

The Great Dechurching

Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?



Jim Davis and
Michael Graham

with Ryan P. Burge

Foreword by Collin Hansen

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN REFLECTIVE

The Great Dechurching

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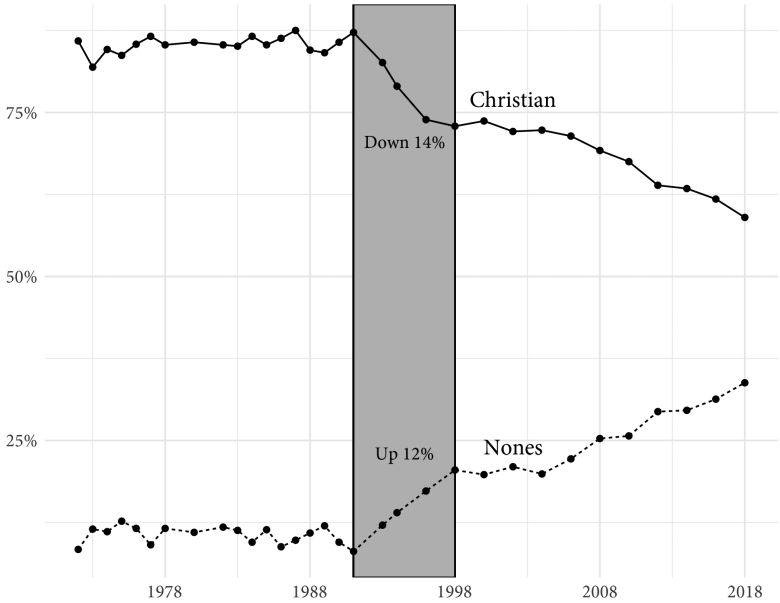
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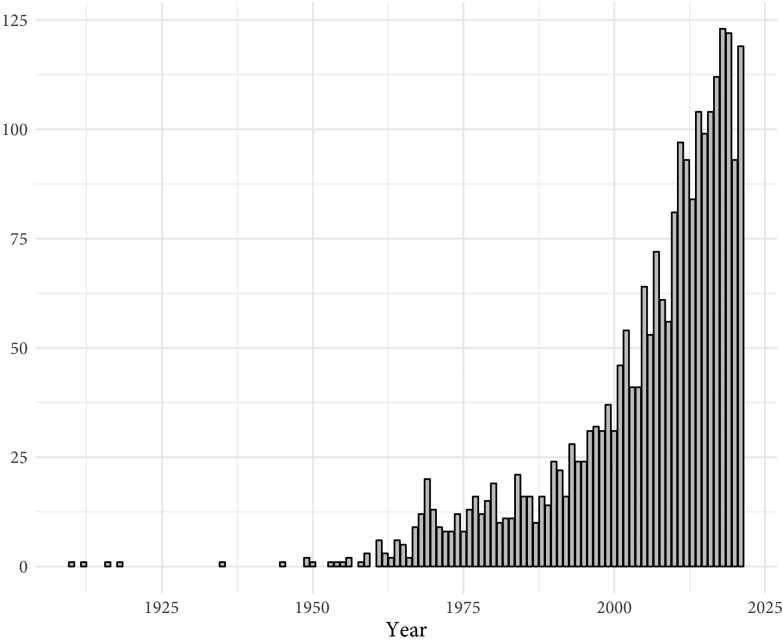
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What Is at Stake?

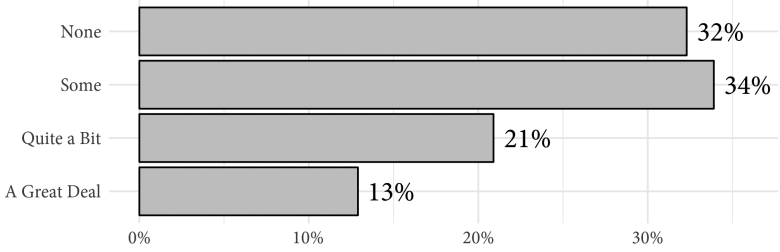
Figure 1.1. The Religious Affiliation of 18-to-35-Year-Olds



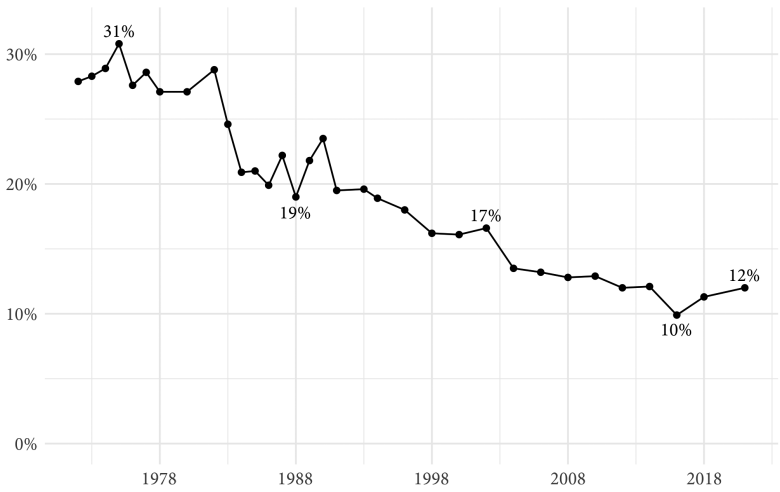
**Figure 1.2. What Year Did You Last Attend
a Congregation a Few Times a Year?**



**Figure 1.3. How Big of an Influence
Were Your Parents in Dechurching?**



**Figure 1.4. Mainline Protestant
Percent of US Population**



Who Are the Dechurched?

