

# Probe 2020 Survey Report #3: Religious Practices and Purpose for Living

*Steve Cable explores Probe's 2020 survey, examining the participants' religious practices, sense of purpose for living, and views on tolerance vs. acceptance.*

In our [first two reports](#), we looked primarily at religious affiliations and core religious beliefs. In this report, we examine the level of religious activity of different religious groups and how they relate to people with different religious beliefs.

Some of the key results for Americans ages 18 through 39 on religious practices are as follows:

- Only about a fourth of Born Again Christians prayed multiple times per day and a similar number said they read their Bible daily.
- Only about one in five Born Again Christians give 10% or more of their income to their church and other charities.
- Only about one in twenty Born Again Christians reported a consistent religious life where they attended church at least **twice** a month, considered their faith as **strongly** important in their daily life, prayed **multiple times** per day, and read their Bible **daily**.
- Less than one in five Born Again Christians reported a nominal religious involvement where they attend church at least once a month, considered their faith as important in their daily life, prayed at least once a day, and read their Bible at least weekly, and gave at least 5% to their church and other charities.

- From 2010 to 2020, the percent of Born Again Christians who reported attending church at least twice a month, considered their faith as strongly important and read their Bible daily dropped by one half from 40% down to 20%.
- When asked about their ultimate purpose for living, slightly more than half of Born Again Christians selected a purpose which included serving God which was a significant drop from the two thirds who selected a similar purpose in 2010.

Some of the key results for Americans ages 18 through 39 on tolerance of other religions are:

- Only about one quarter (27%) of them disagree with the statement “. . . it is important to let people know that I affirm as true (at least for them) their religious beliefs and practices.”
- At the same time, almost two thirds (65%) agree that tolerance is best defined as “Treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.”
- This is another topic where we see somewhat conflicting results. Apparently, many Born Again Christian young adults think that you cannot believe someone is “wrong or misguided” when it comes to religion. Or they believe that “Treating with respect” means “affirming as true (at least for them)”.

## Level of Religious Activities

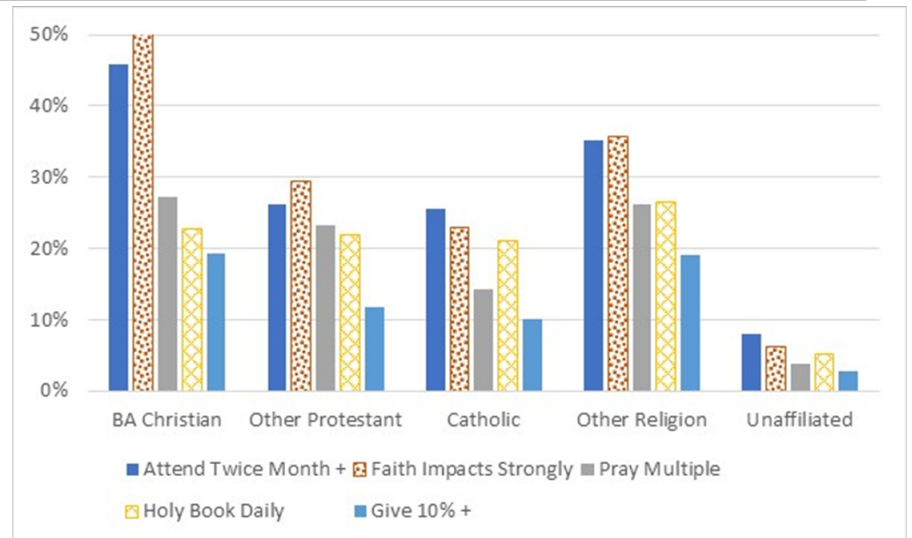
We will begin by looking at two different levels of religious activity: a Nominal Level and a Committed Level as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Defining Levels of Religious Activity**

Religious Activity	Nominal Level	Committed Level
How often do you attend religious services, not including special events such as a wedding or funeral?	Monthly	Twice a month or more
My religious faith has a significant impact on my daily life	Agree	Agree strongly
How often do you pray outside of a formal religious service?	Daily	Multiple per day
How often do you read or study your Holy Book in a small group setting or by yourself	Weekly	Daily or more
How much do you give to religious organizations and charities each year?	5% to 10% of income	At least 10% of income

I think most would agree that someone doing the activities listed at the level required for the Committed Level is serious about their faith. They consider it important enough to make it a priority in their thoughts, time and finances. One can find specific instructions or examples in scripture for the importance of the first four activities listed above in the Committed Level column. Giving at least 10% of your income is not a clear direction in the New Testament, but it is a good metric for assessing someone's commitment. The nominal level probably represents someone who considers their faith as important but not important enough to involve a significant amount of time and money.

*Figure 1 Committed Level of Religious Activity by Faith Group  
Ages 18 through 39*

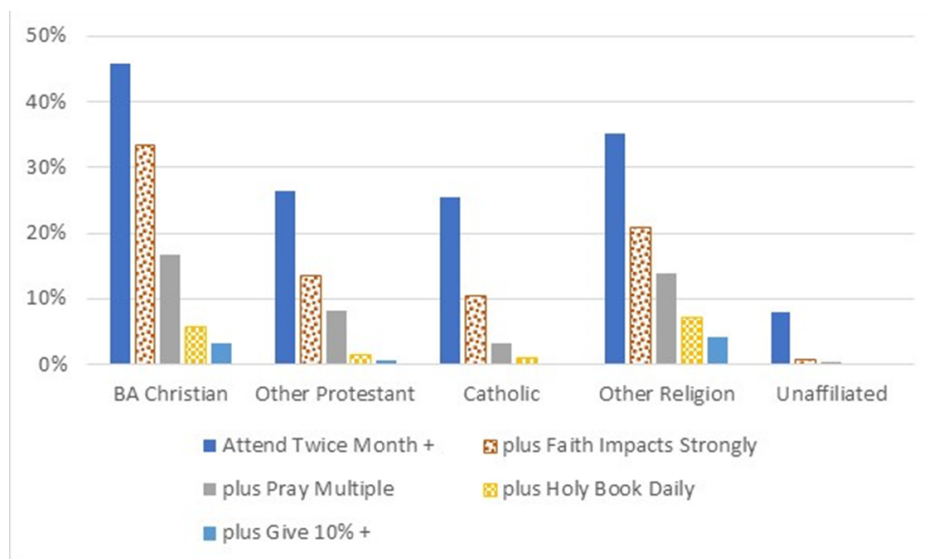


## Committed Level of Religious Activity

Those ages 18 through 39 who practice their religion at a committed level are shown in Figure 1 at right. We have roughly ordered these items from highest probability of adherence to lowest.

