



New Member Survey



Pennsylvania Conference

Conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry

**(c) 2002, Pennsylvania Conference
and the Center for Creative Ministry**




The methodology of this study


- **A total of 296 people were baptized or made Profession of Faith in 1997.**
- **During 1999 and 2000--about two years after they joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church--interviewers made an attempt to talk to each one.**



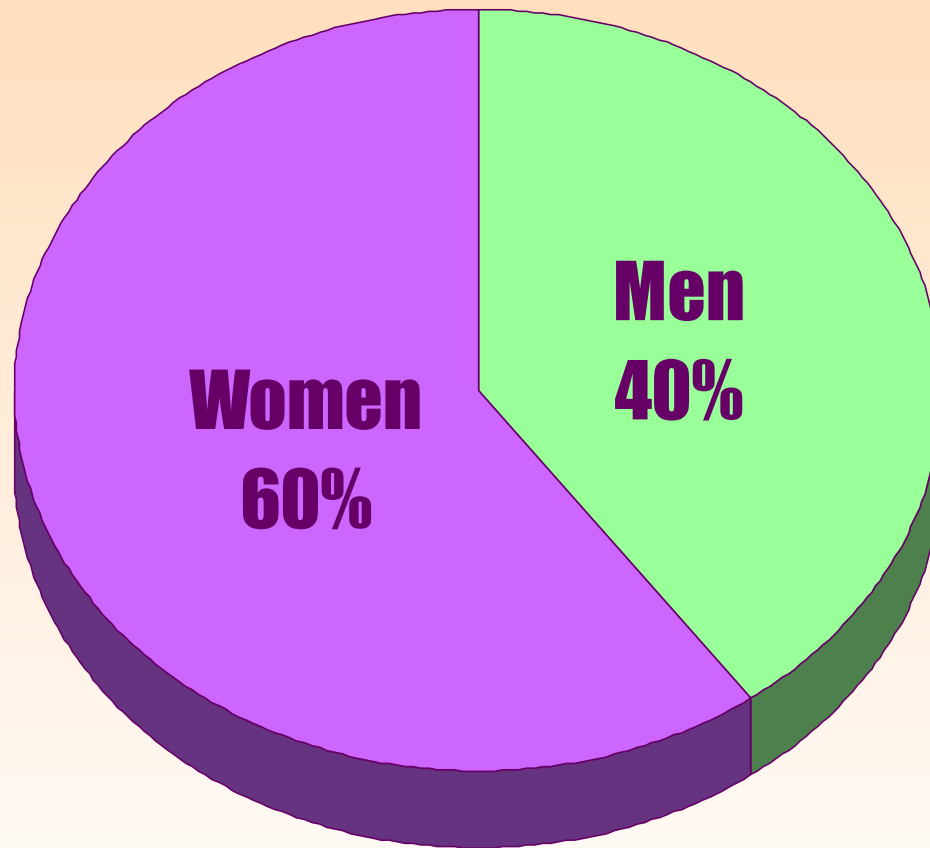
Response rate

- **Interviews were conducted with 215 of the 296 converts (73%) and the data in this study are based on these interviews.**
- **Another 25 individuals were confirmed in situations which make an interview not applicable.**
- **This increases the response rate to 81%, a very high response rate for surveys.**

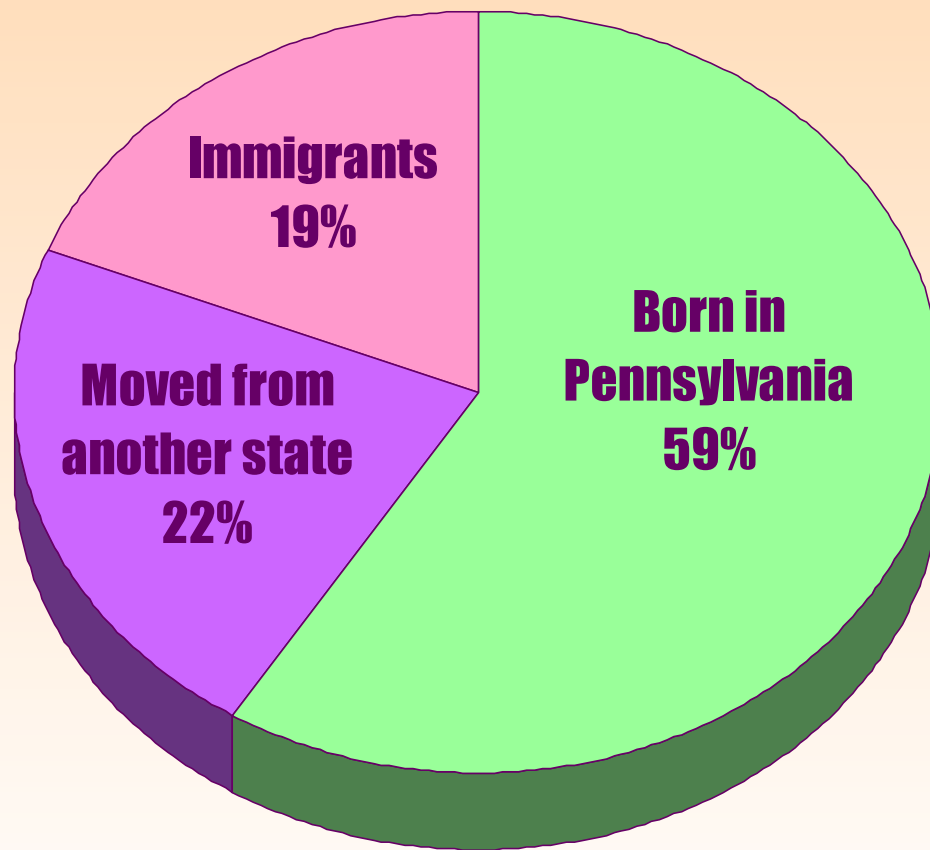
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- **The 25 confirmed in situations where an interview is not applicable:**
 - **2 who are deceased**
 - **9 who report that they are long-term members who were not baptized or made POF in 1997**
 - **14 who have moved out of the Pennsylvania Conference**

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- **The 56 individuals who could not be interviewed include:**
 - **15 who refuse to be interviewed, 11 of whom indicate that their membership was dropped**
 - **20 Hispanic members who either speak no English or cannot now be contacted**
 - **21 others for whom no working phone number can be obtained or who did not answer their phone after repeated attempts**