Figure 2.1. Religious Service Attendance by Sexual Orientation

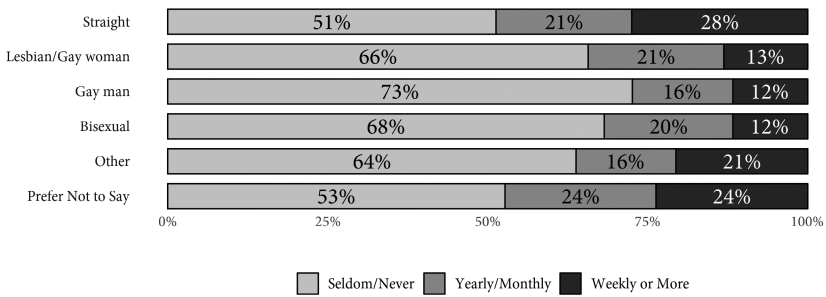


Figure 2.2. Share Who Identify as Republican among Never or Seldom Attenders



Data from Stephen Ansolabehere, Brian F. Schaffner, and Sam Luks, *Cooperative Congressional Election Study*, Harvard University, <http://cces.gov.harvard.edu>. Visualization by Ryan Burge.

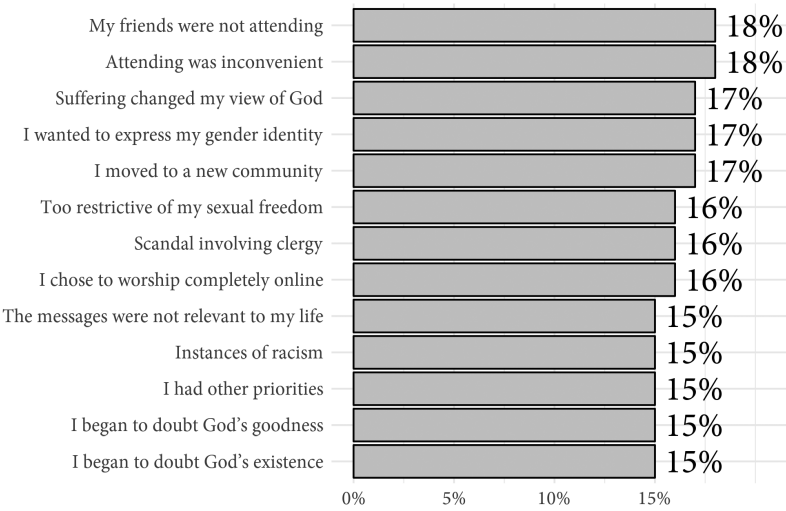
Chapter 3

Cultural Christians

Figure 3.1. What Did Your Parent Do That Played a Role in Your Decision to Stop Attending?

Reasons Given	Cultural	BIPOC	Exvangelicals	Mainstream
All their emphasis on the culture war lost me over time	18%	20%	2%	7%
Lack of love, gentleness, kindness, and generosity	17%	17%	6%	9%
My faith was probably never my own and was mainly a borrowed faith from parents	17%	15%	6%	6%
Inability to listen	17%	23%	5%	5%
Racial attitudes or actions	16%	18%	5%	6%
My parents stopped going to church	15%	18%	6%	9%
My parents are one of the few things that actually causes me to want to return to church	15%	15%	2%	5%
Inability to engage with other viewpoints	15%	21%	5%	6%
Intolerance toward my views of gender	15%	18%	3%	3%
Strong support of Donald Trump and the political right	14%	14%	3%	5%
Their faith seemed more like it was about cultural and/or political power than salvation through Jesus	14%	13%	4%	6%
I just wanted Jesus without all the evangelical baggage	14%	19%	5%	6%
My parents stopped believing	14%	15%	3%	5%
Hypocritical attitudes or actions	14%	16%	6%	9%
Misogynistic attitudes or actions	14%	17%	3%	5%
Intolerance toward My views of politics	14%	15%	4%	5%
The last few years have shown some ugliness	13%	15%	4%	5%
Intolerance toward my views of sexuality	13%	15%	4%	4%
Strong support of Joe Biden and the political left	11%	21%	1%	4%
None of the above	4%	8%	6%	6%