As shown in the figure, Born Again Christians lead the way in frequent church attendance and for strongly considering their faith significant. For the next two, prayer and reading your holy book, all four of the religious groups were similar. Finally, for the giving metric, Born Again Christians show about 20% at that level of giving while Other Protestants and Catholics are about half of that level, or 10%.

*Figure 2 Committed Level of Religious Activity – Cumulative  
Ages 18 - 39*



It is distressing that three of the five metrics show only about one in four of Born Again Christians who practice them. Even the most commonly practiced religious behaviors show

fewer than half of Born Again Christians active at those levels.

And when we combine all of these metrics together (as shown in Figure 2) to identify people who show a strong commitment to their religious faith, we find around 3% (1 out of 33) Born Again Christians saying they perform all five activities. In fact, people of Other Religions have about 4% performing all five metrics. However, for all practical purposes, there is not difference between 3% and 4%. Both numbers represent a tiny portion of the faith group.

Note that if we exclude the question on giving, the percentage of Born Again Christians increases from 3% to 5%. Clearly, money is not the primary issue driving down the number of consistently active believers.

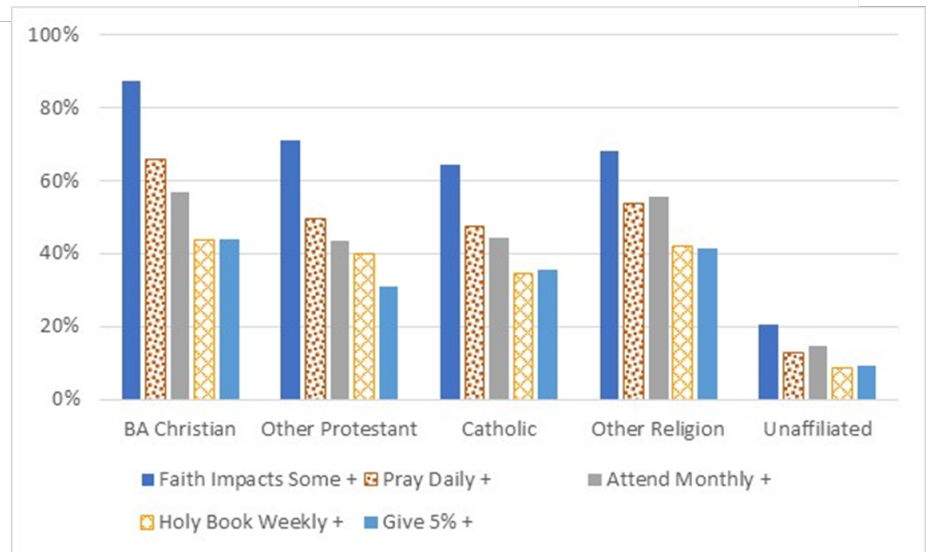
Also note that the entire Unaffiliated group reports less than 8% on each of these practices and less than 1% who claim to do even two of these practices.

These survey results clearly show that a scant few Americans of any religious persuasion take the time to be actively involved in practices

to help them grow in their faith.

## Nominal or Committed Levels of Religious Activity

Figure 3 At Least a Nominal Level of Religious Activity by Faith Group  
Ages 18 through 39



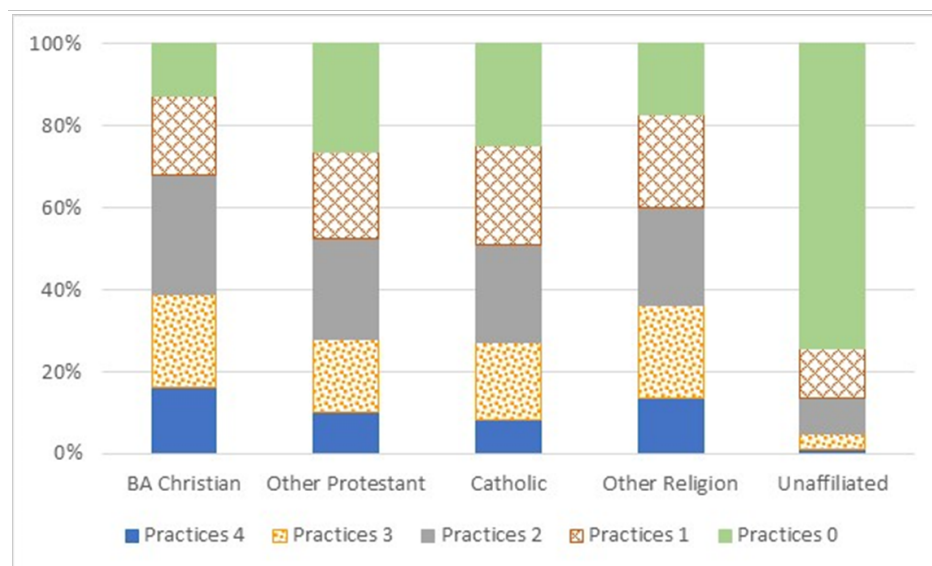
Now let's look at those with at least a Nominal level of religious practice (i.e., those who select the nominal level or the committed level). As shown in the figure, this is a much lower bar with all religious faiths hovering over 60% on those who agree/strongly agree that their faith has a significant impact on their daily lives and around half on those who pray at least daily. The other three activities range between 30% and 50%.

We should not forget that the pastors of these religious groups should be (and probably are) ashamed of these numbers. Particularly so when we consider the percentage of each group that practices all five of these relatively easy levels of commitment. The numbers (not shown on the graph) for those who practice all five are 16% of Born Again Christians, 13% of Other Religions, 9% of Other Protestants and 7% of Catholics. I must believe that pastors of those who answered the two Born Again questions would expect those congregants to be greater than 80% rather than hovering around 15%.

It is interesting that when we combine five different metrics, each of which is greater than 40% for Born Again Christians,

that it drops down to 16%. Note both the metrics for reading the Bible at least weekly and giving at least 5% of your income to charities come in at Almost half (44%). When we combine the two metrics to see how many Born Again Christians affirm that they engage in both of these activities, the number drops to about one in four (26%).

