Tim Stewart

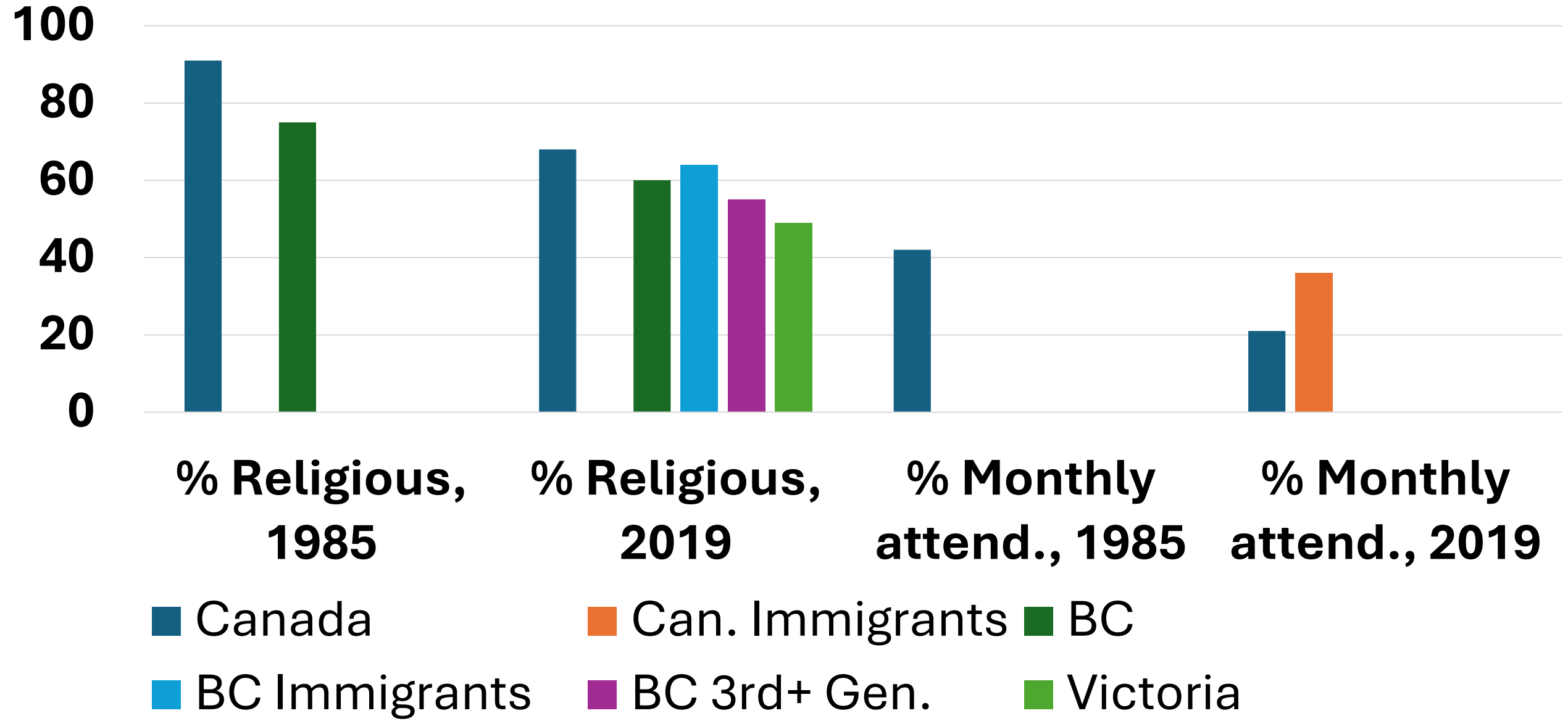
Prairie District of the EFCC

PD EFCC

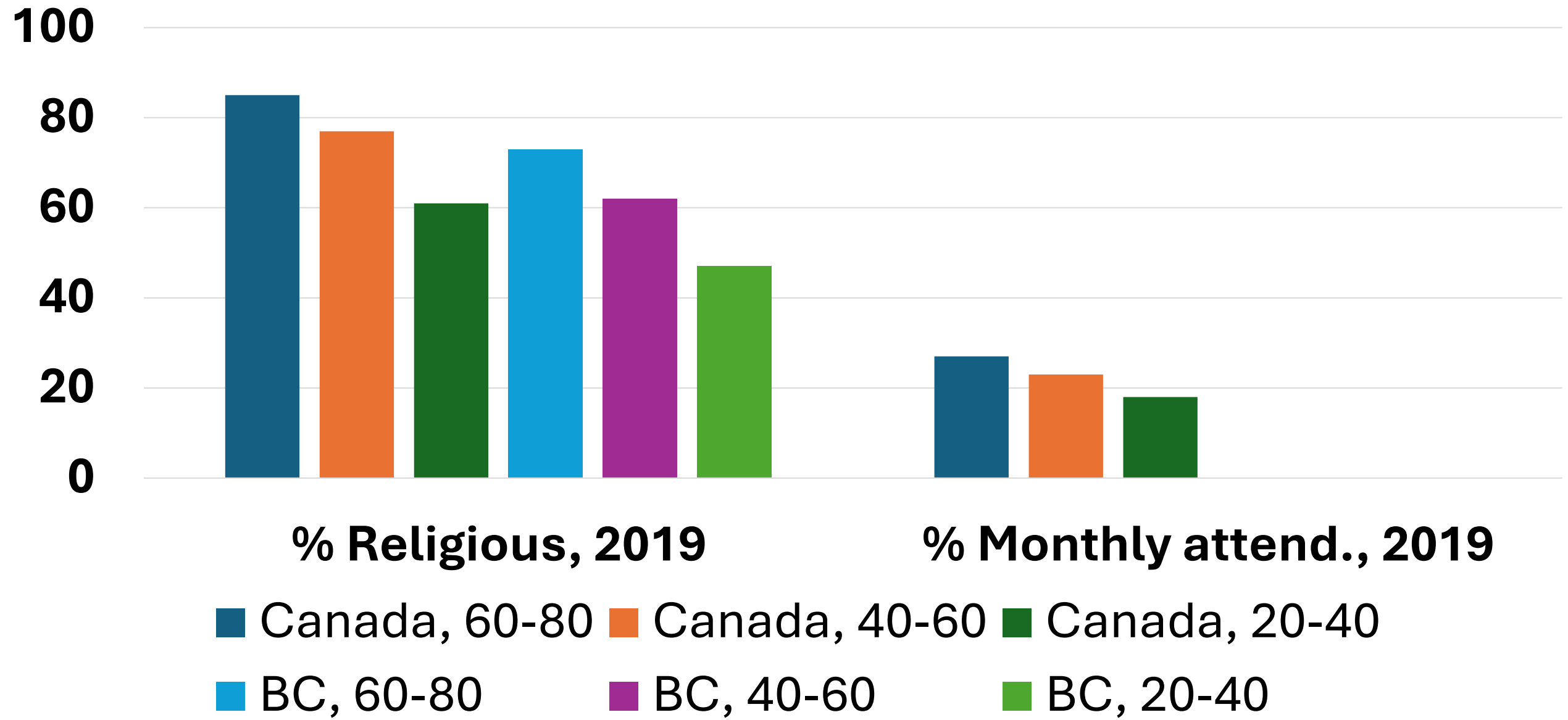


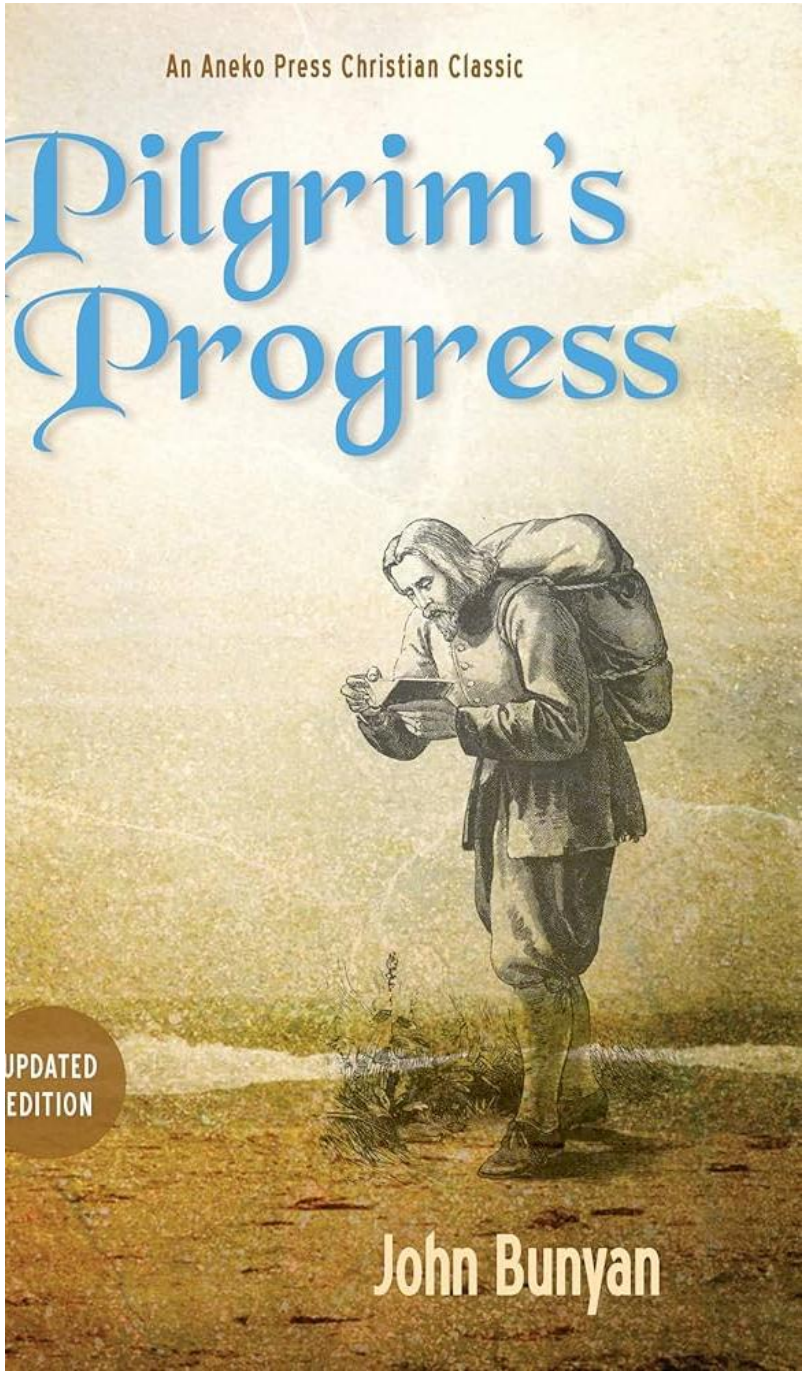

Conversion
Perspectives
Learning from
the stories of
New Believers

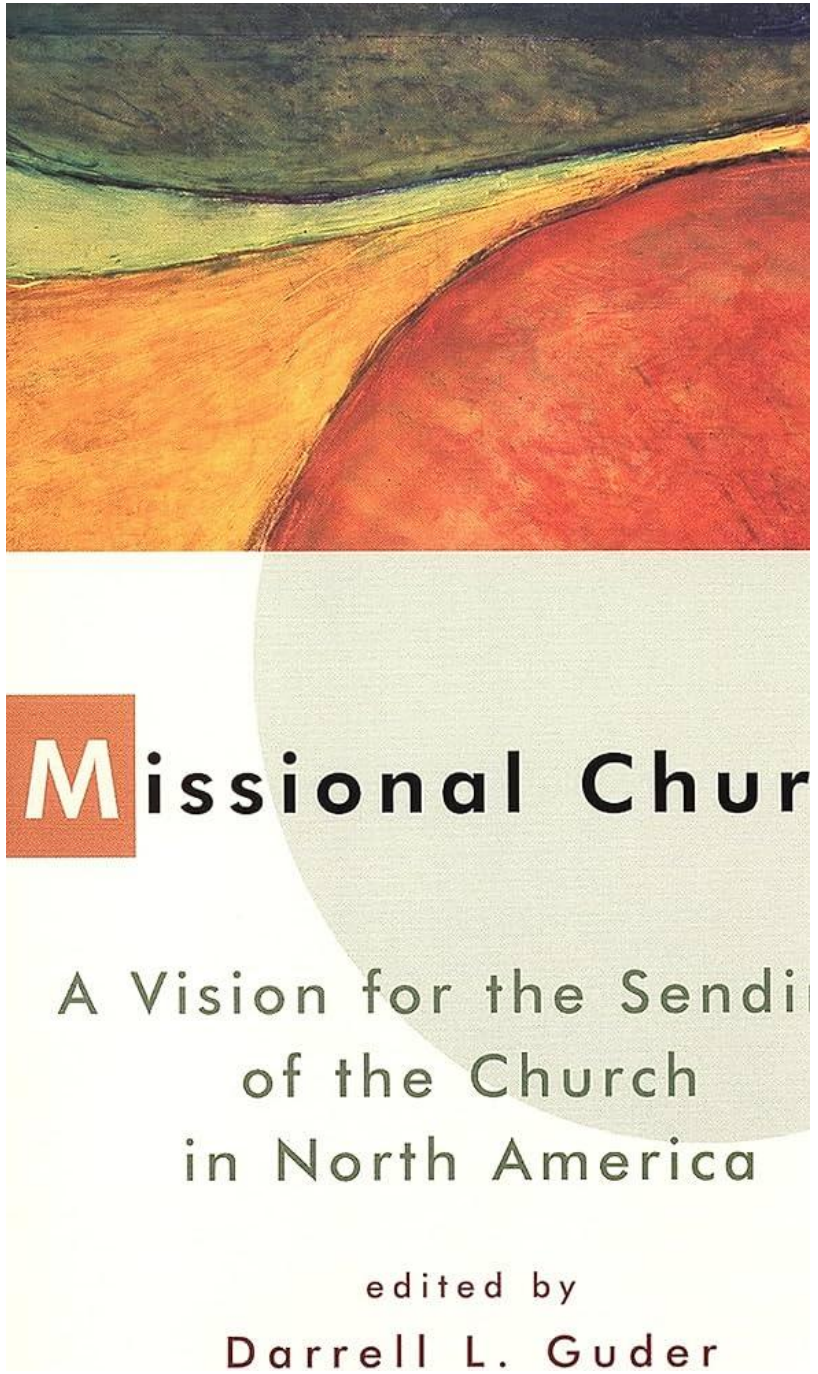
Religion in Canada

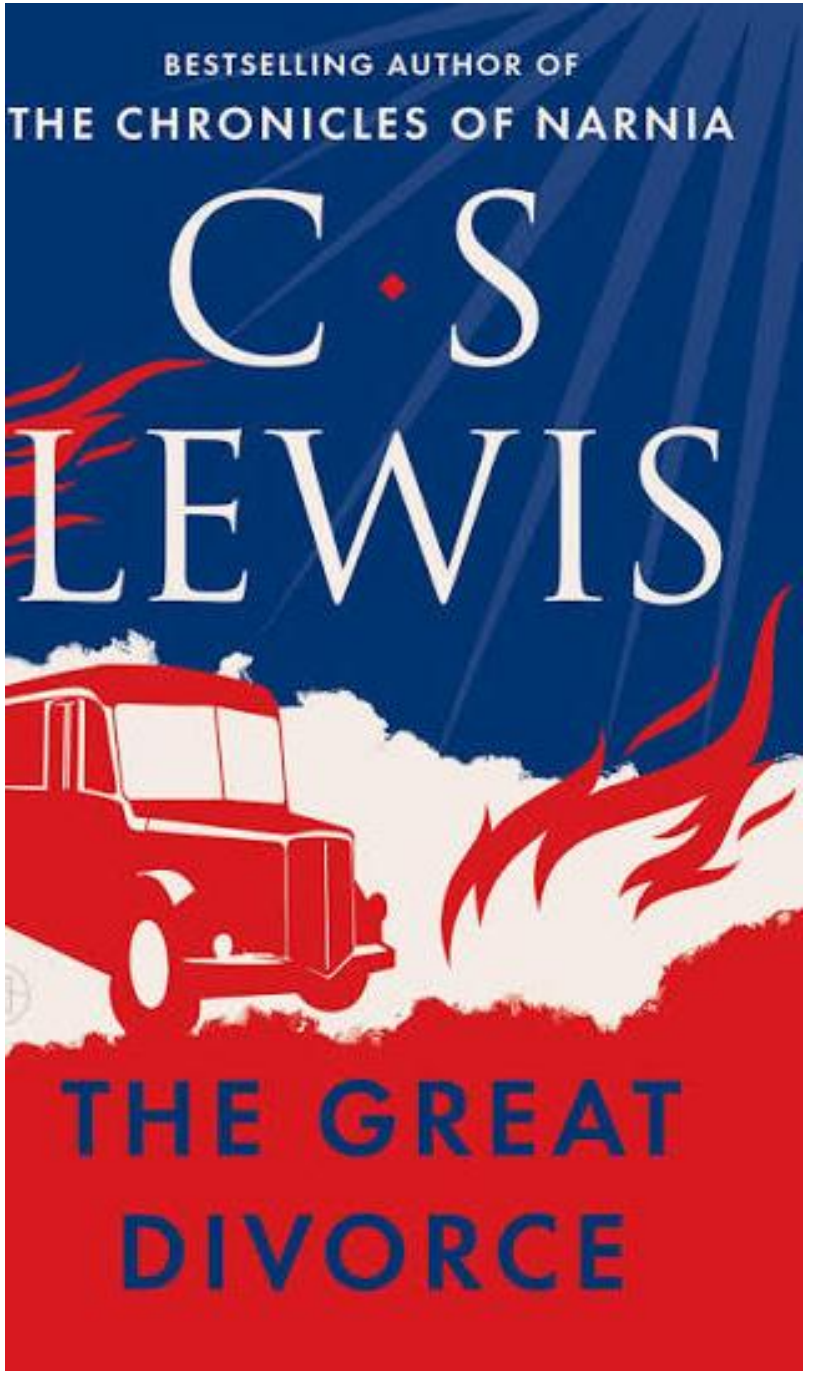


Religion in Canada (by age)




An Aneko Press Christian Classic
Pilgrim's Progress
UPDATED EDITION
John Bunyan


Missional Chur