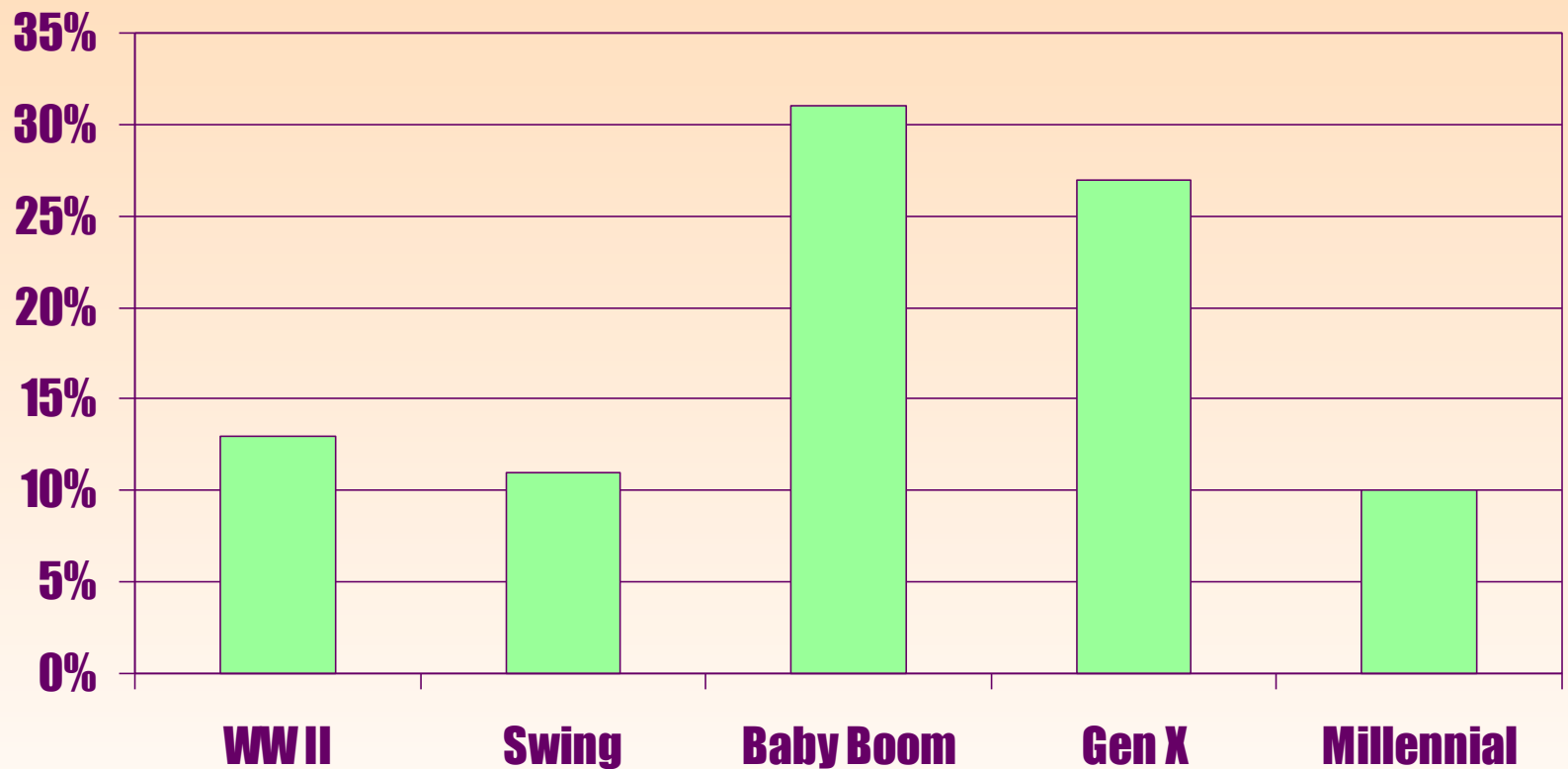
Demographics of converts



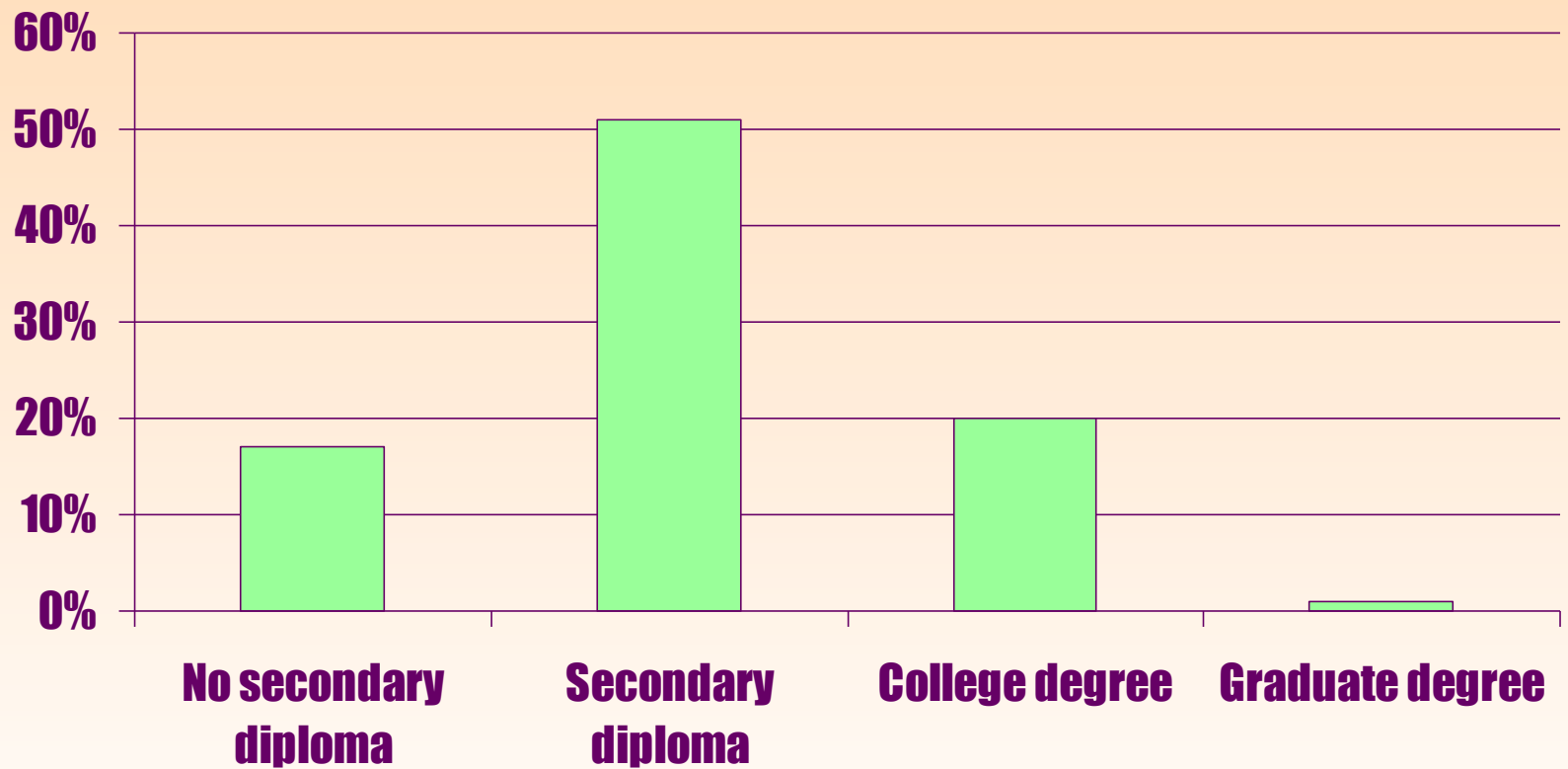
Demographics of converts



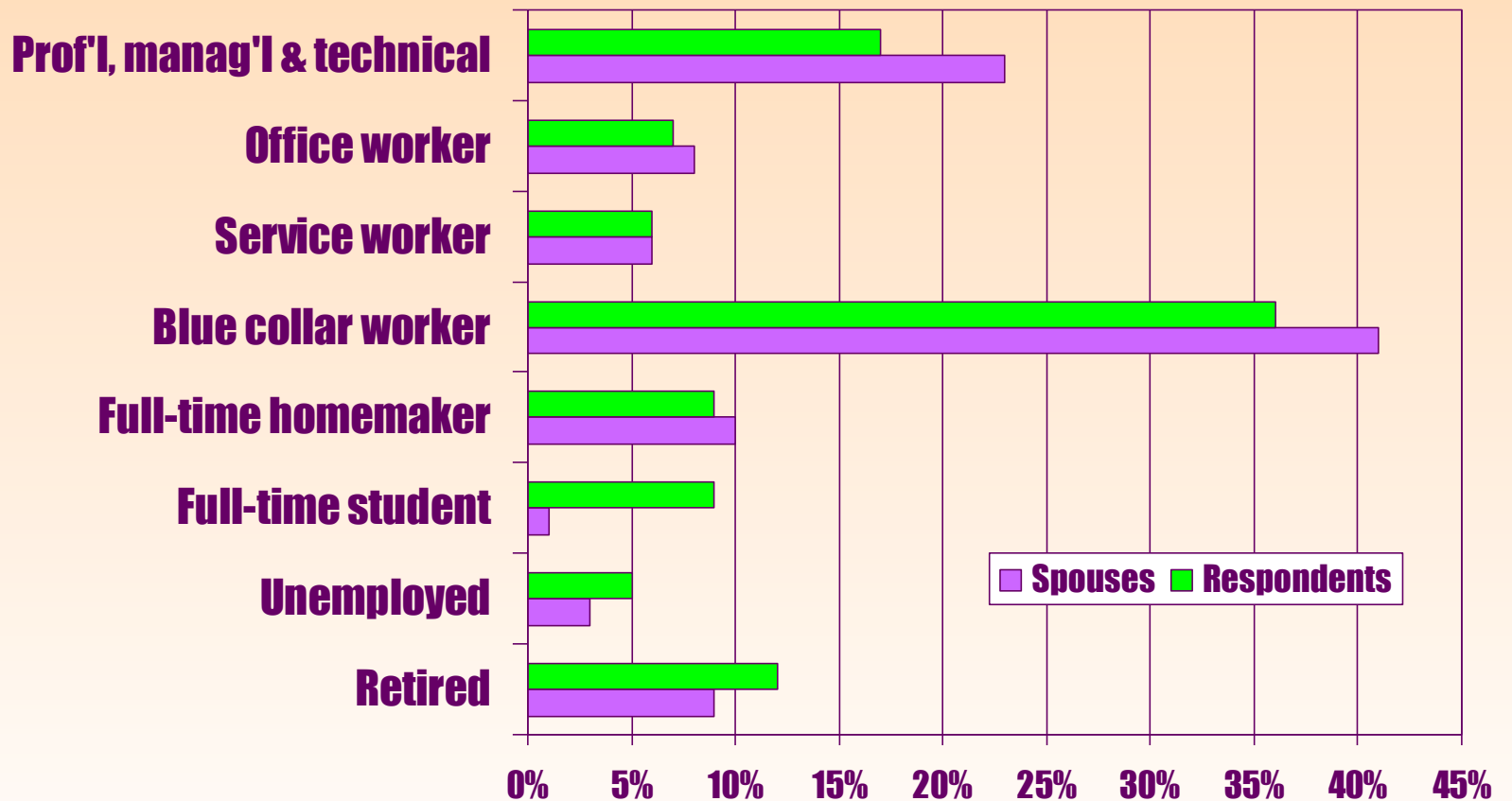
Age of converts by generation



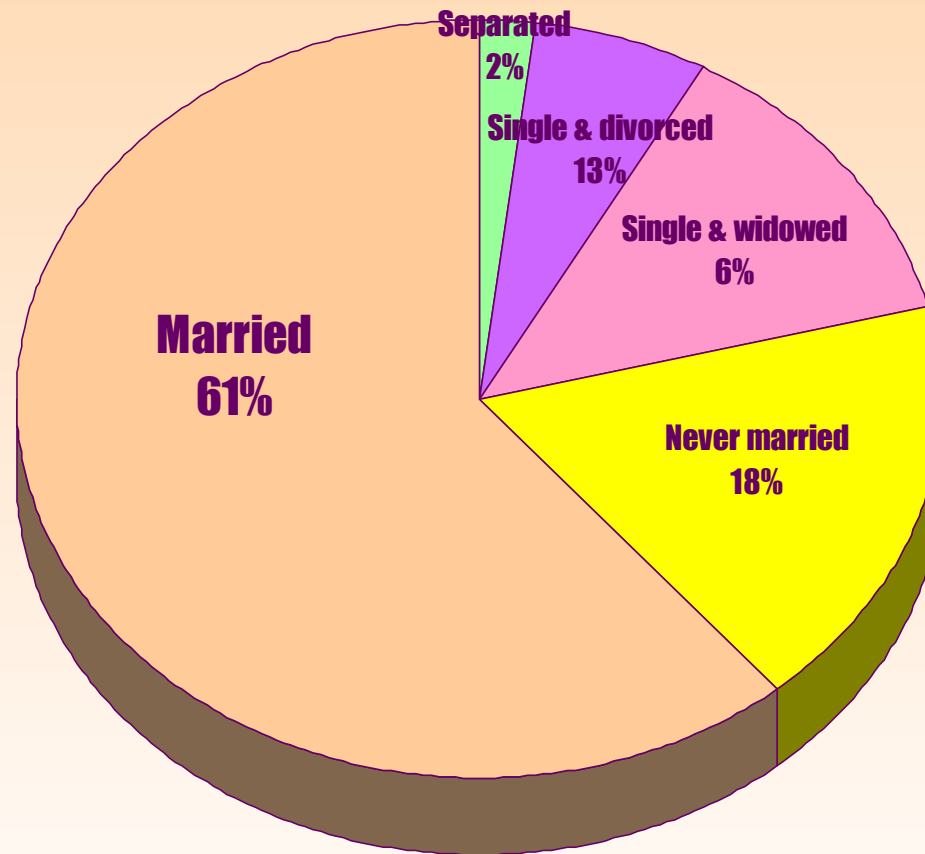
Education of converts



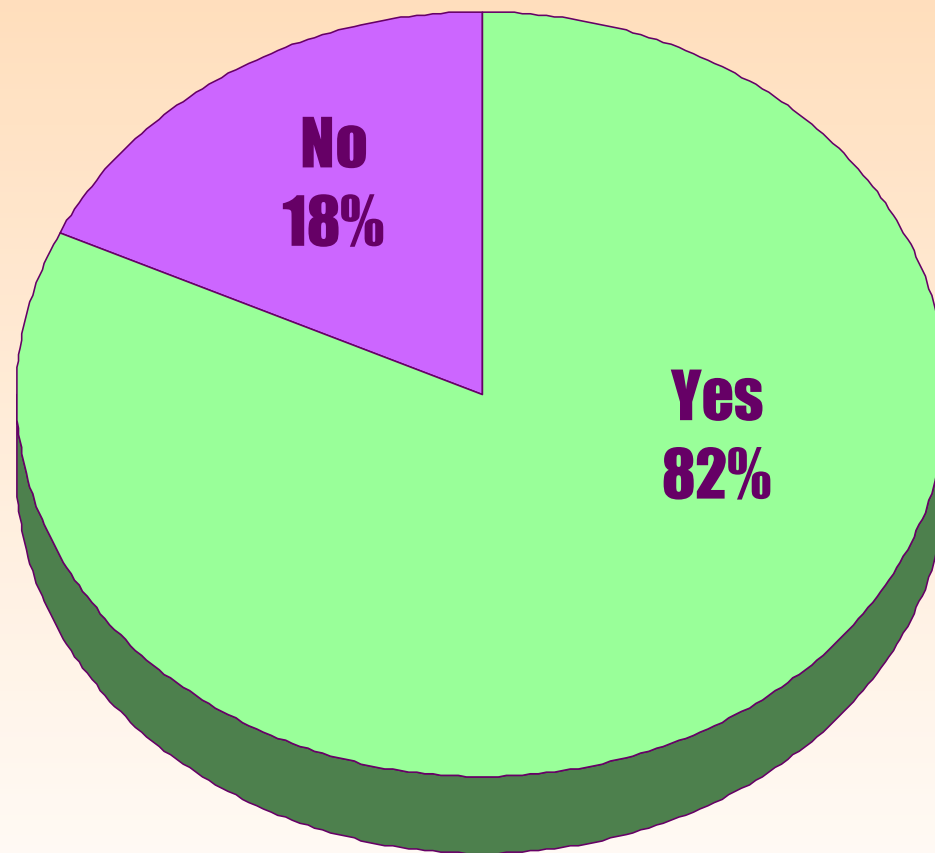
Occupations of converts and their spouses



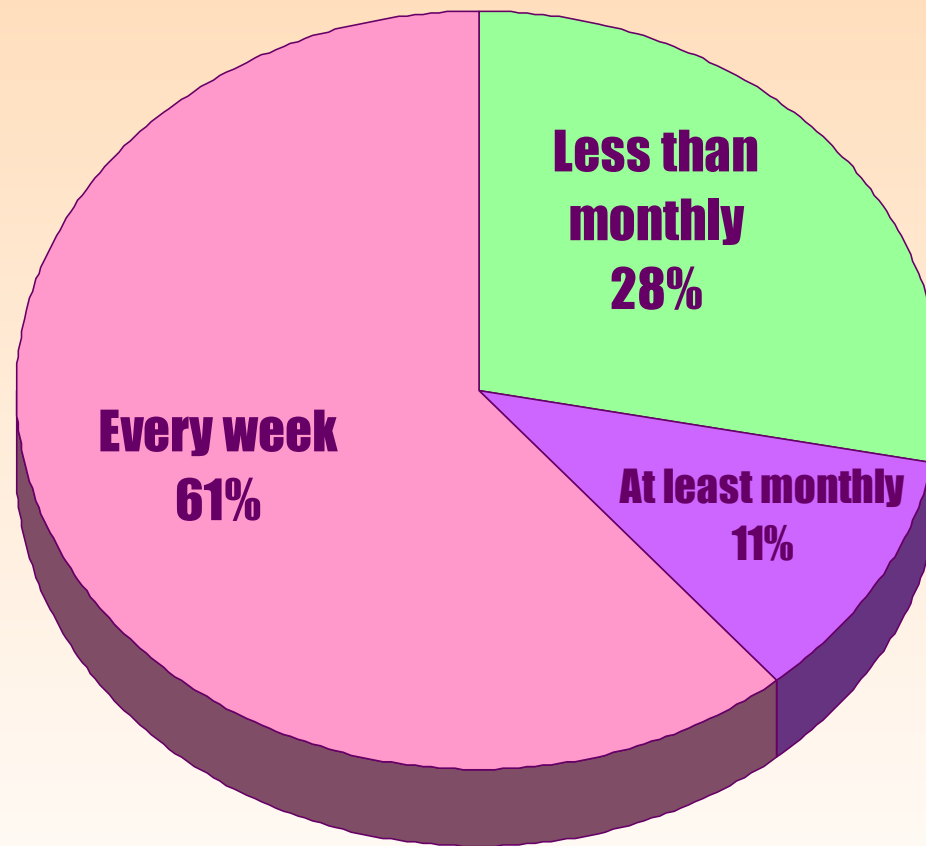
Marital status



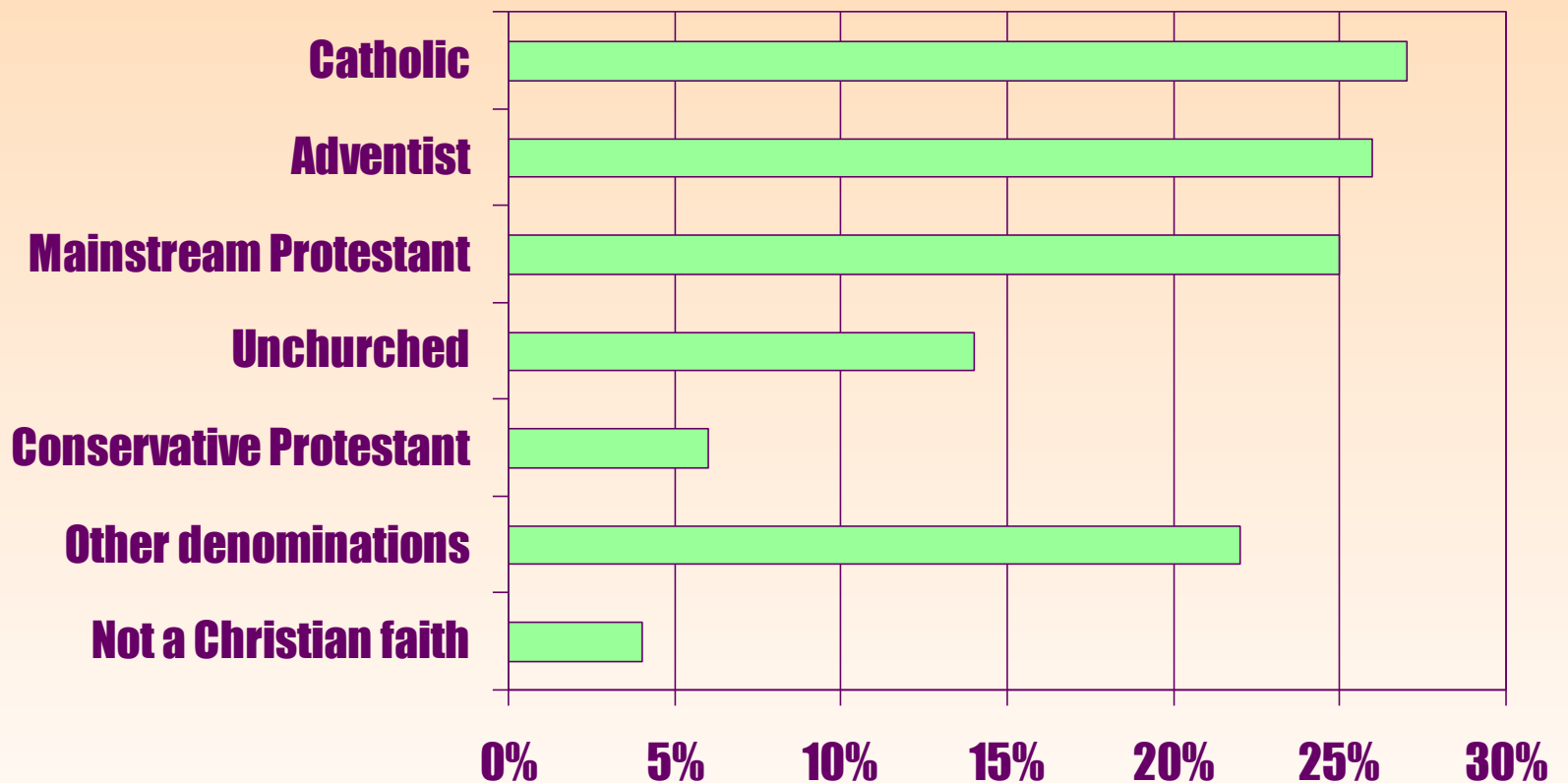
Did your parents take you to church or Sunday School?



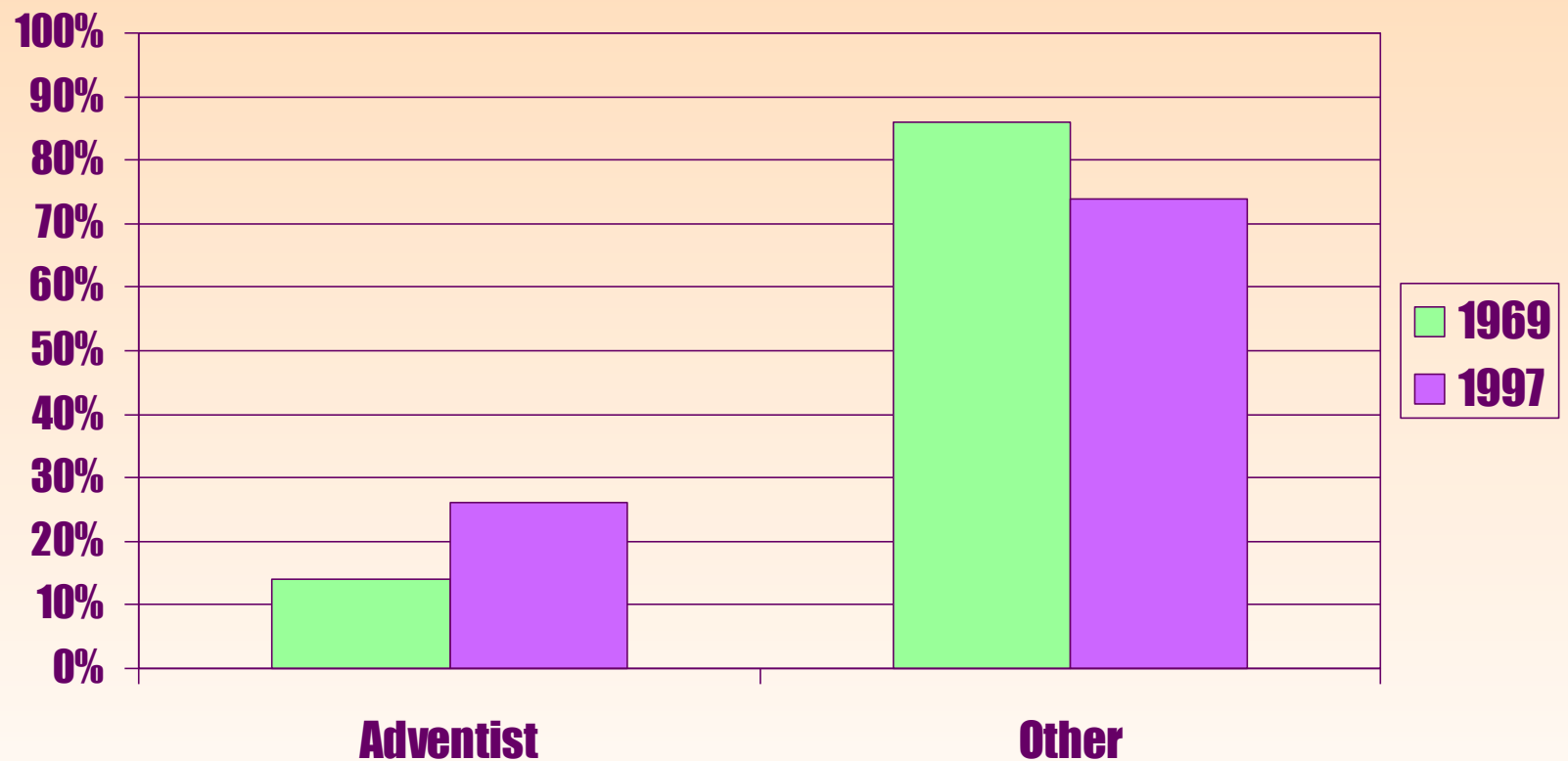
How often did your parents attend religious services?