*Figure 4 Number of Nominal Religious Activities  
Ages 18 through 39*



So let's look and see how many said they did all the activities, three of the activities, two of the activities, etc. Almost 40% of Born Again Christians did at least three of

the activities. Only 5% of the Unaffiliated could say the same. In fact, over 75% of the Unaffiliated did none of these activities.

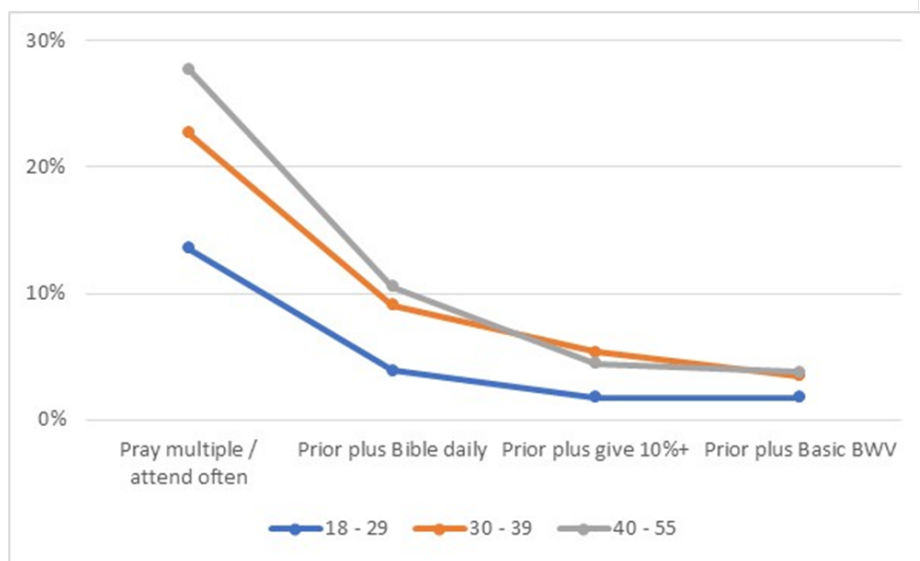
It is worth noting that Other Protestants and Catholics do not lag far behind Born Again Christians in the percentage doing at least three of the activities. This difference is a significant contrast to the Basic Biblical Worldview questions and the "who is Jesus" questions where these other religious groups lagged far behind Born Again Christians.

If I were to say to a Born Again believer, "to consistently grow in your faith and represent the good news of Christ to the world, I recommend that you pray to God daily, attend church at least one a month, read your Bible at least one a week, and give at least 5% of your income to religious charities including your church." I would not expect to get

much blowback. After all, it takes less than one hour a week and no real financial hardship. Of course, what I really say is we should all try to live at a Committed level. Not because it is necessary for salvation, rather this level of activity will help us live a life honoring God and making a difference beyond the temporal into eternity.

### Variations by Age among Born Again Christians

*Figure 5 Committed Level of Religious Activity for Born Again Christians by Age Range*

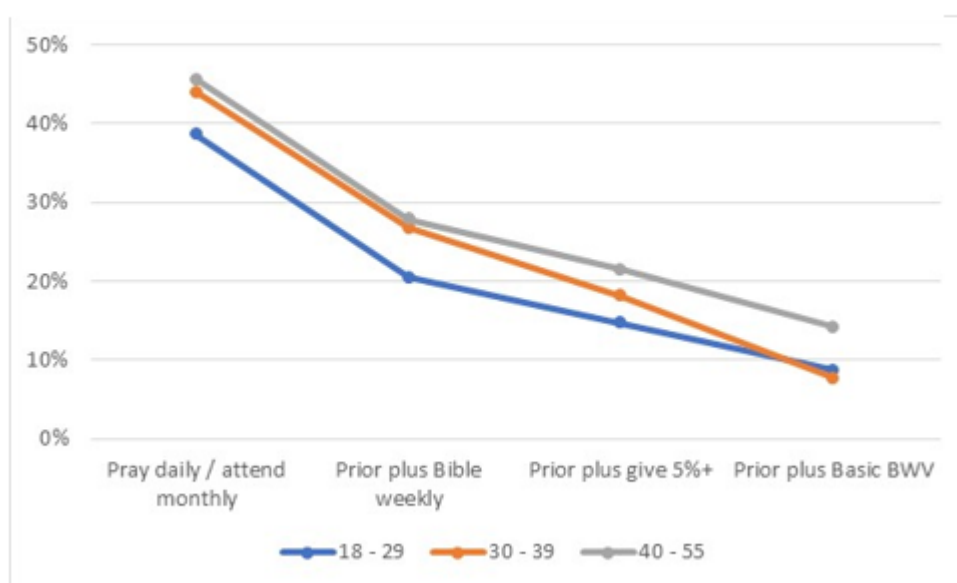


How do these religious activities vary by age among Born Again Christians? The results are plotted in the graph on the right for a

Committed Level of Activity. As shown, the percentage of the youngest adults is significantly less than for the two older groups. However, as the graph moves to the right adding more aspects to the cumulative total, the difference becomes small. In general, the youngest adults are less likely to practice key components of an active faith, but regardless of age the numbers are small.



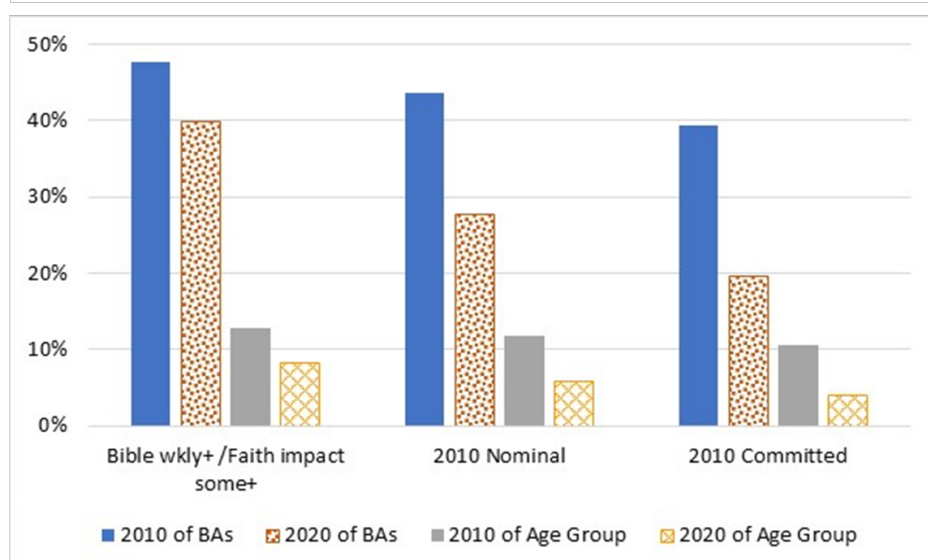
*Figure 6 At Least a Nominal Level of Religious Activity for Born Again Christians by Age Range*



