there.”⁴³ Young people must experience God’s abundant grace for themselves; the church must position itself as a catalyst for such experience and not as a hindrance.



18 - I TRUST THE LEADERSHIP OF MY PASTOR(S)

ECCLESIAL LEADERSHIP

WHAT ROLE DOES THE LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY THE PASTOR, PLAY IN CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF ENGAGEMENT?

SURVEY QUESTIONS 12, 18, 19, 23

There are numerous factors at play in whether or not millennials stay engaged in the church. How much influence does the local church

leadership have in attracting and retaining young people to local congregations?

When prompted with the statement, “I believe in the direction my local church is headed,” an overwhelming 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (80% BC young adults).⁴³ The vast majority, 96% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they trust the leadership of their pastor (80% BC young adults).⁴⁴ When asked if they believe the leadership of their church is authentic, 93% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (90% BC young adults).⁴⁵

The participation of lay leadership alongside the pastor is an important aspect to church growth and health. The Church of England was interested in learning why 18% of their churches grew in the decade up to 2010. A study conducted between 2011 and 2013 sought to discern any features that gave an advantage in church growth. One of these factors was the strength of the lay leadership. According to the study, “Active involvement of lay members throughout the congregation’s ministry was a hallmark of growing churches.”⁴⁶ The sustainability of

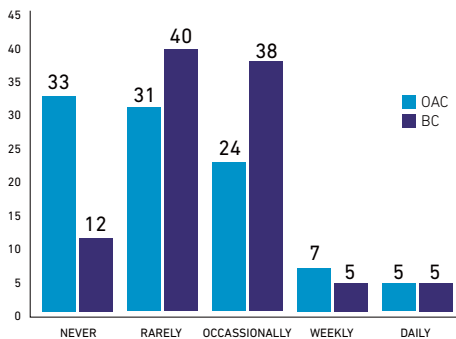
ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT ALL CHURCH-ENGAGED YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE ATTENDING A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CONGREGATION WOULD SELF-IDENTIFY WITH TRADITIONAL ADVENTIST BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS.

church health is dependent on the lay leadership of the church, who remain long after the church pastor moves on.

ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES

DO THE CHURCH-ENGAGED HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE ADVENTIST DENOMINATION AND ITS DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 01, 27, 31, 47



31 - I READ THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE...

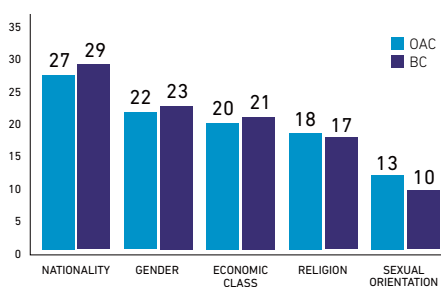
One would assume that all church-engaged young adults who are attending a Seventh-day Adventist congregation would self-identify with traditional Adventist beliefs and teachings. Yet, our survey results revealed the contrary. While 84% of the respondents indicated their religious background was Seventh-day Adventist (100% BC young adults),⁴⁷ only 66% said they self-identify as a Seventh-day Adventists (84% BC young adults).⁴⁸ These statistics are hardly surprising in an age of pluralism. Millennials are less likely to commit to an organized religion and denomination compared with previous generations. This lack of denominational identity can partially explain why only 7% of respondents said they read the writings of Ellen G. White on a weekly basis (5% BC young adults).⁴⁹

EVANGELISM

ARE THE CHURCH-ENGAGED CONCERNED ABOUT THE FAITH OF THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 07, 14, 15, 17, 21, 48

According to our study, the church-engaged are not ashamed or embarrassed by their faith. Of respondents, 95% said their friends and coworkers know they are churchgoers (87% BC young adults).⁵⁰ Also, a minority (17%) said they do *not* feel comfortable inviting friends to church (25% BC young adults).⁵¹ A primary reason for this can be found in how respondents answered question 48: "I feel like my church



48 - I FEEL LIKE MY CHURCH IS A SAFE PLACE FOR PEOPLE OF EVERY...

is a safe place for people of every..." The respondents did not feel like the church would be a safe environment for people of other religions and/or sexual orientations.

Millennials face a unique problem when it comes to sharing their faith.⁵³ Three-in-one say they are not affiliated with any religion.⁵⁴ Because these "nones," as they have been termed, have no previous religious or church experience, proselytizing requires a different set of sensibilities than the ones used to reach past generations.

This generation is quite different when it comes to their religious views. According to Pew Research, they are less likely to be affiliated with religion. Furthermore, they are less likely to say they believe in God. "A solid majority still do — 86% — but only 58% say they are 'absolutely certain' that God exists, a lower share than among older adults."⁵⁵ It is interesting to note the changing patterns in religious affiliation and commitment among millennials. A small minority (13%) of millennials say, "having more people who are not religious

⁴¹ Andrea Palpant Dilley, "Trying to attract the young: church should change carefully and wisely." FaithandLeadership.com July 16, 2013.

⁴² Jason K. Allen. "3 Reasons Young Adults Are Leaving the Church." Pastors.com. August 6, 2013. <http://pastors.com/3-reasons-young-adults-are-leaving-the-church/>

⁴³ Rachel Held Evans, "Why millennials are leaving the church," *CNN Belief Blog*. July 27, 2013. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/07/27/why-millennials-are-leaving-the-church/>

⁴⁴ Question #12

⁴⁵ Question #18

⁴⁶ Question #19

⁴⁷ "Update: Learning from Growing Churches in England," churchleadership.com July 9, 2014. The full report "From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013" is available at www.churchgrowthresearch.org/uk

⁴⁸ Question #1

⁴⁹ Question #47

⁵⁰ Question #31

⁵¹ Question #7

⁵² Question #14

⁵³ It is important to note that young people, with generations past, often grow into their faith as they age. The Pew Research is quick to point out that millennials are "significantly less likely to identify themselves when compared to Gen Xer's at a comparable age (36% vs. 47%)."

⁵⁴ See Barna.org. <https://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church>.

⁵⁵ See "Millennials: A Portrait of Next Generation." Pew Research, p. 13. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

is a good thing for society, but a majority (54%) say this trend doesn't make much difference."⁵⁶ Over half of millennials with a Christian background (59%) have, at some point in their lives, dropped out of church after attending regularly. In his book *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*, David Kinnaman — President of the Barna Group — describes three spiritual experiences of millennials. Here, he coins the terms: Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles.

Nomads are individuals with a Christian background who walked away from church engagement but still consider themselves Christian. Kinnaman surmises that this trend may exist because this group

up in the church but no longer claim to adhere to Christian beliefs. They are typically explicit about their intentions of never returning to the church. Exiles are young people who are still in the church but don't fit in. These are young people with a Christian background who struggle with finding a connection between their church and their everyday lives. More than one-fifth of millennials (21%) with a Christian background say they remain Christian and continue to attend a church, but they find church to be a difficult place to live out their faith.⁵⁷

The church is not keeping up with the changing cultural landscape in attitudes towards race, religion, and sexuality. Millennials take more liberal and pluralistic positions

society.⁵⁹

One of the popular reasons given for the exodus of young adults in the church is because of the prudish stance the church has taken toward sexuality. "For a fifth or more, a 'just say no' philosophy is insufficient in a techno-porno world. Young Christian singles are as sexually active as their non-Christian friends, and many say they feel judged."⁶⁰ Author and historian John Dickson urges Christians to move from a posture of "admonition to mission."⁶¹ In other words, the church must refocus its work on making a meaningful difference in the world (justice) over simply trying to make the world feel guilty (judgment).

A recent study of Adventist millennials compared to young adults, conducted by the Barna Group, found the importance of creating a space for questions. Adventist doctrine and culture has been influenced largely by a modern, 19th century worldview. Adventist doctrine has historically been considered absolute, with no place for questions or disagreement. A. Allan Martin says the Adventist study found "the biggest differences were in the area of feeling like 'I can be myself' and of feeling like 'doubts are tolerated.'"⁶² The postmodern corrective of pluralistic reasoning

ONE OF THE POPULAR REASONS GIVEN FOR THE EXODUS OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THE CHURCH IS BECAUSE OF THE PRUDISH STANCE THE CHURCH HAS TAKEN TOWARD SEXUALITY.

believes going to church and having Christian friends is optional (43%). They see themselves as personally interested in God but not necessarily in the institution of religion. Prodigals are those young people who have lost their faith. They grew

compared to previous generations. Currently, 68% of millennials favour allowing gays and lesbians to legally marry, up 44% from 2004.⁵⁸ In fact, 35% of millennials say the trend of gay and lesbian couples raising children is good for

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ "Three Spiritual Journeys of Millennials." See <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/teens-nextgen/612-three-spiritual-journeys-of-millennials#.VGalg4e4lBw>

⁵⁷ See "Millennials: A Portrait of Next Generation." Pew Research, p. 31

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁹ See Six Reasons Young Adults Leave the Church. Christianity Today. <http://christianitytoday.com/le/2012/winter/youngleavechurch.html>.

⁶⁰ Drew Dyck. "Millennials Need a Bigger God, Not a Hipper Pastor." *Aspengroup.com*. July 3, 2014.

⁶¹ A. Allan Martin. "Ministry with Millennials: What's Good about Church." *nadministerial.org*. August 19, 2014.

⁶² "Three Spiritual Journeys of Millennials." *Barna.com*

⁶³ Question #30

⁶⁴ Question #32

⁶⁵ Question #51

⁶⁶ <http://youthandreligion.nd.edu/>



SURPRISING INSIGHTS

Our survey results provided a cursory understanding of the thoughts and opinions of young people at Oakridge Adventist Church and the British Columbia Conference. After sorting and analyzing the data, we were surprised at several findings.

heavily influences this generation. Today, church leaders are being encouraged to provide a safe place for questions, placing an emphasis on the Christian life as a walk or journey rather than a destination or means to an end. Mary Schaller, president of Q Place, calls this aspect of postmodernity “holy curiosity.” She writes, “Many people are looking for someone to listen to them, not to hear an uninvited apologetic argument.”⁶³

SURPRISING INSIGHTS

Our survey results provided a

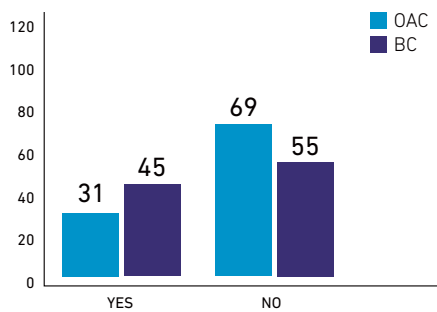
cursory understanding of the thoughts and opinions of young people at Oakridge Adventist Church and the British Columbia Conference. After sorting and analyzing the data, we identified several surprising findings.

A lack of transformative faith:

The church-engaged fail to practice the hallmark disciplines of the Christian faith: prayer and bible engagement. Only 19% say they read the Bible daily (30% BC young adults),⁶⁴ and 81% say they pray daily (76% BC young adults).⁶⁵

A lack of grace orientation: The church-engaged seem to fail to grasp God’s unfailing love. When faced with the statement, “I have assurance of my salvation,” only 36% of respondents agreed (32% BC young adults). However, when asked the same question in a more direct manner, “I am going to heaven,” only 29% agreed (24% BC young adults).⁶⁶

The value of a mentor: The National Study of Youth and Religion, a major research project, revealed factors contributing to a young person retaining



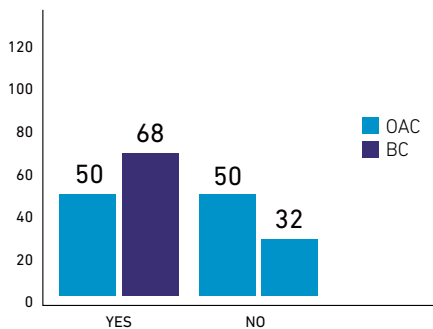
35 - I HAVE A MENTOR WHO IS OVER 40 AT CHURCH WHO IS NOT PART OF THE CHURCH STAFF

their religious tradition into adulthood.⁶⁷ The study revealed the importance of young people having a meaningful relationship with a Christian mentor outside of their family.⁶⁸ In our study, we found that a rather small majority confirmed this finding. When asked if they have “a close personal friend at church who is over the age of 40,” 55% said yes (87% BC young adults).⁶⁹ When asked if they have a “mentor who is over the age of 40 at church who is not a member of the church staff,” a minority (31%) responded yes (45% BC young adults).⁷⁰

The value of mentors is crucial for the future growth of the church. Drew Dyck says, “The number one predictive factor as to whether or not a young Christian will retain his or her faith is whether that person has a meaningful relationship with an older Christian.”⁷¹ Churches interested in attracting and engaging young adults would do well to spend time and resources to foster and encourage such relationships.

