

# Barna Group

Knowledge to navigate a changing world

## SEEKER STUDY 2015

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS

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***Research commissioned by:***

United Methodist Communications  
Nashville, Tennessee

***Research conducted by:***

Barna Group  
Ventura, California

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## INTRODUCTION

These are the findings of a study conducted on behalf of United Methodist Communications by Barna Group.

### DEFINITIONS: SEEKER SURVEY

The target audience was defined as those who (1) are currently ages 18 to 34, (2) are *not* affiliated with the United Methodist church, (3) are *not* an active church goer (infrequent church attendance) **OR** are *not* committed to a church (frequent church attendance), and (4) answer ‘*Yes*’ to at least **four** of the following statements:

- Searching for meaning & purpose
- Something feels missing from your life
- Have emotional pain or frustration that you’d like to resolve
- A spiritual person
- Seeking something better spiritually in life
- On a quest for spiritual truth
- Want to have a difference with your life
- Have a passion for social justice
- Contribute to the common good of your community

Note that a respondent committed to a church, but not actively attending can qualify as a “Seeker”.

The Seeker audience represents about one out of every three (36%) young adults under 35 years old and is drawn from a mix of religious backgrounds and experiences. In total, this represents about 20-25 million adult Americans, or about one-tenth of the adult population. The sample excludes the extremes: those most committed to their faith and to their church, as well as those who are aggressively skeptical of churches.

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## DEFINITIONS: EXPANDED SURVEY

In addition to the regular Seeker survey, Barna Group conducted a second survey on behalf of United Methodist Communications, called the “expanded survey.” This survey included any adult aged 18 to 49, to learn more about seekers by life stage.

In this report, the main Seeker Survey is examined first, followed by the Expanded Survey. Insights will help United Methodist Communications reevaluate variables such as:

- *How should a seeker be defined?*
- *What are the typical Seeker profiles; what defines and characterizes them?*
- *What felt needs do these Seekers have, presently, and what would draw them to a church?*
- *How can United Methodists effectively reach out to these Seekers?*
- *What messaging may be most effective?*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WHAT DOES A TYPICAL SEEKER LOOK LIKE?

Despite an earlier focus on Millennials (adults 18 to 31 years old), Gen-Xers (adults 32 to 49 years old) are most receptive to church and its offer of spiritual development. Gen-Xers are more likely than Millennials to consider themselves “spiritual” (65% vs. 54%). They also find more reasons to attend church, such as “church helps my spiritual development” (57% vs. 36%), “opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships” (55% vs. 35%), “opportunity to find out more about God” (50% vs. 36%), and appreciate “knowing that anyone will be welcomed into the church community” (48% to 36%).

Interestingly, *volunteering* (25%) and *causes* (14%), however, are not the most motivating reasons to attend church. Only half of Seekers say they volunteered in the past month, mostly because of lack of time. Additionally, 91% of Seekers agree “people my age talk about wanting to be involved in improving their communities, but most actually do not volunteer.” These findings suggest that previous focus on volunteering and cause engagement may not be as effective in connecting with Seekers.

Considering specific elements of a church service, Seekers say enjoyable sermons (47%), insightful teaching (35%) and feeling like part of a community (37%) are most appealing. This sense of feeling welcomed, as well as instilling values in their children, are the top motivators for married Seekers. A desire for spiritual growth as well as support and friendships are more motivating for singles to attend a church service.

Regarding causes, LGBTQ issues are no longer considered as important. More than half of Seekers have an accepting view on same-sex marriage, yet most also value “religious freedom”—letting individual churches decide for themselves on same-sex issues. Meanwhile, Seekers are generally conservative in their views on immigration. Only 33% believe the government should ease restrictions on immigration, for example.

Impressions of The UMC have been improving over the years. Among those familiar with The UMC, 8% have a very favorable impression, and 32% a somewhat favorable impression. This is compared to 3% and 25%, respectively, in 2009. Additionally, stated likelihood of visiting a UMC in the next 3 months has risen slightly, from 6% in 2009 to 11% in 2015. There also has been a shift from “definitely not” to “probably not”—many of whom have a favorable view of The UMC.

Awareness of The UMC tagline *Rethink Church* is very low, at 9%, and only 45% of Seekers find this tagline appealing (12% very appealing, 33% somewhat appealing). However, recall of *Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.* is strong, at 32%. Additionally, three-quarters (74%) of Seekers find this tagline appealing (34% very, 40% somewhat). Clearly the *Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.* tagline resonates with Seekers, and should be the primary focus of future communications.

Seekers say the primary motivators for attending church are *spiritual growth* (39%) and *genuine community* (38%). Additionally, most Millennials (86%) believe “to be fulfilled in life you should pursue the things you desire most.” Nearly all (91%) believe “The best way to find yourself is to look within yourself.”

In comparison, Gen-Xers find more reasons to attend church, such as “church helps my spiritual development” (57% vs. 36%), “opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships” (55% vs. 35%), “opportunity to find out more about God” (50% vs. 36%), and “knowing that anyone will be welcomed into the church community” (48% to 36%).

# SEEKER SURVEY

A total of 406 online surveys were conducted among young adult Seekers to gain insight into their attitudes and spiritual needs, as well as their expectations of churches.

The study used a national, random, and representative sample of young adults across the country, drawn from an online panel. Individuals on the panel were screened to identify people who met the criteria of a Seeker. The sample of 406 Seekers means the research results for the total sample are accurate to within plus or minus 4.7 percent points at the 95% confidence level. The sample was weighted by gender and region to be nationally representative. Research was conducted from November 26 to December 7, 2015.

## 1. SEEKER PROFILE

From a series of possible statements, young adults were asked to indicate which words or phrases they would choose to describe themselves.

### SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

By an overwhelming margin, which has stayed relatively consistent over the years, Seekers describe themselves as having a desire to make a difference in the world (95%). About 3 in 5 say they have a passion for social justice (58%), dropping from 66% in 2013. Three in five also say they contribute to the good of their community (61%).

### SEEKING

Seven out of 10 Seekers say they are searching for meaning or purpose in their life (69%). The proportion of those seeking for meaning or purpose peaked at 75% in 2011 but has been declining since. Three in five identify with the statement that something feels missing (60%), which is the lowest proportion reported over the last six years and down 8 percentage points since 2011 (68%). Slightly fewer are dealing with an emotional pain or frustration they would like to resolve (57%).

### SPIRITUALITY

In 2015, nearly two-thirds of Seekers consider themselves to be spiritual (65%), which is the highest reported proportion over the last six years. The lowest proportion in six years say they are seeking something better in life spiritually speaking (45%). Just one-third say they are on a quest for spiritual truth (34%).

Seekers of the Millennial generation are most likely to be single (68%), and just 2 in 10 are married (20%), whereas the opposite proportions are true of Seekers age 32~34 (21% single and 65% married). Millennial Seekers are more than twice as likely as Gen-Xer Seekers to be active church goers (7% vs. 3%) and more than six times as likely to be totally committed to their current church (13% vs. 2%). Nearly 9 in 10 Gen-Xer Seekers say they are excited about the future (88%), compared to about 3 in 4 Millennial Seekers (76%).

Seeker Demographics	
Millennials (18~31)	Gen-Xers (32~34)
41% are men, 59% are women	48% are men, 52% are women
20% are married	65% are married
12% are living with a partner	13% are living with a partner
68% are single (0% divorced)	21% are single (3% divorced)
55% are Caucasian	47% are Caucasian
17% are Black or African American	18% are Black or African American
21% are Hispanic or Latino	22% are Hispanic or Latino
7% are active church goers	3% are active church goers
13% are totally committed to their current church	2% are totally committed to their current church
76% are excited about the future	88% are excited about the future