The results are shown on the left for a Nominal or Committed Level of Activity. We have more Born Again Christians who participate across these levels. The

lines still trail down sharply as we move to the right, adding more practices to the cumulative total. The fact that only one out of five Born Again Christians ages 18 through 29 pray daily, attend church at least monthly, and read the Bible at least weekly presents a major challenge to our young adult ministries. I would suggest that these activities are essential to a consistently grow sanctification in our lives.

*Figure 7 Comparison of Religious Practices in 2010 and 2020 Born Again Christians Ages 18 through 39*



## Religious Practice from 2010 to 2020

How has the commitment to religious practices fared over the last 10 years or so? Our survey from 2010 asked the same questions regarding attendance, Bible reading, and the importance of faith. The questions on prayer and giving were different. However, we can get some good comparison data looking at the three common questions.

In the figure at right we use two terms, 2010 Nominal and 2010 Committed, which are defined below. The 2010 Nominal attend monthly plus, read the Bible weekly plus, and agree that their faith is significant in their daily lives. The 2010 Committed attend **more than** monthly, read the Bible weekly plus, and **strongly agree** that their faith is significant in their daily lives.

The first category shown does not include church attendance. One unknown with the attendance question taken during the Covid-19 pandemic is that some respondents may have replied taking the pandemic into consideration and while other respondents considered normal times. We see a slightly greater drop-off between the first category and the 2010 Nominal category which could be associated with this issue. However, the difference is not large enough to impact the overall conclusions.

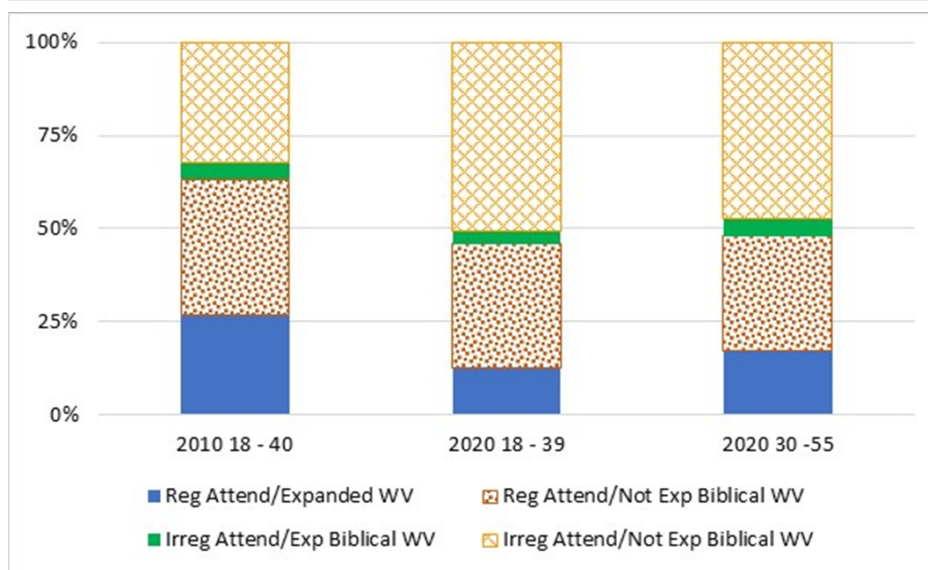
What we see is that the drop-off in the 2010 Nominal category is from 44% to 28% and the drop-off in the 2010 Committed category is down one half from 40% to 20%. These numbers reflect an astounding drop in the importance that Born Again Christians place on these simple religious activities.

**Combining Worldview and Church Attendance** (a key metric from our earlier book[\[1\]](#))

In our prior study of Born-Again Christians, one of the key divisions we used in looking at religious practices, religious beliefs and cultural practices was a combination of Biblical

Worldview and Church Attendance. We found that those Born-Again Christians with a Biblical Worldview and regular church attendance (twice a month or more), were much more likely to demonstrate biblical religious practices, beliefs, and cultural practices. So, we wanted to compare those results with the findings from our new survey.

*Figure 8 Church Attendance and Expanded Biblical Worldview*



The figure on the left compares the findings from 2010 with those from 2020 using the more stringent Expanded Biblical Worldview. The values shown are the percent of Born-Again Christians (so

all columns add up to 100% even though the percentage of Born Again Christians is less in 2020). Two age ranges are used in 2020; the first one is basically the same age range used in 2010 (18 – 39) and the second age range (30 – 55) is very close to the age range of the 2010 survey aged by the ten years that have gone by.