Figure 3.2. Reasons for Not Attending Church



Chapter 4

Dechurched Mainstream Evangelicals

Figure 4.1. Issue Positions of Still Church and Dechurched Evangelicals

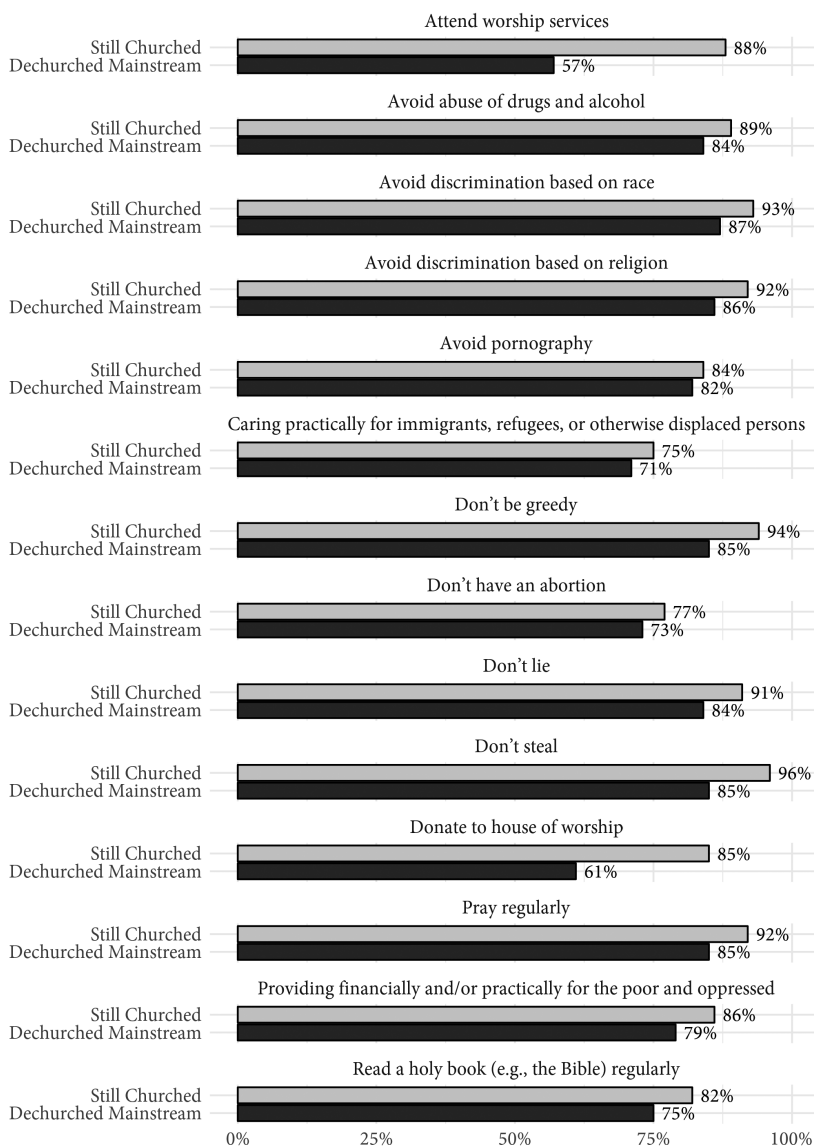


Figure 4.2. Reasons for Leaving Church

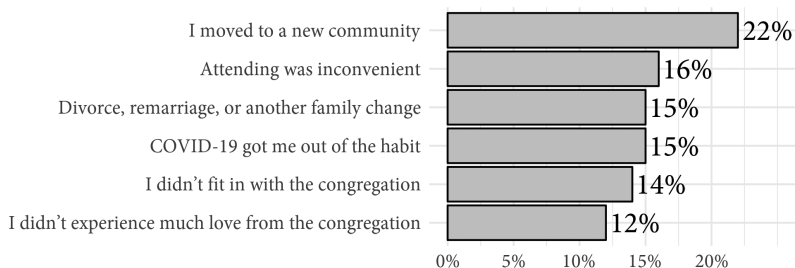
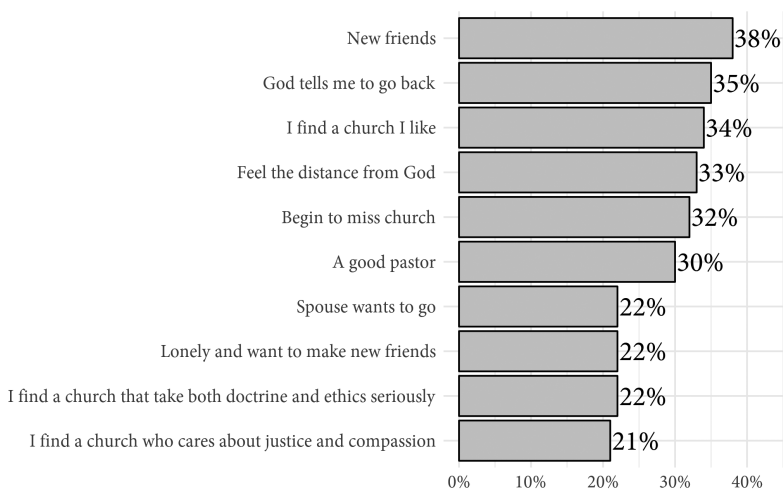


Figure 4.3. Reasons for Returning to Church



Exvangelicals

Figure 5.1. Reasons for Not Attending Church

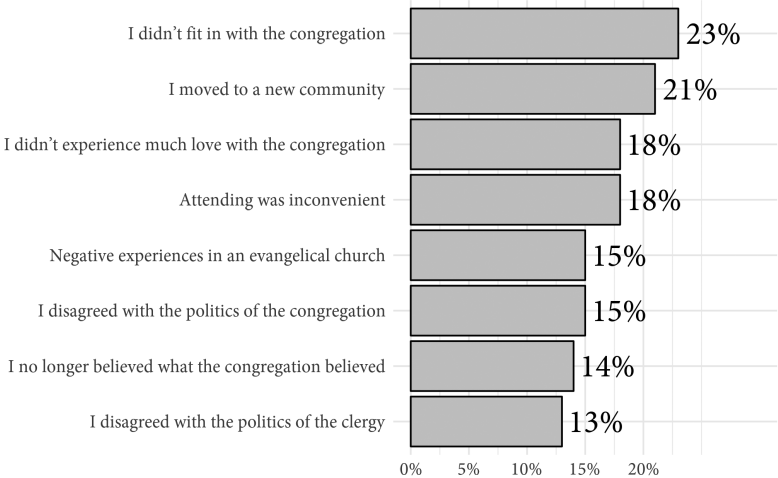
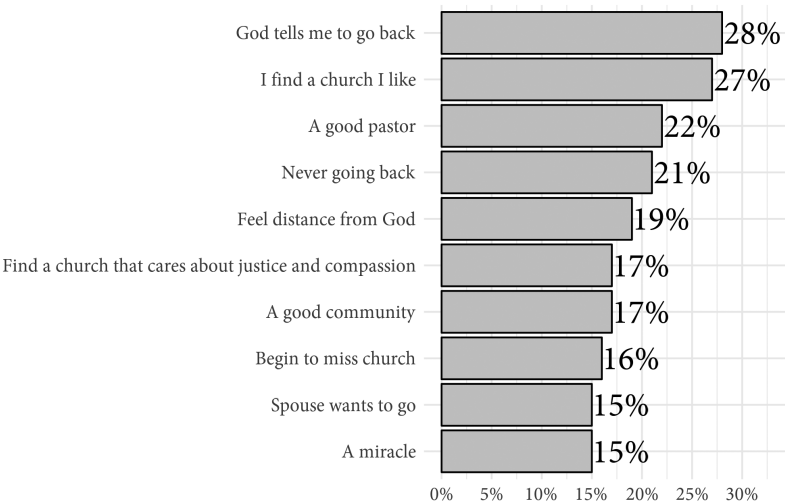
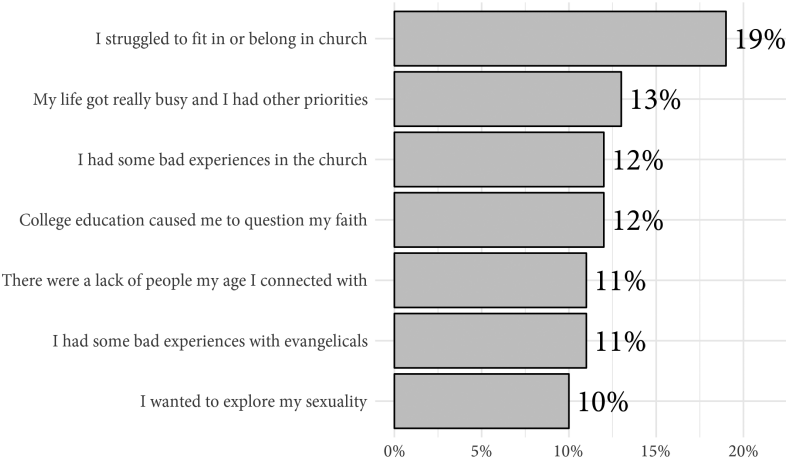