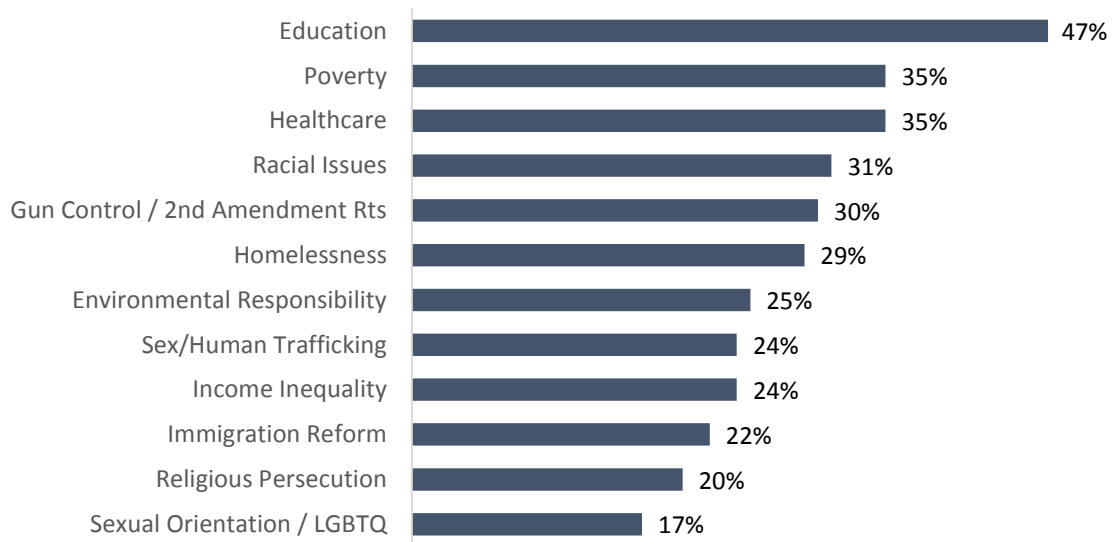


## 2. SEEKER INTERESTS & CAUSES

### SEEKER INTERESTS

Education, poverty and healthcare are top issues of importance to Seekers. Nearly half say the issue of education is “very important” to them (47%), and one third say the same about poverty (35%) and healthcare (35%).

#### Interests that are "Very Important"



*Q: The following are issues and interests that may or may not be important to you. Please rate their importance to you.*

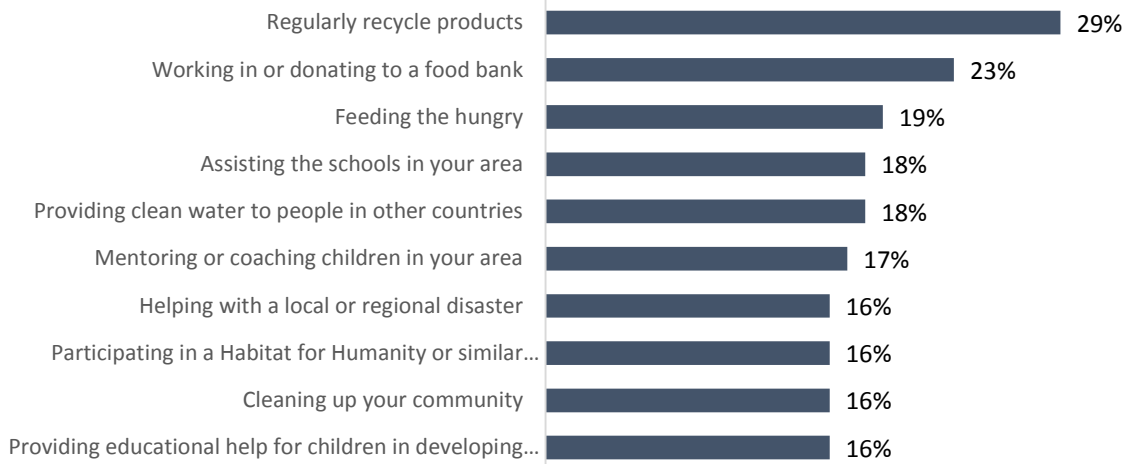
Not surprisingly, women are more likely to think sex/human trafficking issues as more important while men are more likely to think issues on gun control/2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights are more important.

Singles are also more liberal on same-sex marriage issues. Marital status is more of a differentiator than age.

### SEEKER CAUSES

When asked to think about issues facing their community and their likelihood to engage with these issues, recycling or hunger programs prove to be the most inherently motivating causes among Seekers.

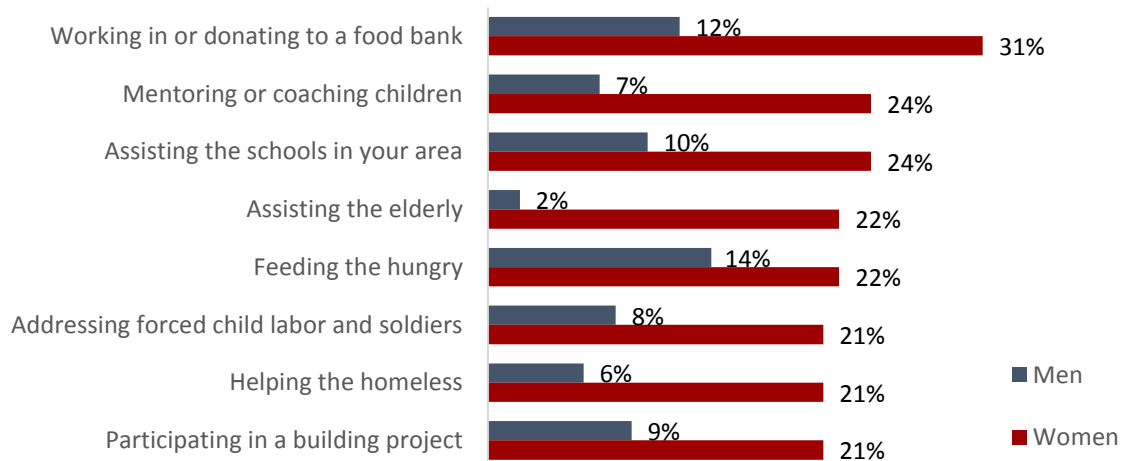
## "Definitely" Will Be Engaged with Cause



*Q: Think about issues that may be facing your community / other countries. In the next few months, how much would the following causes motivate you to become personally engaged, such as donating, volunteering, or persuading others to be involved?*

Women are significantly more likely to engage in causes across the board. Women are most likely to say they will definitely work in or donate to a food bank (31%), while men are most likely to say they will feed the hungry (14%). Men, whether married or single, are less likely to be motivated to do something about the issues they believe are facing the community.

## Gender Differences



*Q: Think about issues that may be facing your community / other countries. In the next few months, how much would the following causes motivate you to become personally engaged, such as donating, volunteering, or persuading others to be involved?*

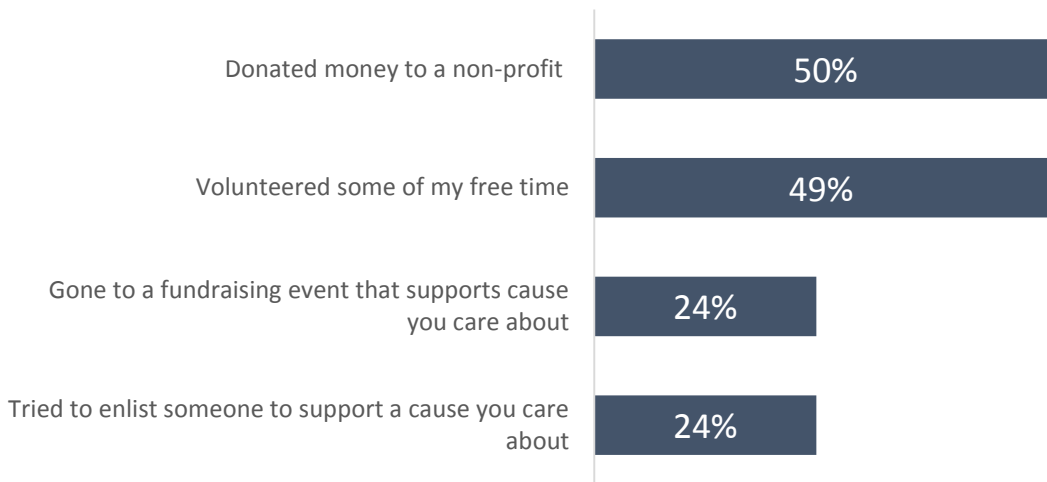
**CAUSES: GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING**

In the past month, about half of Seekers have donated money to a non-profit (50%) or volunteered some of their free time (49%). About half as many have gone to a fundraising event for a cause they care about (24%) or tried to enlist someone to support a similar cause (24%).

Singles are most likely to spend their time on volunteer-related activities.

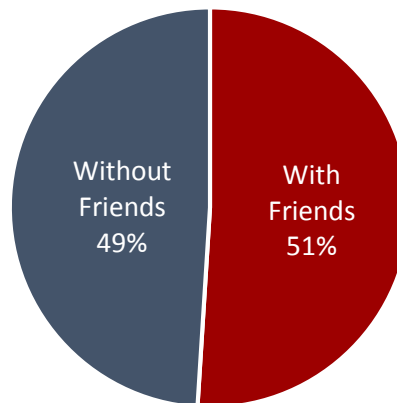
Among Seekers that volunteered within the past month, about half did so with friends (51%).