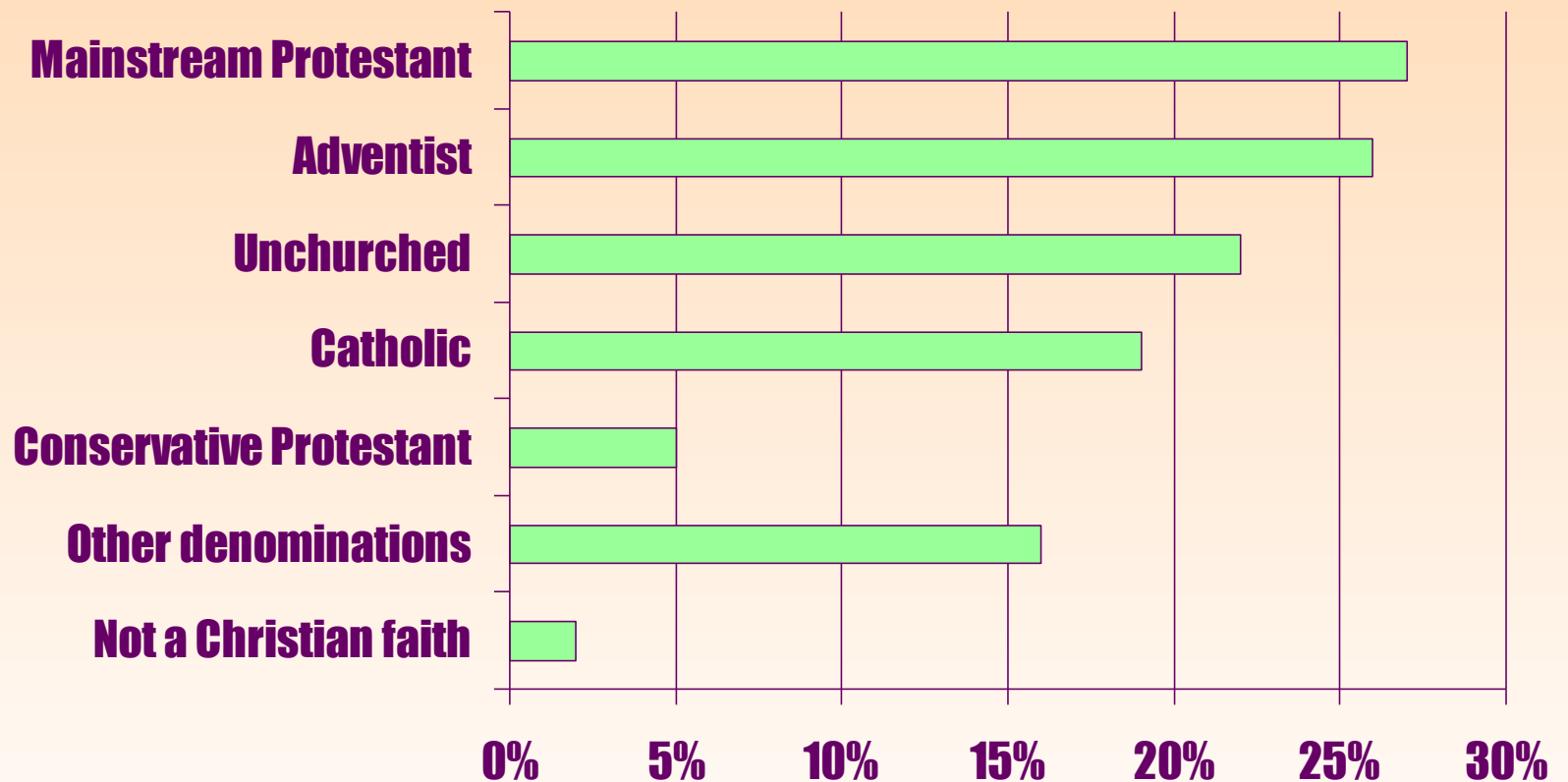
Religious background of parents



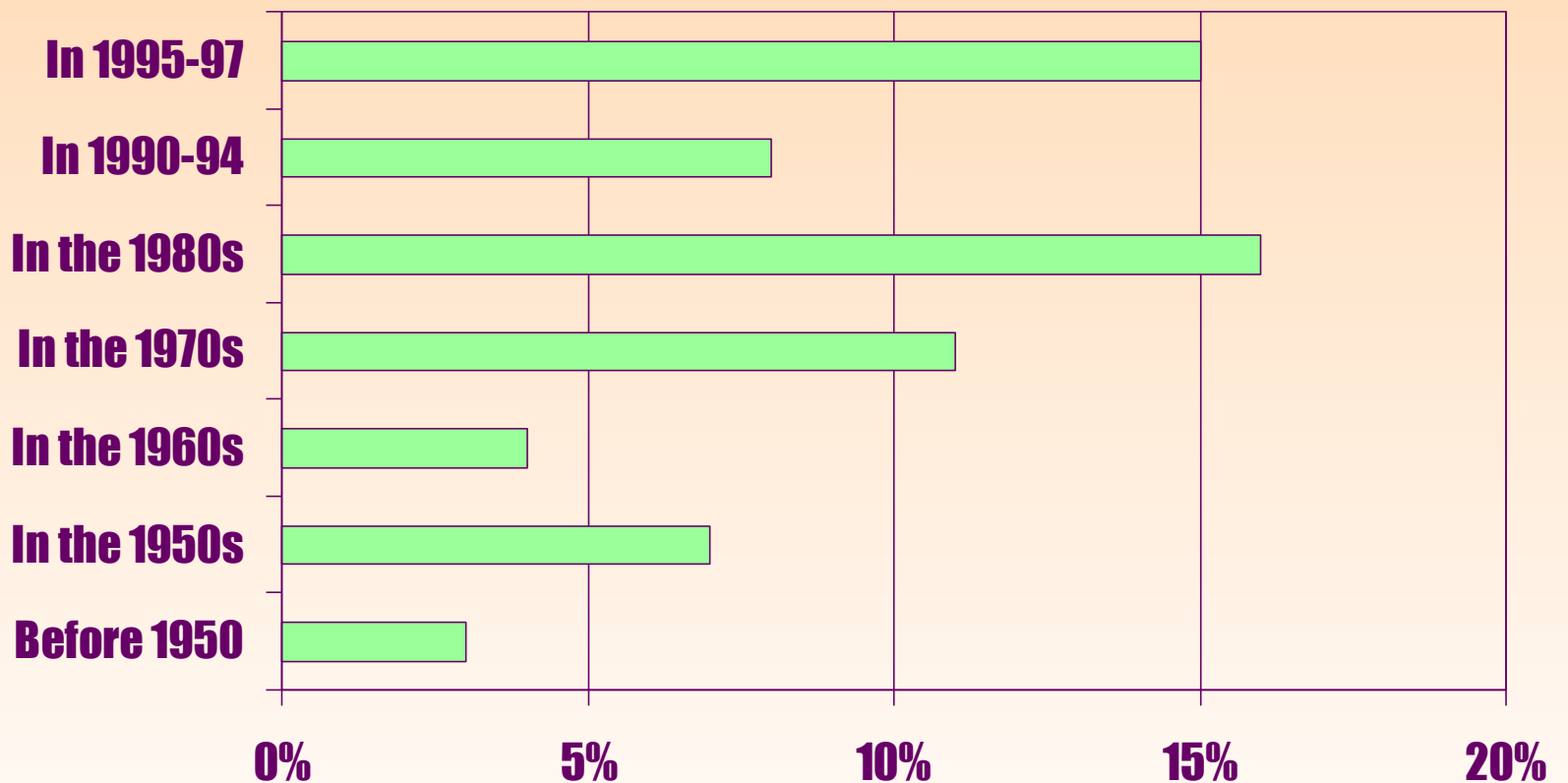
Religious background of parents



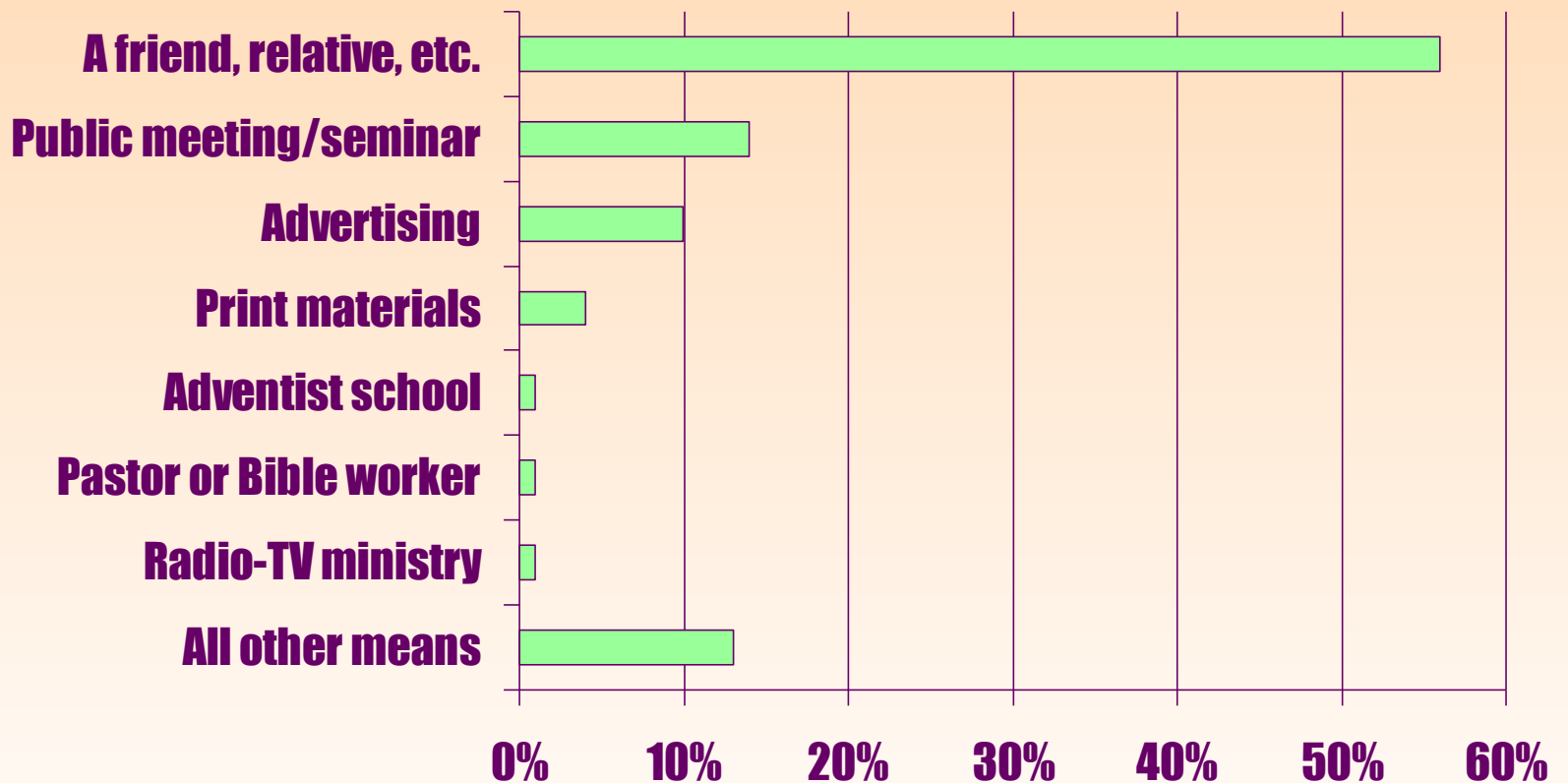
Religious background of spouse



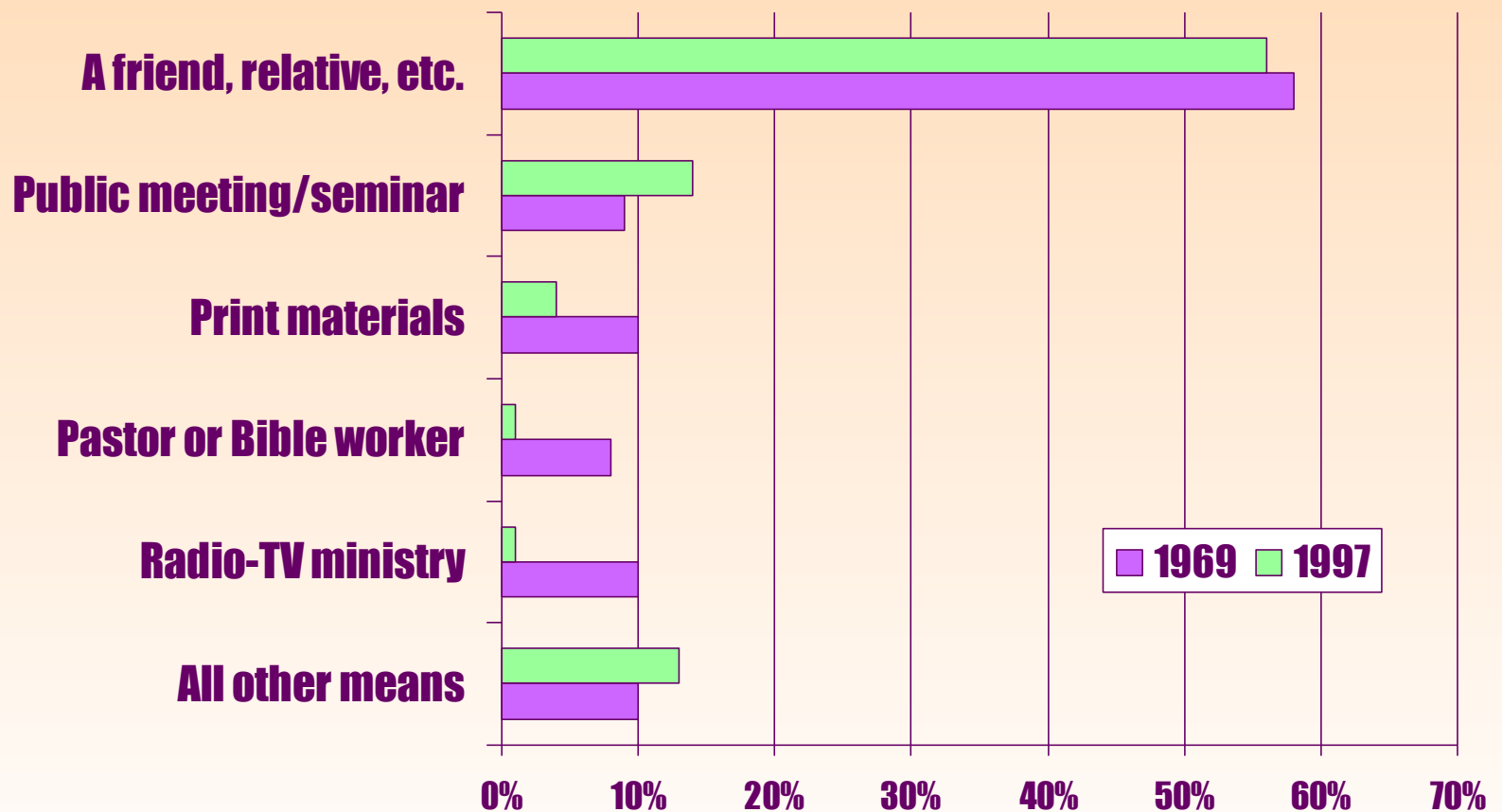
When did you first hear about the Adventist Church?



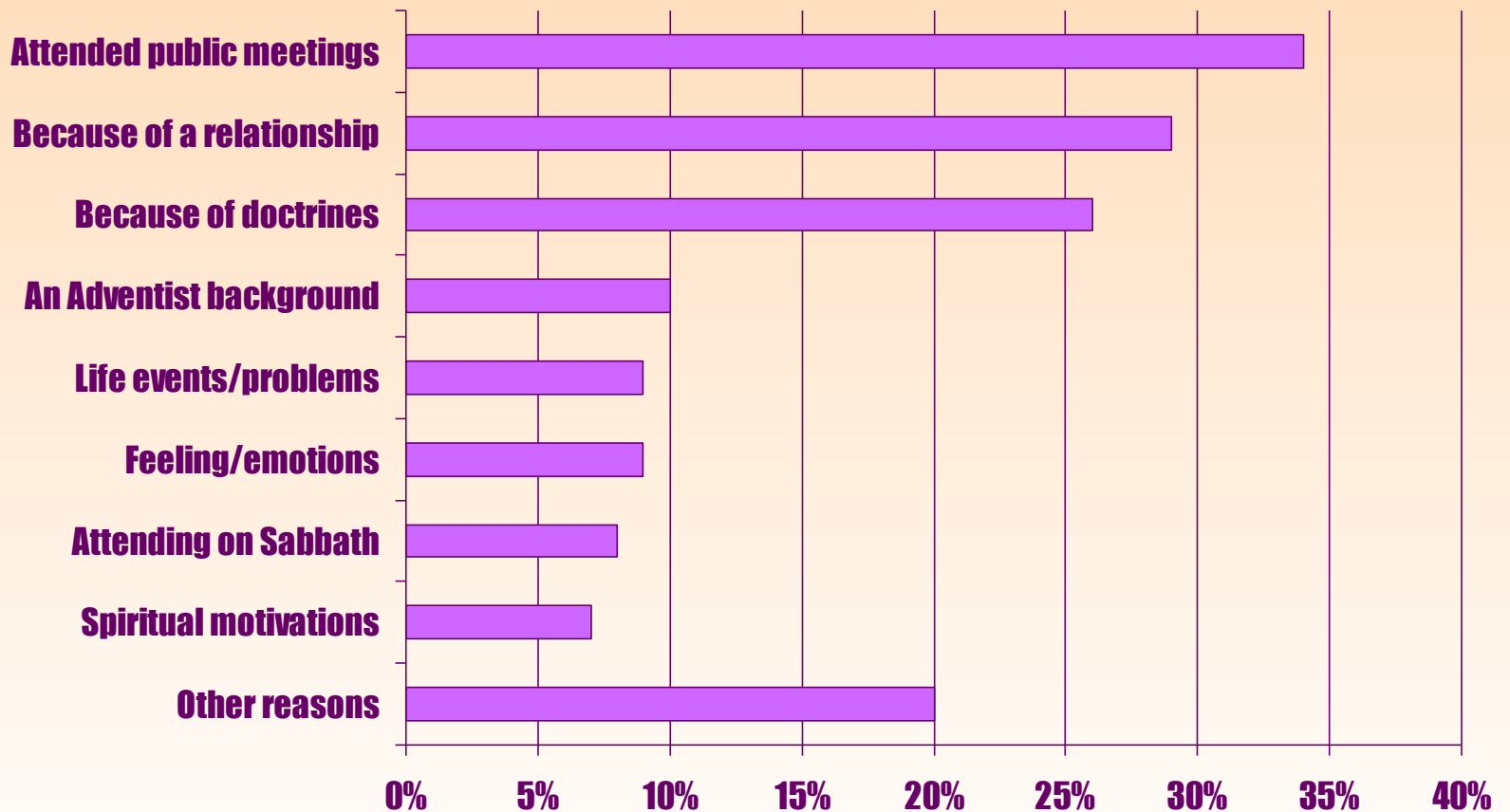
How did you first become aware of the Adventist Church?