Figure 5.2. Reasons for Returning to Church

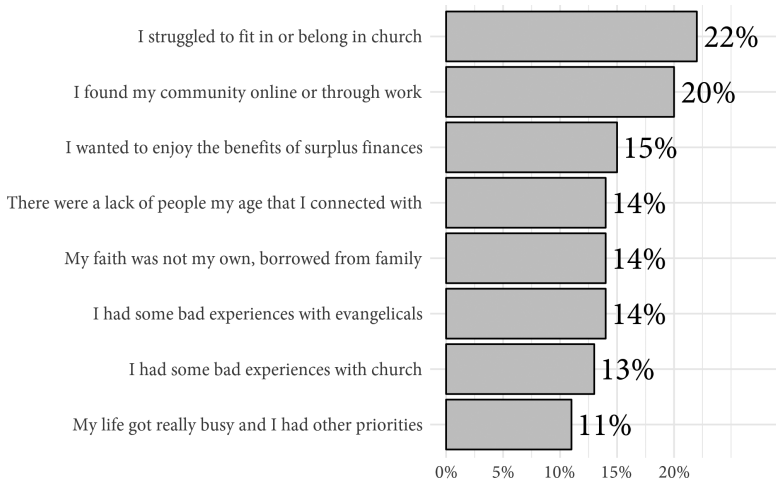


Dechurched BIPOC

Figure 6.1. Reasons for Leaving Church (18–25)



**Figure 6.2. Reasons for Leaving Church,
Young Professionals (26–39)**



**Figure 6.3. Parental Reasons
for Leaving Church**

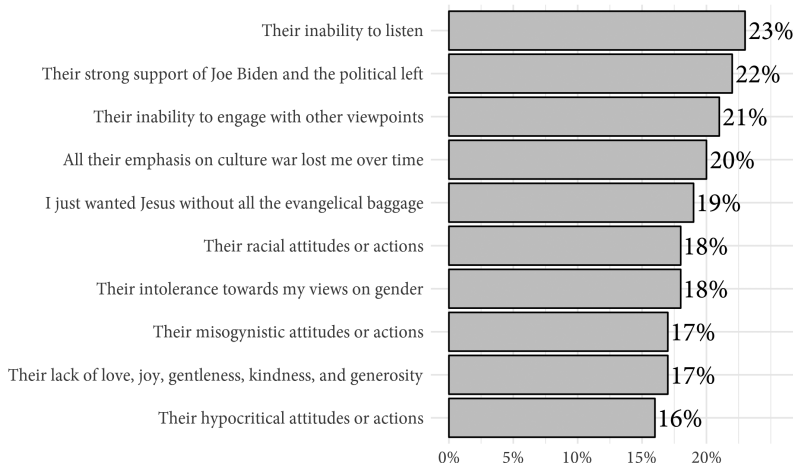
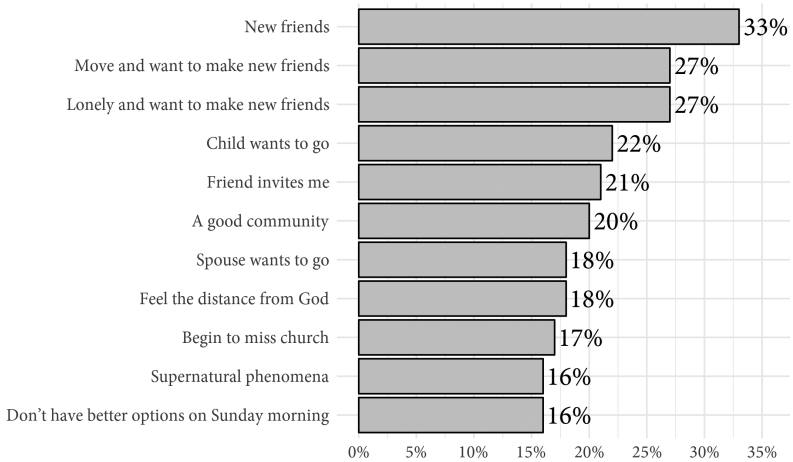