A Vision for the Sendi
of the Church
in North America
edited by
Darrell L. Guder


BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
C·S LEWIS
THE GREAT DIVORCE

Discovering the Need

- Millennial Generation
- Church Planting Roadblock
- Accumulating Testimonies



Questions (Itches to Scratch)

Demographics:

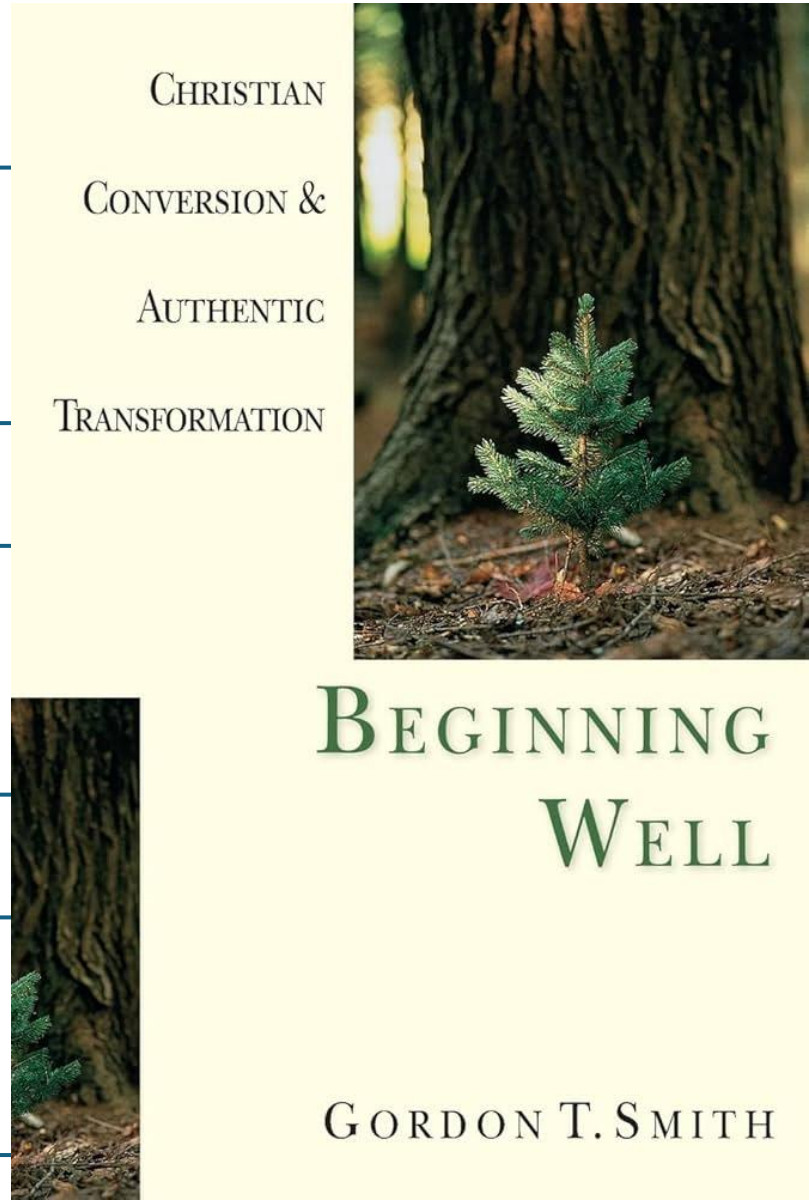
- *Measuring faith correctly?*

Evangelism:

- *Getting the message?*

Conversion:

- *How does it really happen?*



Bible: Identifying the Gospel

- **Gospels** – the story of Jesus's life, death, resurrection
- **Jesus** – "the kingdom is near" (Mark 1:14-15; Isaiah 61)
- **Peter** – Jesus's life, death, resurrection (Acts 2:22-41)
- **Paul** – the story of Jesus (1 Cor 15:1-5, 2 Tim 2:8)
  - Inclusion of gentiles in God's people (Eph 3:6-8)
- **Dodson, *Unbelievable Gospel*, 2014** – "What does the death and resurrection of a first-century Jewish messiah have to do with twenty-first-century people?"