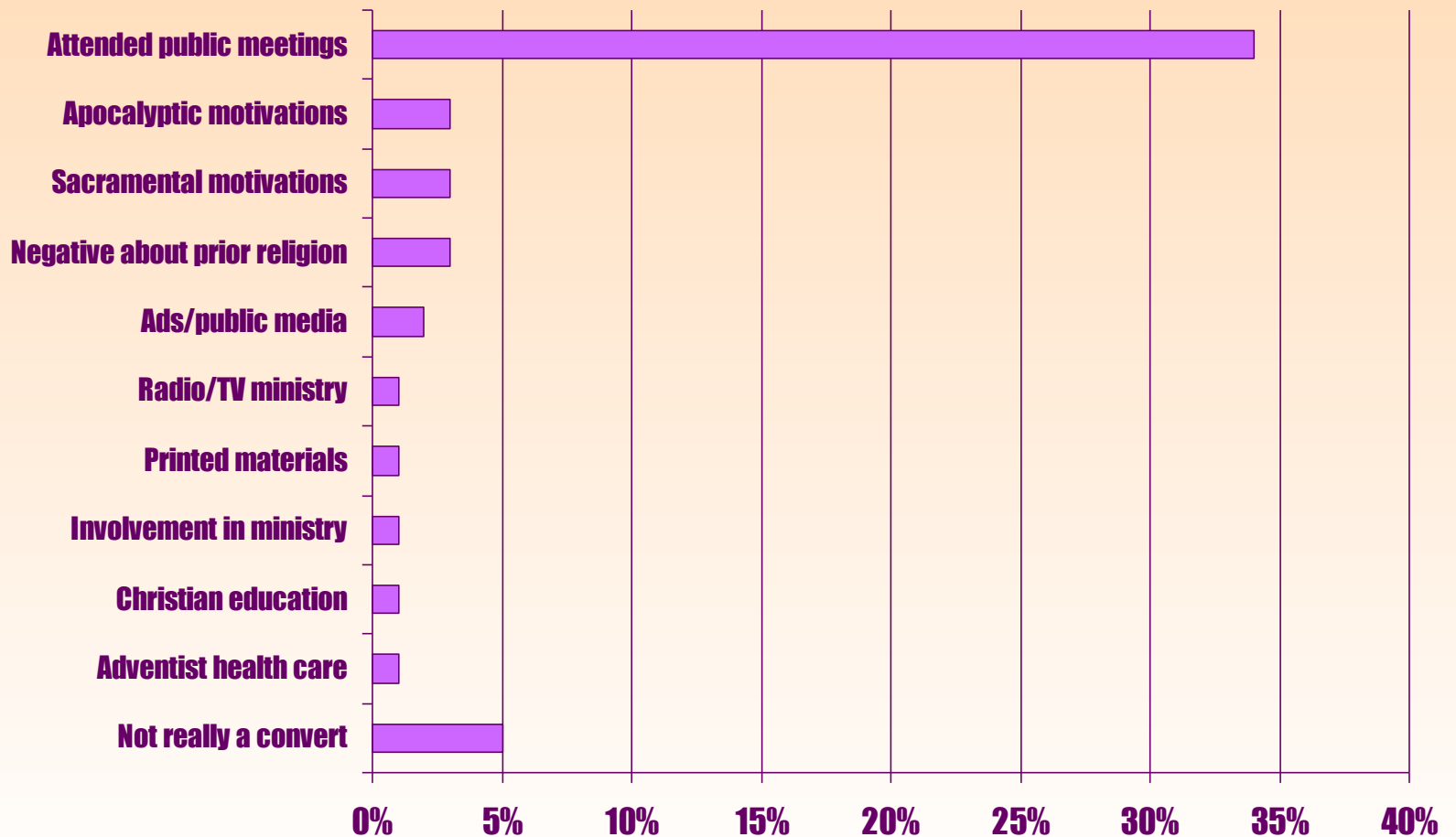
How did you first become aware of the Adventist Church?



How did you decide to join the Adventist Church?



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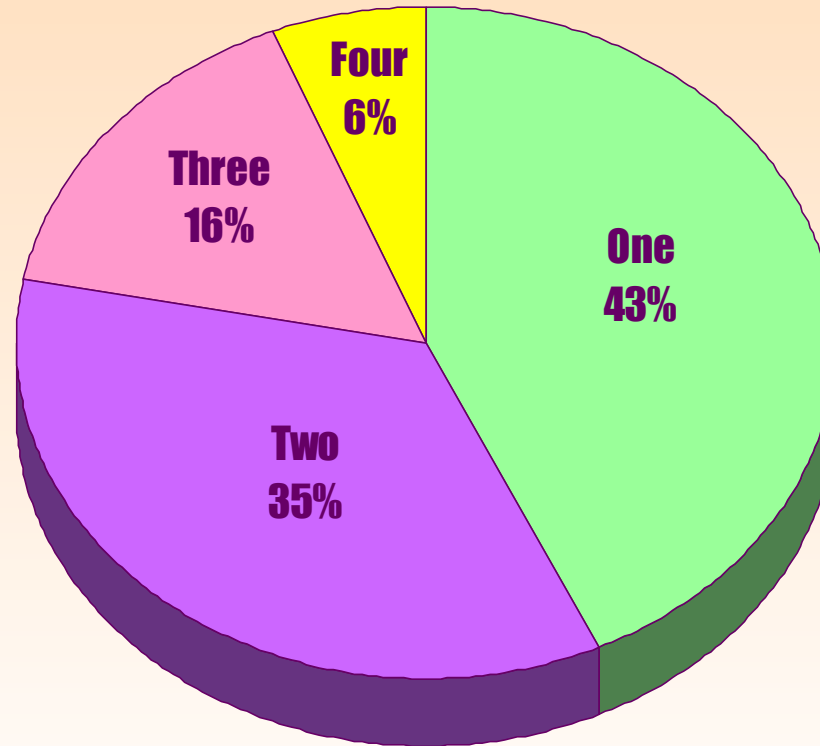


“Not really a convert”

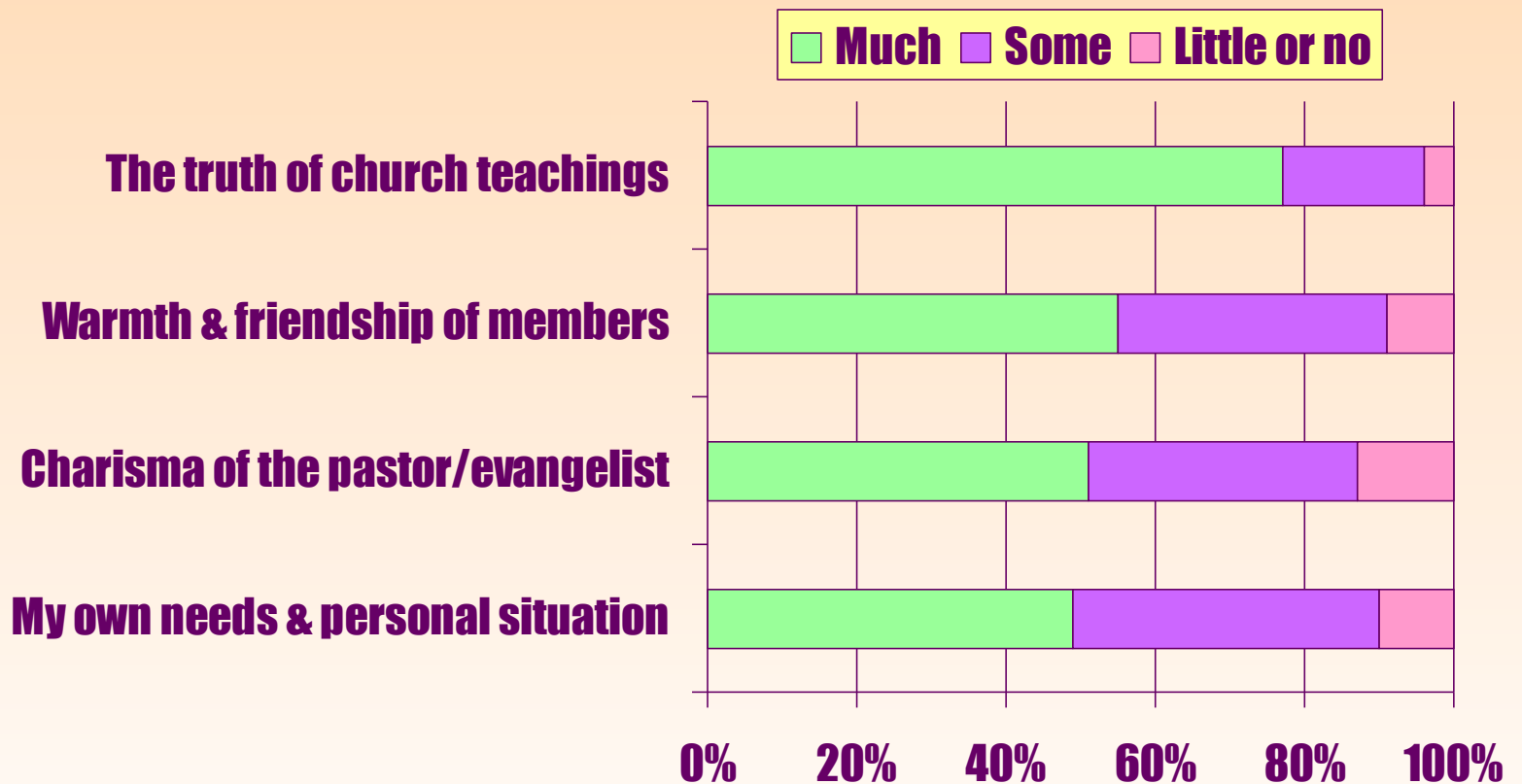
- **This 5% includes people who say that they wanted to be baptized, but did not want to join a church ... or, did not understand that by agreeing to be baptized, they were also agreeing to join the church ... or, simply went along with social pressure from friends and family ... or, quit attending church immediately after baptism.**

How did you decide to join the Adventist Church?

Number of items mentioned in response



What most attracted you to the Adventist Church?





Was there a strong attraction not mentioned above?

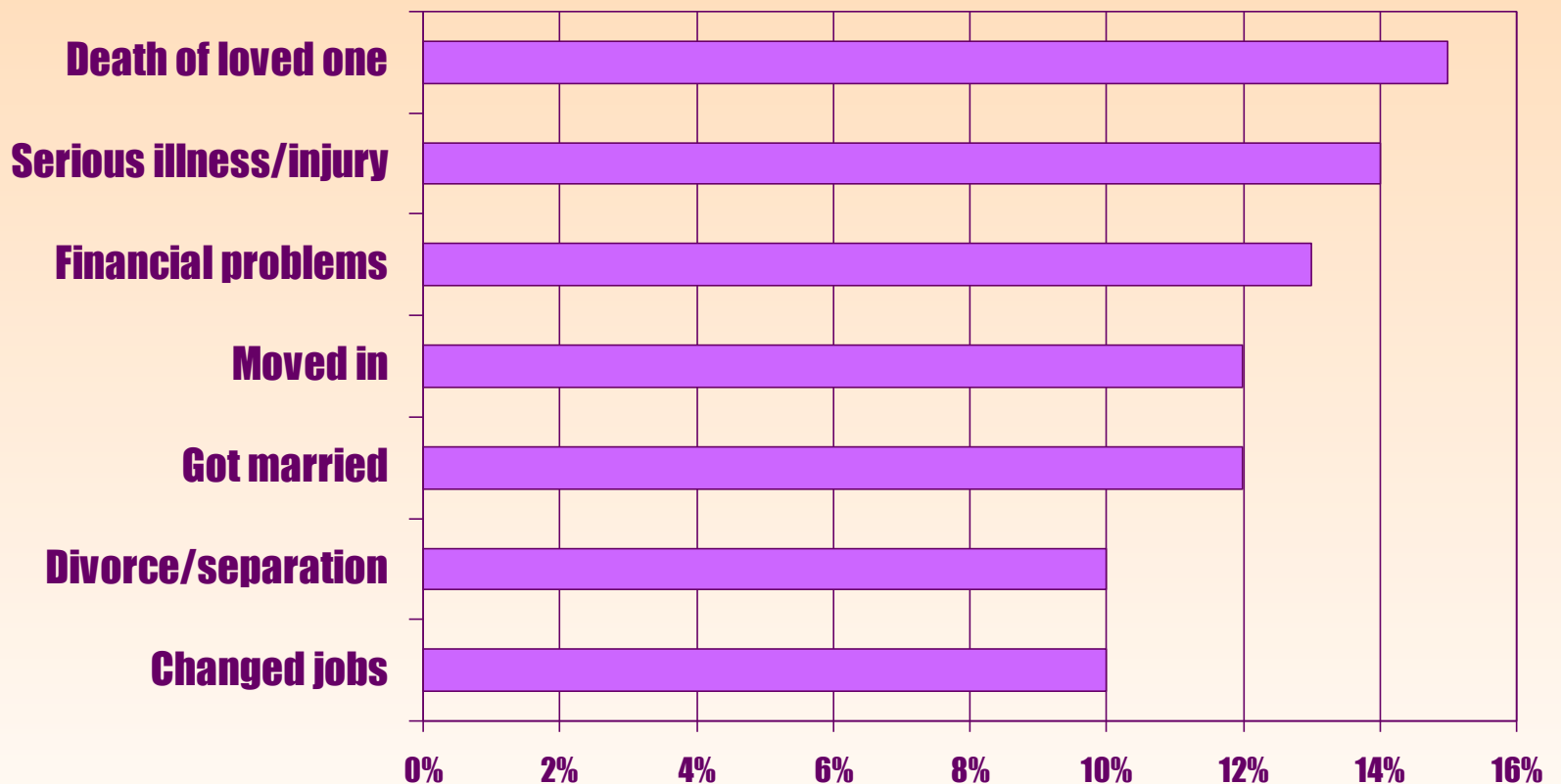
- 43 responses to this follow-up question**
- 28 simply re-stated one of the prior items**
- 7 mentioned specific church ministries (54% of proper response; 3% of total)**
- 5 mentioned spiritual motivations (38% of proper response; 2% of total)**
- One mentioned a media ministry (8% of proper response; 0.5% of total)**



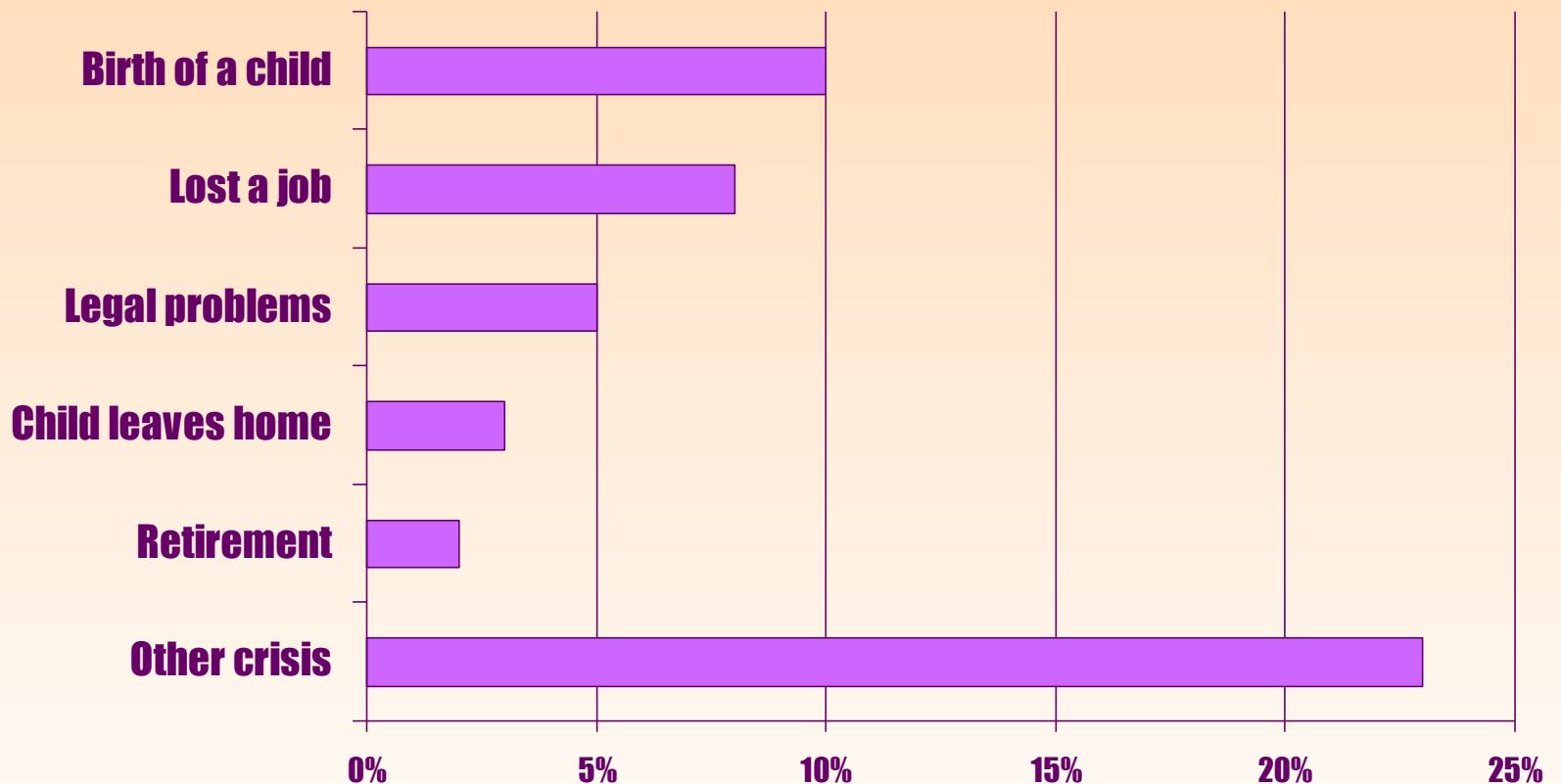
Was there a strong attraction not mentioned above?