**In the last month...**



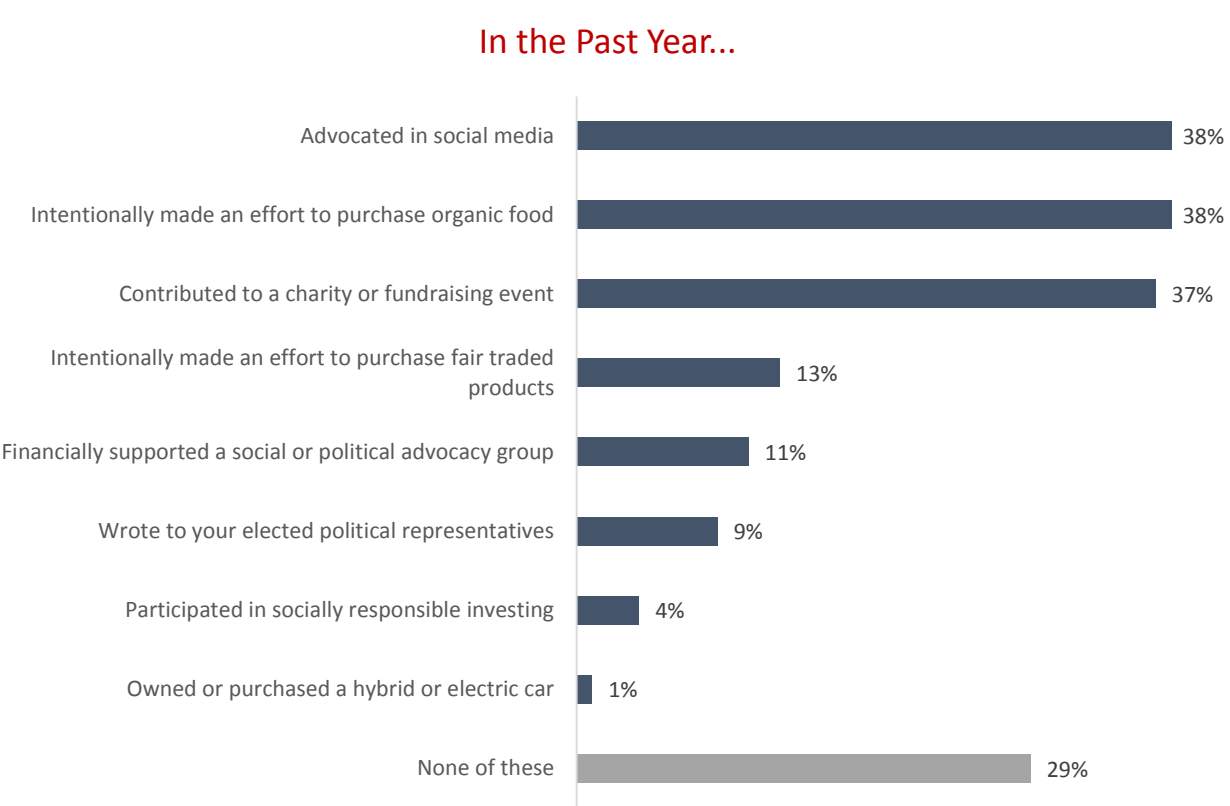
*Q: Which of the following have you done in the last month? [Check all that apply] /*

**Volunteered...**



*Q: When you volunteered, do you typically do so individually or with other friends?*

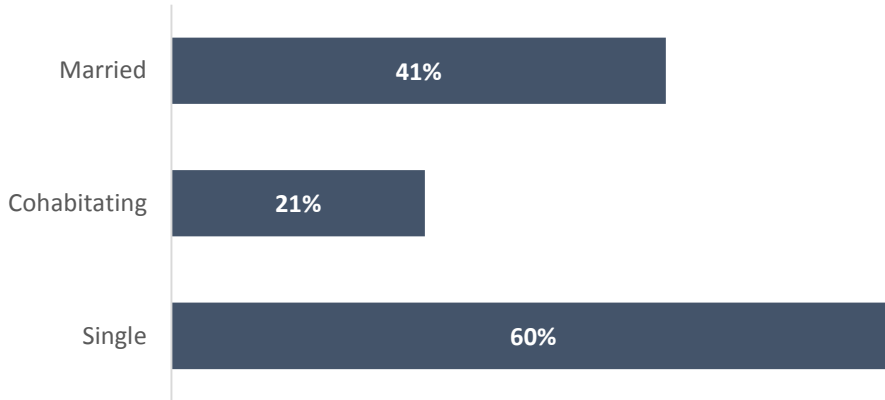
Within the past year, Seekers are most likely to have advocated in social media (38%), to have made an intentional effort to purchase organic food (38%), and to have contributed to a charity or fundraising event (37%). Less commonly, roughly 1 in 10 Seekers say they made an intentional effort to purchase fair traded products (13%), financially supported a social or political advocacy group (11%), or wrote to their elected officials (9%). About 3 in 10 say they have not engaged in any of these activities.



*Q: In the past year, which of the following activities have you done, if any? [Check all that apply]*

Singles are most likely to volunteer their free time than marrieds. Volunteering free time is much higher among singles (60%) versus marrieds (41%) and lowest among Cohabitators (21%).

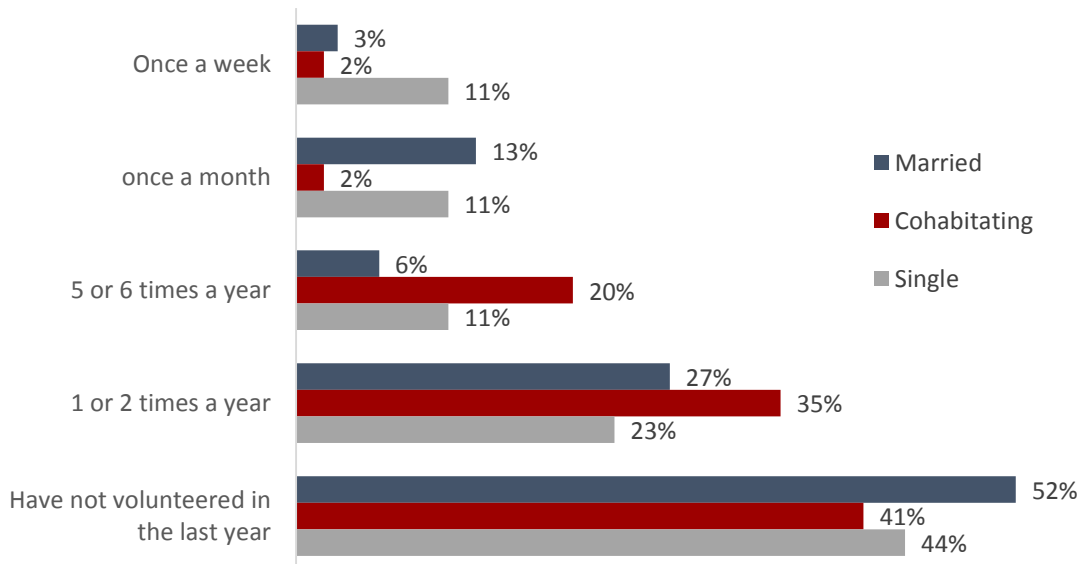
### % Volunteered, by Marital Status



*Q: Which of the following have you done in the last month, if any? Checked "Volunteered some of my free time"*

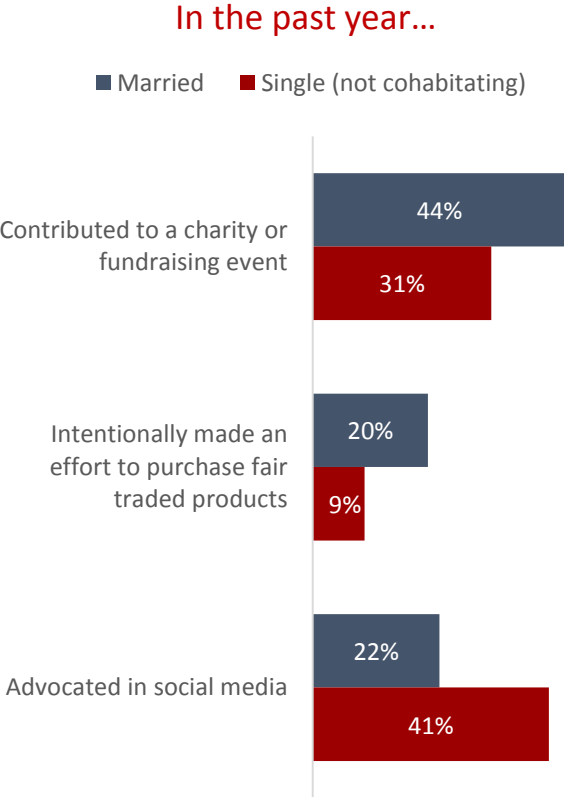
Between 40-50% of Seekers have not volunteered in the last year. Singles more often spend their time on volunteer-related activities, with 1 in 10 saying they do so weekly (11%). More than half of marrieds say they have not volunteered in the past year (48%).