Those who serve will lead:

We were surprised by the high correlation between those who had been asked to serve and those who



9 - I'VE BEEN ASKED TO BE A LEADER IN MY LOCAL CHURCH.

were active ministry leaders: 60% of the church-engaged said they were involved in a ministry (80% BC Young Adults).⁷² However, 50% said they had never been asked to serve as a ministry leader (32% BC young adults).⁷³ The more active young adults are in the leadership of the church, the greater likelihood they will engage with the whole of church life, as confirmed by the “Learning from Growing Churches” report by the Church of England.⁷⁴ However, this activity can only be possible if long time members intentionally invest in young adults by passing the baton to younger leaders.

Social Interaction is Key: Our research revealed that social interaction is valued over spiritual discipline. Millennials engage in and excel in relationships. While spiritual matters are important to them, they often experience spirituality in community rather than in isolation: 32% of the respondents said they attend church for “social gathering” (30% BC Young Adults).⁷⁵ Young adults are detached from institutions and networked through friendship. They are not as interested in creating structures and are wary of institutional religion. They have also avoided another institution of

society — marriage. Only 26% of this generation has walked down the aisle, compared to 36% of Gen Xers, 48% of Baby Boomers, and 65% of the Silent Generation at comparative ages.⁷⁶ In spite of their timidity toward commitment, millennials are committed to relationships in all aspects of their life. According to a study by the US Chamber Foundation, 70% of millennials are more excited about their decisions when their friends agree, compared to 48% percent of non-millennials.⁷⁷ Their need for peer socialization and affirmation seems to drive all aspects of their life.

While the need for community and networking is real for young adults, there are some deeper issues that the church must keep in mind when serving millennials. In an essay called *Loneliness in the Age of Facebook*, Andy Gill carefully outlines the shifting landscape that is occurring in the technological age.⁷⁸

⁶⁷ Andrea Palpant Dilley, Trying to attract the young. Church should change carefully and wisely. FaithandLeadership.com July 16, 2013.

⁶⁸ Question #34

⁶⁹ Question #35

⁷⁰ Drew Dyck. “Millennials Need a Bigger God, Not a Hipper Pastor”. Aspengroup.com. July 3, 2014.

⁷¹ Question #8

⁷² Question #9

⁷³ Question #52

⁷⁴ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

⁷⁵ Ibid. Also see www.uschamberfoundation.net/MillennialsReport. See also, Martin Davis. Millennials, Social Media, and the Church. Churchleadership.com. April 9, 2014.

⁷⁶ Millennials are often called, “digital natives” – the only generation for which new technologies are not something they’ve had to adapt to. They were born in this age of technology.

⁷⁷ Andy Gill. Loneliness in the Age of Facebook. relevantmagazine.com. April 23, 2014

The proliferation of social media and handheld devices has quickly rewritten the social rules at work and play. “We’ve become a generation that prefers Netflix to dating, texting to talking, pornography to sex, and being *liked* by many instead of being *loved* by few. As a result,

so many of us are finding ourselves to be and feel as if we’re surrounded by people yet still alone.”⁷⁹ Given this context, the church must provide a space where open dialogue and relationship building (horizontal and vertical) can be central to Christian discipleship.

CONCLUSION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded by a group of young adults. Today, the church-engaged young person retains the same zeal for the gospel and the imminent return of Jesus Christ, as did the early church founders. However, millennials have questions about their place in the Adventist church. They long to be seen, not as the future of the church, but as competent and reliable leaders in the present. Some worry that their doubts and fears will not be welcomed in the church. The vast majority have a different approach to current social issues, and they fear that their ideas (and their unchurched peers) might be rejected. The scare tactics of previous generations are no longer successful methods of evangelism in a postmodern, post-Christian era.

In an effort to retain and attract young adults, the local church must adapt to the present situation by embracing open dialogue with all generations. Young people are ready and willing to serve; however, they

are not going to accept token titles of leadership. They want to be respected and entrusted with responsibility. Through authentic Christian discipleship with others in their church community, young people will continue to believe in the promise and the future of the Seventh-Adventist movement. In order to build trust with millennials, other generations will need to make allowances for young people to contextualize their religious experience based on their worldview and personal experiences. Is the Seventh-day Adventist church ready to hear their voice?

**THEY LONG TO BE SEEN,
NOT AS THE FUTURE OF THE
CHURCH, BUT AS COMPETENT
AND RELIABLE LEADERS NOW.**



APPENDIX A

7 MINUTES OR LESS CARD

I was greeted in a friendly manner
 1 2 3 4 5

The overall appearance of the church was clean and neat
 1 2 3 4 5

The bulletin (program guide) provided helpful information about the church
 1 2 3 4 5

The music was uplifting
 1 2 3 4 5

The sermon (talk) was relevant and helpful to my life
 1 2 3 4 5

The people were friendly
 1 2 3 4 5

I found this to be a safe and fun environment for my family.
 1 2 3 4 5

I'll come back again
 1 2 3 4 5


I'd recommend this church to others
 1 2 3 4 5

Is there anything you want us to know or bring to our attention? _____

Our goal is to be a community that loves and accepts people where they are at, and help them to take the next step in their journey with God.

Please let us know if you'd like to:

- Join a small group study
- Explore and know more about God
- Take the next step and commit my life to Jesus
- Take the next step and prepare for baptism.



Seven Minutes or LESS

Date ____/____/____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____ zip/pc _____

Phone (cell/home) _____

Email _____

Please indicate your age range

13-18 19-35 36-55 56-70 71+

Single Married New to the area

Children (how many/how old) ____/____

Do you have a church/denominational affiliation?

How did you hear about Oakridge?

Would you like to receive the email newsletter?
 Yes No

Tell us about your experience Please rate the questions below. 1 is for poor. 5 is for exceptional.

The church was easy to find
 1 2 3 4 5

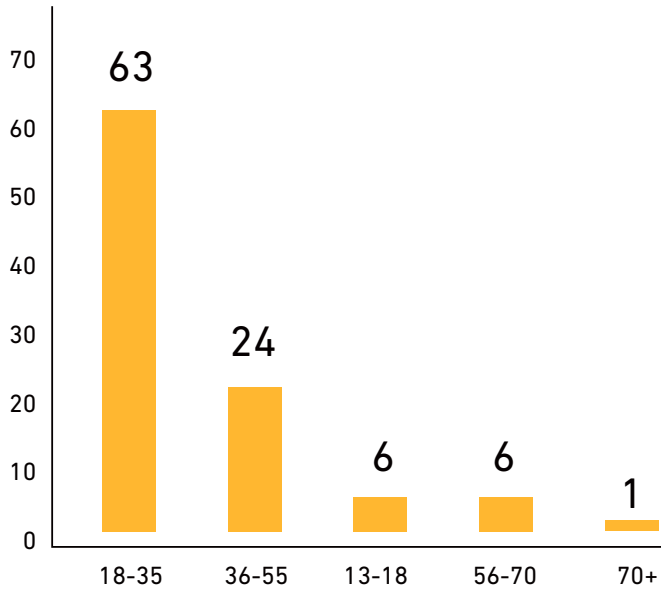
Parking was available
 1 2 3 4 5



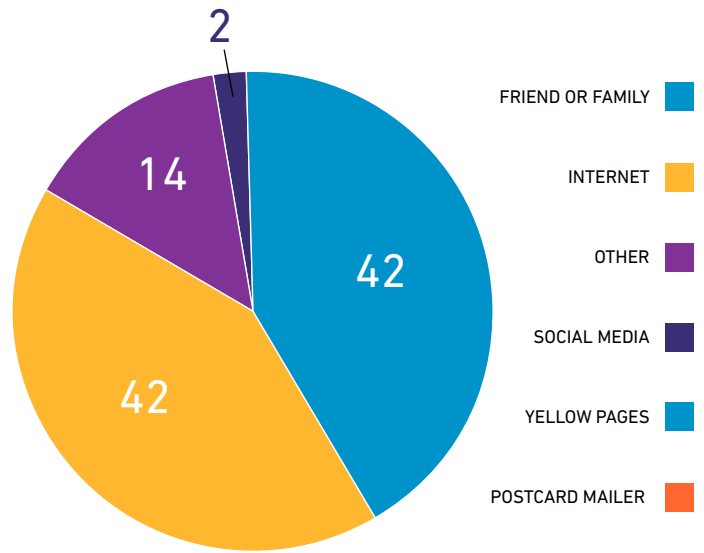
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 Vancouver BC V5Z 3M5

APPENDIX B

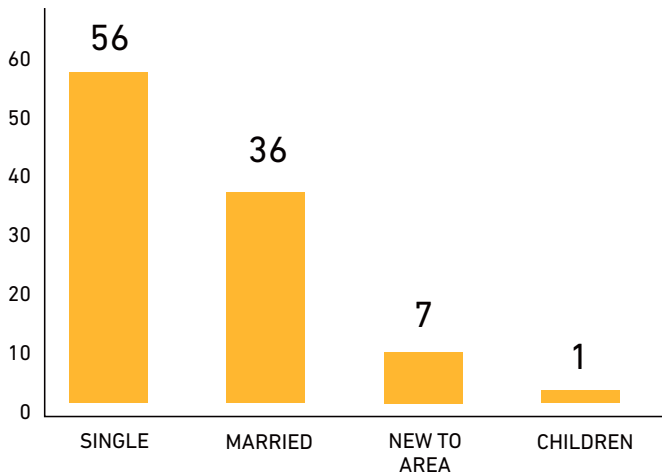
7 MINUTES OR LESS DATA



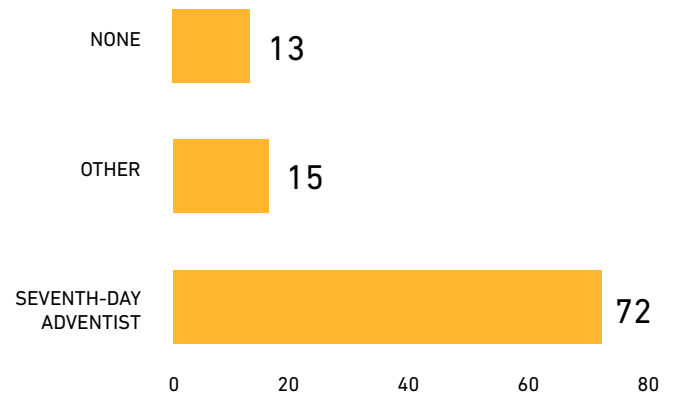
SEVEN MINUTES OR LESS – AGE CATEGORY



SEVEN MINTUES OR LESS – HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT OAKRIDGE?



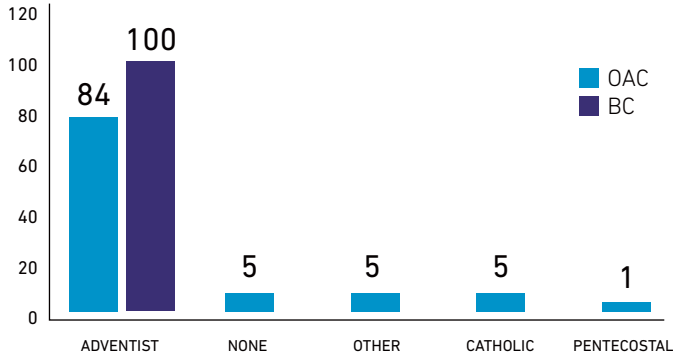
SEVEN MINTUES OR LESS – STATUS CATEGORY



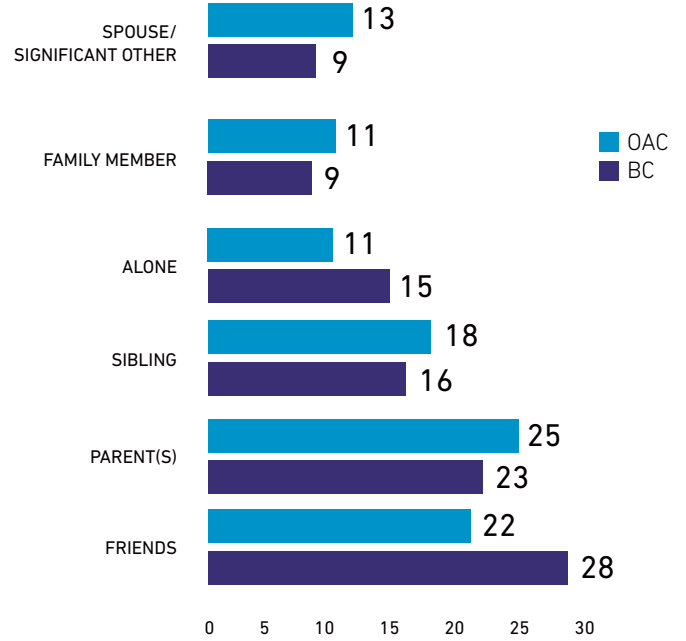
SEVEN MINTUES OR LESS – MY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IS...