- **One woman “felt tricked into joining. An Andrews University student asked her to sign a baptism card and she did not know what she was agreeing to. But now, she’s glad she’s a member” of the church.**
- **This represents 8% of the proper response and 0.5% of the total.**

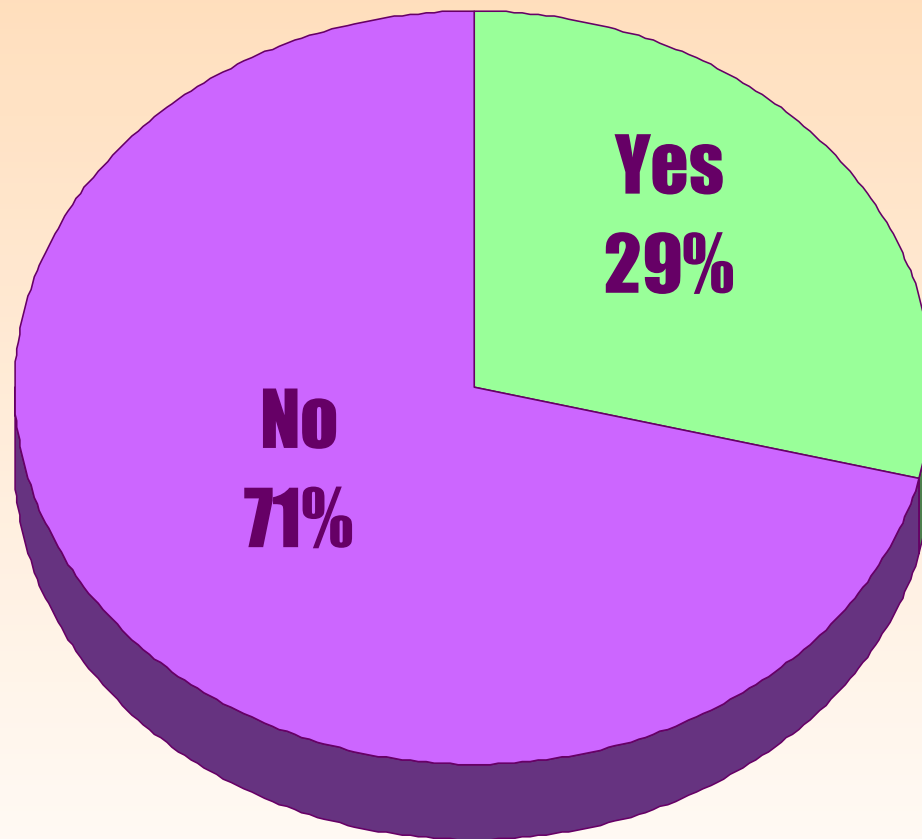
Life events in year prior to decision to join the church



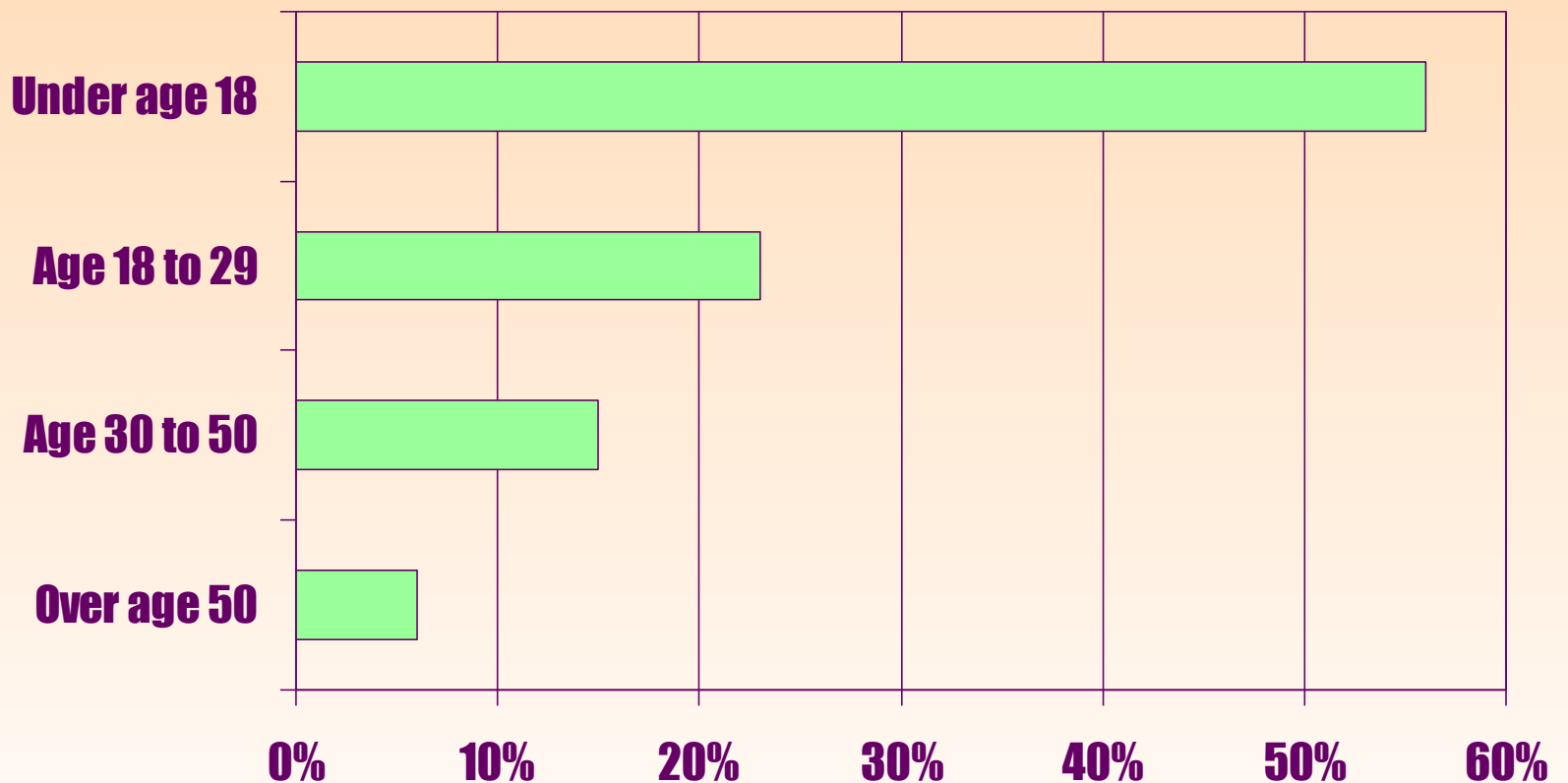
Life events in year prior to decision to join the church



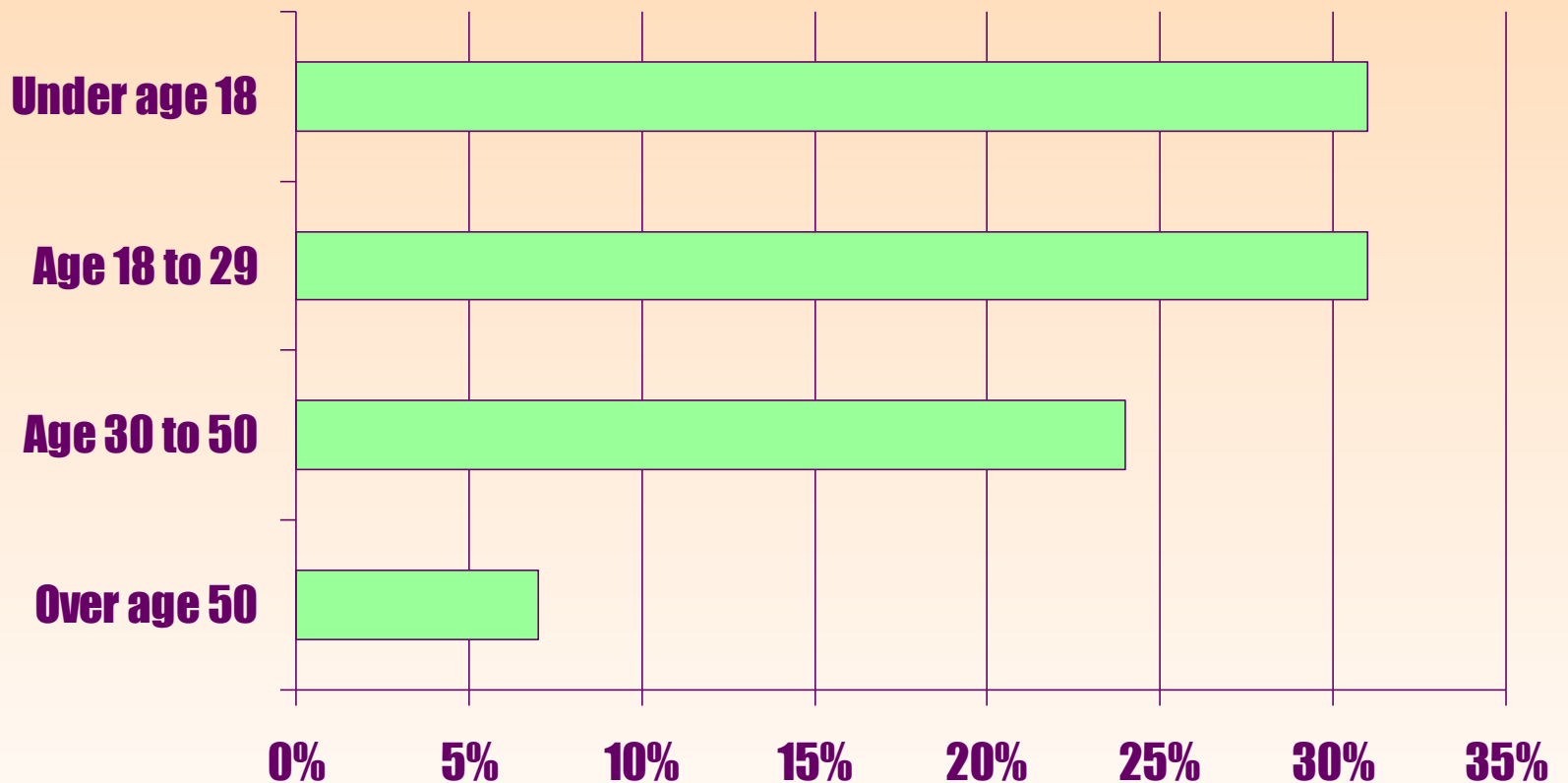
Did you ever join the Adventist Church before 1997?



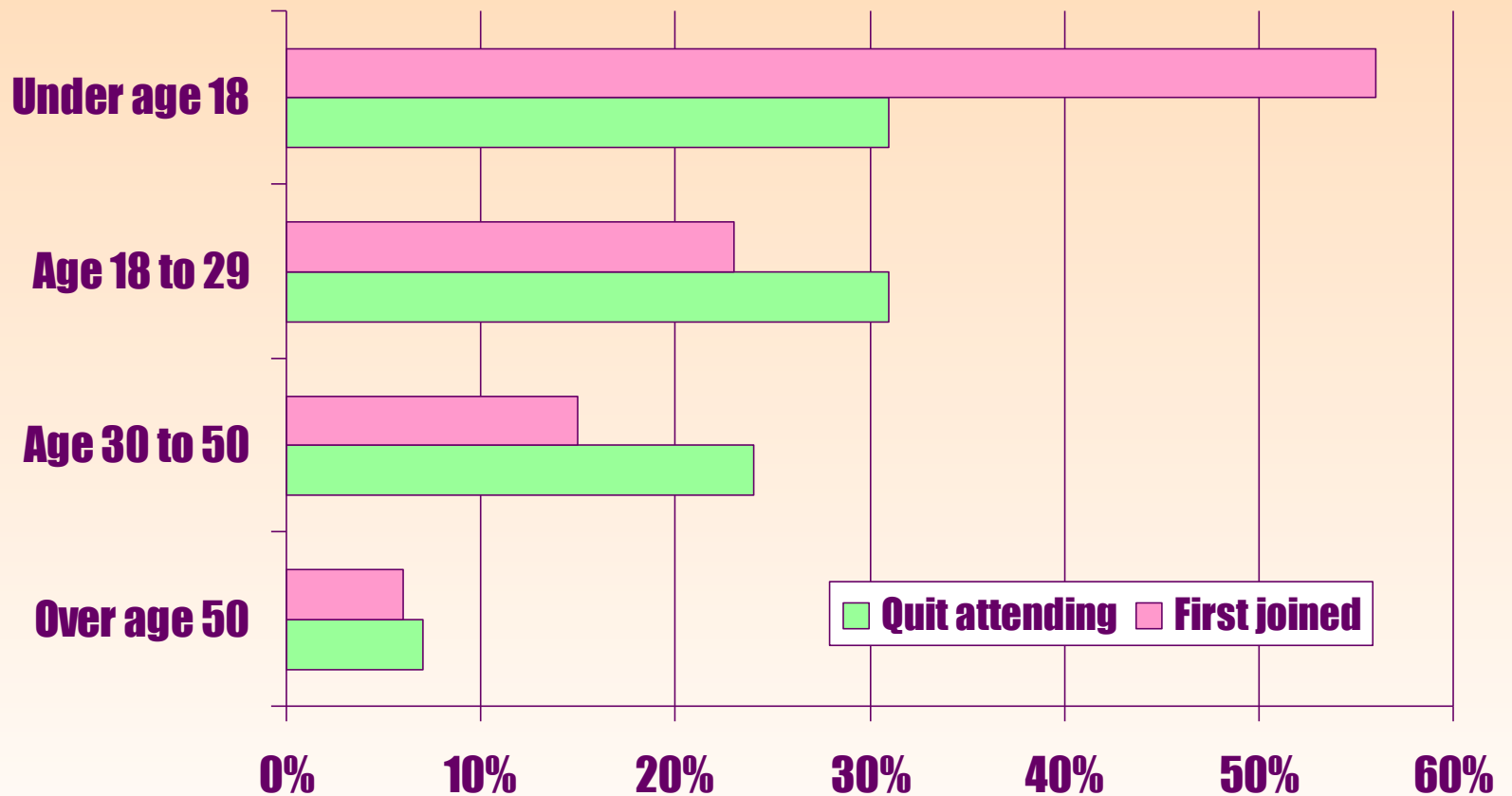
Returning Dropouts: At what age did you first join the Church?



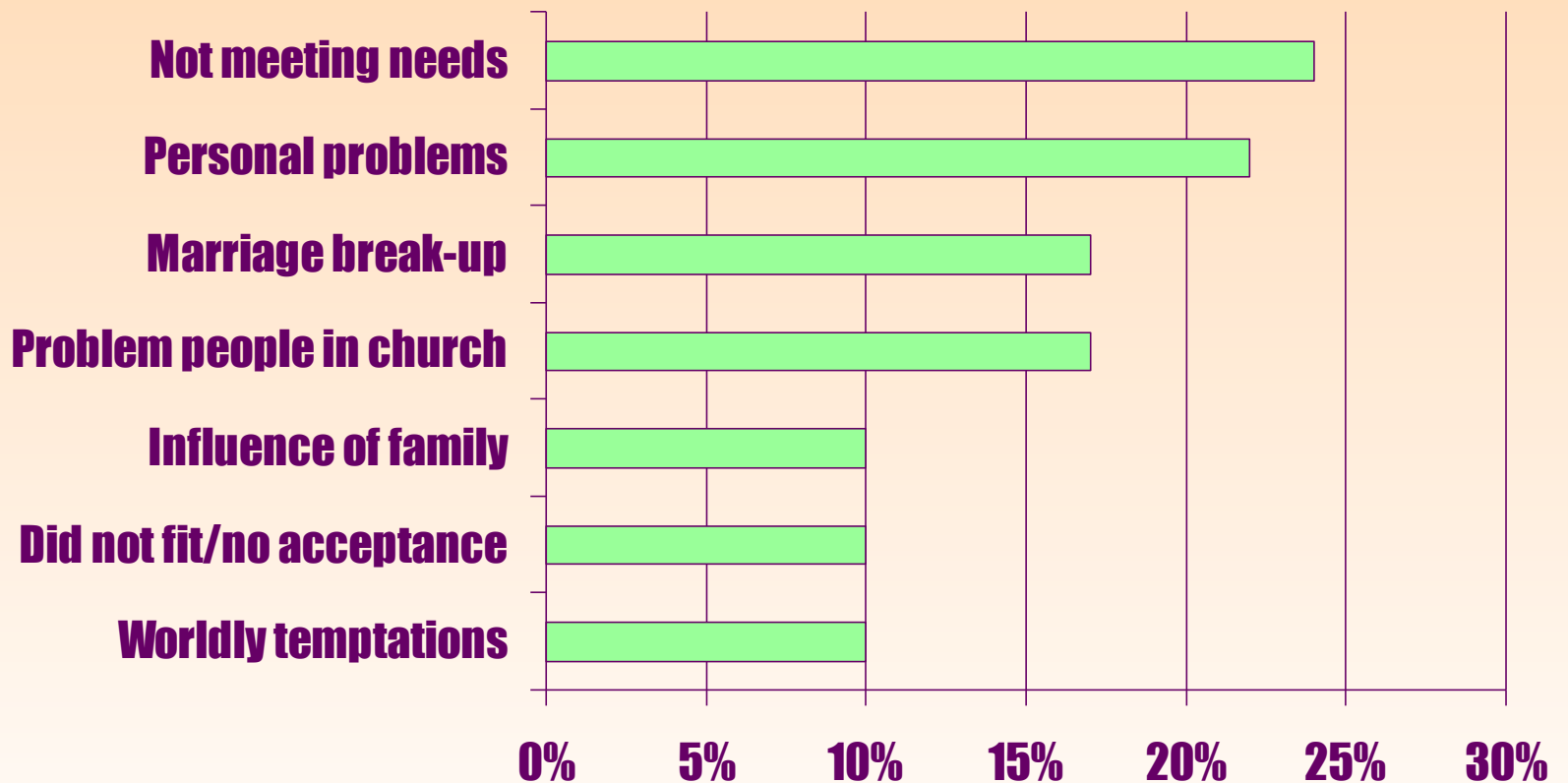
Returning Dropouts: At what age did you quit attending?