Figure 6.4. Reasons for Returning



Chapter 7

Dechurched Mainline Protestants and Catholics

**Figure 7.1. Theological Positions of
Dechurched Mainline/Catholic**

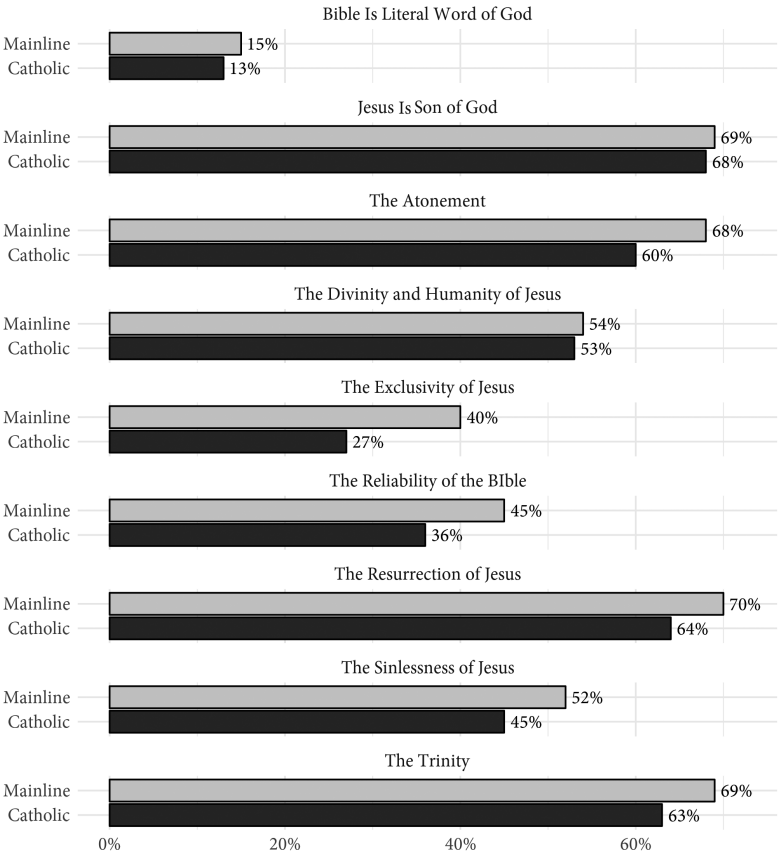


Figure 7.2. Reasons for Leaving Church (Mainline)

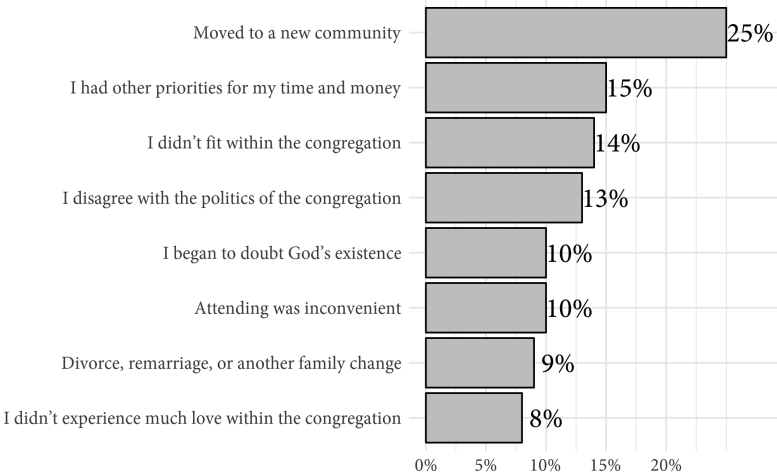


Figure 7.3. Reasons for Leaving Church (Catholic)