APPENDIX C

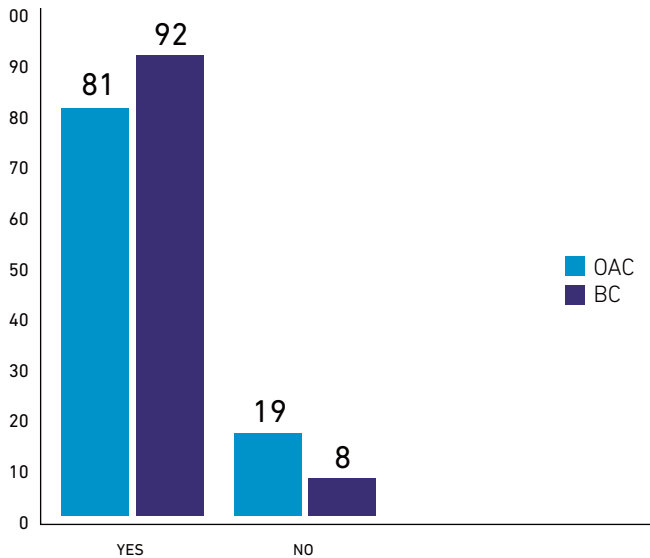
SURVEY RESULTS



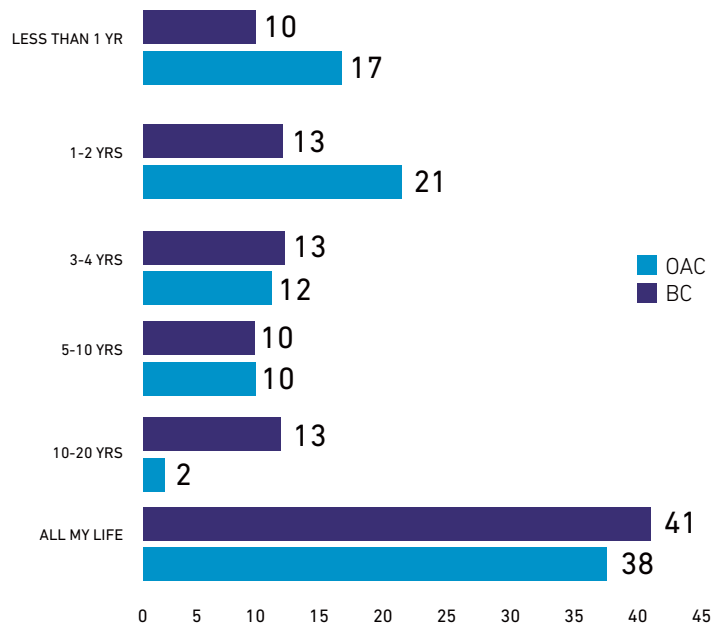
01 - MY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IS



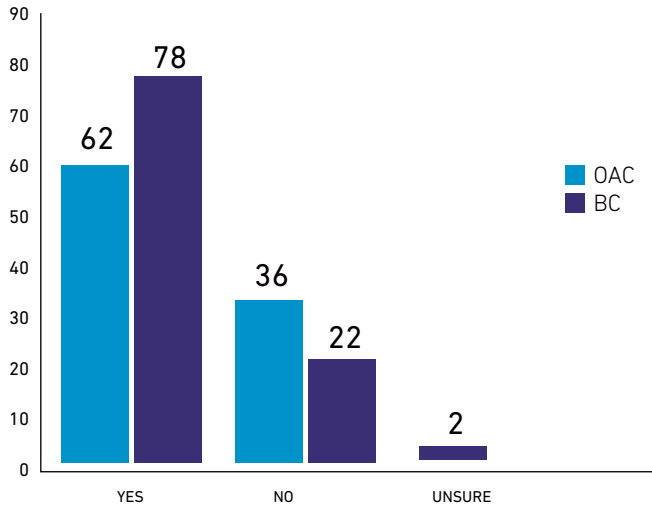
03 - WHO DO YOU ATTEND CHURCH WITH?



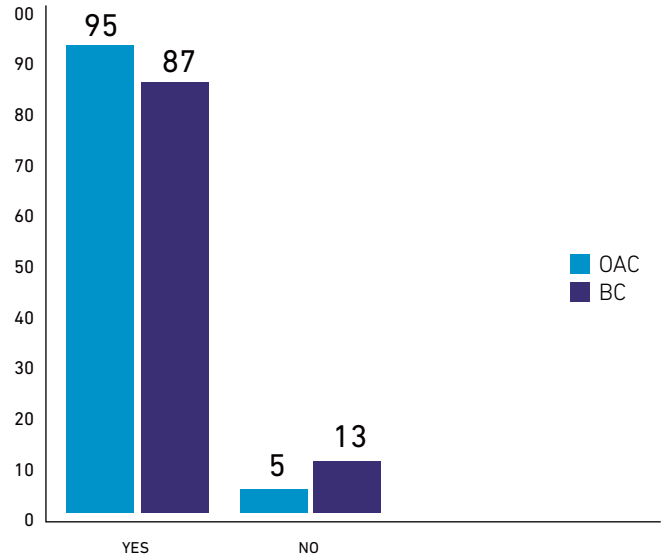
02 - ONE OR BOTH OF MY PARENTS ATTEND A CHURCH



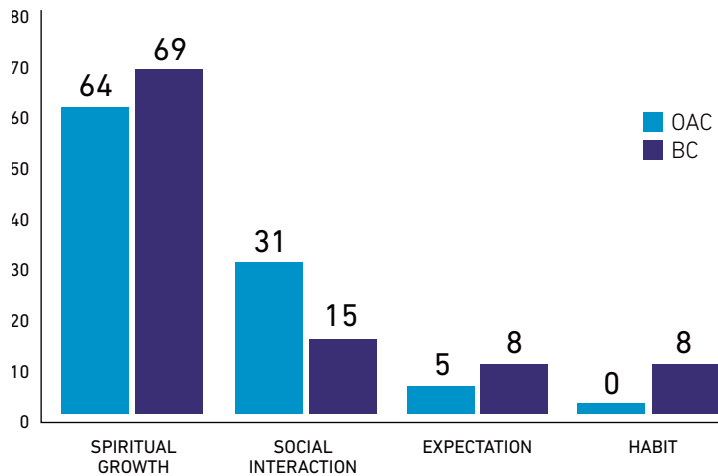
04 - HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ATTENDING YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?



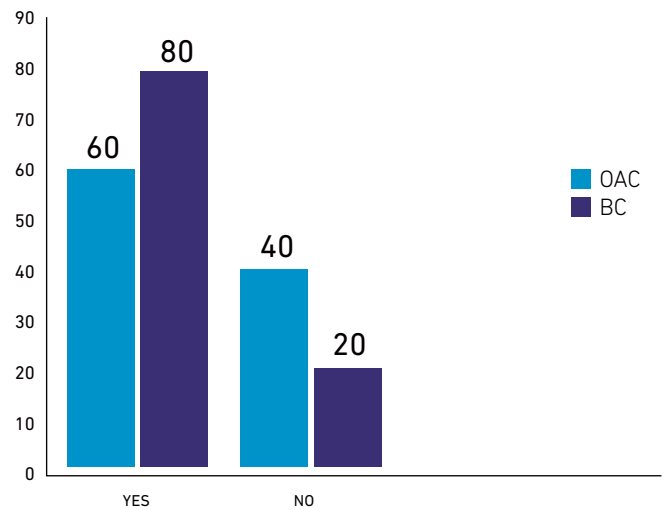
05 - ARE YOU AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH?



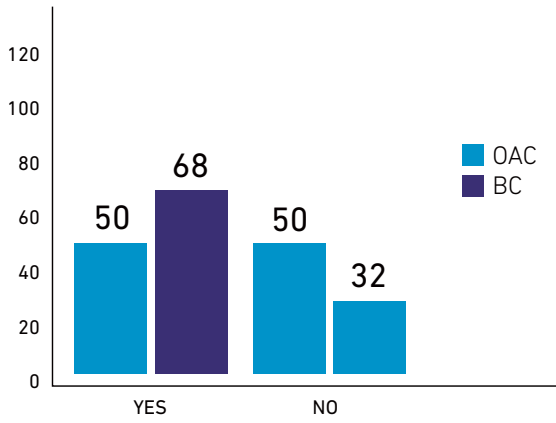
07 - MY FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS KNOW I'M A CHURCH GOER.



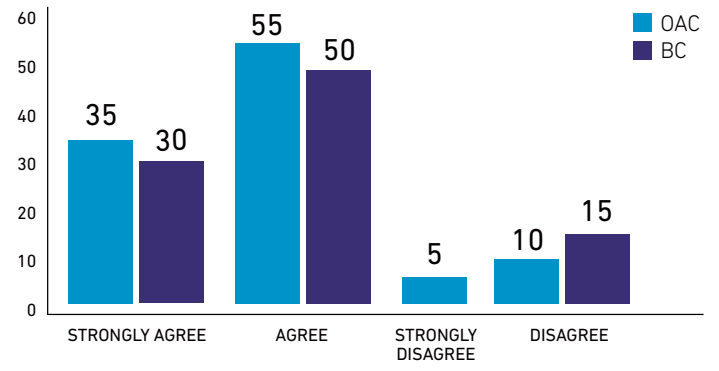
06 - WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON YOU ATTEND CHURCH?



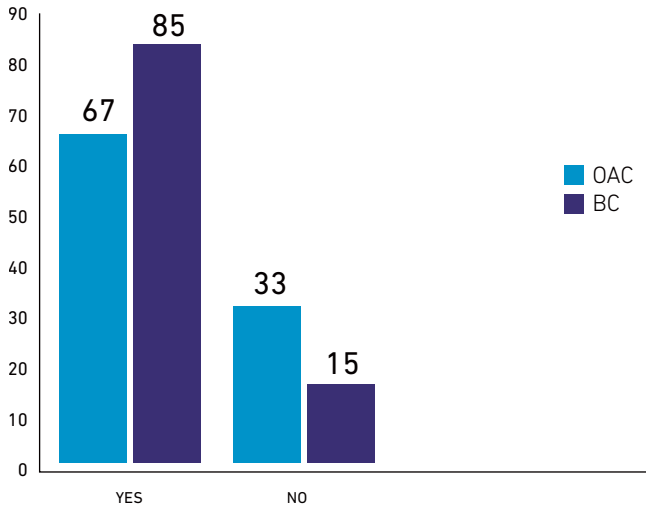
08 - I AM INVOLVED IN A MINISTRY.



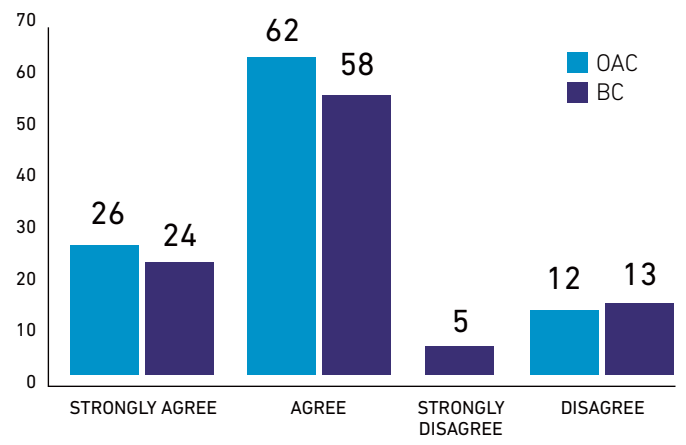
9 - I'VE BEEN ASKED TO BE A LEADER IN MY LOCAL CHURCH.