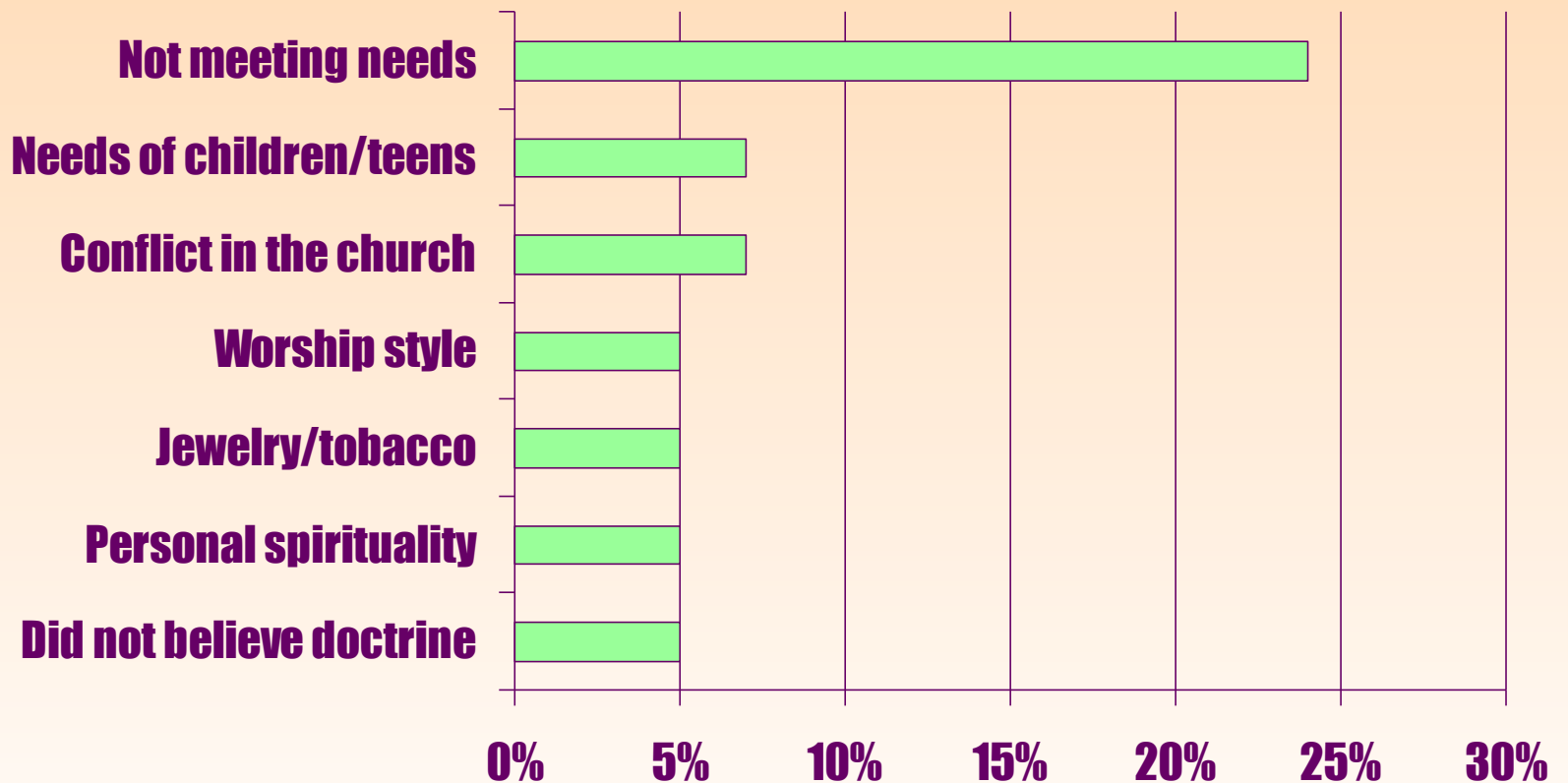
Returning Dropouts: Age first joined and age quit attending



Returning Dropouts: How did you happen to quit attending?



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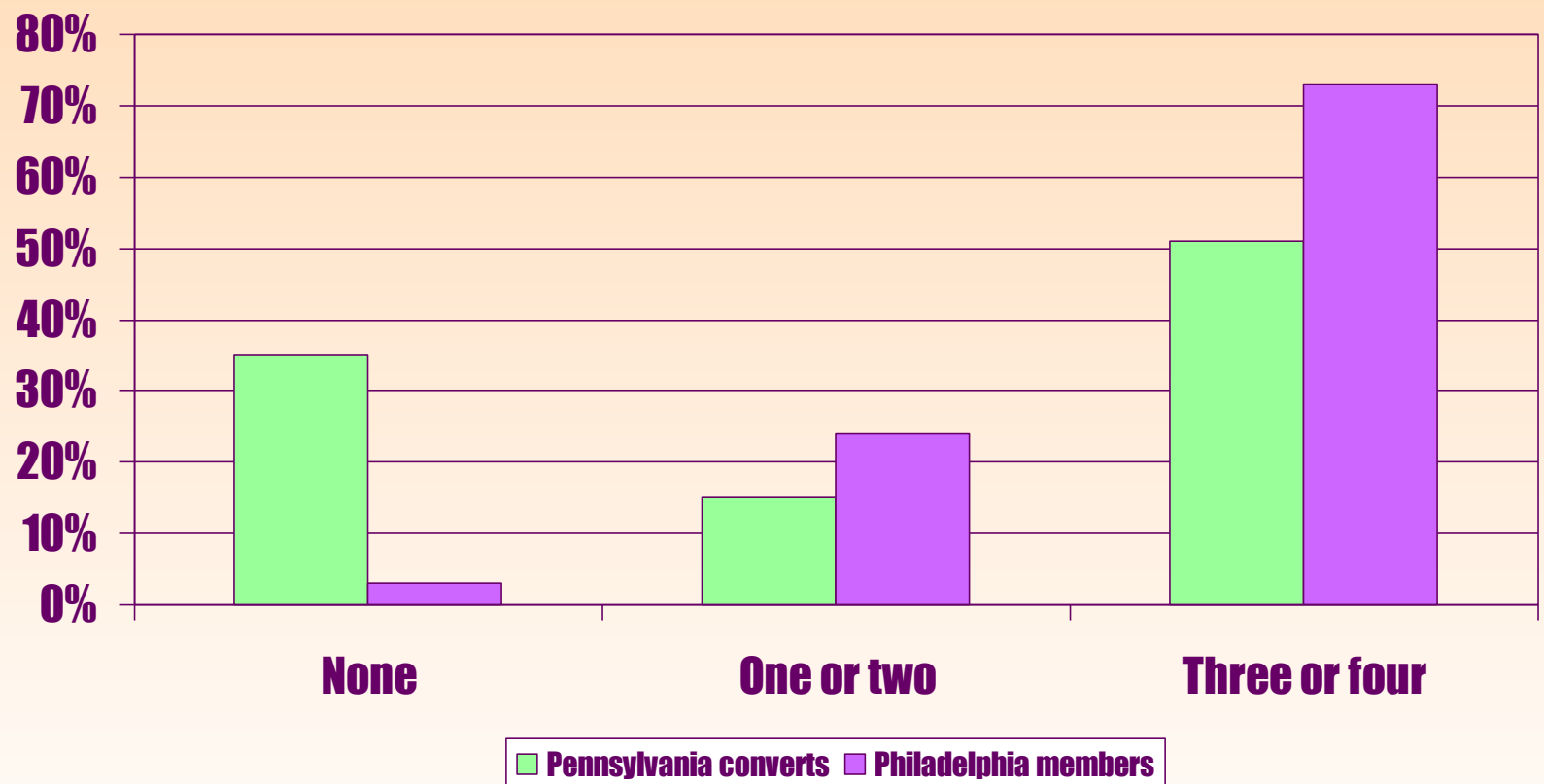




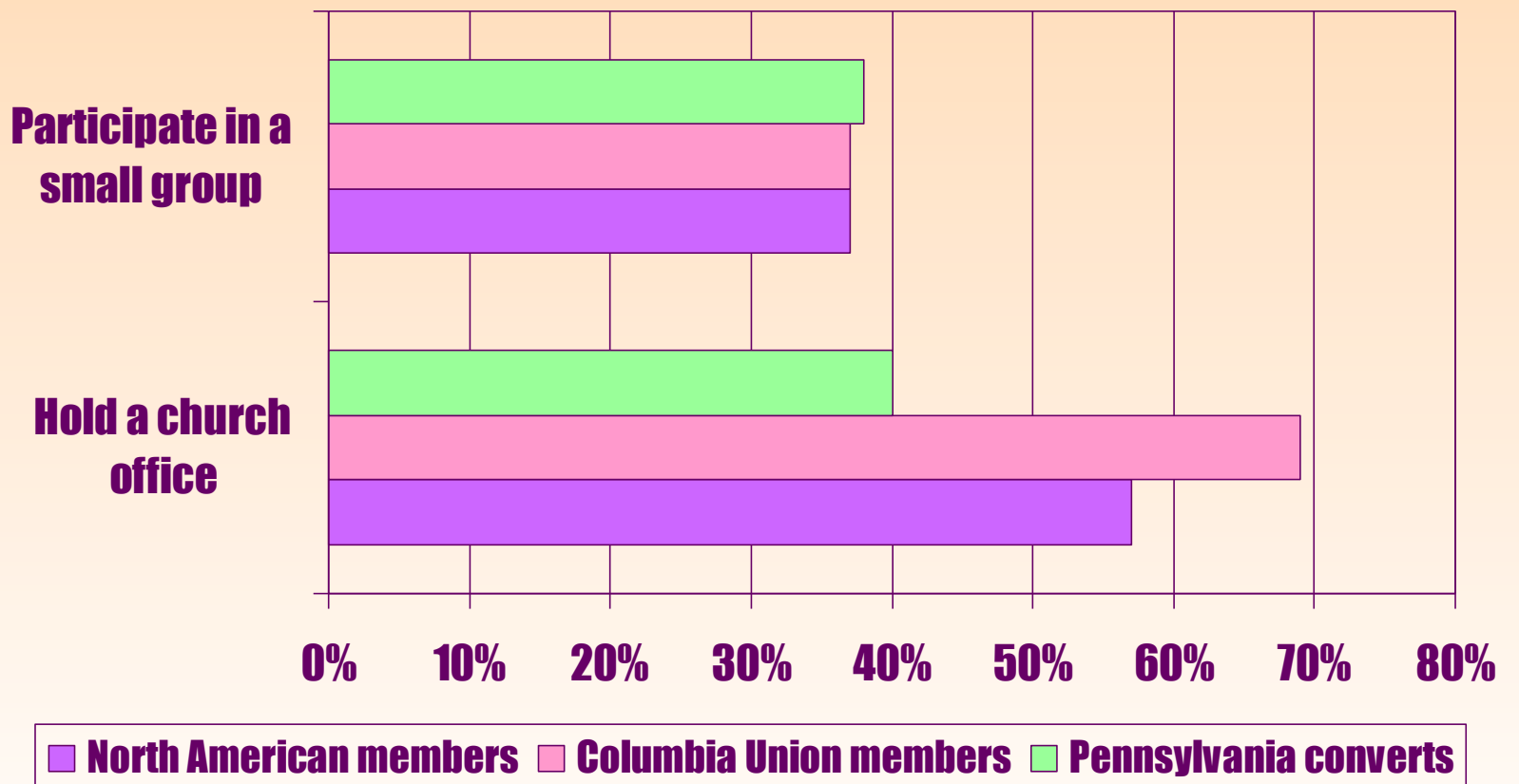
Returning Dropouts: How did you happen to quit attending?

- **All of the respondents that indicated they dropped out of the Adventist Church because of doctrine are former members of the World-wide Church of God who left that denomination because of its change of teaching on the Sabbath**
- **In some cases they say they did not realize they were joining the Adventist Church**

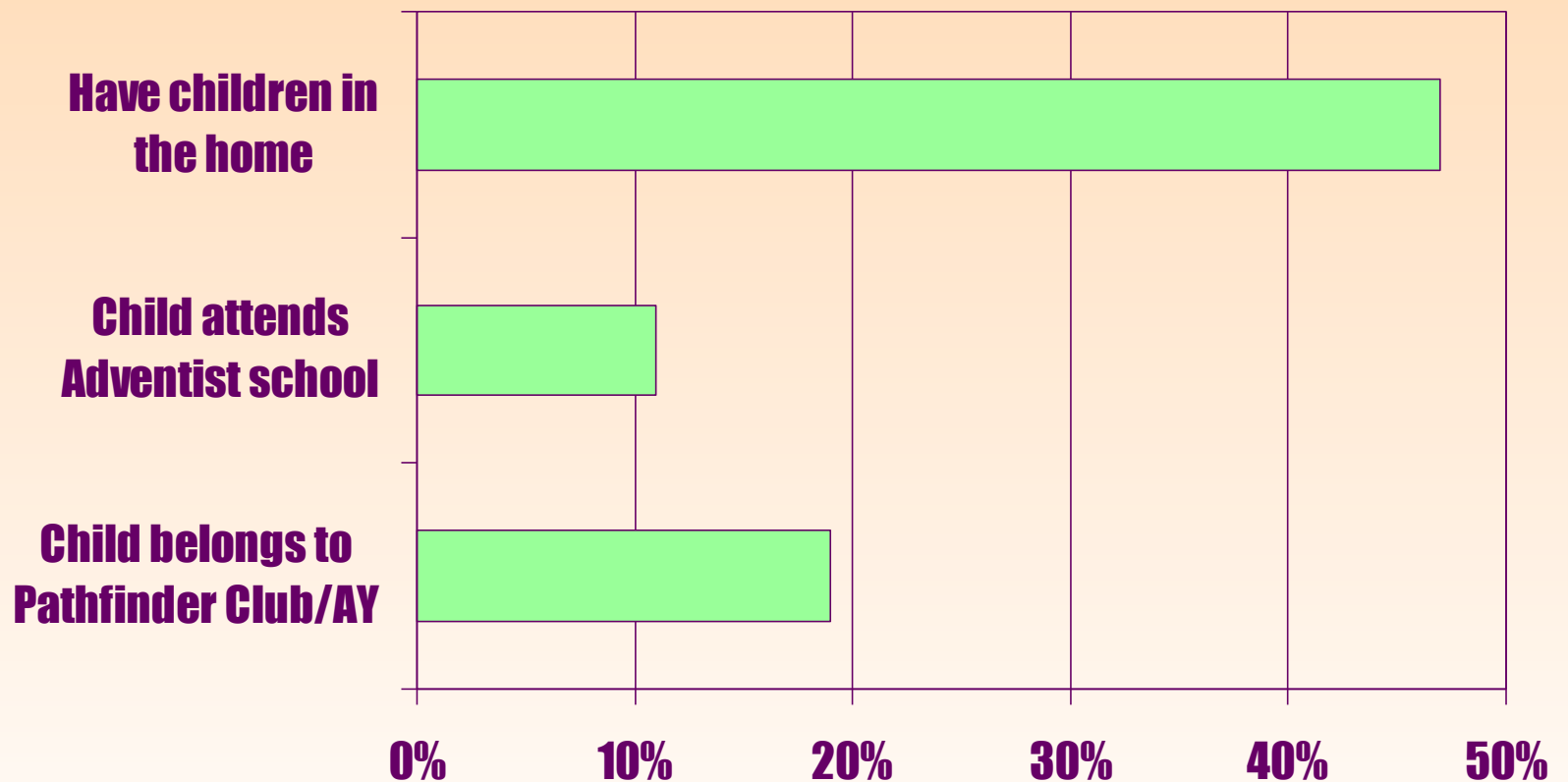
Church attendance out of the last four Sabbaths