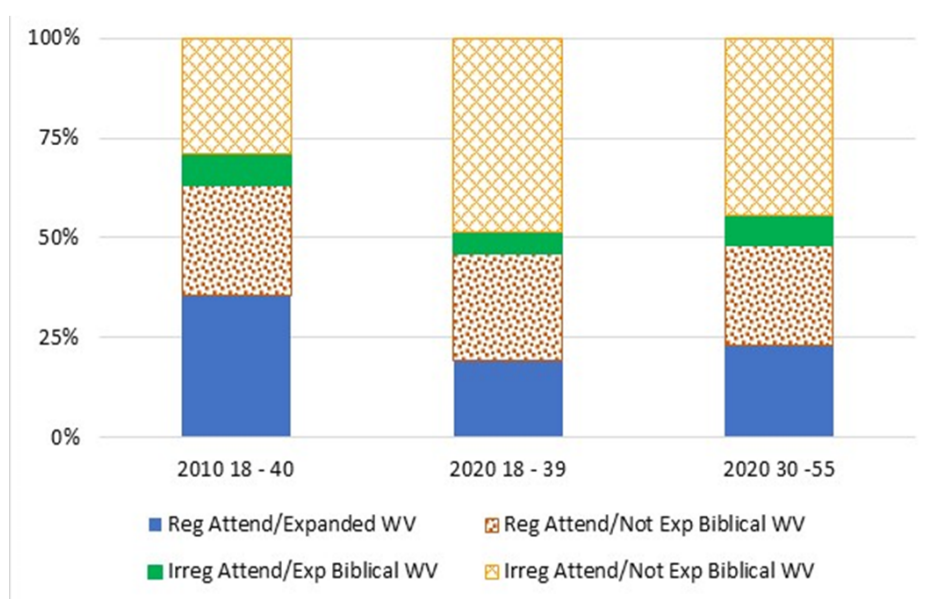
Looking at those with regular attendance and an Expanded Biblical Worldview we see a significant reduction among 18- to 29-year-olds in 2020 (27% down to 13%) with a lesser reduction among 30- to 55-year-olds down to 17%. The percentage of regular attenders without an Expanded Biblical Worldview has remained relatively constant. But of course, that does not mean that the people who stopped attending were those with an Expanded Biblical Worldview. It could be that many without it stopped attending while some decided that they did not believe all of the positions in the worldview but kept attending on a

regular basis.

The area showing a startling high level of growth are those attending monthly or less who do not hold to an Expanded Biblical Worldview. This is the square that ten years ago we wanted to drive down to a smaller number. Instead, it has grown by about 18% (from 32% to 50%).

Now let's examine the same chart using a Basic Biblical Worldview. We see nearly the same features as discussed above. A significant drop is shown in those with regular attendance and a Basic Biblical Worldview coupled with a significant increase in those with irregular attendance and no Basic Biblical Worldview.

*Figure 9 Church Attendance and Basic Biblical Worldview among Born Again Christians in 2010 and 2020*



## Ultimate Purpose for Living

We wanted to explore what American young adults thought they were living their lives for. So we asked, "Which statement comes closest to describing your ultimate primary purpose for living?" The choices to select from were:

1. To be a good person and make others happy.
2. To serve God by living a life which proclaims Christ's grace.
3. To make it through each day with integrity.

4. To live at peace with all.

5. To enjoy the best life has to offer, e.g. success, money, travel.

6. To love my family and raise loving, productive children.

Most of these answers sound like good purposes for life. But only one of them extends into eternity and recognizes our Creator and his “desire for all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”[\[2\]](#) The answers to this question help identify those who are living their life as eternal beings rather than as temporal beings.

The results are charted in the graph to the left. As shown, just over half of Born Again Christians profess an eternal perspective. This means almost half do not, with most of those

selecting a purpose that focuses on good behaviors in their personal life.

Every other religious group has very few that selected an eternal perspective as their ultimate purpose for living. Around forty to fifty percent of the other groups selects a purpose reflecting good behaviors.

It is interesting that only a small percentage of each group selected the family focused purpose for living. I would like to know if that would have been a larger number say fifty years ago.

*Figure 24 My Ultimate Purpose for Living  
Americans 18 through 39*

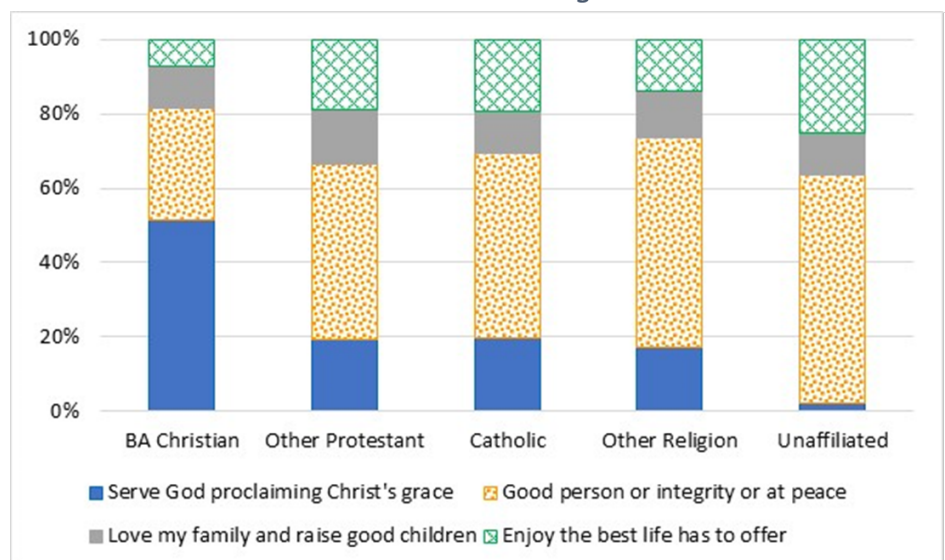
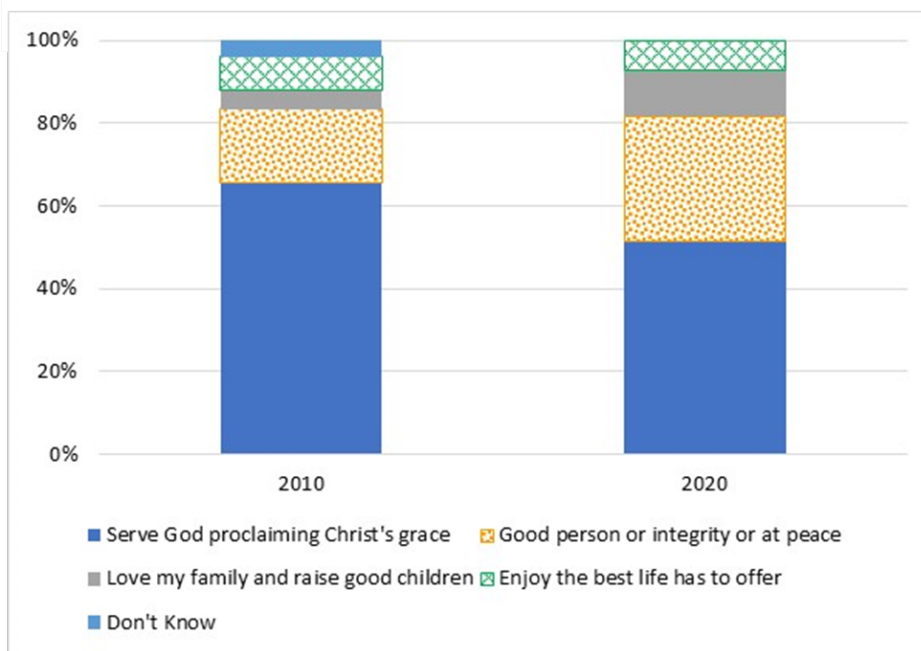




Figure 25 My Ultimate Purpose for Living: 2010 and 2020  
Born Again Christians 18 through 39



Finally, note this is another question that highlights the stark difference between the Unaffiliated and Born Again Protestants. We see that 57% of Born Again Protestants selected the eternal answer

while only 2% of the Unaffiliated did the same. This result is a clear indicator that the Unaffiliated do not include a lot of Christians who do not want to affiliate with a particular Christian group.