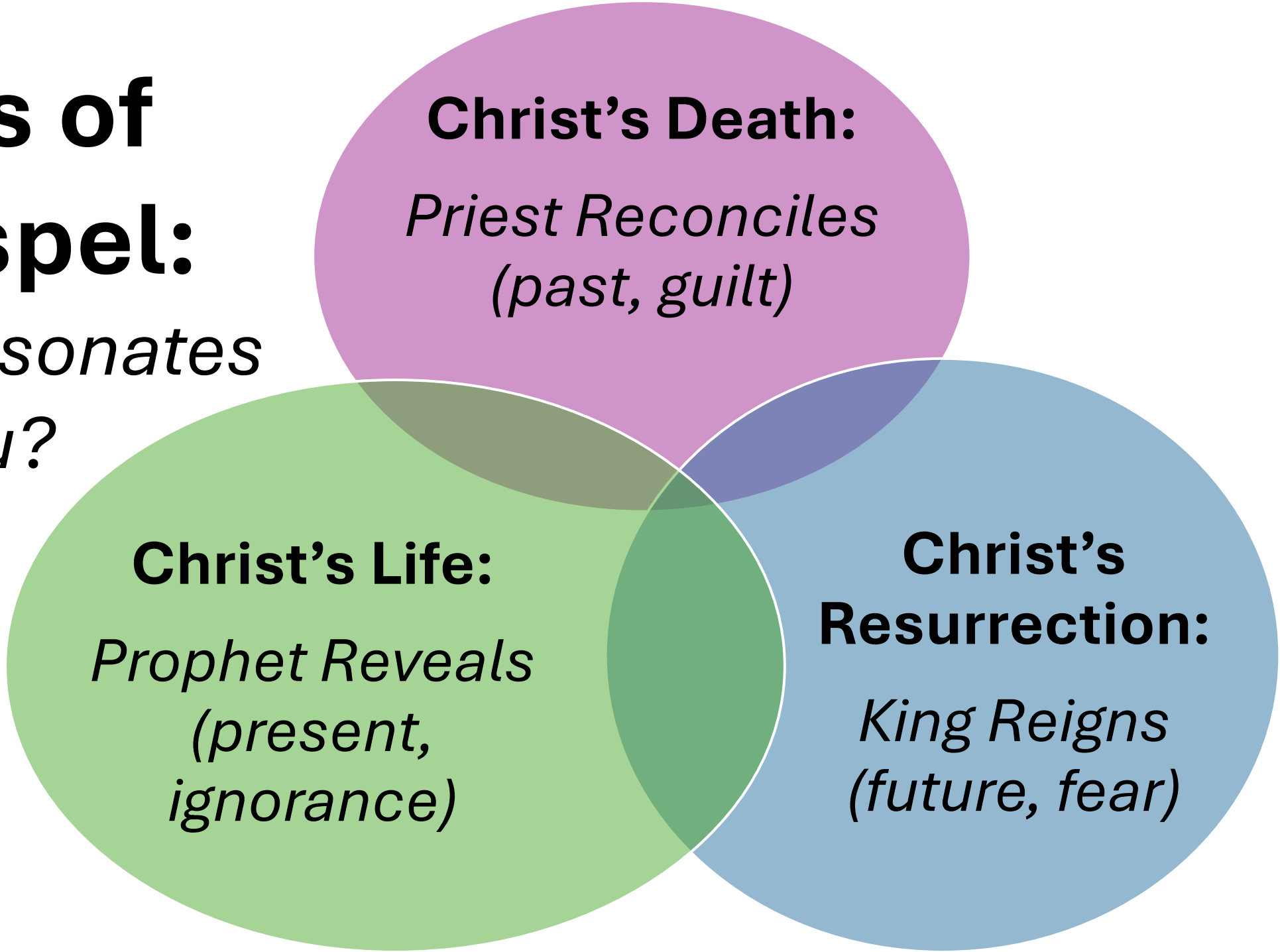
Theology: Understanding the Gospel

- **Death** – Romans 1-4; Heb 10 – **Jesus reconciles** us with God – dies for our forgiveness, renews relationship (Packer)
- **Life** – Col 1:15, Heb 1:1-3 – **Jesus reveals** God to us; called to follow as disciples (Willard)
- **Resurrection** – 1 Cor 15 – **Jesus reigns** over new creation 2 Co 5:17 – we are part of it now (Wright)
- **Keller, *Center Church*, 2012**
  – "Because the gospel is endlessly rich, *it can handle the burden of being the one 'main thing' of a church.*"



Aspects of the Gospel:

- *What resonates with you?*
- *How is it good news?*



Mission: Communicating the Gospel

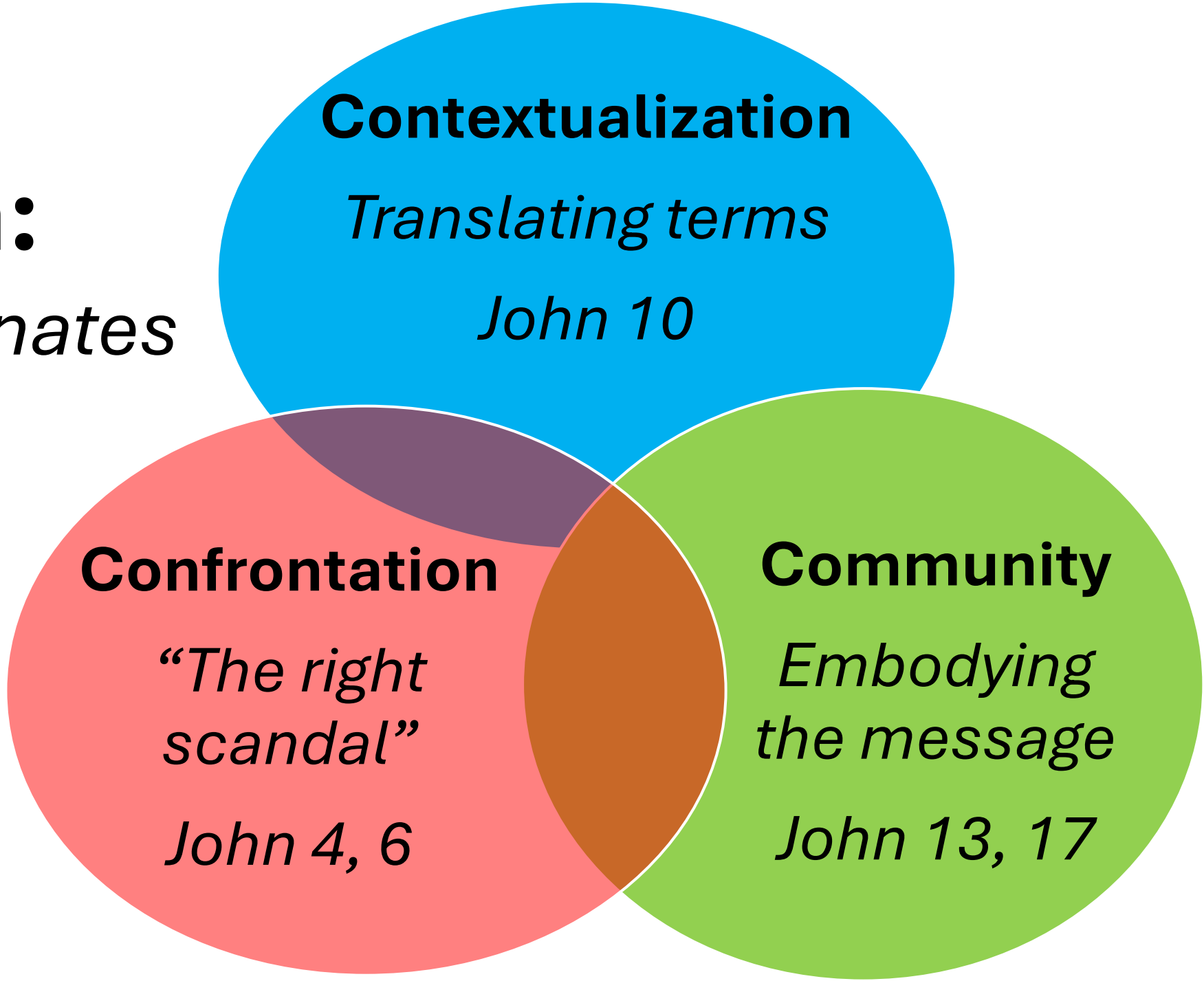
Transmission & translation

- **Contextualization** – Jesus's individual conversations in John, apostles' sermons in Acts (M. Green)
  - A. Walls, F. Buechner, J. Wesley
- **Confrontation** – identify their idols, worldview contradictions (Keller, Schaeffer)
- **Embodiment** – show & tell (Mat 10), church must demonstrate truth (Newbigin)