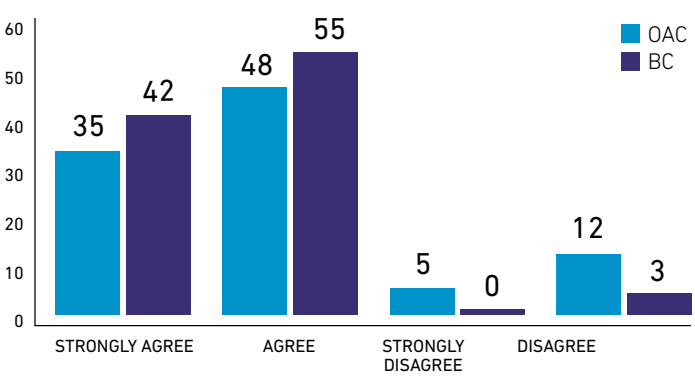
12 - I BELIEVE IN THE DIRECTION MY CHURCH IS HEADED



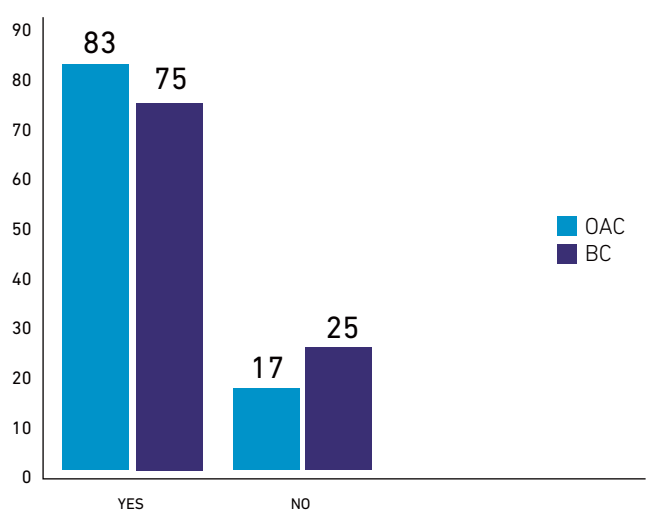
10 - I'VE BEEN ASKED TO SERVE IN A MINISTRY IN THE LAST YEAR.



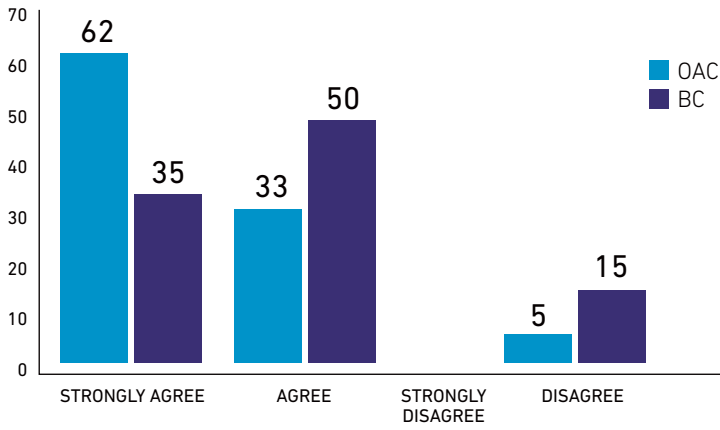
13 - THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE LIKE ME AT CHURCH



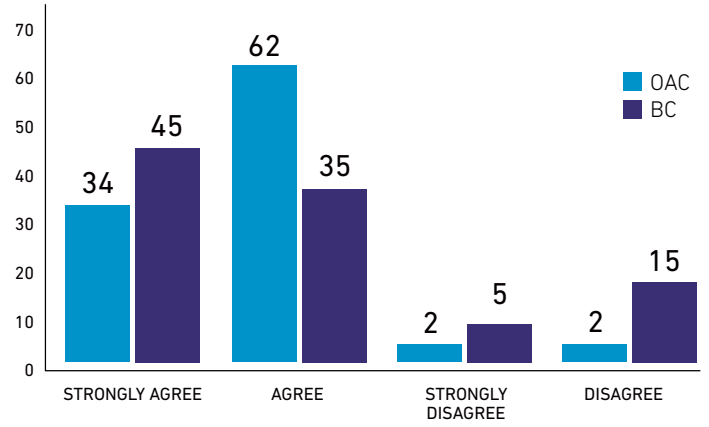
11 - I UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER AT CHURCH



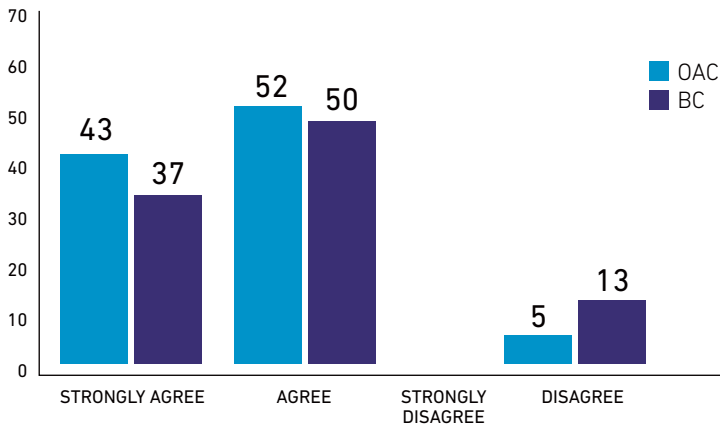
14 - I FEEL COMFORTABLE INVITING MY FRIENDS TO CHURCH



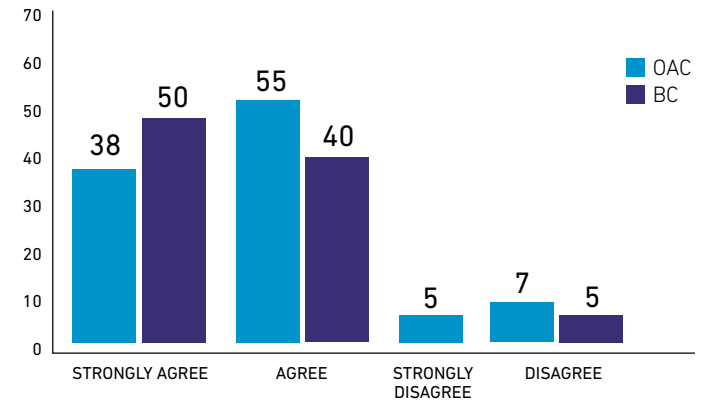
15 - I AM PROUD OF MY CHURCH



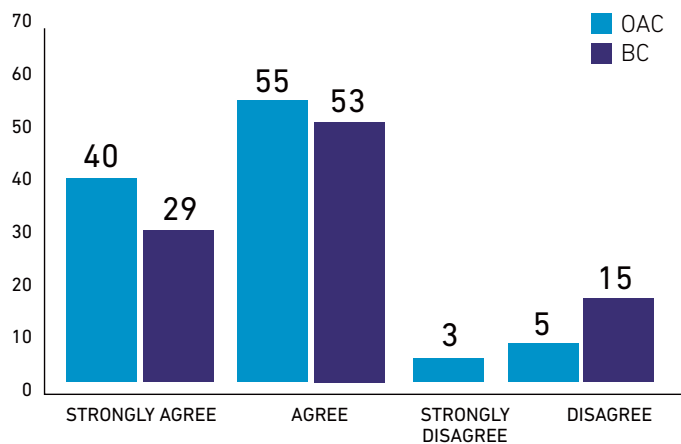
18 - I TRUST THE LEADERSHIP OF MY PASTOR(S)



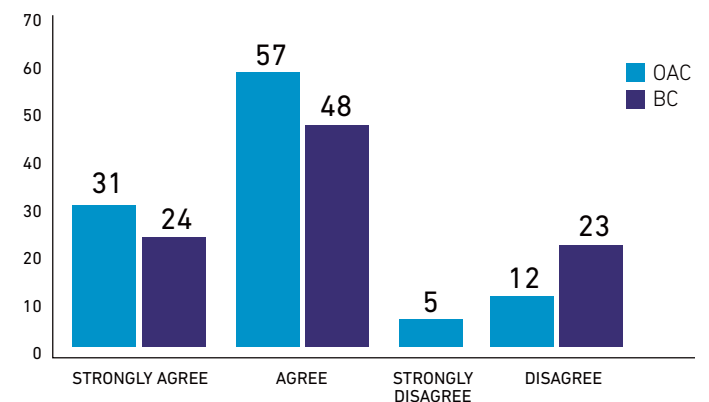
16 - MY CHURCH CARES ABOUT IT'S MEMBERS



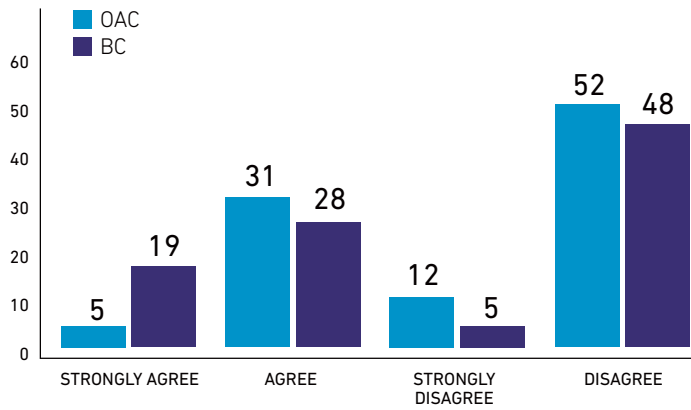
19 - I BELIEVE THE LEADERSHIP OF MY CHURCH IS AUTHENTIC



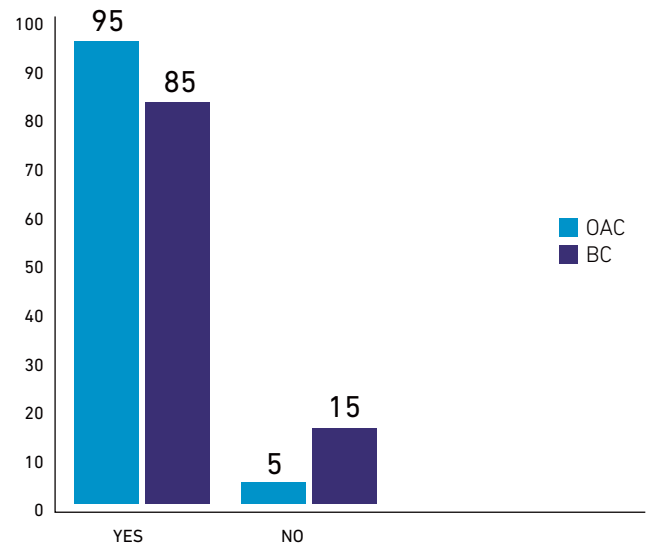
17- MY CHURCH IS HOSPITABLE TO VISITORS



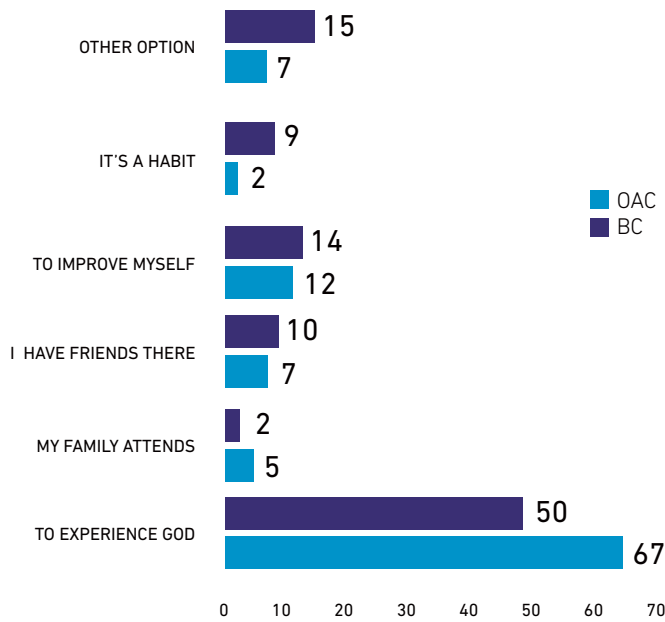
20 - MY CHURCH ENCOURAGES ME TO ACT AUTHENTICALLY