For Born Again Christians, we can compare data from our 2010 survey with the 2020 survey as shown in the figure. The 2010 survey had the same question as the 2020 survey, but it had more answers to choose from. For example, there were three answers that had an eternal perspective: *to serve God and live out His will for my life, to lead others to salvation in Jesus Christ, to praise and glorify God*. These three answers were grouped together to align with the 2020 answer: *To serve God by living a life which proclaims Christ's grace*.

As you can see the percentage of Born Again Christians who included God in their ultimate purpose for living dropped from 66% in 2010 to 51% in 2020, a significant drop. It appears that in 2020 people who did not name God in their answer opted to pick an admirable answer focused on themselves.

## Relationship to a Basic Biblical Worldview

Consider the question of how many Born Again Christians accept a Basic Biblical Worldview and an eternal perspective on their ultimate purpose. We find that 88% of those with a Basic Biblical Worldview selected an ultimate purpose proclaiming God's grace. Conversely, 43% of those selecting an ultimate purpose proclaiming God's grace affirmed a Basic Biblical Worldview for their life (as compared with 25% for Born Again Christians as a whole). Thus, we find a fairly strong correlation between a biblical worldview and an eternal ultimate purpose for life.

## Acceptance or Tolerance

Some of the key findings on this topic summarized at the beginning of this report are repeated below prior to going into the details.

Looking at Born Again Christians ages 18 through 39, we find:

- Only about one quarter (27%) of them disagree with the statement “. . . it is important to let people know that I affirm as true (at least for them) their religious beliefs and practices.”
- At the same time, almost two thirds (65%) agree that tolerance is best defined as “Treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.”
- This is another topic where we see somewhat conflicting results. Apparently, many Born Again Christian young adults think that you cannot believe someone is “wrong or misguided” when it comes to religion. Or they believe that “Treating with respect” means “affirming as true (at least for them)”.

According to the Collins Dictionary, “Tolerance is the quality

of allowing other people to say and do what they like, even if you do not agree with or approve of it.”[\[3\]](#) In today’s culture, we find two conflicting understandings of the meaning of tolerance. One, following the idea of the dictionary meaning is, “treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.” The second one influenced by postmodern philosophy and popularized by the secular media, is “valuing human beings equally and affirming their ideas as right for them.” The second definition basically assumes that there are no absolute truths in our existence and therefore we have no basis to disagree with what someone else believes.

Which of these definitions holds sway among our population today?

To explore this question, we asked two different questions dealing with how to treat those who have a different religious viewpoint. The first question we asked on this topic is “What does Tolerance mean to you?” The respondents chose from four possible answers:

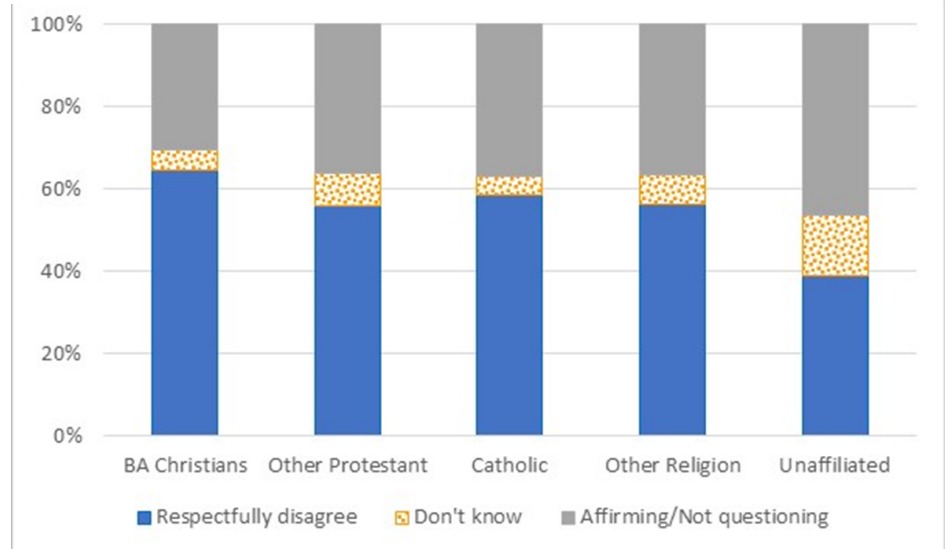
1. Treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.
2. Not questioning another person’s moral decisions.
3. Valuing human beings equally and affirming their ideas as right for them.
4. Don’t know.

This question gives us information on how people interpret the word, not whether they apply tolerance in their dealings with others.