Aspects of Mission:

- *Which resonates with you?*
- *What examples come to mind?*



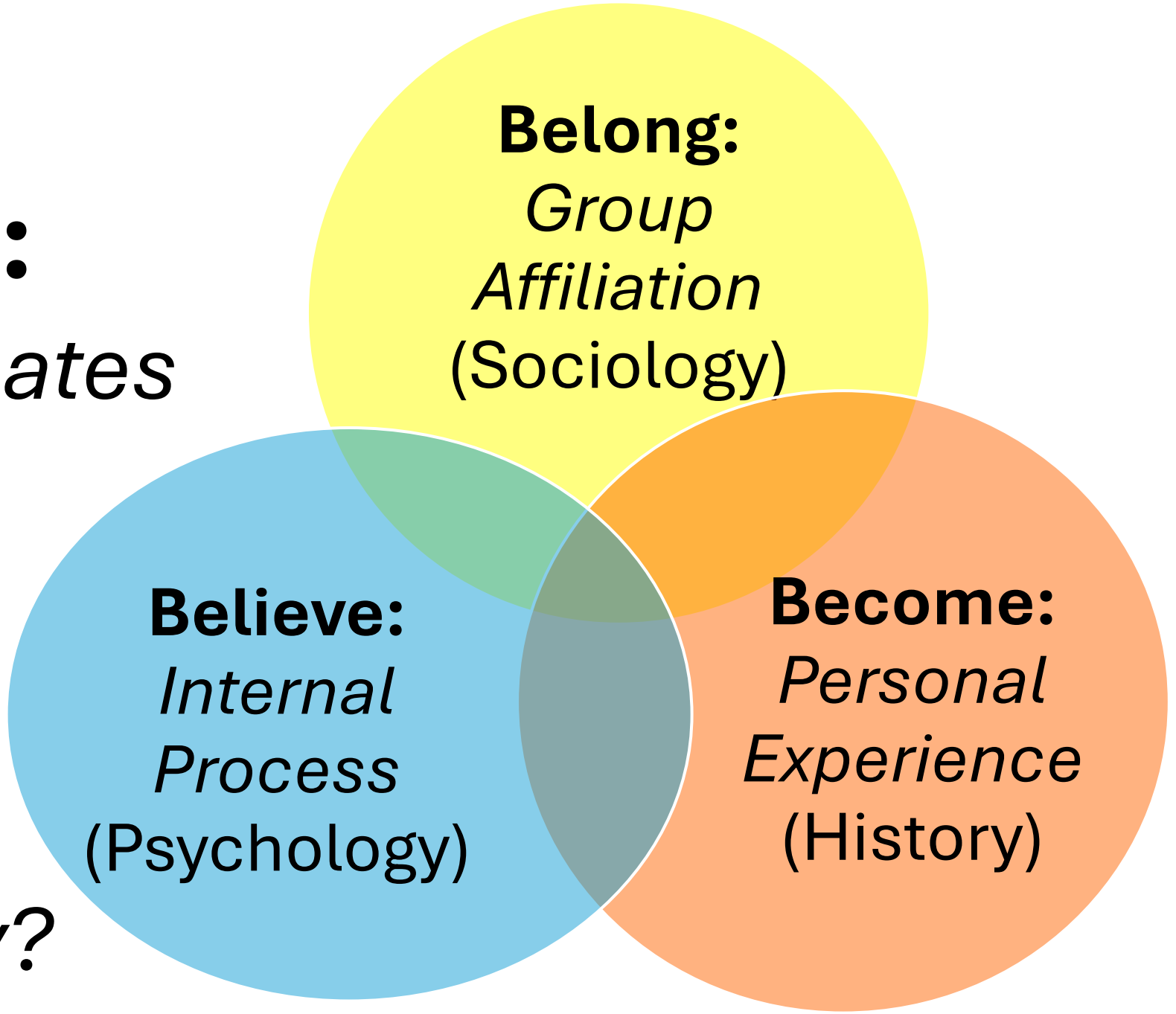
Conversion: Receiving the Gospel

Conversion: Human response to God's saving work

- **Sociology** – conversion as **social conformity**
  - **Stark** – focuses on **context**, neglects content
- **Psychology** – conversion as an **internal process**
  - **Fowler, Rambo** – identify stages & factors
- **History** – considering & compiling personal **testimonies**
  - **Kreider** – early church: believing, belonging & becoming

Aspects of Conversion:

- *Which resonates with you?*
- *Which one do you see at play today?*

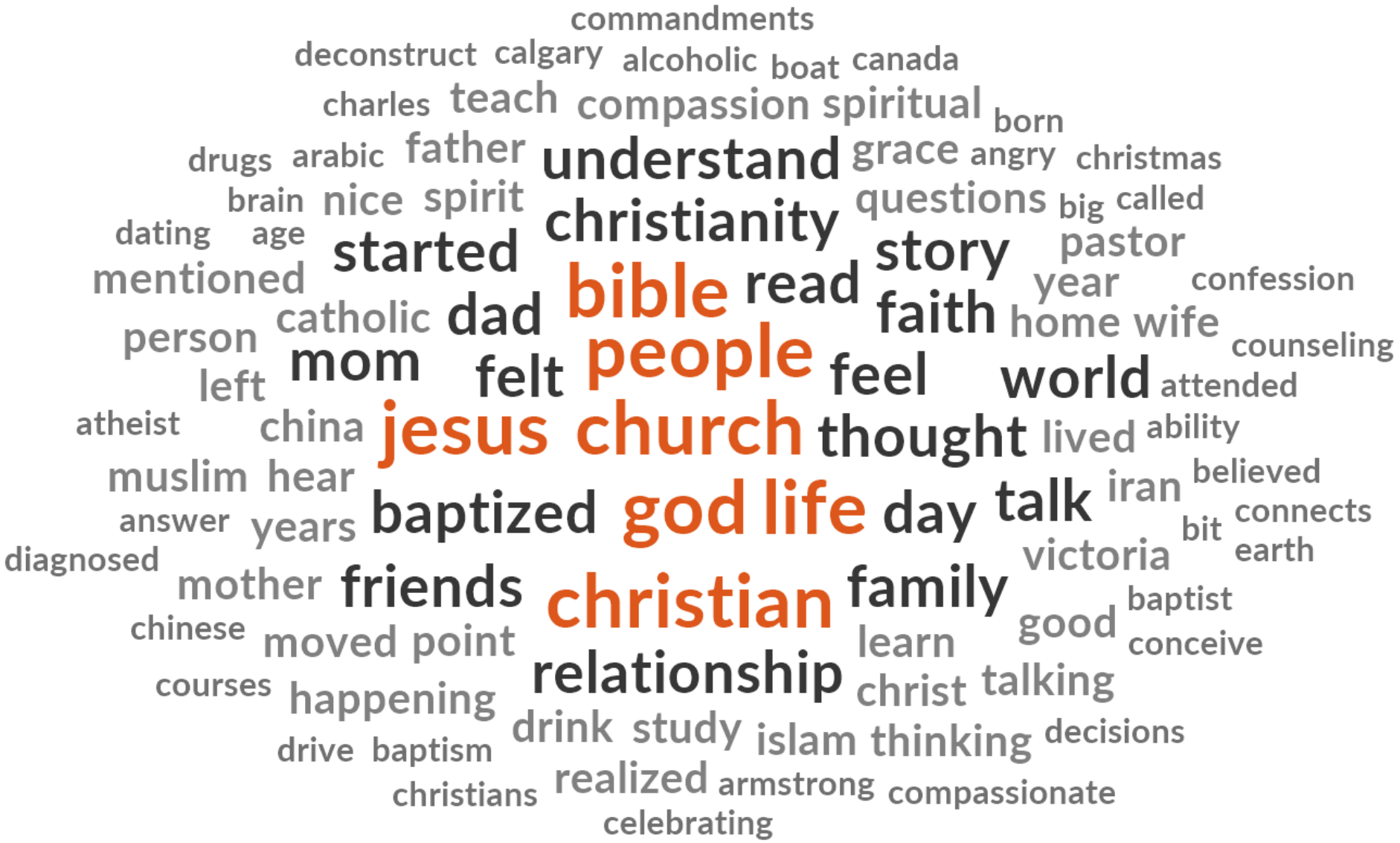




A Doctor of Ministry Project: Trinity Western Seminary

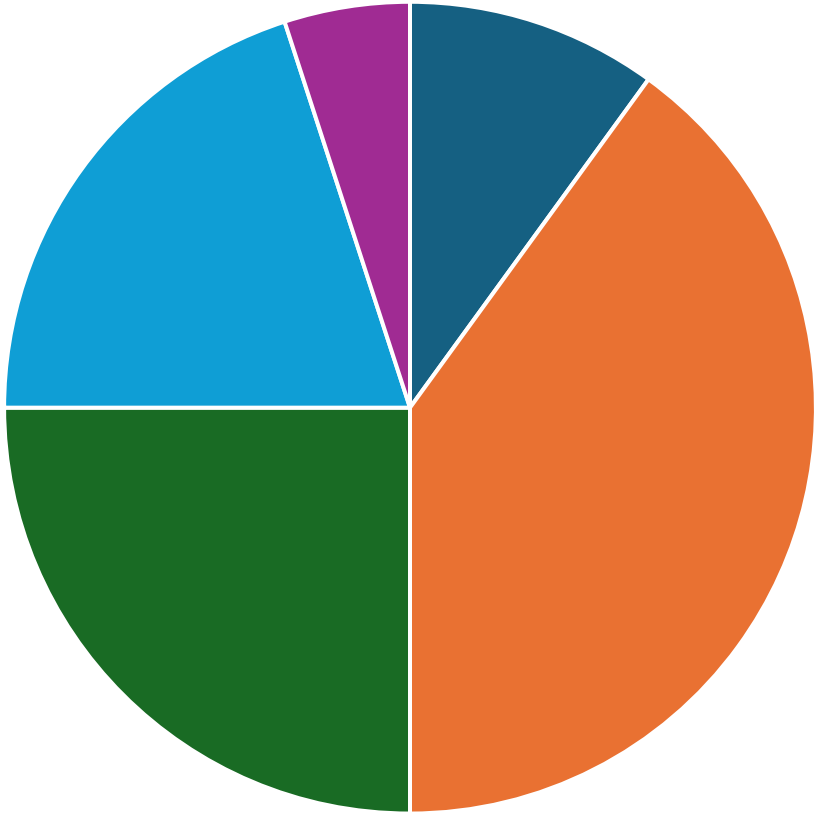
- 20 Interviews
- Baptized, 2017-2022
- Evangelical churches in Victoria
- 190,000 words of transcript