### How often do you spend your time on volunteer-related activities?



*Q: Which of the following best describes how often you spend your time on volunteer-related activities?*

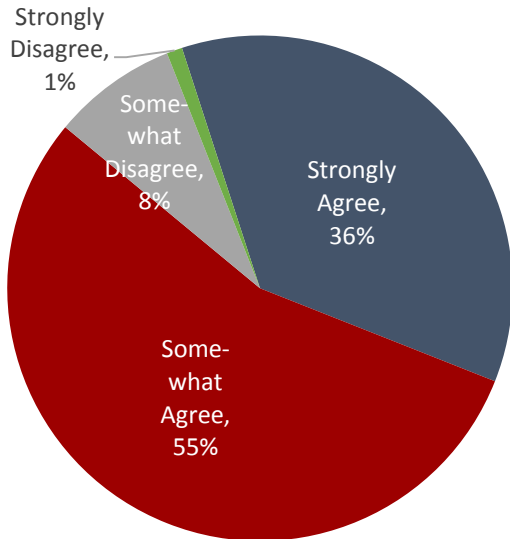
Life stage impacts form of cause engagement. Marrieds are much more likely than singles to have contributed to a charity or fundraising event (44% vs. 31%) and to have made an intentional effort to purchase fair traded products (20% vs. 9%). Singles are twice as likely to have advocated in social media, however (41% vs. 22%).



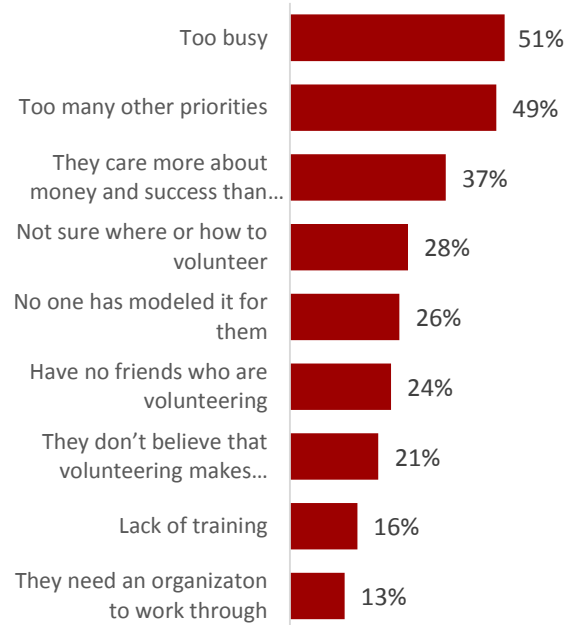
Q: In the past year, which of the following activities have you done, if any? [Check all that apply]

More than 9 in 10 Seekers agree that people their age talk about wanting to play a part in improving their communities, yet most do not actually volunteer. “Lack of time” and “Too many other priorities” are the greatest perceived barriers to volunteering more.

*“People of my age talk about wanting to be involved in improving their communities, but most actually do not volunteer.”*



**"Strong Barrier"**



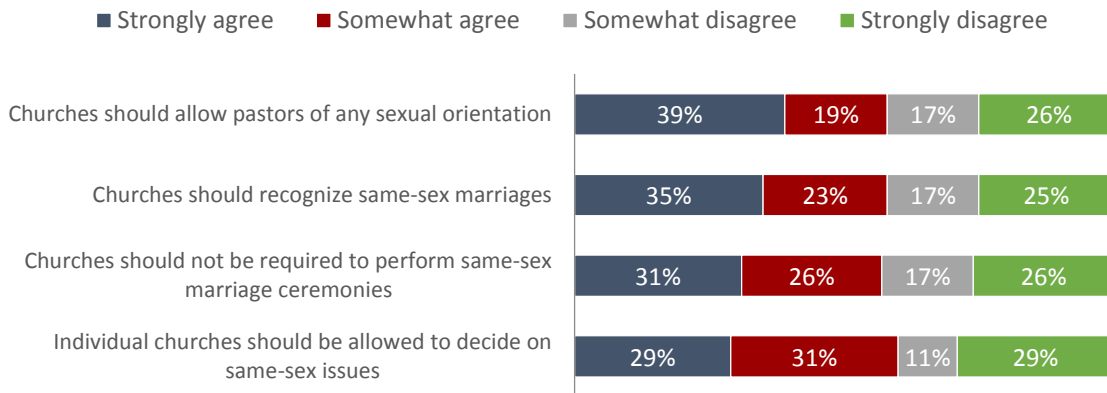
*Q: Rate your feeling on the following statement: “People of my age talk about wanting to be involved in improving their communities, but most actually do not volunteer.”*

*Q: There are many things that prevent people my age from volunteering more time or energy or resources to the causes they care about. Which of the following do you think are barriers to volunteering more?*

## VIEWS ON ISSUES

Seekers are more likely to strongly agree that churches should allow pastors of any sexual orientation (39%) than strongly agree that individual churches should be allowed to decide on same-sex issues (29%).

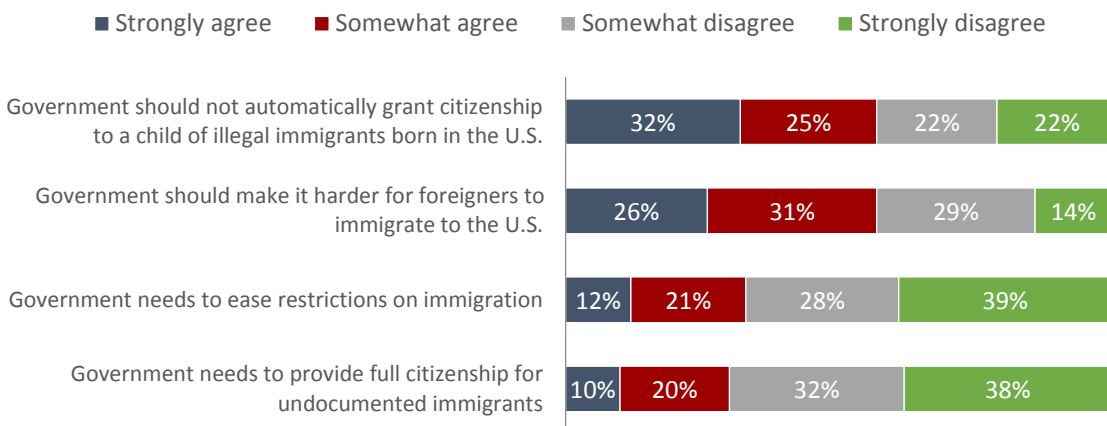
### Views on Same-Sex Marriage



*Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on same-sex marriage?*

Seekers are generally conservative in their views on immigration. They are most likely to agree that the government should not automatically grant citizenship to children of illegal immigrants born in the U.S. (32%) and should make it harder for foreigners to immigrate to the U.S. (26%). In contrast, only 12% think the government needs to ease restrictions on immigration and 10% think the government should provide full citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