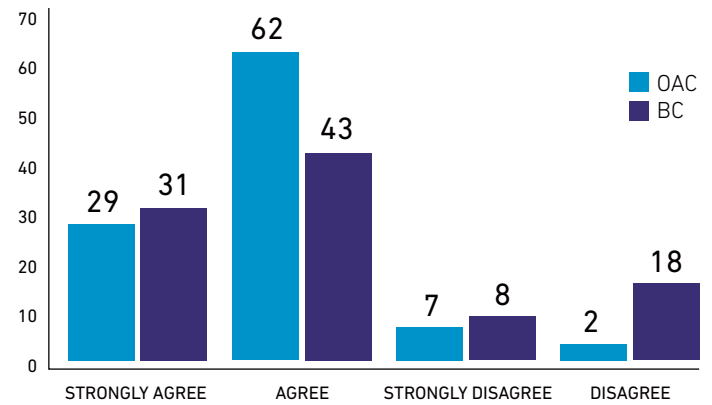
21 - MY CHURCH TRIES TOO HARD TO BE RELEVANT



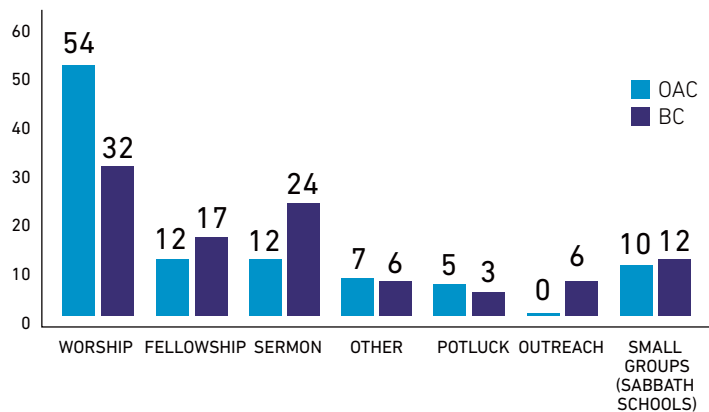
24 - MY CHURCH SERVES THE COMMUNITY



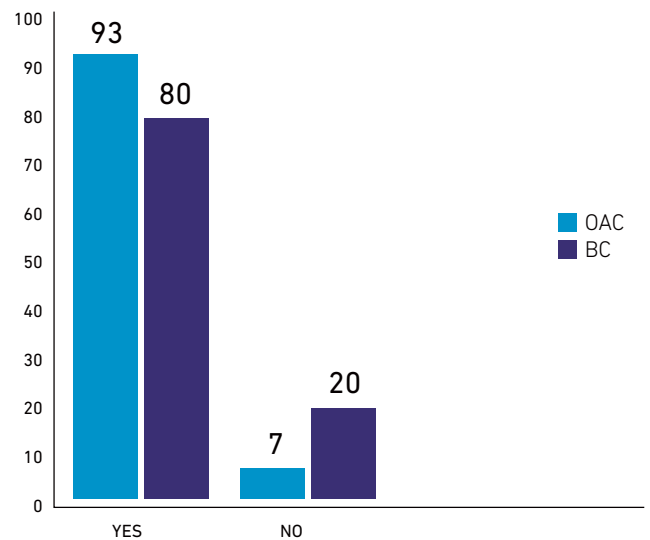
22 - I ATTEND CHURCH BECAUSE...



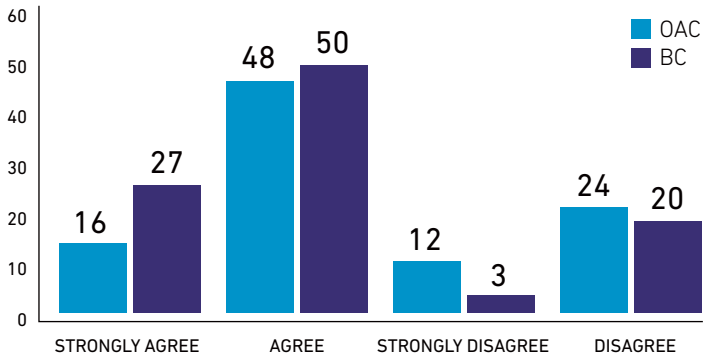
25 - MY CHURCH IS MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY



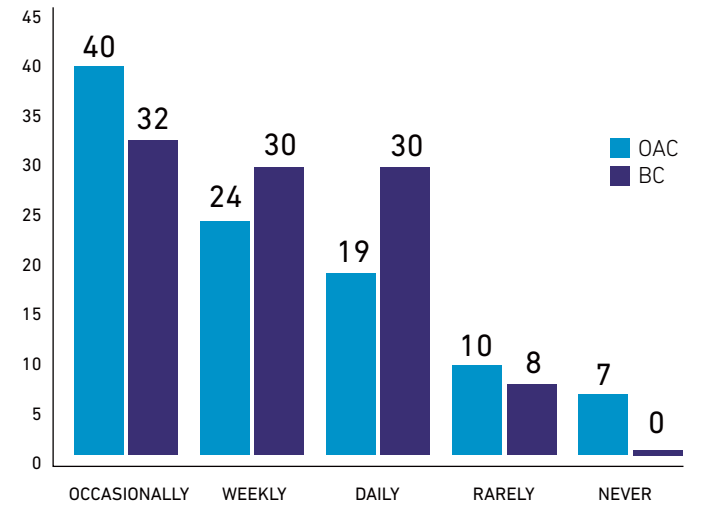
23 - MY FAVOURITE PART OF CHURCH IS...



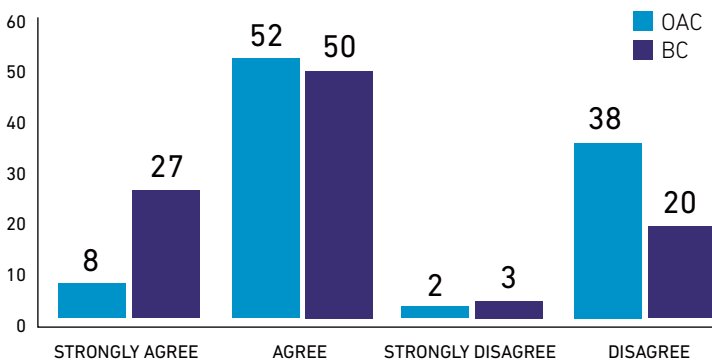
26 - I LOOK FORWARD TO ATTENDING WORSHIP SERVICES AT MY LOCAL CHURCH



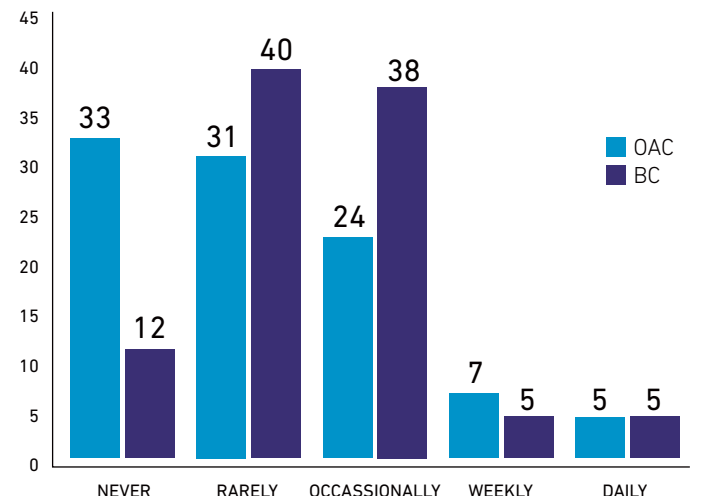
27 - THE LORD'S SUPPER (COMMUNION) IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY SPIRITUAL LIFE



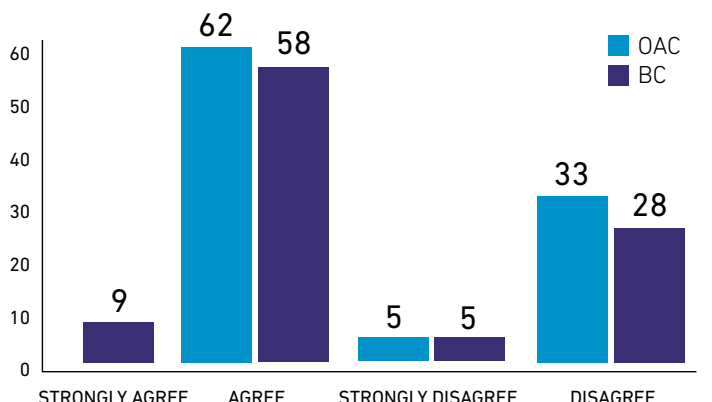
30 - I READ MY BIBLE...



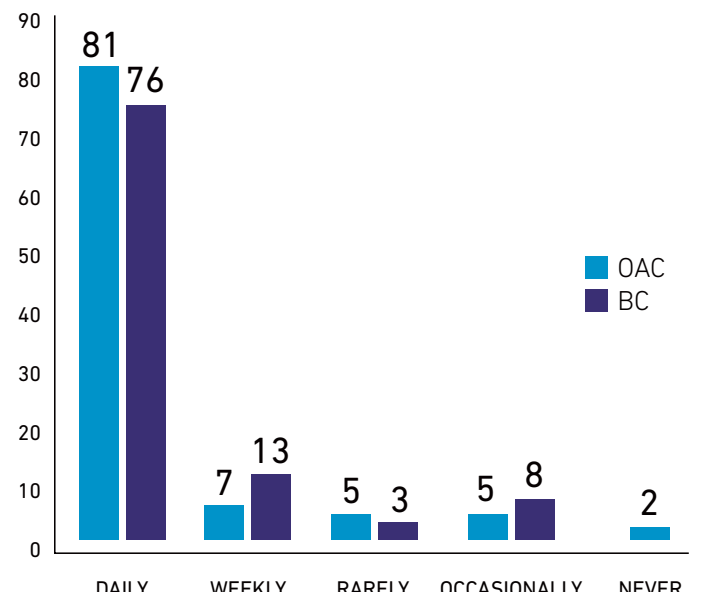
28 - CONNECTING WITH HISTORICAL CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS THROUGH MY LOCAL CHURCH IS IMPORTANT TO ME



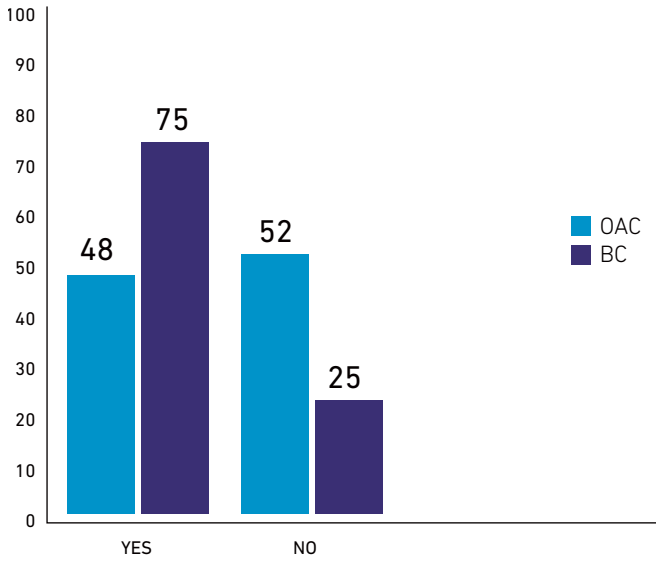
31 - I READ THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE...