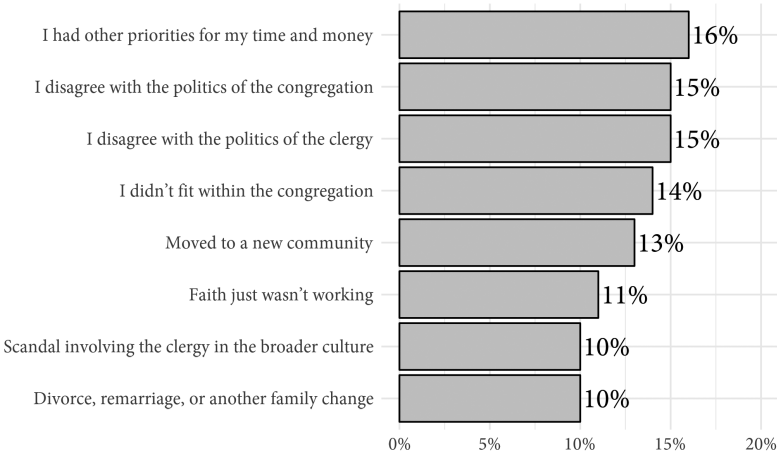


Figure 7.4. Prioritize What a Congregation Should Do

1 = Most Important; 7 = Least Important

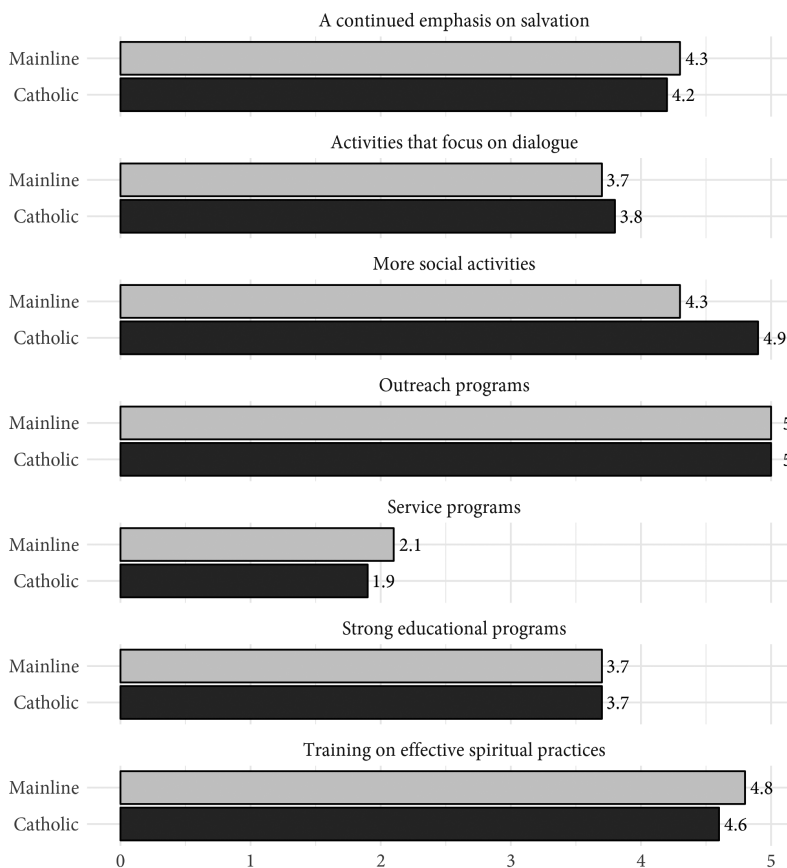
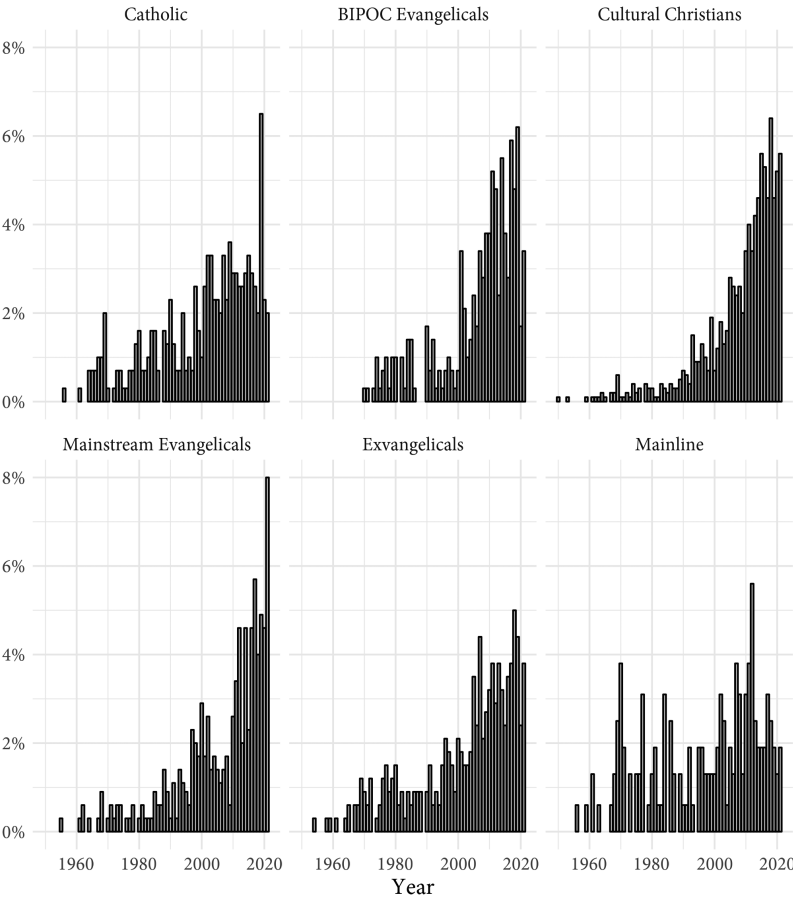


Figure 7.5. About What Year Did You Last Attend a Congregation a Few Times?