### Views on Immigration



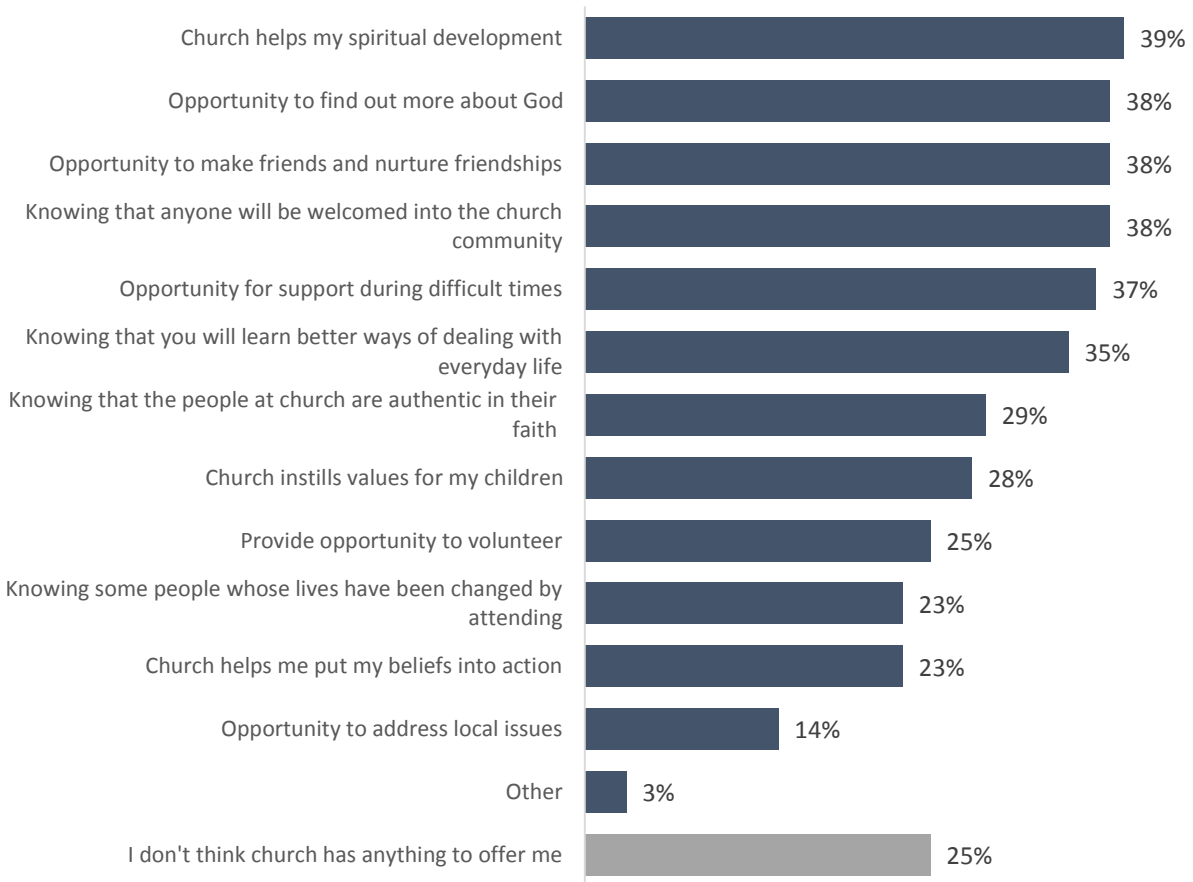
*Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on immigration?*



### 3. MOTIVATIONS FOR CHURCH

Spiritual growth and genuine community are the primary motivators to attend church. Volunteering and causes are not as motivating. One in 4 say they do not think church has anything to offer them (25%).

#### Reasons that Would Encourage You to Attend Church

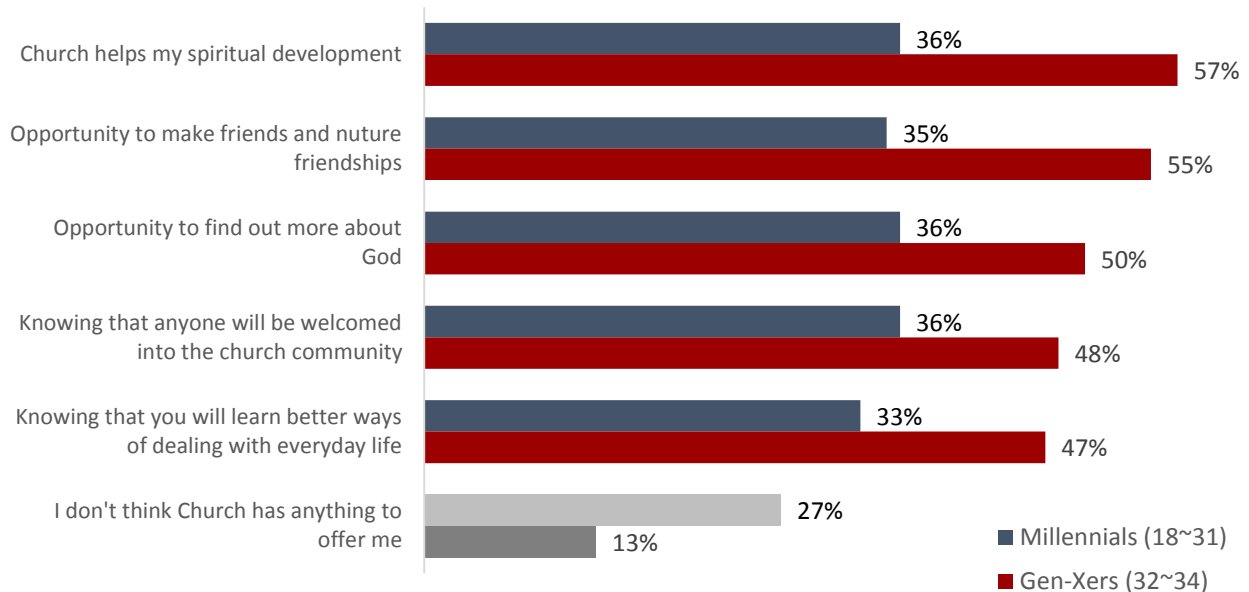


*Q: What are some reasons that would encourage you to attend a Christian church? [Check all that apply]*

Gen-Xers (32~34) generally find more reasons to attend church than Millennials (18~31). Millennials are twice as likely as Gen-Xers to think that church has nothing to offer them.

Many who value spiritual development and making friends as a motivation to go to church are also motivated by the opportunity to find God and be supported during difficult times. Feeling welcomed into a community and instilling values in their children are the top motivators for marrieds. However, a desire for spiritual growth and support / friendships would more likely drive singles to church.

## Reasons that Would Encourage You to Attend Church



*Q: What are some reasons that would encourage you to attend a Christian church? [Check all that apply]*

Marrieds generally report more reasons that would encourage them to go to church, including knowing that anyone will be welcomed into the community (48%), instilling values in their children (48%), the opportunity to make friends (44%), and finding out more about God (42%).

On the other hand, singles are more likely encouraged to go to church for spiritual reasons such as the opportunity to find out more about God (39%), for spiritual development (38%), for support during difficult times (37%), and to make friends and nurture friendships (36%).

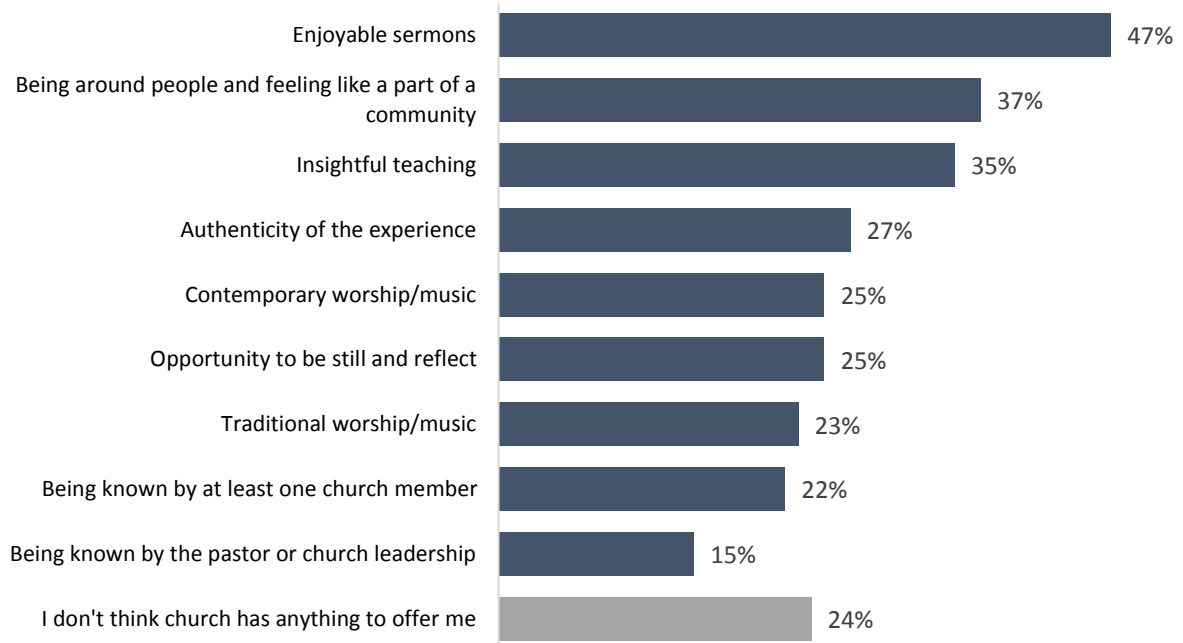
Marrieds	Singles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing anyone will be welcomed into the community <b>48%</b></li> <li>Instilling values into their children <b>48%</b></li> <li>Opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships <b>44%</b></li> <li>Opportunity to find out more about God <b>42%</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to find out more about God <b>39%</b></li> <li>Church helps my spiritual development <b>38%</b></li> <li>Opportunity for support during difficult times <b>37%</b></li> <li>Opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships <b>36%</b></li> </ul>

*Q: What are some reasons that would encourage you to attend a Christian church? [Check all that apply]*

## MOTIVATE TO ATTEND CHURCH

Teaching and community are attractive aspects of church; music and worship are less motivating. Nearly half say enjoyable sermons would motivate them to attend a church service (47%) and more than one-third say the same about insightful teaching (35%). Nearly 4 in 10 say being around people and feeling like part of a community would attract them to a church (37%).