Figure 1 How 18 - 39 Year Old Americans Define Tolerance

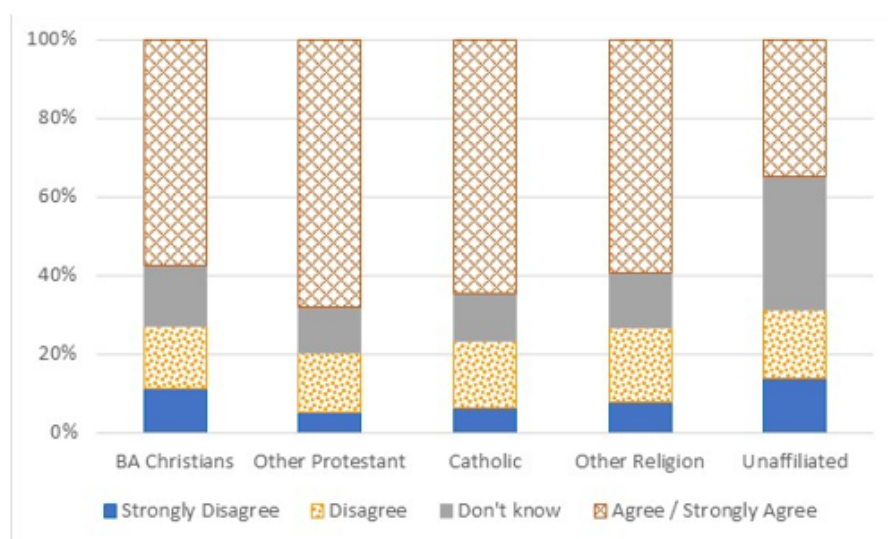
In figure 1, we see how the definitions are distributed. Almost two thirds (65%) of young adult, Born Again Christians selected a classic definition of tolerance.



As shown, over 50% of the other religious groups also selected a classic definition. But as one can see from the graph, a significant number of young adult Americans were selecting a different definition with the portions ranging from one third to almost one half of each religious group. So, it appears that a majority of the population is hanging onto the classic definition, but definitions which question the reality of absolute truths have a strong following.

Now let's look at how people apply tolerance in the area of religious beliefs. Are they quick to say, "I will respect you and your beliefs even though I believe them to be wrong"? Or are they going to follow the trend saying, "They may well be true for you."

*Figure 2 Should I tell others I affirm as true their religious beliefs  
18 – 39 Americans*



To find out, we asked another question: “When discussing religious matters, I feel that it is important to let people know that I affirm as true (at least for them) their religious beliefs

and practices,” with the answer ranging from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly. As an evangelical Christian, I would answer that I Disagree Strongly with that statement. I want them to know that I respect them as a person, but I believe I have been shown the absolutely true answer as to how man can be reconciled to our creator God. But somehow, when asked in this manner, Born Again Christians just don’t seem to get the importance of disagreeing as shown in Figure 1.

As shown in the figure, only about one in four (27%) Born Again Christians disagree with the statement. This level tracks closely with the rest of the population. If one is agreeing with the statement, one is either saying in religion what’s not true for me can be true for you, or there are multiple religions that are the truth, or we should lie to others about the absolute truth of Christianity when discussing religion with them. All three of those options are clearly countered by the Bible which tells us that Jesus Christ is the source of absolute truth, that there is only one way to heaven, and that lying about the truth is against the nature of God.

The disconnect between the definition of tolerance and

applying tolerance in our interactions with other religions is striking. As noted in the initial summary, apparently many Born Again Christian young adults think that you cannot believe someone is “wrong or misguided” when it comes to religion. Or they believe that “Treating with respect” means “affirming as true (at least for them).” We don’t have data to distinguish between these two options, but I suspect that both of them contribute to the current reluctance to lift up Jesus as God’s one true answer to the fundamental problem of mankind.

### Notes

1. Stephen Cable, Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behaviors of American Young Adults, 2012
2. 1 Timothy 2:4
3. Collins English Dictionary, [Tolerance definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary \(collinsdictionary.com\)](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/en/english-uk/definition-and-meaning-of/tolerance)

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## Western Europe: Religious Practice

In my [last post](#), we looked at how many people in the countries of Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Spain, and Cyprus profess a God-focused worldview. Now let’s consider some religious practices typically associated with an active faith. This worldwide survey did not ask many questions about religious practice, but the three questions asked highlight some interesting differences.

The three questions asked were:

1. Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray?
2. Do you have an active membership in a church or religious organization?
3. Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?

Let's look at the responses based on the country of the respondent, their religious preference, and their age (less than 30 or over 60). The "Pray" columns are those who pray daily or more often. The "Active" columns refer to those who say they have an active membership. The "Attend" columns are those who attend religious services once a month or more often.

**Table 1 Those Actively Participating in Religious Practices**

Country	Age	All (%)			Protestant {%			Catholic (%)		
		Pray	Active	Attend	Pray	Active	Attend	Pray	Active	Attend
Germany	All	NA	14	20	NA	14	17	NA	27	35
	Under 30	NA	9	10	NA	13	7	NA	13	19
	Over 60	NA	18	25	NA	16	21	NA	31	48
Netherlands	All	19	11	17	65	46	64	31	18	30
	Under 30	9	6	11	42	42	77	20	5	21
	Over 60	26	16	24	70	48	67	38	22	39
Sweden	All	10	6	9	11	8	11	—	—	—
	Under 30	9	2	6	6	2	2	—	—	—
	Over 60	13	7	12	17	10	15	—	—	—
Spain	All	NA	7	20	—	—	—	NA	8	24
	Under 30	NA	3	6	—	—	—	NA	4	8
	Over 60	NA	14	41	—	—	—	NA	15	47

Cyprus	All	32	10	35	–	–	–	42	12	44
	Under 30	22	6	20	–	–	–	34	7	26
	Over 60	52	12	65	–	–	–	55	13	68

We see some widely varying results between countries and age groups, but none are very encouraging. How many say they pray daily or more often? In the Netherlands, almost 2 out of 3 Protestants and 1 out of 3 Catholics. The large number of Nones in the Netherlands drop the percentage for the country as a whole down to less than 1 out of 5. Sweden, on the other hand, has only about 1 out of 10 saying they pray regularly whether they are Protestant or otherwise. We will see how dismal this level is when we compare it to the United States later in this post.

Also, you can see that those under 30 are less likely to pray daily than older adults. However, the small number of adults of all ages praying daily is the dominant factor.

Being an active member of a church is a definite minority in all categories shown. Roughly one out of ten adults claim to be an active church member across all countries and age groups. Once again, the relatively smaller number of young adults who claim to be active is overwhelmed by the small number across the board.

Those who attend church at least once a month reflect percentages almost equal with those who pray daily or more.

What does it look like when we consider those who combine all three of these characteristics as shown below?