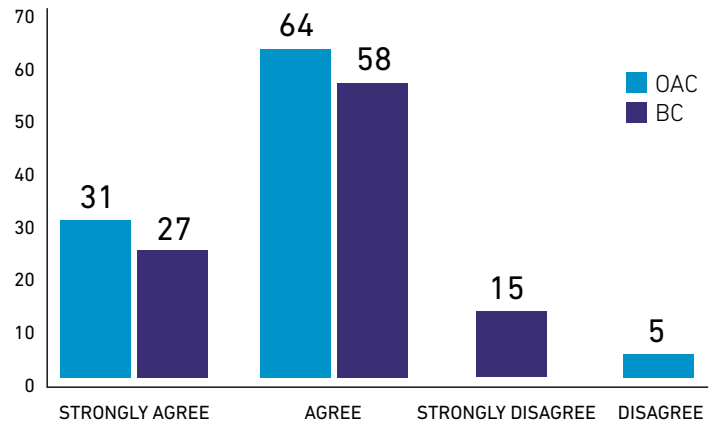
29 - MY CHURCH HAS TAUGHT ME HOW TO PRAY WELL



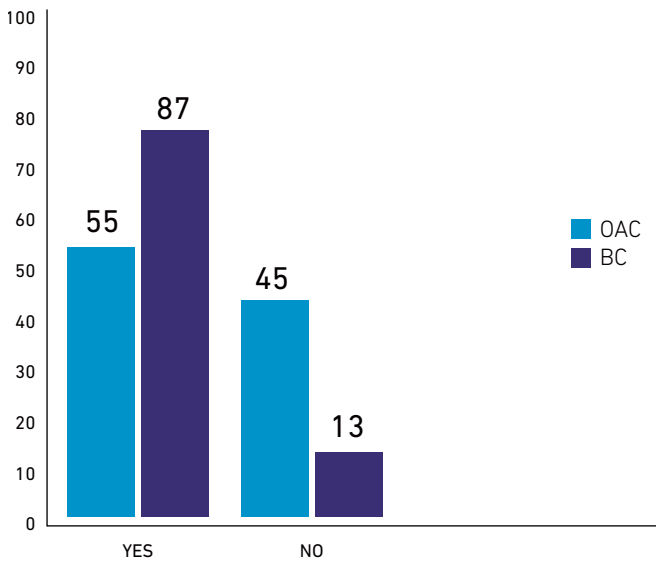
32 - I PRAY...



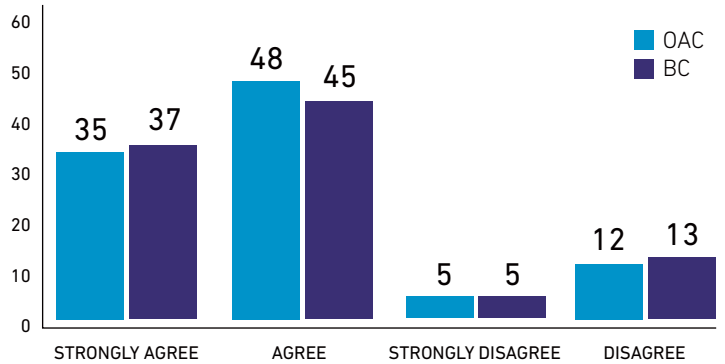
33 - A FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS THE SAME CHURCH AS ME



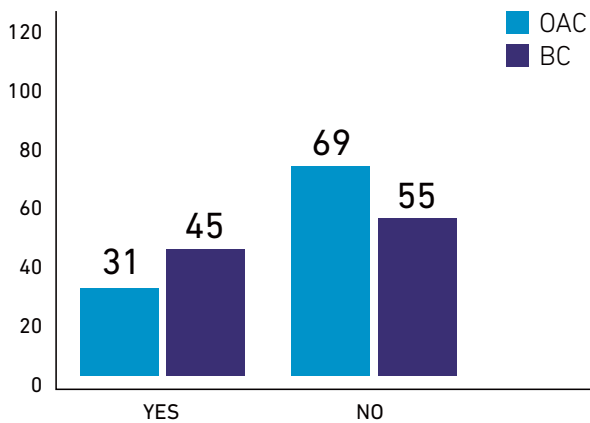
36 - AT CHURCH, I LEARN ABOUT HOW CHRISTIANS CAN POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY



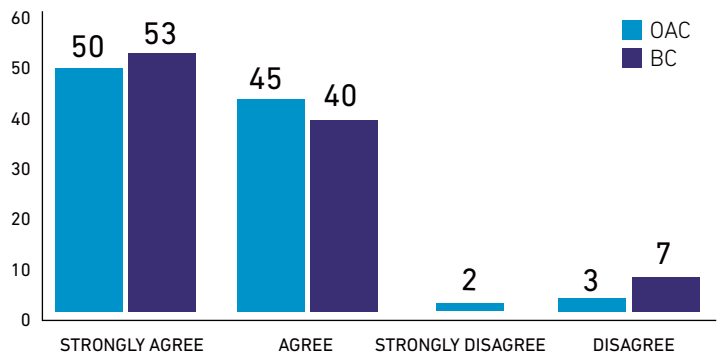
34 - I HAVE A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND AT CHURCH WHO IS OVER 40.



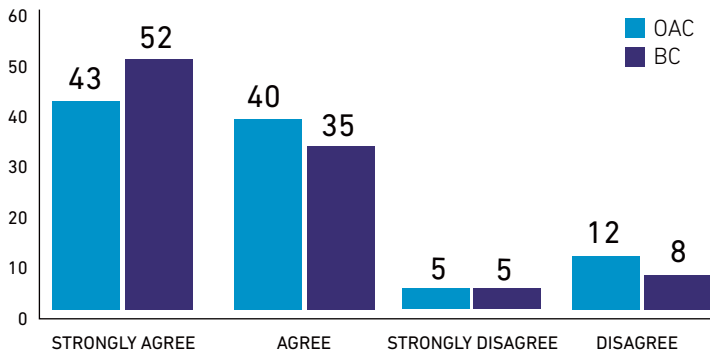
37 - I BETTER UNDERSTAND MY PURPOSE IN LIFE BECAUSE OF CHURCH



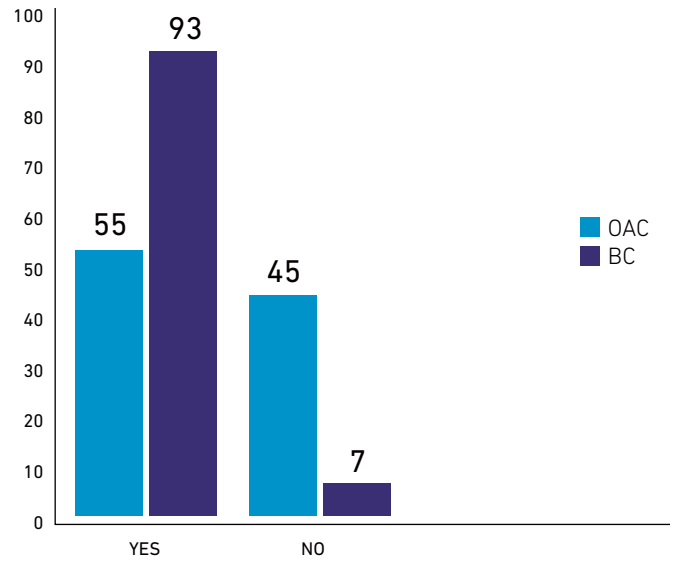
35 - I HAVE A MENTOR WHO IS OVER 40 AT CHURCH WHO IS NOT PART OF THE CHURCH STAFF



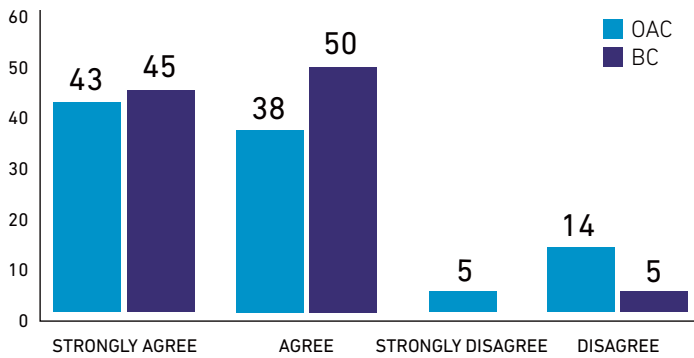
38 - JESUS SPEAKS TO ME IN A PERSONAL AND RELEVANT WAY



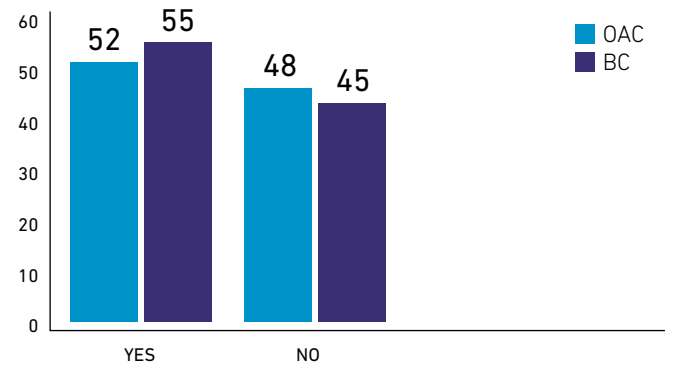
39 - I BELIEVE THE BIBLE CONTAINS EVERYTHING A PERSON NEEDS TO LIVE A MEANINGFUL LIFE



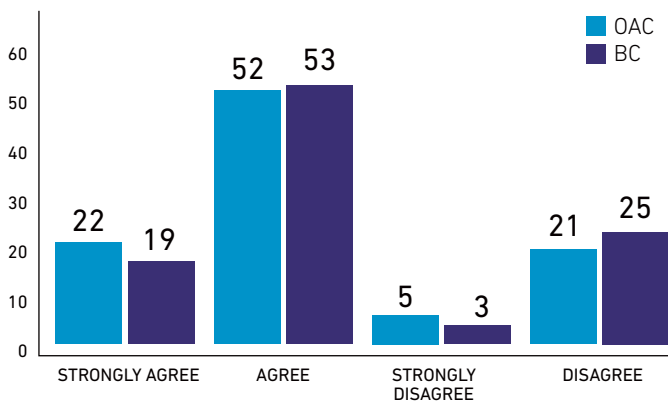
42 - I'VE SERVED THE POOR THROUGH MY CHURCH.



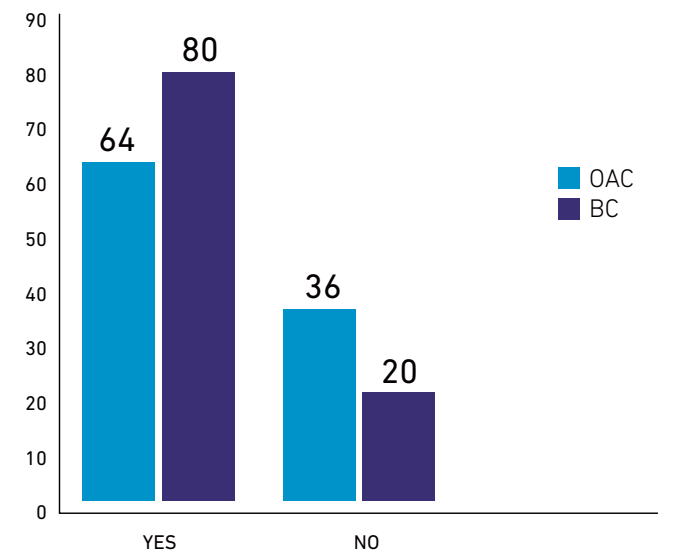
40 - THROUGH CHURCH, I'VE LEARNED TO VIEW MY GIFTS AND PASSIONS AS PART OF GOD'S CALLING



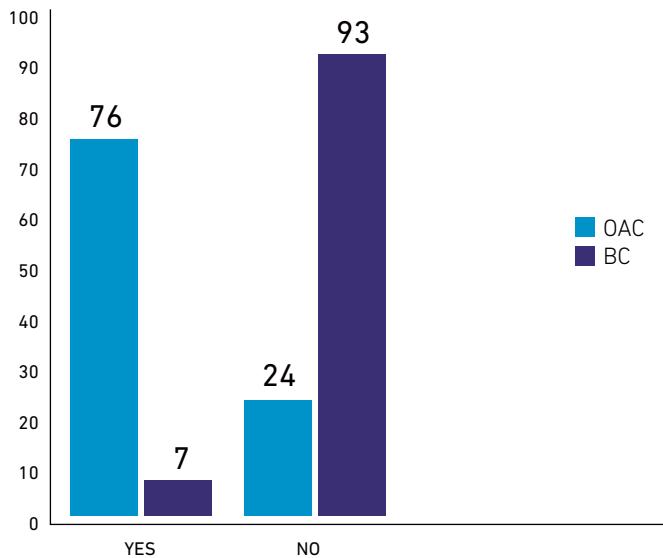
43 - I'VE GONE ON A TRIP THROUGH MY CHURCH THAT HELPED ME EXPAND MY THINKING



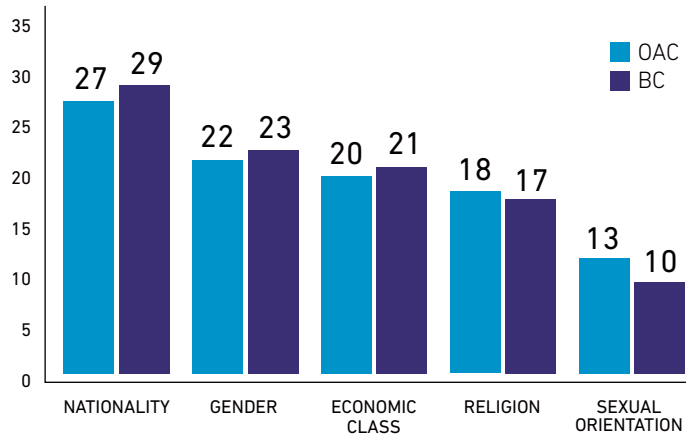
41 - THROUGH CHURCH, I'VE LEARNED HOW THE BIBLE APPLIES TO MY FIELD OR CAREER INTERESTS