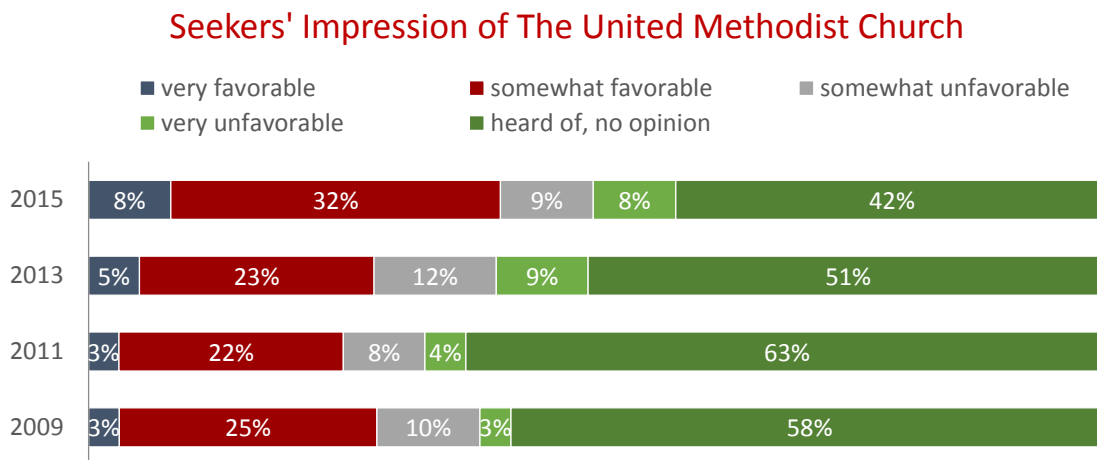
### Aspects of Church Service that Would Motivate You to Attend



*Q: What aspect of a church service would motivate you to attend?*

## 4. IMPRESSIONS OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Seekers' impressions of The United Methodist Church (The UMC) have improved since 2009. Those with a very favorable impression have more than doubled from 2009 to 2015 (3% to 8%). Those with an overall favorable view saw a 50% increase from 2013 to 2015 (12 percentage points from 28% to 40%).

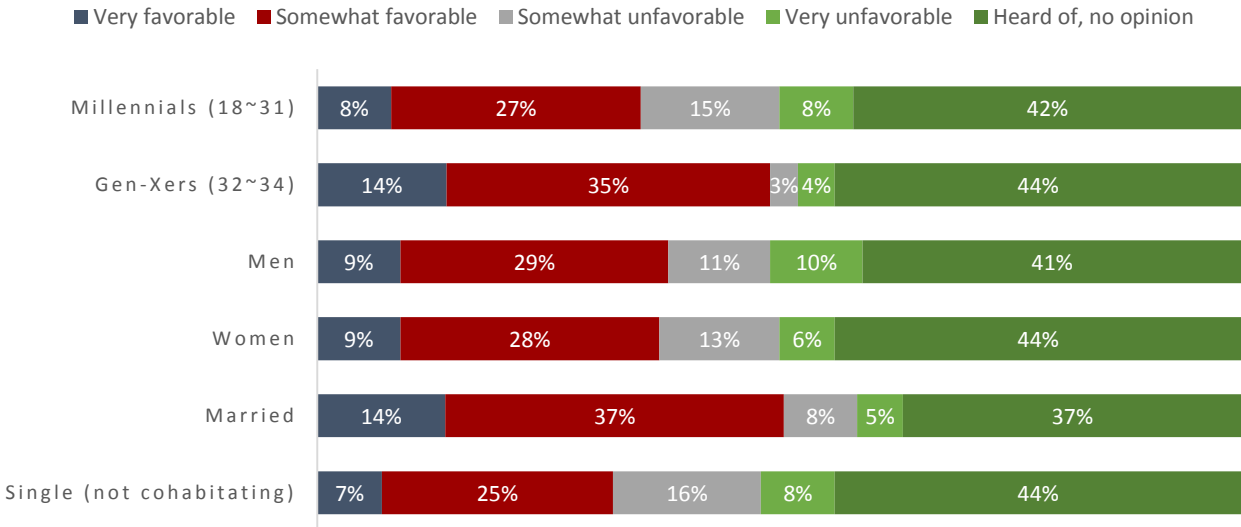


*Q: Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable impression for each organization listed.  
Base: Among those who have heard of The United Methodist Church*

Seekers' opinion of The United Methodist Church is somewhat more favorable among Gen-Xers, women and marrieds.

Nearly half of Seekers age 32 to 34 have a favorable impression of The UMC (49%), compared to just one-third of those age 18 to 31 (35%). Singles are more than twice as likely as marrieds to have an unfavorable opinion of The UMC (24% vs. 13%). Men are slightly more likely than women to have an "unfavorable" opinion (21% vs. 19%).

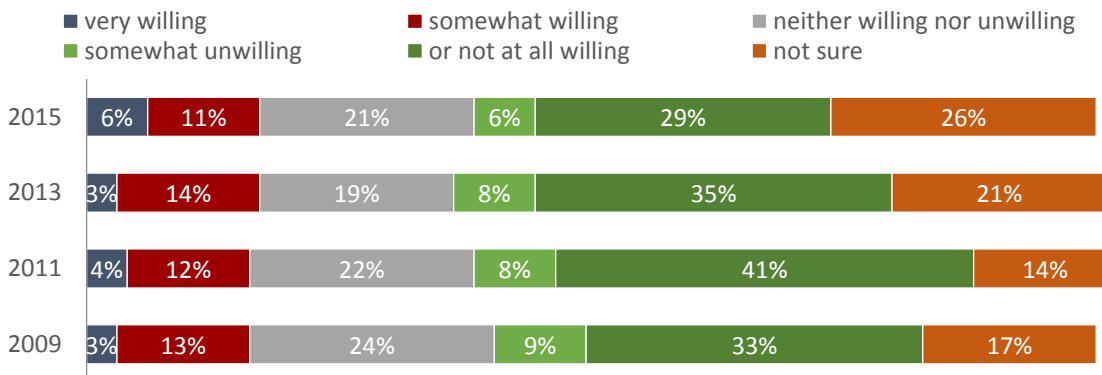
## Favorable or Unfavorable?



*Q: Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable impression for each organization listed.  
Base: Among those who have heard of The United Methodist Church*

Willingness to visit a UMC has not increased much, but the proportion of those unwilling to visit has dropped, shifting mostly to “not sure.” In 2015, just over a third say they are unwilling to visit (35%), down from roughly 45% in previous years.