**Table 2 Those Who Pray at Least Daily, Are Members, and Attend Monthly or More**

Country	Age	All (%)	Protestant (%)	Catholic (%)
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Germany	All	9	7	19
	Under 30	3	1	7
	Over 60	13	10	25
Netherlands	All	8	39	10
	Under 30	4	35	5
	Over 60	12	43	12
Sweden	All	3	4	–
	Under 30	1	1	–
	Over 60	4	6	–
Spain	All	5	–	6
	Under 30	1	–	2
	Over 60	12	–	14
Cyprus	All	4	–	5
	Under 30	2	–	3
	Over 60	9	–	10

Note: For Germany and Spain this does not include “Pray at least daily”

Clearly none of these countries have a significant number of people who report a minimal amount of regular religious involvement. Only among Protestants in the Netherlands do we see more than 1 in 10. The percent of Protestants in the Netherlands is small enough that only 8% of all people in that country report a minimal religious involvement.

Just looking at these three very simple practices, we see that the vast majority of people in all these countries do not actively practice their faith. And, those under the age of 30 are much less likely than their seniors to practice these characteristics.

Now let’s compare the results for Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands with those from the United States as shown in table 3.

**Table 3 United States Results Compared to Germany, Sweden and Netherlands (GSN)**

Activity	Age	All (%)		Protestant (%)		Catholic (%)	
		U.S.	GSN	U.S.	GSN	U.S.	GSN
Pray daily	All	45	10	64	16	51	11
	Under 30	34	5	55	6	30	4
	Over 60	55	14	65	25	64	18
Active church member	All	35	11	54	17	40	23
	Under 30	26	6	40	10	34	11
	Over 60	42	15	58	22	48	27
Attend monthly or more	All	44	16	65	22	10	33
	Under 30	36	1	58	10	53	20
	Over 60	50	22	67	30	58	43
All three	All	26	4	45	9	27	4
	Under 30	15	1	32	3	14	1
	Over 60	35	6	48	13	41	6

As shown, the religious activities of Western Europeans lag significantly behind the level of activity practiced in the United States. When it comes to daily prayer, over 4 times as many Americans practice this activity across the general population, the Protestant population and the Catholic population. Looking at only those under thirty, we find that over 7 times as many Americans practice daily prayer as do Western Europeans. This increase is not due to an increase in prayer among under 30's in the United States, but rather due to a significant drop in daily prayer among young adult, Western Europeans.

The table shows similar levels of differences between people in the United States and those in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. Consider the young adults who practice all three of these religious activities. The Americans practice these activities from 10 to 15 times as often as their Western

European counterparts. Once again, these huge differences are not due to high levels of faithfulness among Americans. Americans claim only 15% of those under 30 practice all three activities. But rather by the lack of faithfulness among Western Europeans; where only 1% claim to practice all three.

This look at the data on three questions, which describe a very nominal degree of commitment to one's religious life, clearly shows that Western Europe has a very small remnant of active Christ followers. Without looking at this data, you probably would have agreed with the statement above. But now, you know how significant the problem really is. If they represent the rest of Western Europe, we see that the places where Protestantism was born and initially flourished have become places where Christian religious practice is relegated to a few and ignored by the many.

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## United States and Mexico: Religious Practice

In my [prior post](#), we looked at how many people in Mexico and the United States profess a God-focused worldview. Now let's consider some religious practices typically associated with an active faith. This worldwide survey did not ask many questions about religious practice, but the three that it did ask unveil some interesting differences.

The three questions asked were:

1. Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray?



2. Do you have an active membership in a church or religious organization?
3. Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?

Let's look at the responses based on the country of the respondent, their religious preference, and their age (less than 30 or over 60). The "Pray" columns are those who pray daily or more often. The "Active" columns refer to those who say they have an active membership. The "Attend" columns are those who attend religious services once a month or more often.

**Table 1: Those Actively Participating in Religious Practices**

Country	Age	All (%)			Protestant (%)			Catholic (%)		
		Pray	Active	Attend	Pray	Active	Attend	Pray	Active	Attend
Mexico	All	60	38	62	72	60	81	64	40	69
	Under 30	48	33	55	66	61	74	53	35	63
	Over 60	78	46	79	88	56	88	81	49	84
United States	All	46	35	44	64	54	65	52	40	54
	Under 30	34	25	36	55	40	58	30	34	53
	Over 60	55	42	50	65	58	67	64	48	58

How many say they pray daily or more often? Overall 60% of Mexicans and only about 45% of people from the United States said they prayed that often. But of those under the age of 30, the numbers were only 48% for Mexico and 34% for the United States. In both locations, those over 60 were over 50% more likely to have an active prayer life than those under 30. In both countries, Protestants were more likely to say they prayed at least once a day than Catholics. Almost nine out of ten Protestants from Mexico over the age of 60 pray at least once a day. At the other end of the spectrum, only three out of ten Catholics from the United States pray at least once a

day.

Active memberships are fairly close in number between Mexico and the United States. But like prayer, those from Mexico are more likely to profess an active membership. Typically, those over 60 are at least 50% more likely to be active members. Interestingly, Mexican Protestants are essentially the same percentage (60%) regardless of age.

As with prayer, regular church attendance is much more common in Mexico among both Protestants and Catholics. Looking at all respondents, we see 62% of Mexicans versus only 44% of those from the United States attend church at least monthly. Although not as pronounced as for prayer frequency, we see that those under 30 are less likely to attend regularly than those over 60.

What does it look like when we consider those who combine all three of these characteristics as shown below?

**Table 2: Those Who Pray At Least Daily, Are Members, and Attend Monthly or More**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>All (%)</b>	<b>Protestant (%)</b>	<b>Catholic (%)</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	All	23	44	24
	Under 30	17	39	18
	Over 60	37	50	30
<b>United States</b>	All	26	45	27
	Under 30	15	32	14
	Over 60	35	48	41

Very interestingly, when we combine these three, the significant difference between Mexico and the United States on the individual questions disappears for both Protestants and Catholics. Apparently, about one quarter of people are serious enough about their religion to pray and to attend regularly regardless of whether they reside in Mexico or the United States.

However, the difference between those under the age of 30 and older ages remains for the combination. For Catholics, those over 60 are at least twice as likely to do all three as those under 30. For Protestants, they are about 50% more likely if they are over 60 than those who are under 30. So in both countries, emerging adults are less likely (i.e., only about 15% of the group) to pray, belong and attend.

Just looking at these three very simple practices, we see that the vast majority of people in both countries do not actively practice their faith. And, those under the age of 30 are much less likely than their seniors to practice these characteristics.

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