Listening to Stories



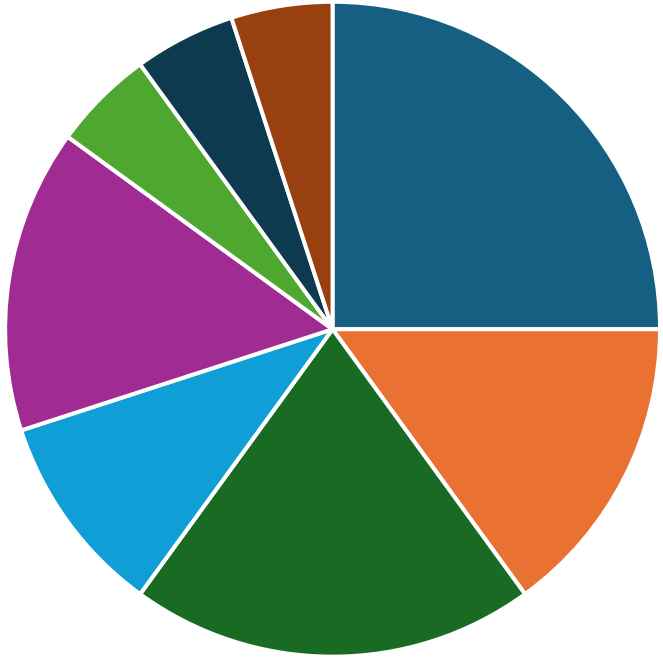
Who? When? Where? Demographic Info

Decade of Birth



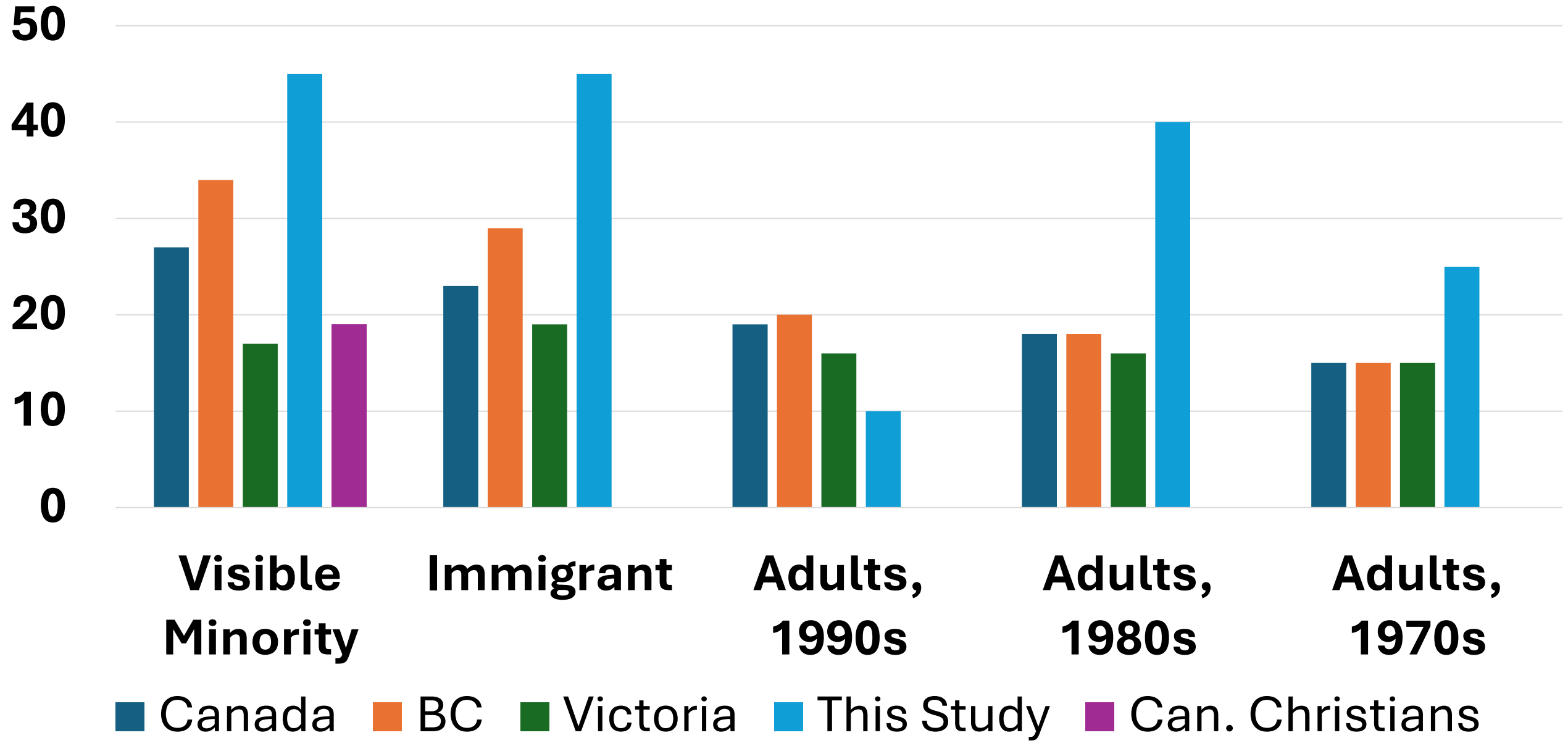
90s 80s 70s 60s 50s

Church of Baptism

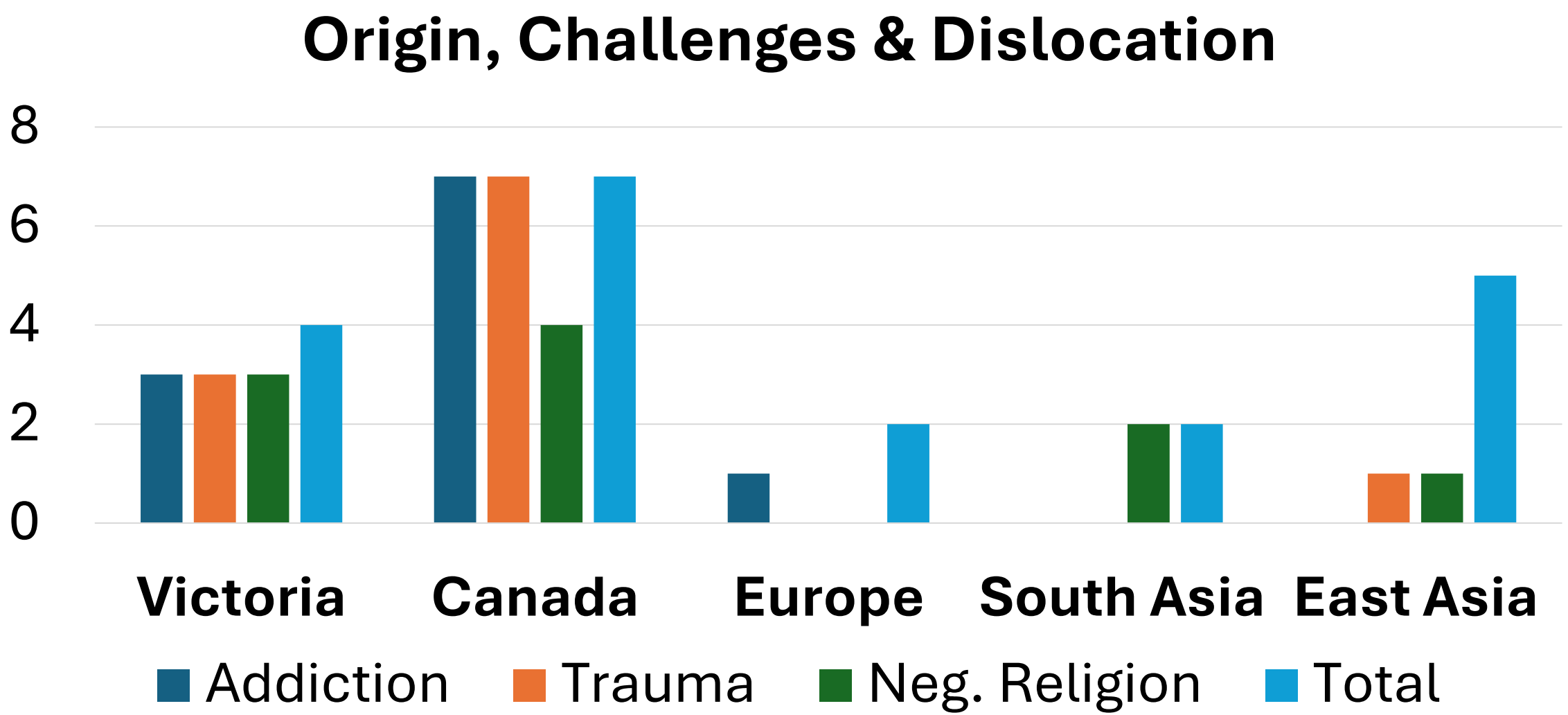


Parkdale Zion Mosaic
Shelbourne Gateway Lambrick
Capital Lighthouse

2021 Census Data: Origin & Age



Why? Background Info

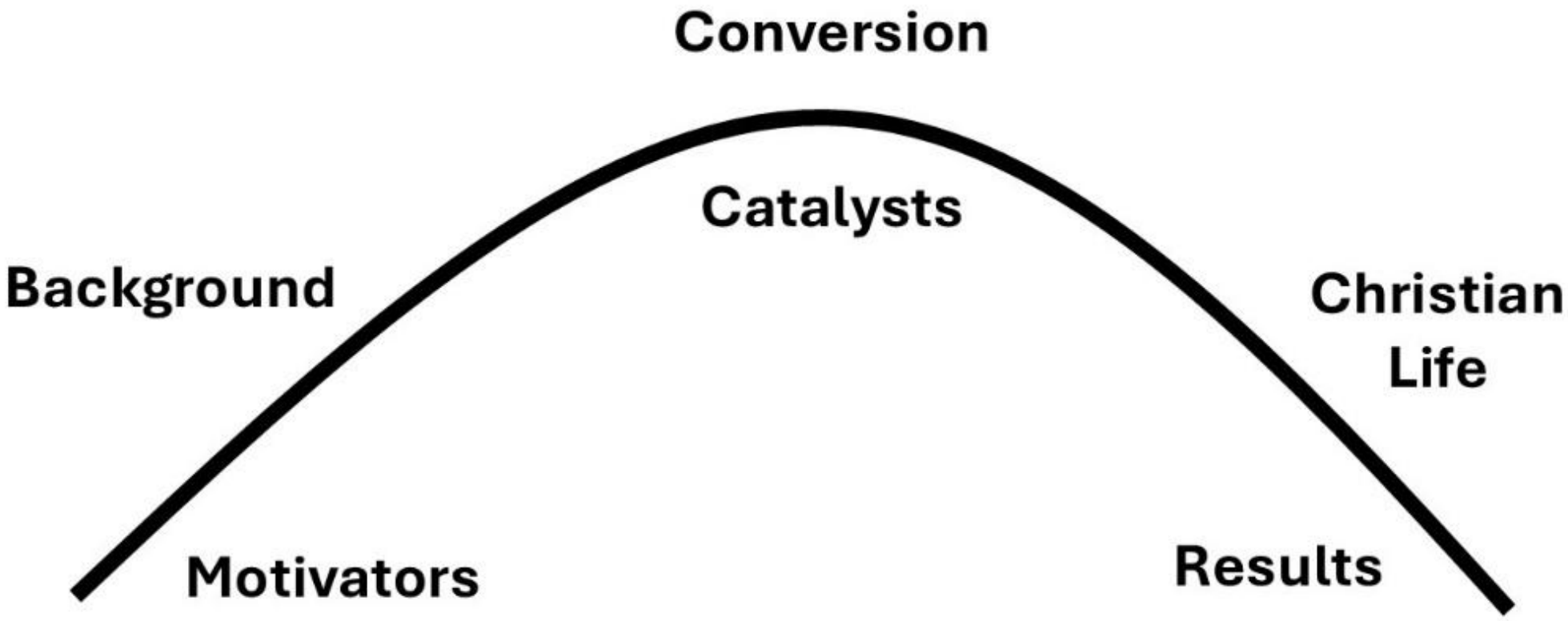


Why? Background Motivators

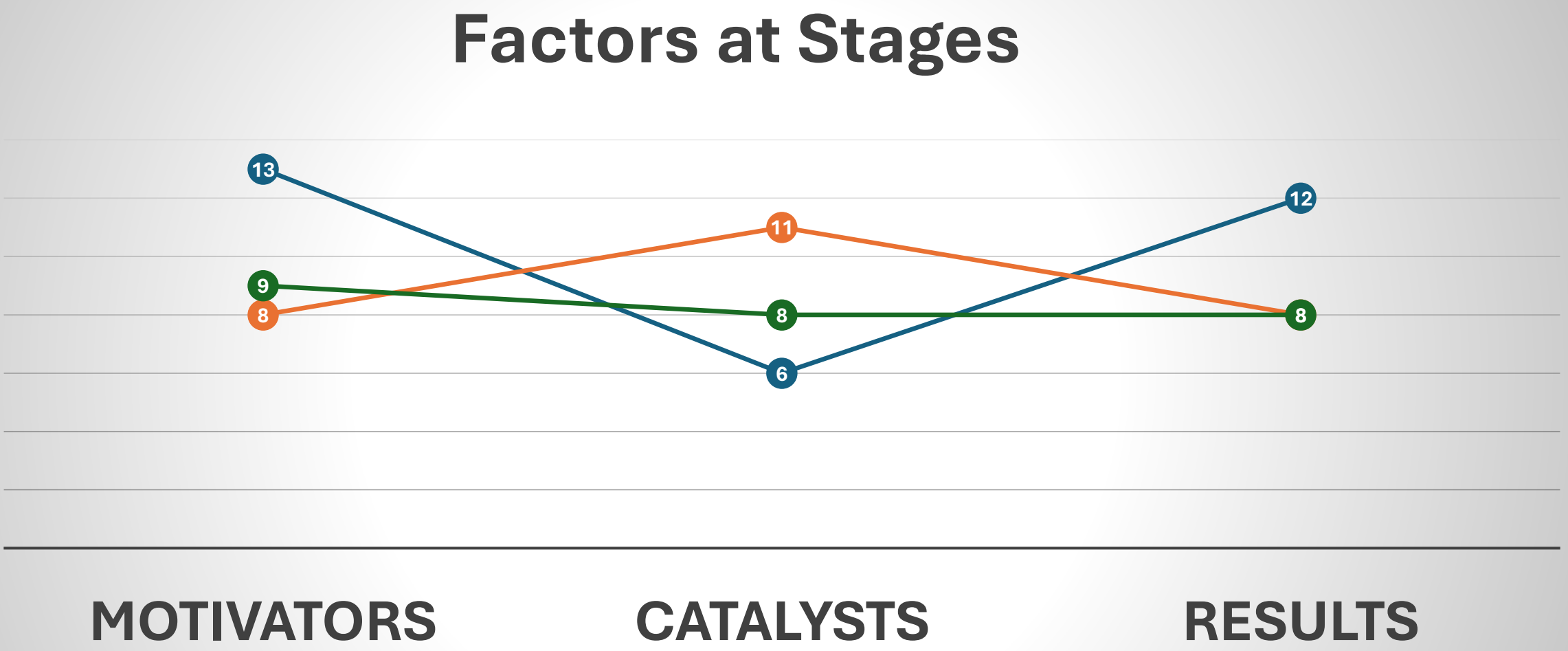
- **Challenges provided motivation**
  - Visible: Trauma, addiction, dislocation
  - Underlying: Negative experiences, hardship, feelings
- **Quest begun**
  - Seeking answers to questions
  - Relational needs identified
  - Encounters & experience with Christianity
- **3 Aspects**: social, conceptual, experiential