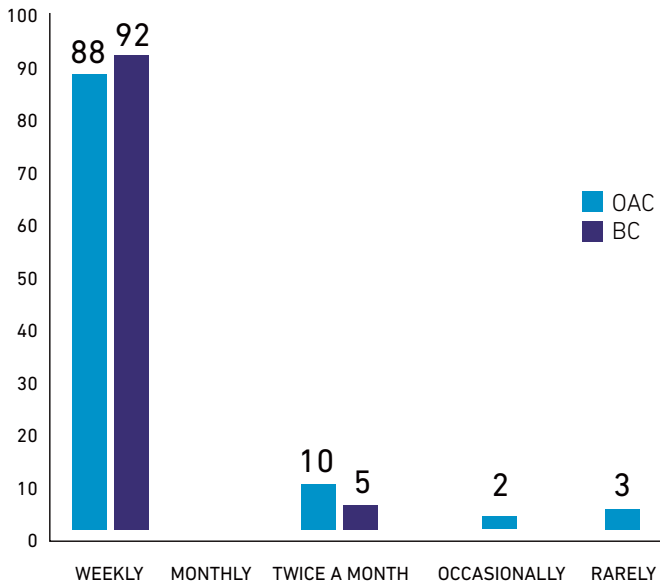
44 - I HAVE FOUND A CAUSE OR ISSUE AT CHURCH THAT MOTIVATES ME



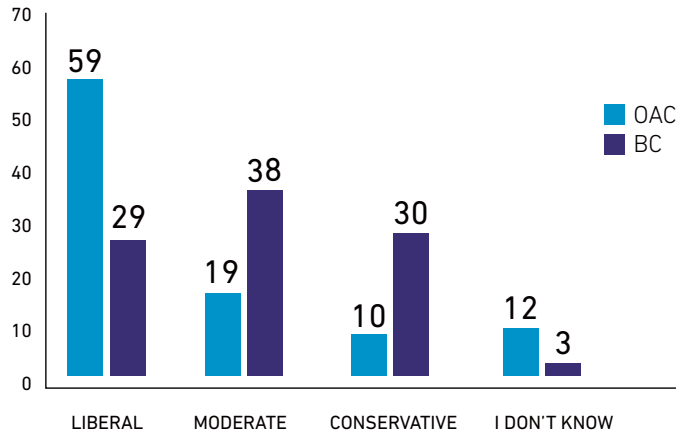
45 - I STOPPED ATTENDING CHURCH FOR OVER A YEAR BUT RETURNED



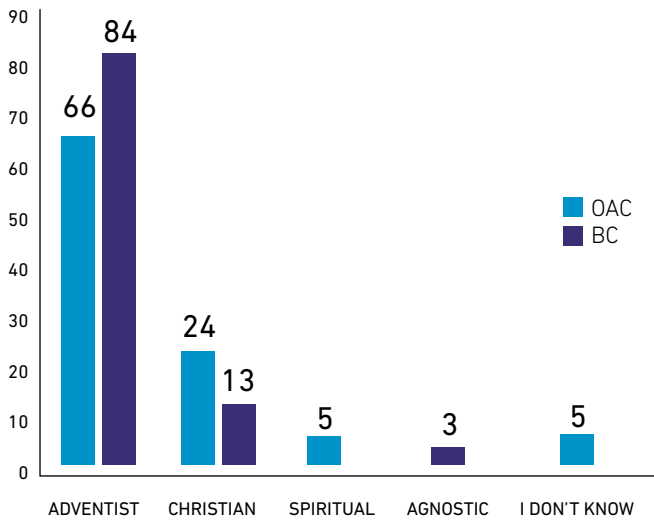
48 - I FEEL LIKE MY CHURCH IS A SAFE PLACE FOR PEOPLE OF EVERY...



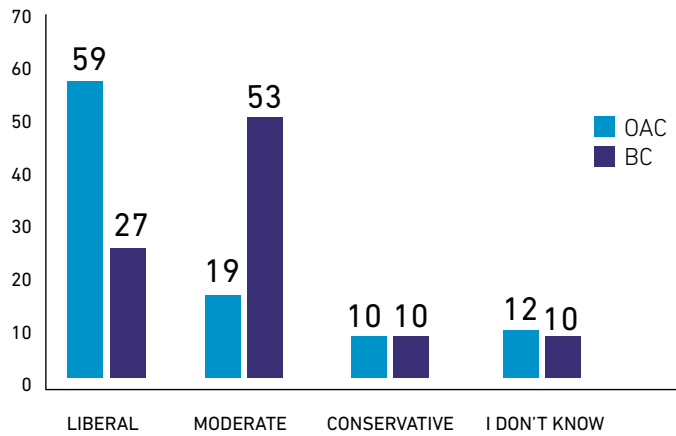
46 - I ATTEND CHURCH...



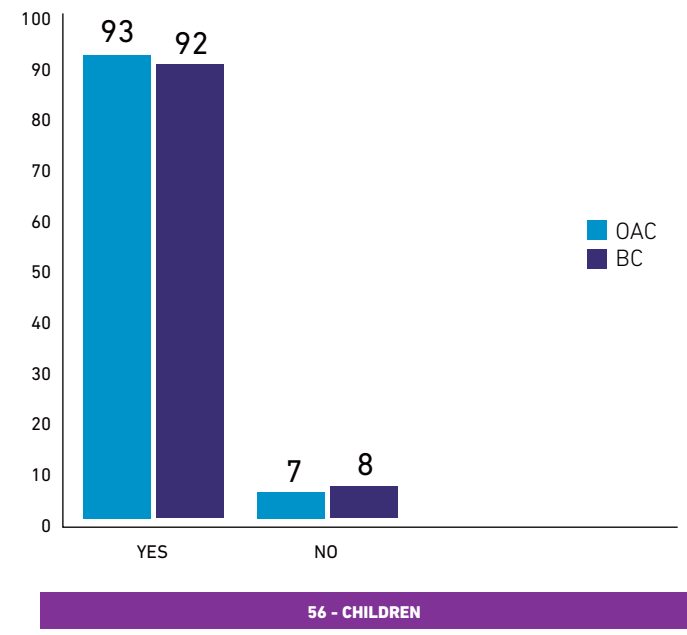
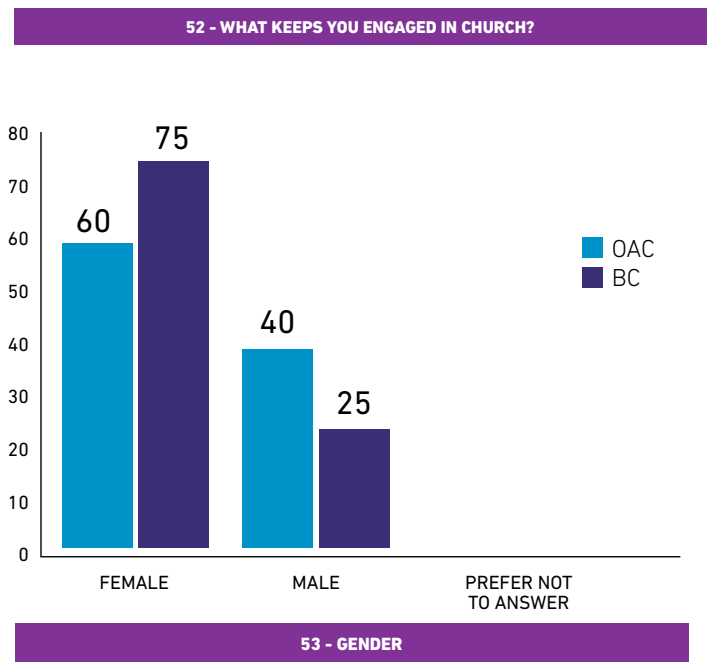
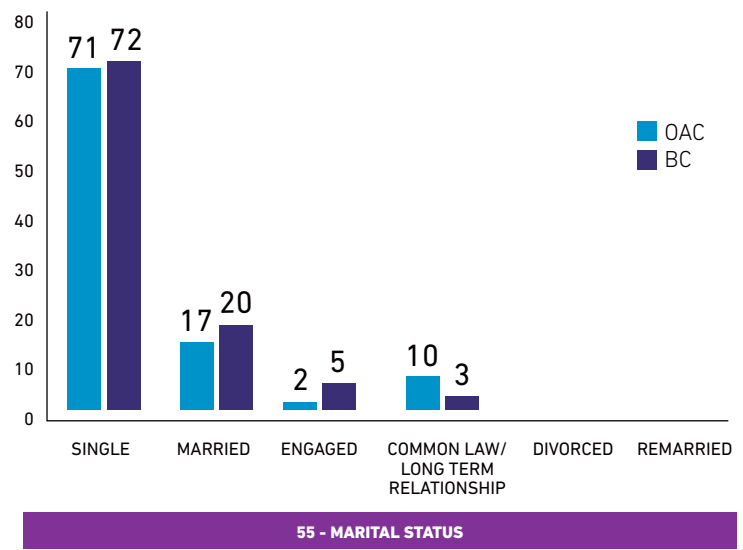
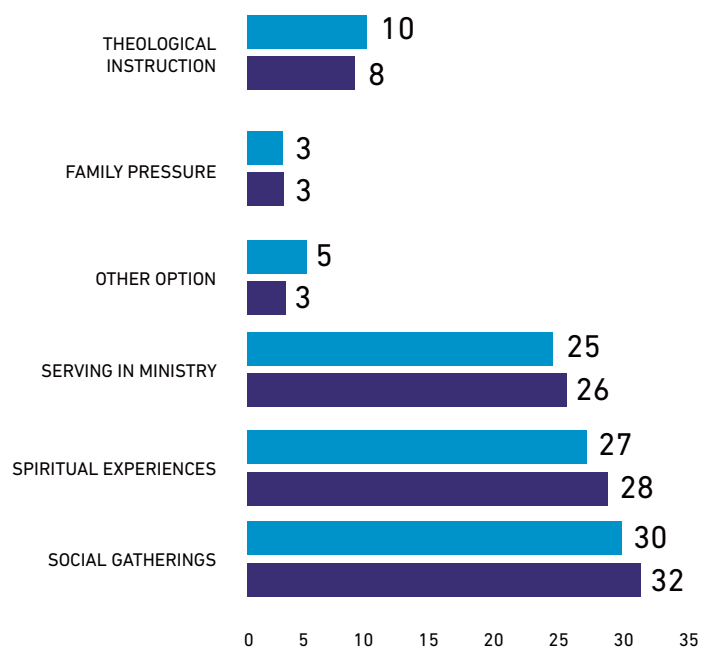
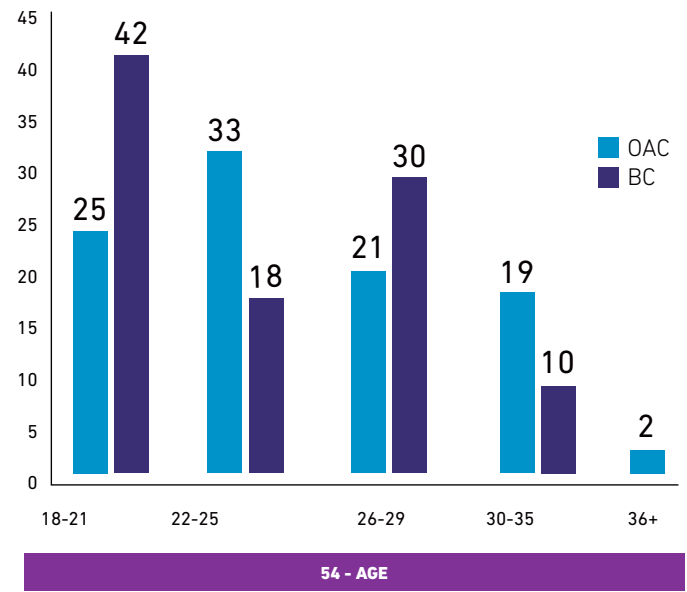
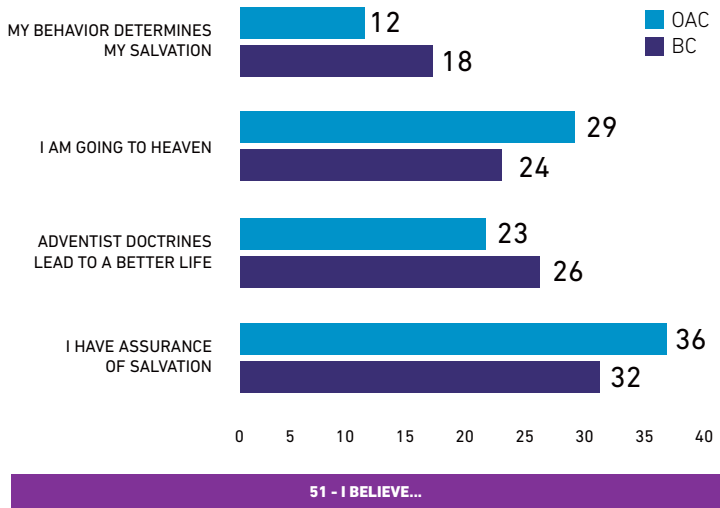
49 - MY CHURCH IS...