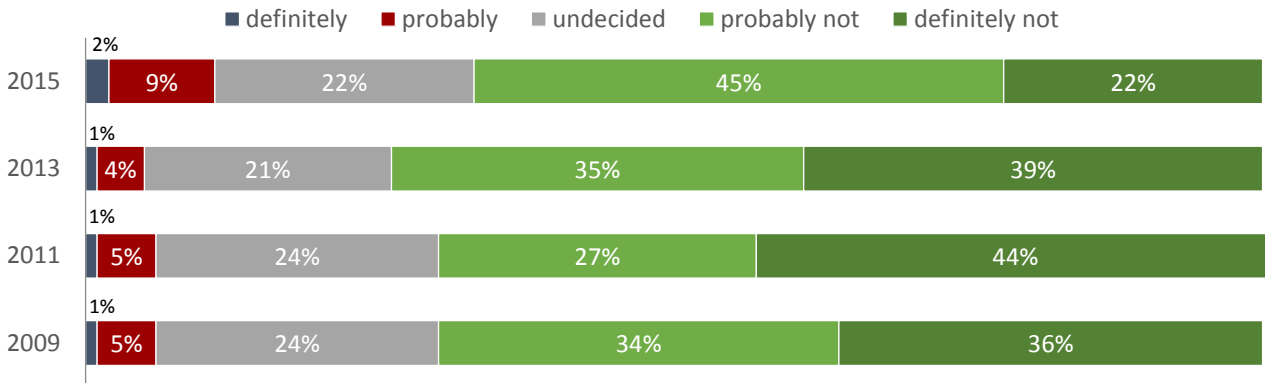
## Willingness to Visit a United Methodist Church



*Q: In the future, how willing are you to visit a local United Methodist Church? Would you say you are...  
Base: Among those who have heard of The United Methodist Church*

Although *willingness* to visit has not seen much increase, *likelihood* of visiting a UMC in the next 3 months has risen. The proportion of those who say they will “definitely” or “probably” visit has doubled since 2013 (11% vs. 5%). There also has been a shift from “definitely not” to “probably not”—many of whom have a favorable view of The UMC. Now just over 1 in 5 say they will “definitely not” visit (22%), compared to roughly 2 in 5 in previous years.

## Likely to Visit a United Methodist Church Within Next Three Months

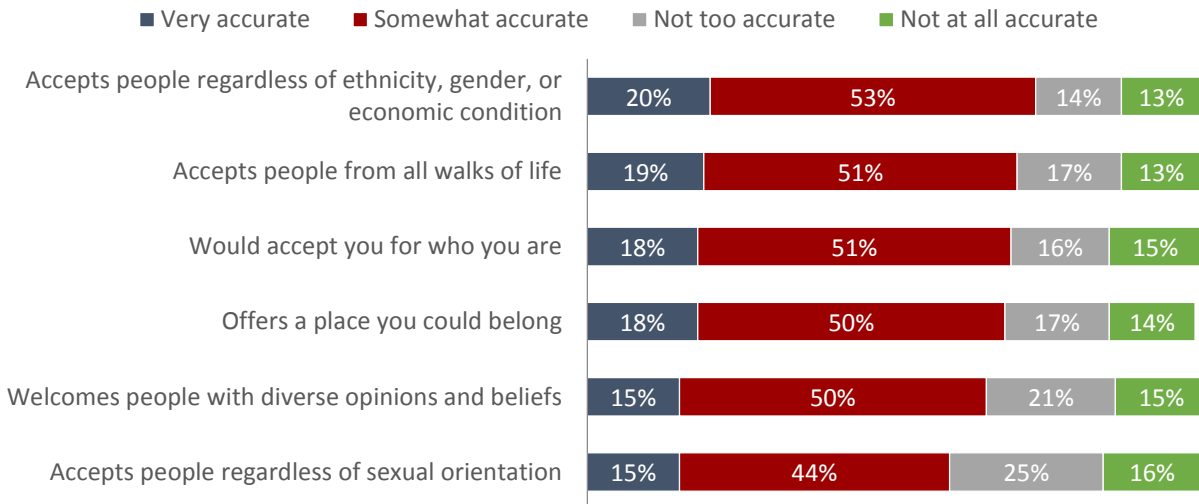


*Q: In the next three months, how likely are you to visit a local United Methodist Church?  
Base: Among those who have heard of The United Methodist Church*

## ATTITUDINAL STATEMENTS

Seekers have a generally favorable impression of The UMC and its congregants. While 3 in 4 Seekers say The UMC and United Methodists accept people regardless of ethnicity, gender, or economic condition (73%), just 3 in 5 say the same about acceptance regardless of sexual orientation (59%).

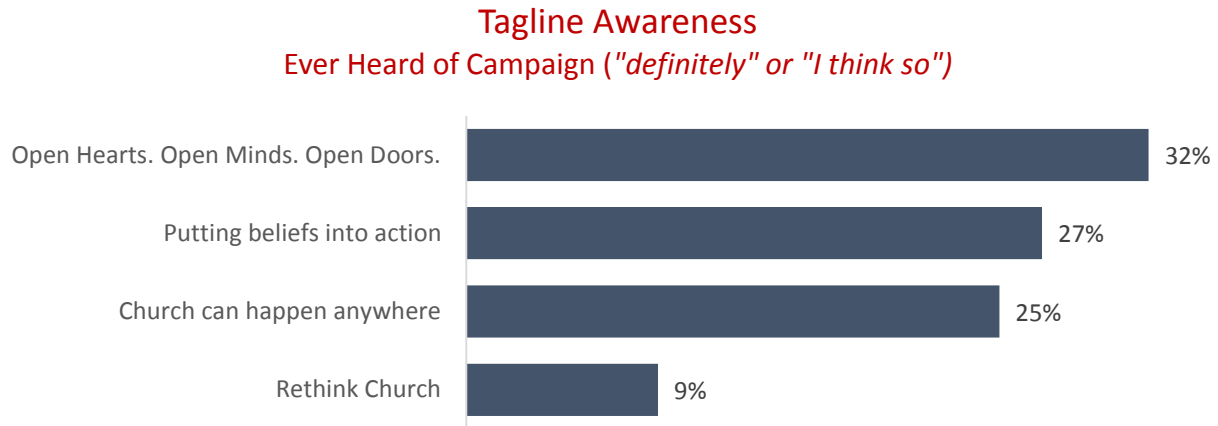
## Describing United Methodists



*Q: Based on what you know, have seen, or have heard, please indicate how accurately each statement describes the United Methodists and The United Methodist Church.*

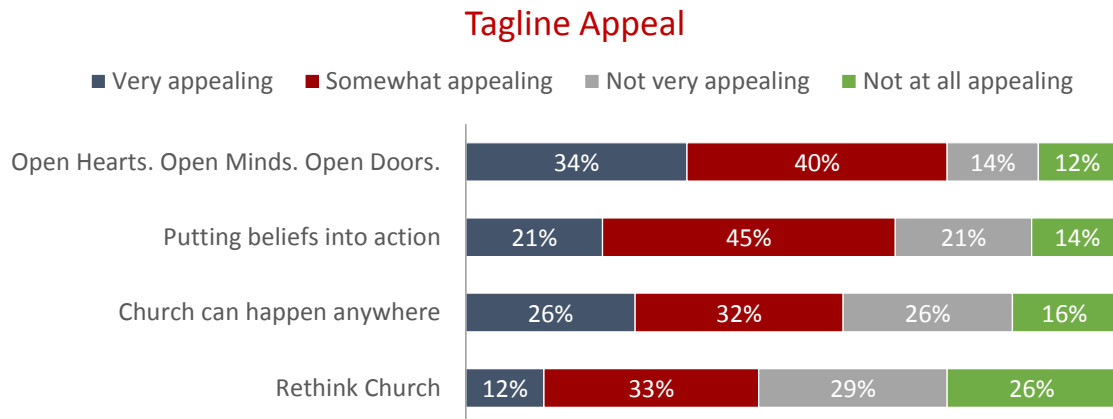
**CAMPAIGN AWARENESS & APPEAL**

Regarding tagline awareness, Seekers are most familiar with *Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.* and least familiar with *Rethink Church.*



*Q: Have you ever heard of the campaign called Rethink Church, which comes from The United Methodist Church? The following are campaign taglines for The United Methodist Church. Have you ever heard of any of them?*

*Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.* is the most engaging tagline and appeals most to Gen-Xers, women and marrieds. It is also preferred by Millennials, but they feel less strongly (only 31% say “very appealing” vs. 43% of Gen-Xers).



*Q: Please select how appealing the tagline is to you, whether you have heard of it or not.*

*Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.* and *Putting beliefs into action* score well among marrieds (47% = very appealing vs. 29% of singles).

## EXPANDED SURVEY

An expanded survey was conducted from November 18 to December 2, 2015. This was an online survey of adults ages 18 to 49.

A total of 500 online surveys were conducted among the general population (including current church-goers). Focused topics include: defining the spiritual person, spiritual development, community orientation, motivations for church, and generational life stage.

The survey is nationally representative by gender and region. The sample of 500 adults means the research results for the total sample are accurate to within plus or minus 4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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### GOAL & OBJECTIVES

The goal of the survey is to better understand the general public's view on their own needs for spiritual development, community orientation, and motivation for church. A number of new questions and statements were introduced to try to uncover more about spiritual motivations, or characteristics of Seekers.