How? The Shape of Conversion



How? The Process of Conversion

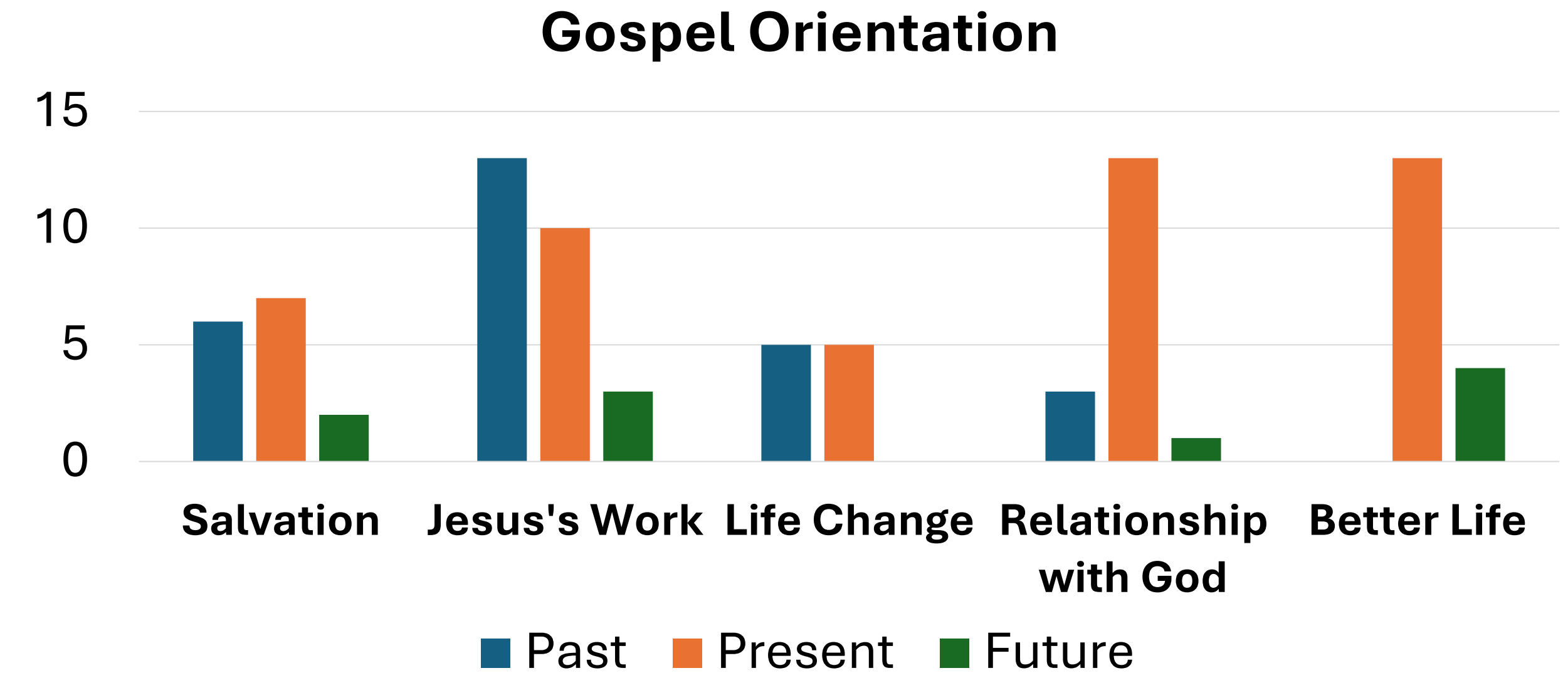


So What? The Results



- **The meaning of conversion**
  - Similar factors at play: relational peace, behavioral improvement, ongoing learning
  - Emotional, intellectual, spiritual, practical changes
- **The takeaway message**
  - Christianity – process of change, finding direction/purpose, a relationship with God
  - God – “good, great, present”
  - Gospel – salvation, change, relationship, Jesus

So What?


Gospel Orientation
15
10
5
0
Salvation
Jesus's Work
Life Change
Relationship with God
Better Life
Past
Present
Future

What Next?

- Learning to Listen Well
- Patience with the Process
- Gospel Contextualization



Questions & Discussion