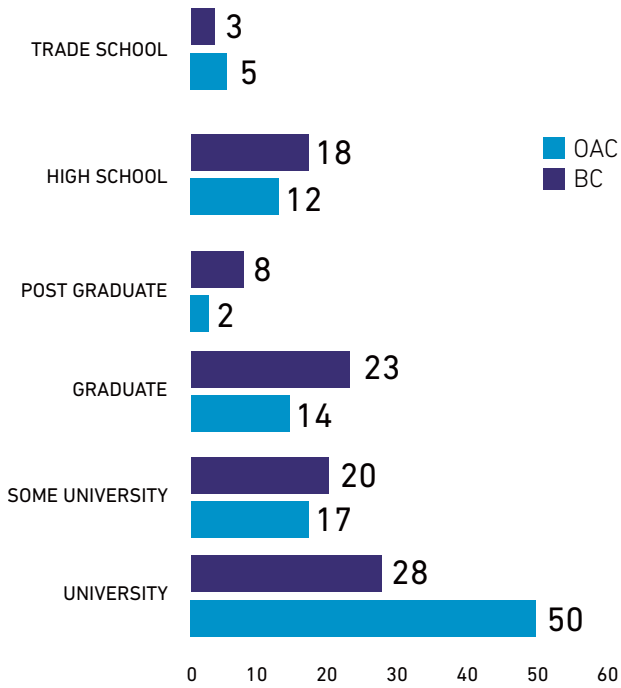


47 - I SELF-IDENTIFY AS...

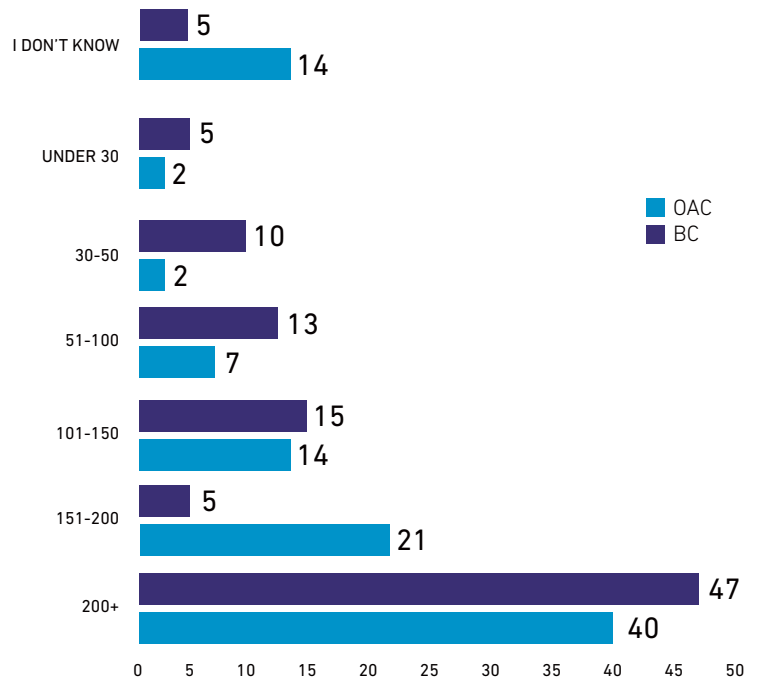


50 - I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE...

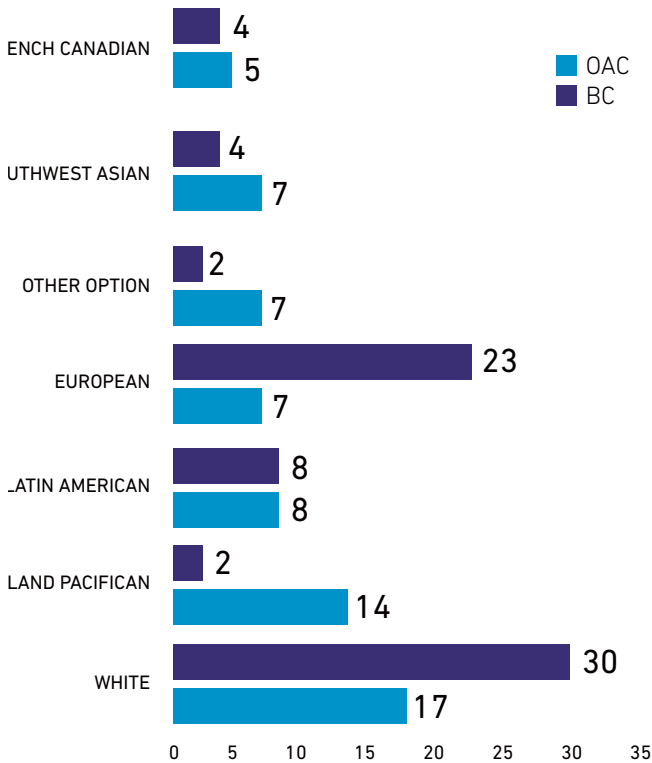




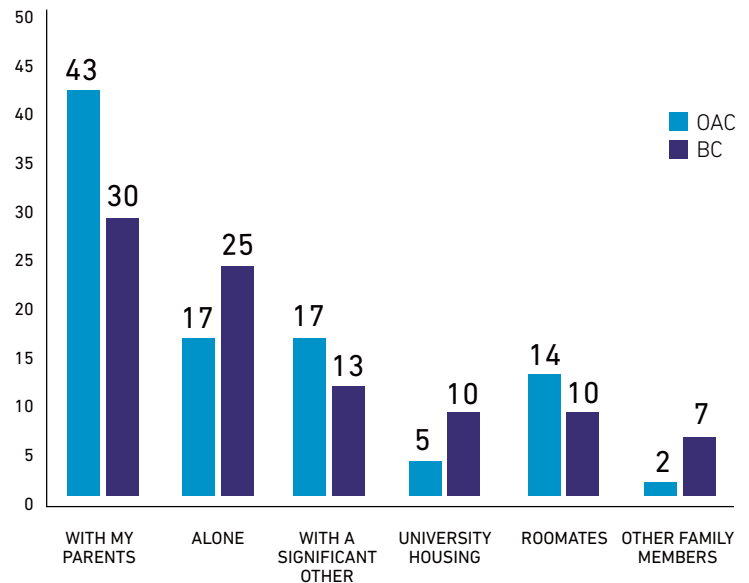
57 - EDUCATION



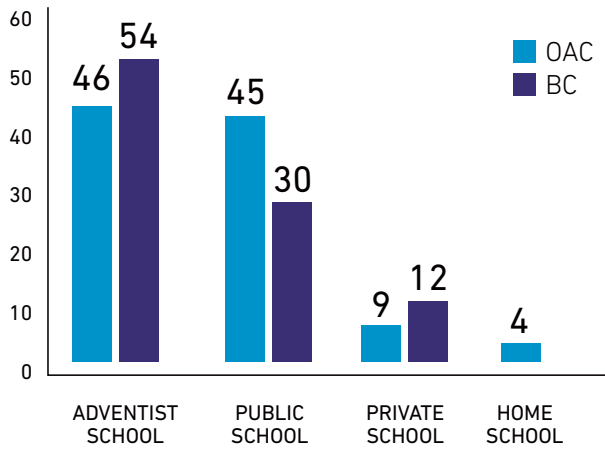
59 - SIZE OF CHURCH



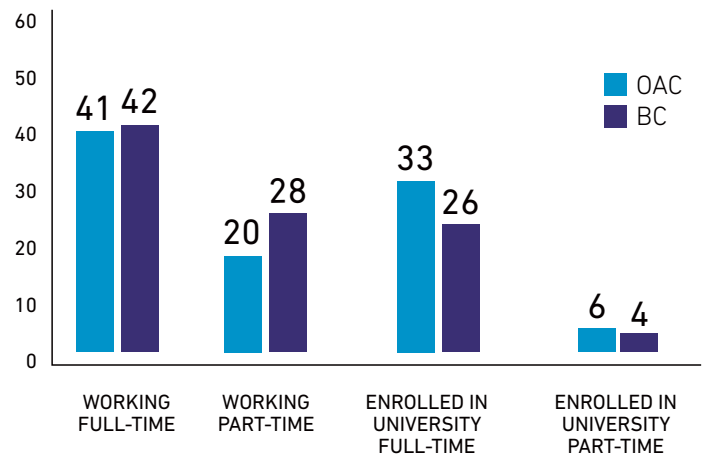
58 - ETHNICITY (TOP 7 SELECTED)



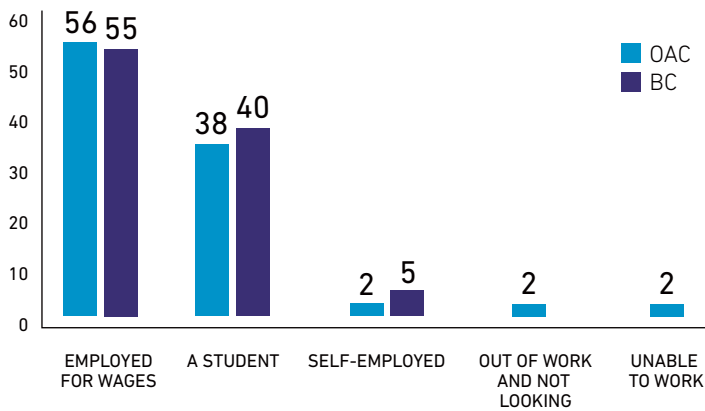
60 - I LIVE...



61 - I ATTENDED...



63 - ARE YOU CURRENTLY...



62 - ARE YOU CURRENTLY...

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rajkumar Dixit (M.Div, D.Min) is the Lead Pastor of Oakridge Adventist Church in Vancouver, Canada. Beginning his career in ministry as a University Chaplain, Dixit is especially enthusiastic about serving young people. He holds a Master's Degree from La Sierra University with a concentration in Youth Ministry. His Doctor of Ministry was earned from Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington D.C.) in Leadership Excellence. He is the author of *Branded Faith: Contextualizing the Gospel in a Post-Christian World* (Wipf and Stock Publishing, 2010) and contributing author of *Steps to Discipleship* (General Conference Youth Department, 2012). He is also the author of numerous magazine articles.

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Kyle Stiemsma is a Pastoral Intern at Oakridge Adventist Church. He is a full-time graduate student of theology at Regent College, passionate about the spiritual life of the church. Since his teenage years, he has been serving in many different aspects of church ministry: coordinating small groups, developing curricula, teaching the Scriptures, and leading youth ministry. He has written for a variety of publications and is a regular contributor to Converge Magazine. As a millennial, he seeks to create practical theological tools and ideas to help his generation connect with Jesus Christ.



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