**Figure 7.6. Percent Dechurched
by Education and Tradition**

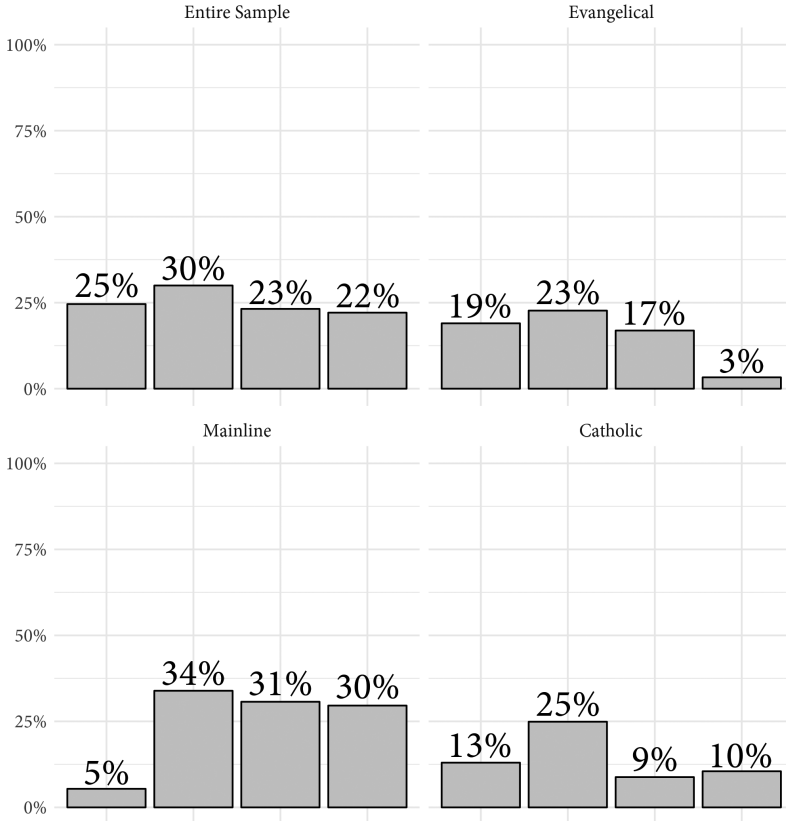


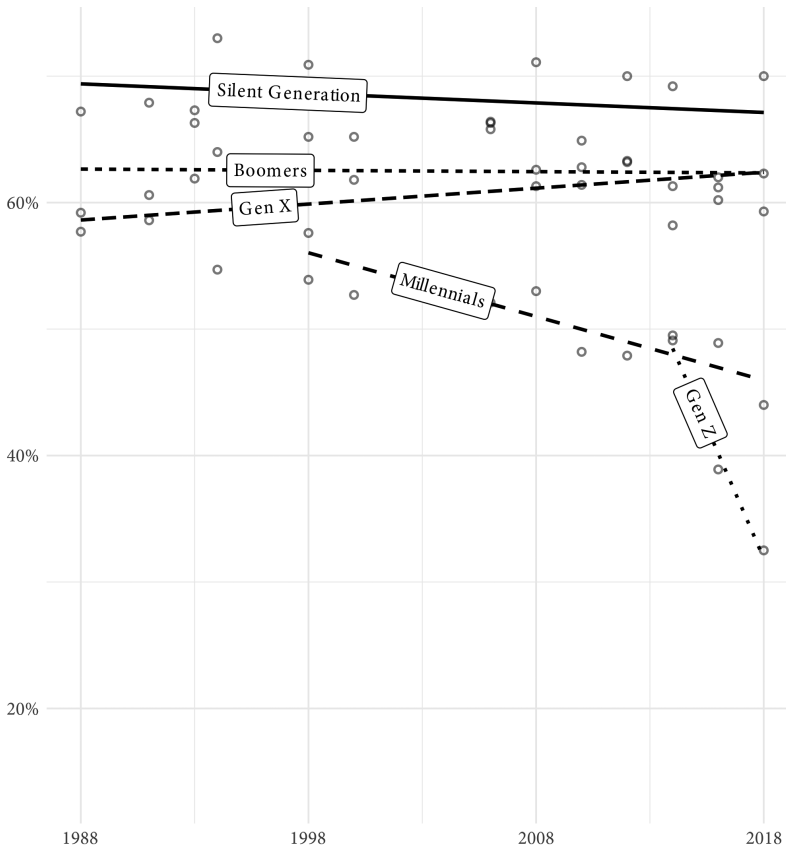
Figure 7.7. Which of the Following Standards and Practices Do You Seek to Follow in Good Faith?

Reasons Given	Overall Evangelical Dechurched	Dechurched Mainline	Dechurched Catholic	Still Churched Evangelicals ONLY
Avoid discrimination based on race	74%	96%	93%	93%
Avoid discrimination based on religion	75%	95%	90%	92%
Providing financially and/or practically for the poor and oppressed	71%	69%	69%	86%
Caring practically for immigrants, refugees, or otherwise displaced persons	66%	62%	65%	75%
Don't have an abortion	59%	48%	43%	77%
Avoid pornography	65%	68%	54%	84%
Avoid abuse of drugs and alcohol	69%	82%	79%	89%
Attend worship services	51%	23%	33%	88%
Pray regularly	64%	70%	64%	92%
Donate to house of worship	53%	31%	35%	85%
Don't lie	71%	93%	85%	91%
Don't steal	73%	97%	93%	96%
Don't be greedy	71%	91%	91%	94%
Read a holy book (e.g., the Bible) regularly	55%	35%	32%	82%

Chapter 10

The Missed Generational Handoff

Figure 10.1. Share Believing in God without a Doubt



Ryan Burge, “‘OK Millennial’: Don’t Blame the Boomers for Decline of Religion in America,” Religion News Service, August 30, 2021, <https://religionnews.com/2021/08/30/ok-millennial-dont-blame-the-boomers-for-decline-of-religion-in-america/>.

**Figure 10.2. Most Difficult Transition
in Maintaining Faith**

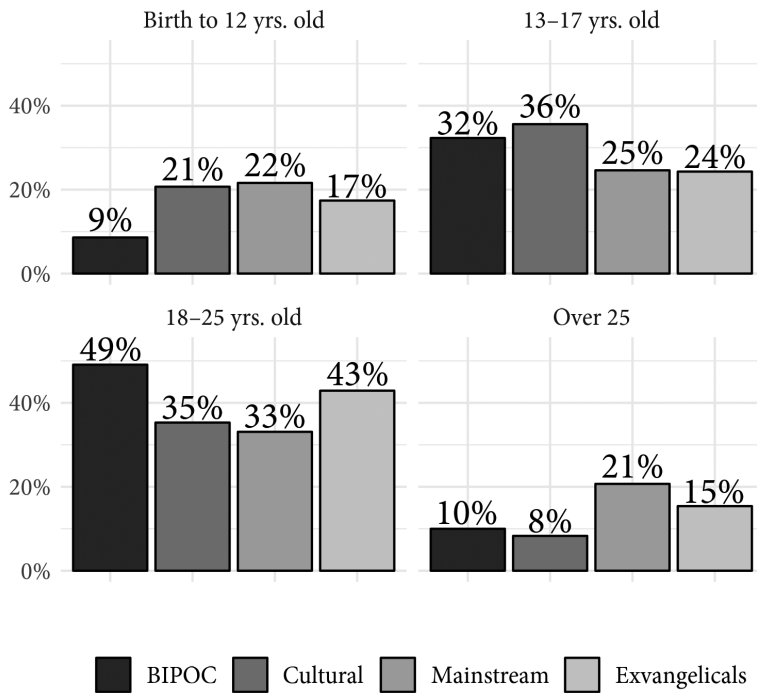


Figure 10.3. What Made the Transition from Teen to Young Adult Difficult?