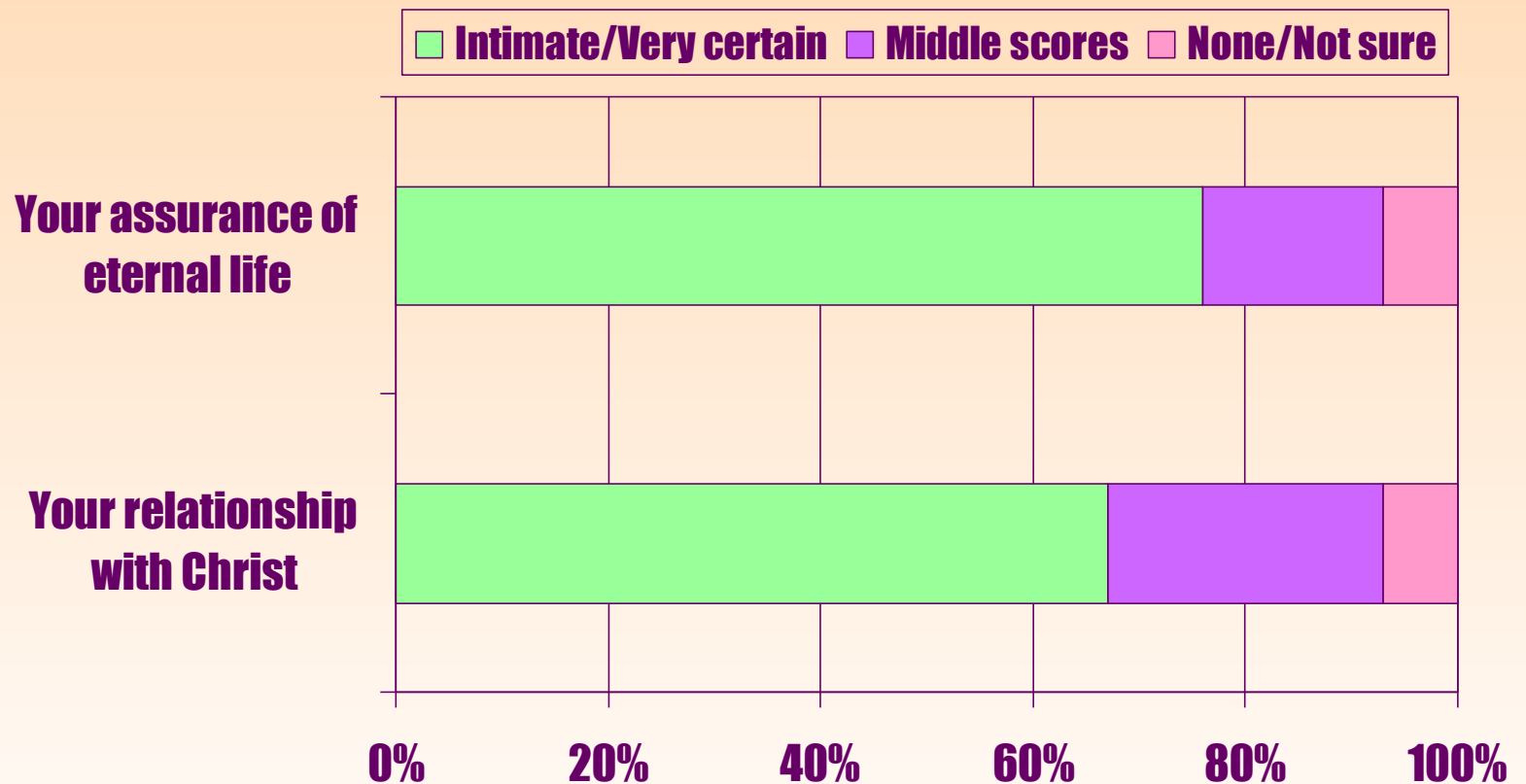
Church involvement



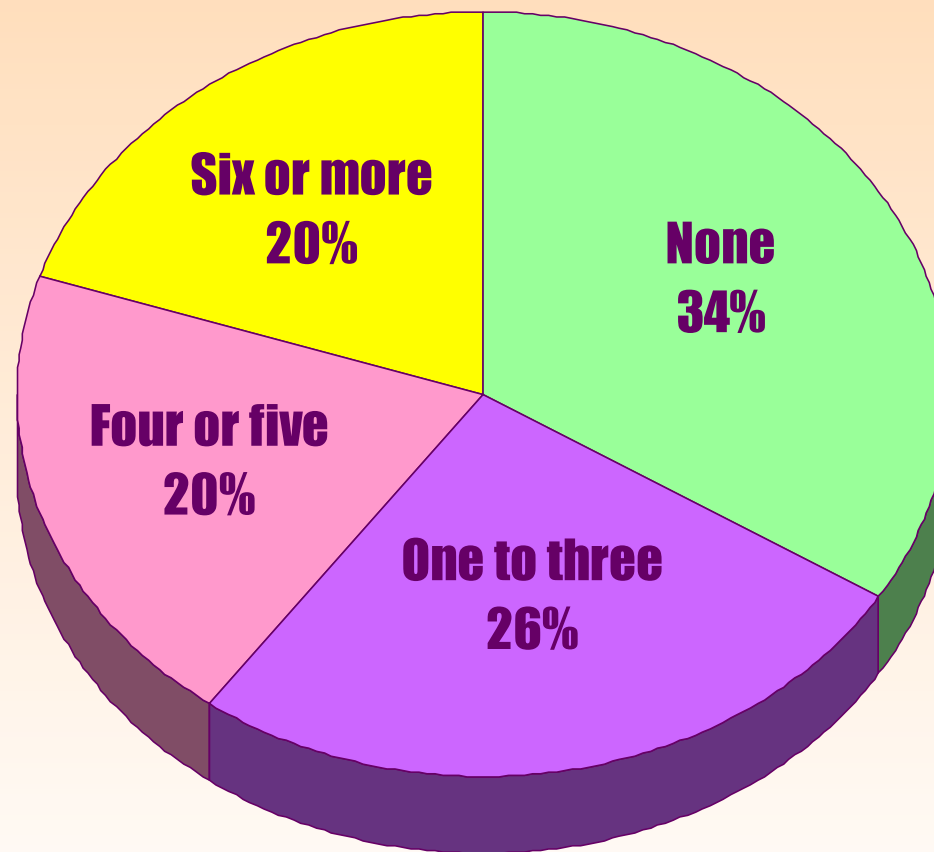
Participation in children's and youth ministries



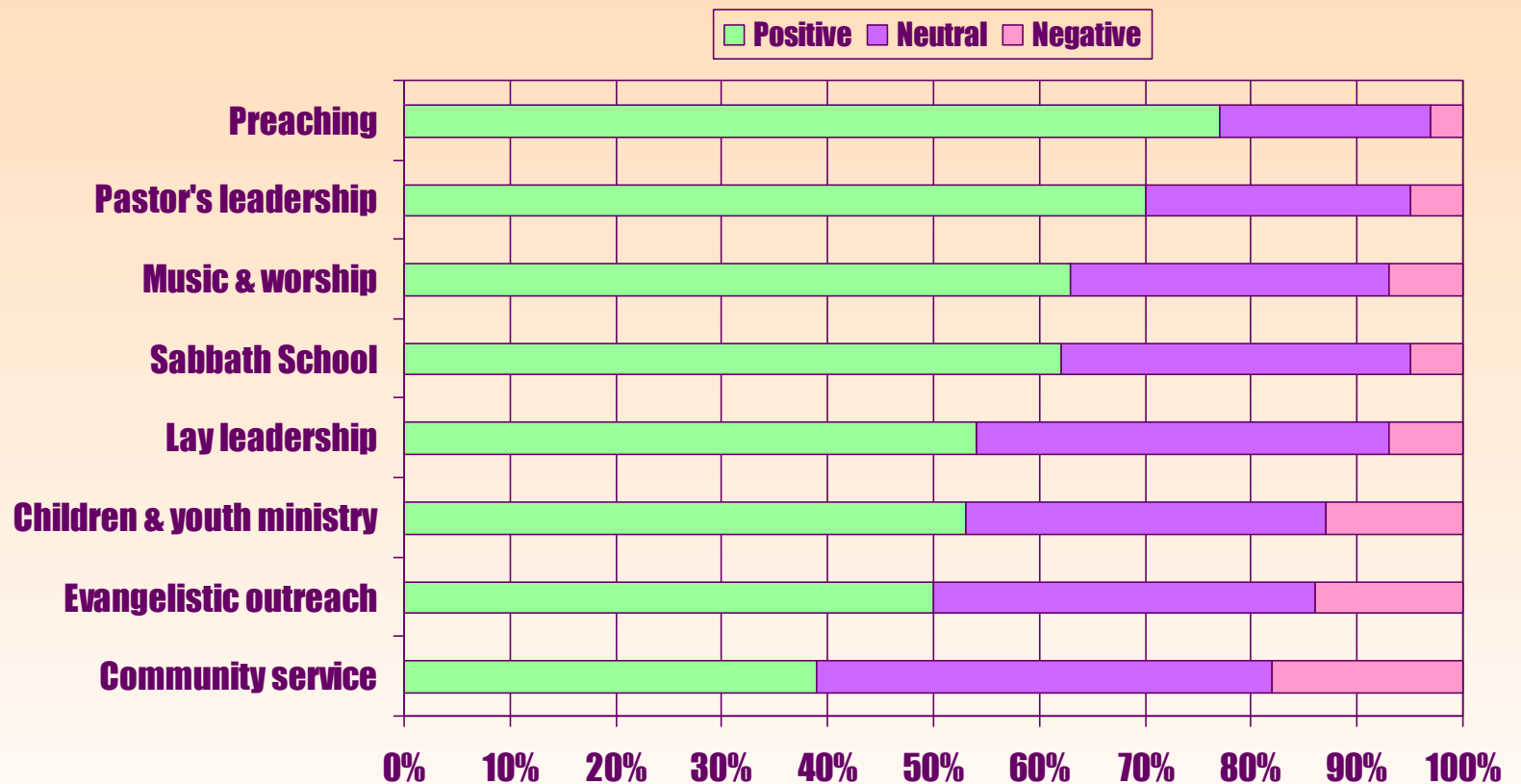
Spirituality of converts



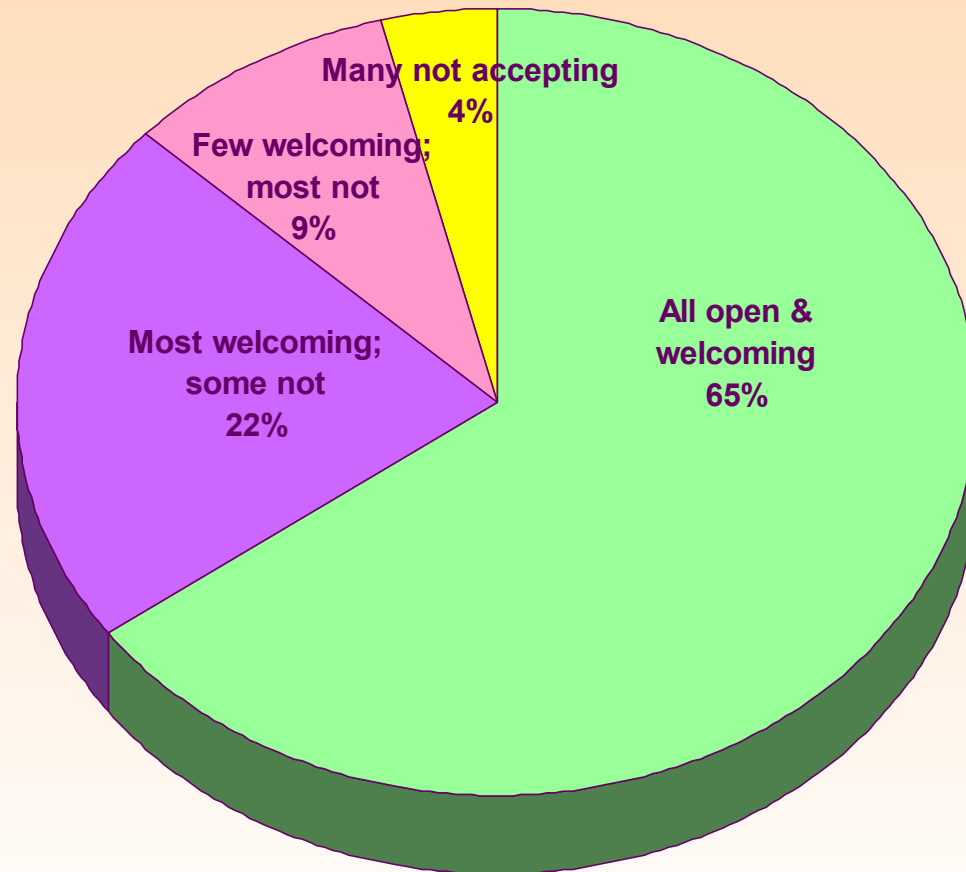
How many personal friends do you have in the church?



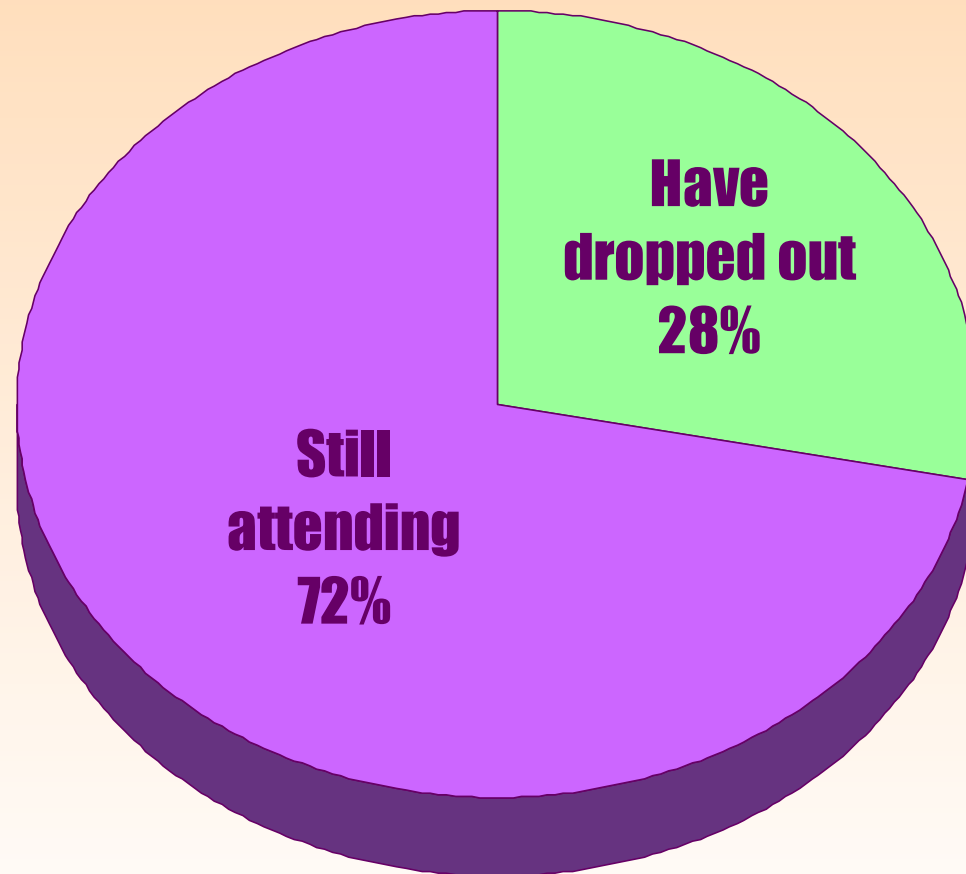
Evaluation of local church



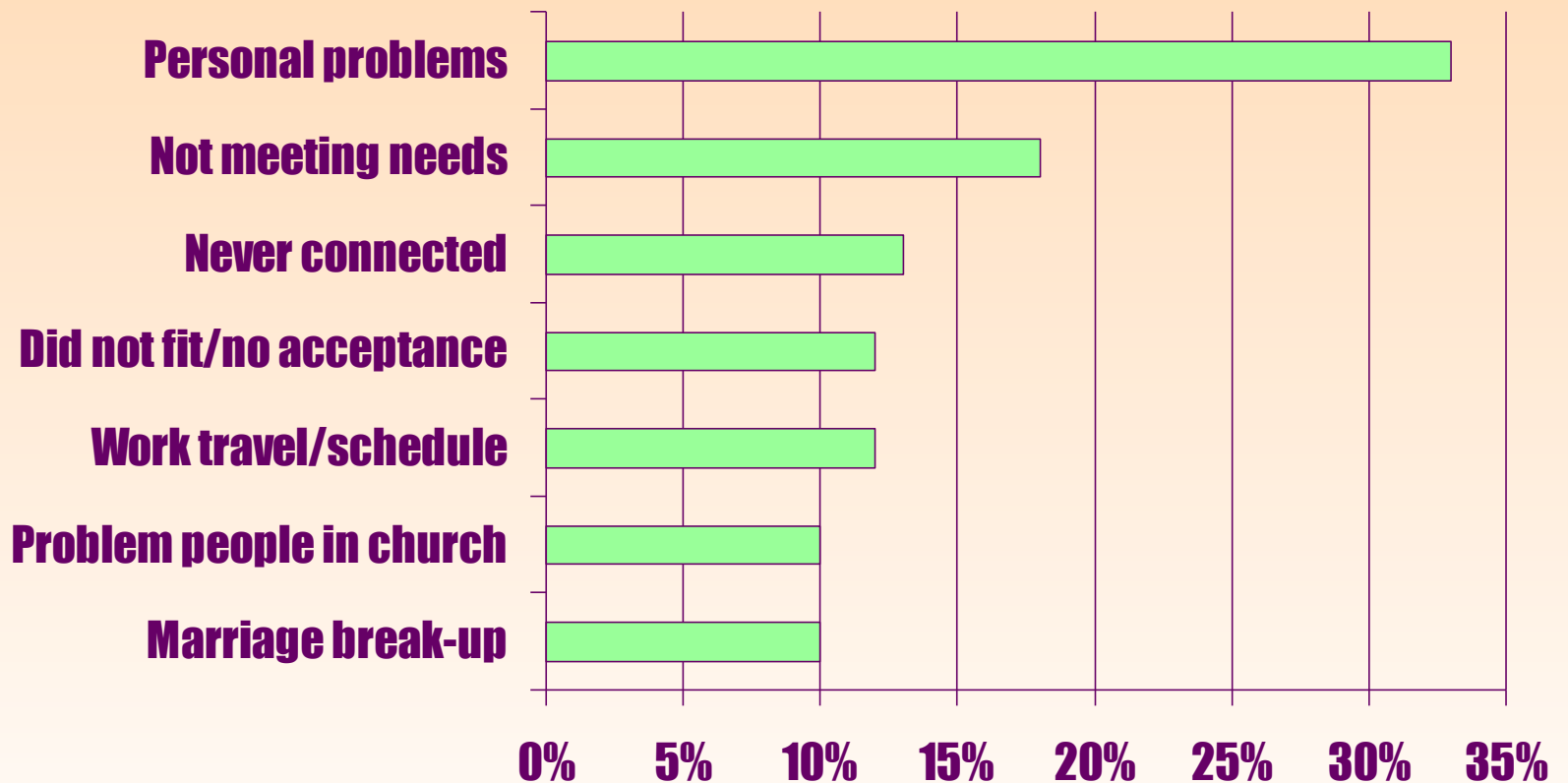
Evaluation of inclusiveness of the congregation



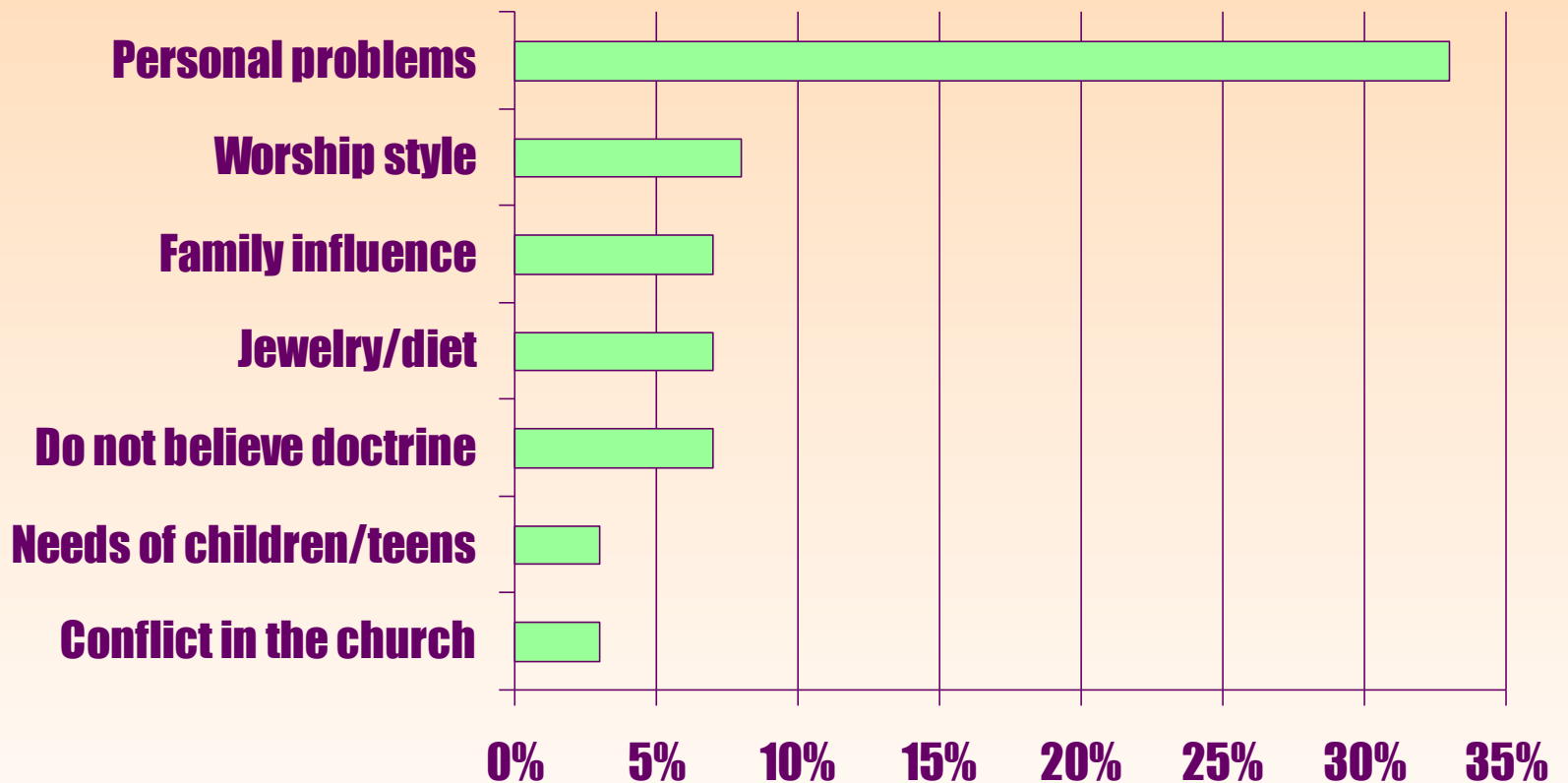
How many have dropped out?




Dropouts: How did you happen to quit attending?



Dropouts: How did you happen to quit attending?





Dropouts: How did you happen to quit attending?

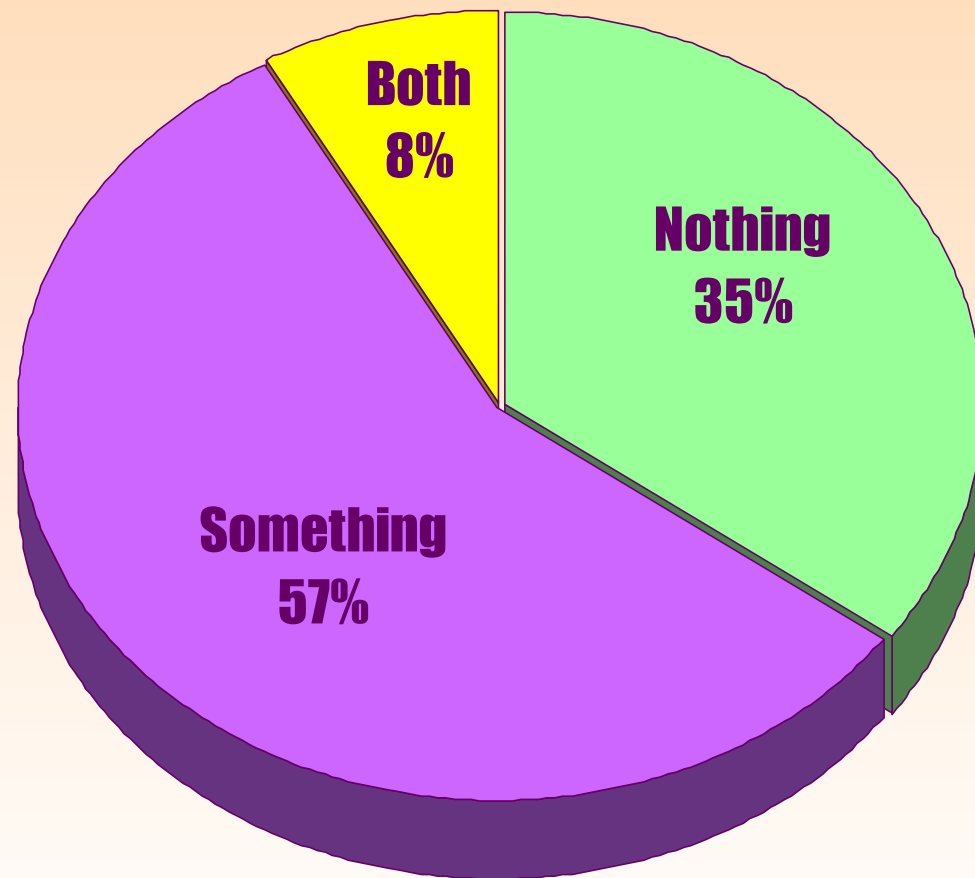
- **Only one respondent indicated that distance to the nearest Adventist church was a problem.**
- **For 8% of the dropouts, no reason could be identified because some of these response were obtained from the pastor or a church officer instead of the dropout member.**



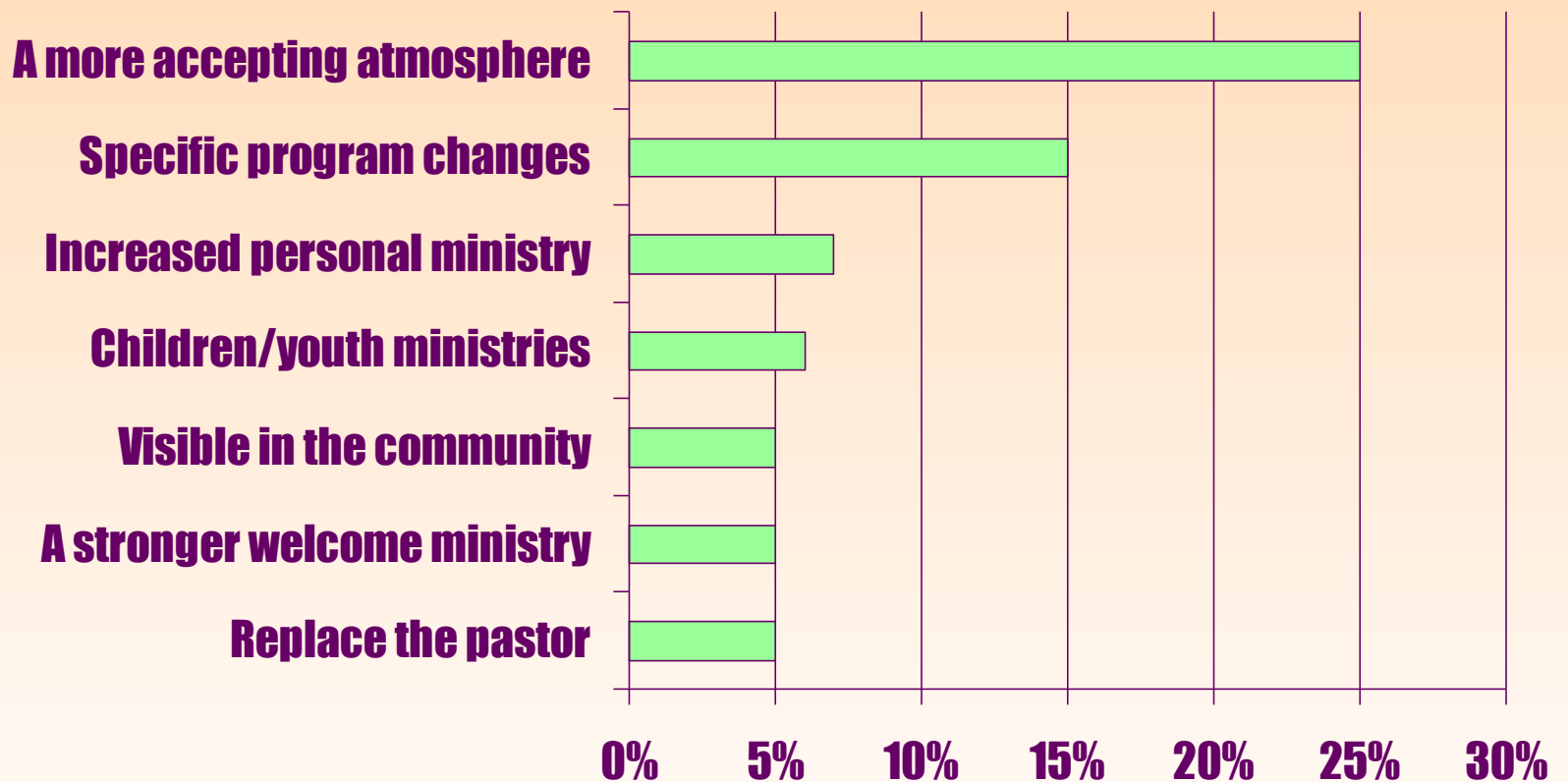
“Never connected”

- **One pastor reported, “Many people baptized at Leo Screven’s meetings did not understand that baptism meant joining the Adventist Church.”**
- **In a few other cases, the dropout indicated that they attended church once but then decided they did not want to join; they did not see baptism as joining the church.**

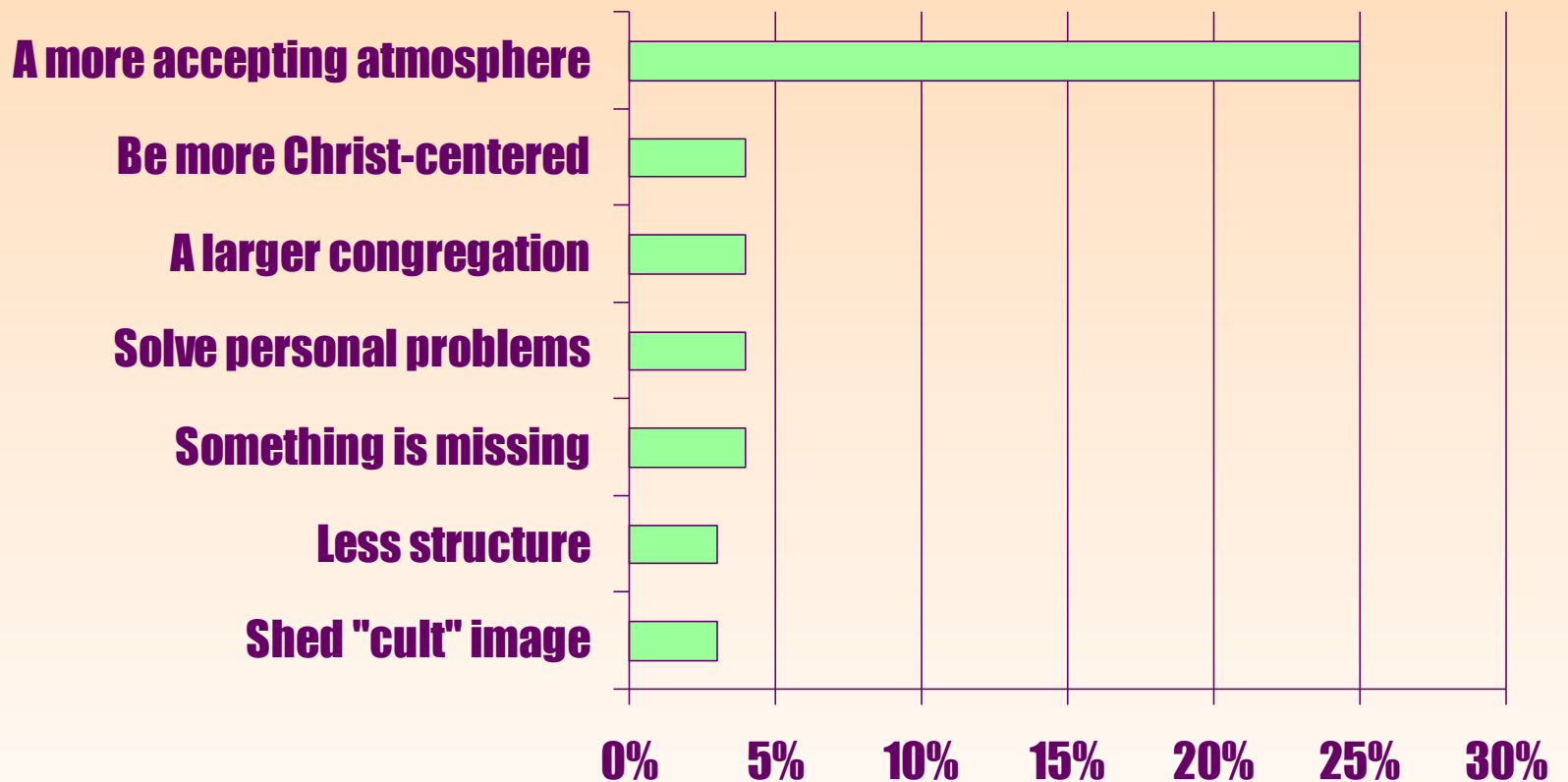
What would help you feel more “at home” in the Church?



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- **3 respondents mentioned specific issues about dress (“pants suits,” etc.)**
- **2 respondents said, “Don’ t force vegetarian diet at fellowship dinners,” etc.**
- **2 respondents mentioned doctrines they do not agree with**
- **2 respondents said, “Congregation should be more accepting of change.”**



What would help you feel more “at home” in the Church?

- **One respondent (each) mentioned:**
 - **“Need my family to join the church.”**
 - **Distance to church; would like an Adventist church in their community.**
 - **“More people my age.” (young adults)**

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- **Monte Sahlin analyzed the data and wrote the report.**
 - **Paul Richardson, project director**
 - **Carole Kilcher, associate director**