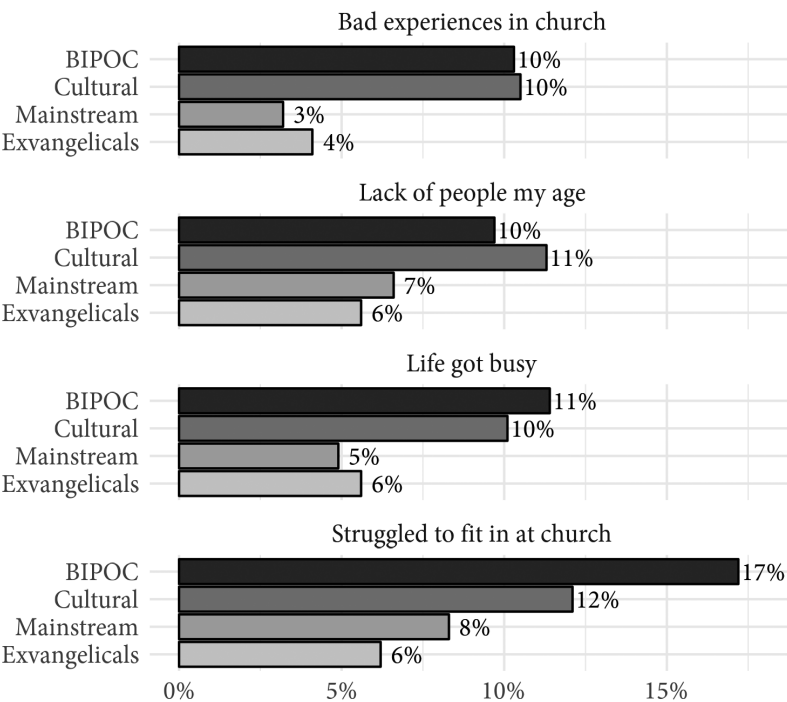
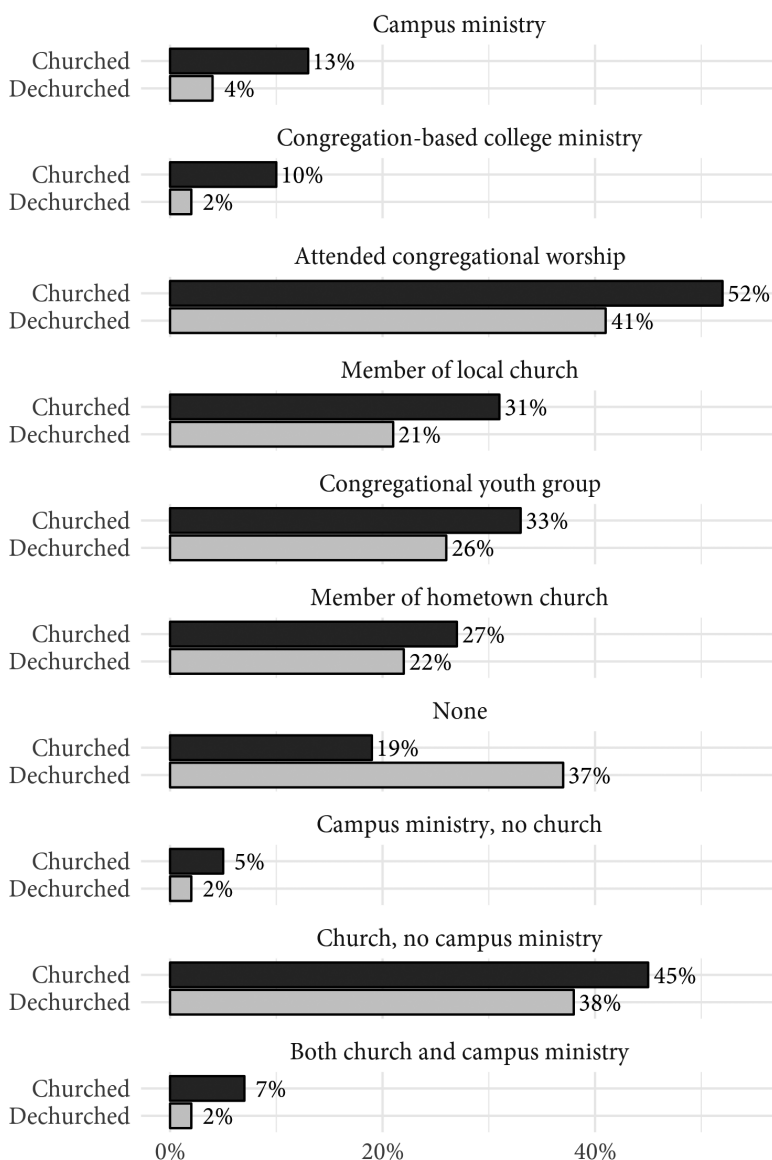
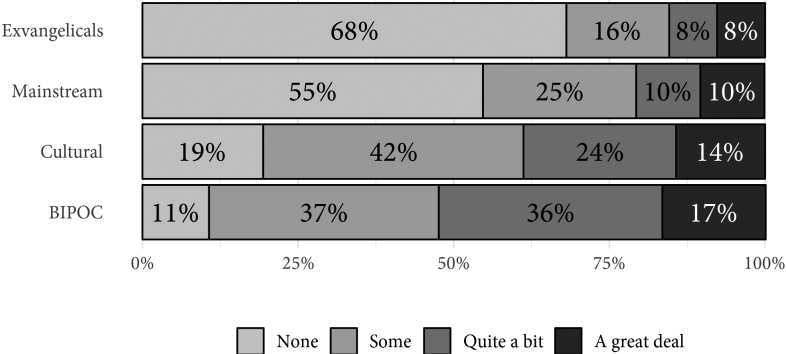


Figure 10.4. Religious Involvement during College Years among Evangelicals



**Figure 10.5. How Big of an Influence
Were Your Parents When It Comes to
No Longer Attending Church?**



Messages for the Dechurched

Figure 11.1. Reasons for Dechurching