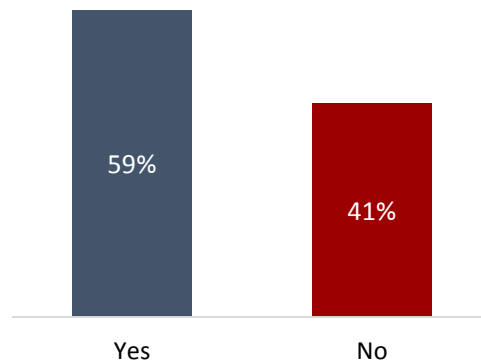
The survey probed into the common definition of a "Spiritual Person," as well as generational differences between Millennials and Gen-Xers. Survey questions explored different attitudes related to spirituality, community and interest in church. For analysis, we categorized respondents into groups from high to low on these parameters by summing the number of statements to which they answered in the affirmative.



# 1. DEFINING THE SPIRITUAL PERSON

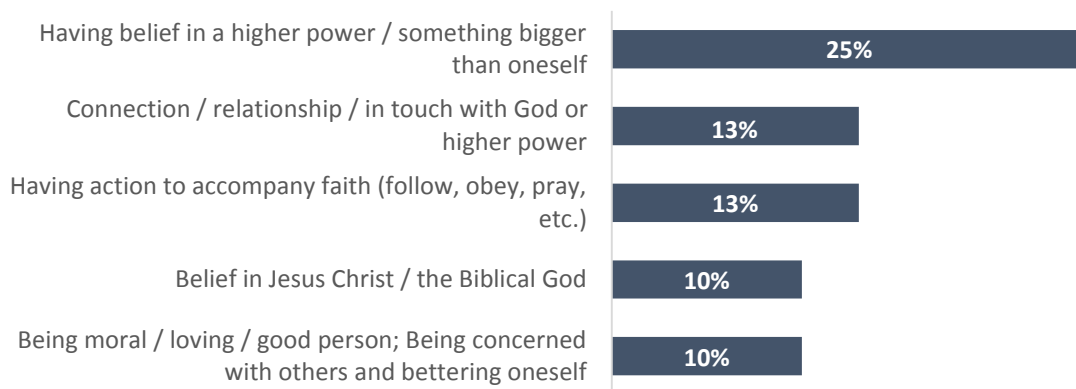
There is no general consensus on what being “spiritual” means. Among respondents, the most frequently cited definition of a “spiritual person” is someone who believes in a higher power or something bigger than oneself.

## Do you consider yourself to be a "spiritual person"?



*Q: Do you consider yourself to be a “spiritual person”? | “Yes” = Definitely/Somewhat | “No” = Not really/Not at all/Not sure’*

## What does it mean to be a "spiritual person"?



*Q: What does it mean to be a “spiritual” person? [Open End] | Base: Gen Pop*

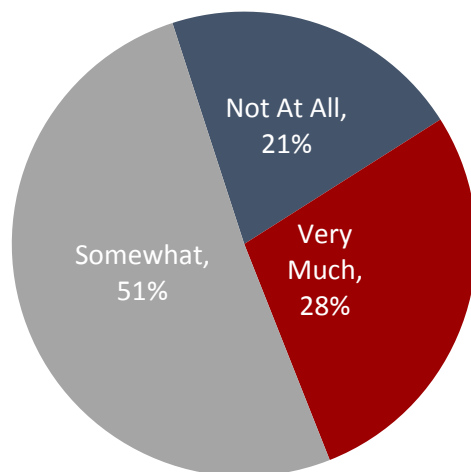
## 2. PROFILES OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

Almost 80% of the general population values some sort of spiritual development in their life. When asked about nine statements regarding spiritual development, about half “completely agree” with 1~4 of the statements (51%), indicating they value spiritual development somewhat. An additional 28% completely identify with 5~9 of the statements, indicating that spiritual development is valued highly among about 3 in 10 people.

### Spiritual Development

I “completely agree” that...

- I am always looking for ways to improve myself
- I have a great sense of hope about the future
- I desire to be uniquely myself
- I strive to achieve emotional balance in my daily life
- I take time to contemplate the larger questions of life
- It is important for me to find support and guidance from others
- It is important for me to find support and guidance from a higher power
- I get my values from faith
- I meditate or pray at least once a week



#### Value Spiritual Development

**Very much** = 5~9 statements

**Somewhat** = 1~4 Statements

**Not At All** = 0 statements

Almost 3 in 4 people among the general population are NOT community oriented (72%), as they only identify strongly with three or less of the fourteen community-related statements.

## Community Oriented

“Very important” to me...

- A feeling of fellowship with others
- Sharing of common attitudes
- Sharing of common interests
- Sharing of common goals
- Sharing of common social values
- Sharing of common responsibilities
- Sharing of common spiritual values
- Sharing of common cultural traditions
- Living in close proximity as a group of people
- Frequency of seeing everyone within the community
- Get values from Community
- Appreciation for community traditions
- Being around people and feeling like a part of a community
- Frequency of communicating with everyone in the community

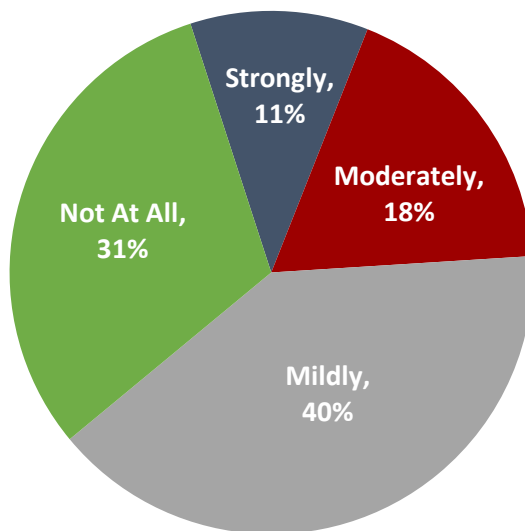


About one in 10 among the general population are strongly motivated to go to church (11%), and an additional 2 in 10 are moderately motivated (18%). Three in 10 believe church has nothing to offer them (31%).

## Motivated to go to Church

Would encourage me to attend a church...

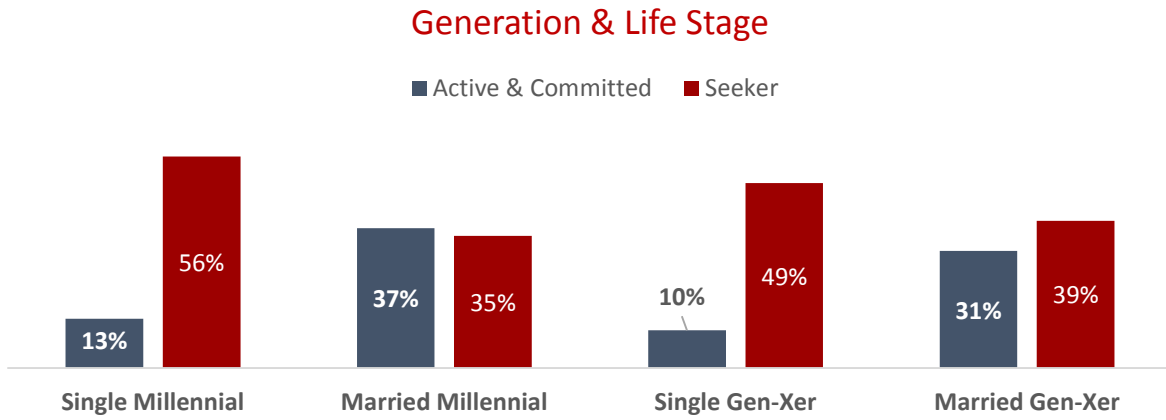
- Church helps me put my beliefs into action
- Church instills values for my children
- Church helps my spiritual development
- Church provides opportunity to volunteer
- Knowing that anyone will be welcomed into the church community
- Knowing some people whose lives have been changed by attending
- Knowing that you will learn better ways of dealing with everyday life
- Knowing that the people at church are authentic in their faith
- Opportunity to address local issues
- Opportunity to find out more about God
- Opportunity for support during difficult times
- Opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships



**Strongly Motivated** = 9~12 statements  
**Moderately Motivated** = 5~8 statements  
**Mildly Motivated** = 1~4 statements  
**Not At All Motivated** = "Church has nothing to offer me"

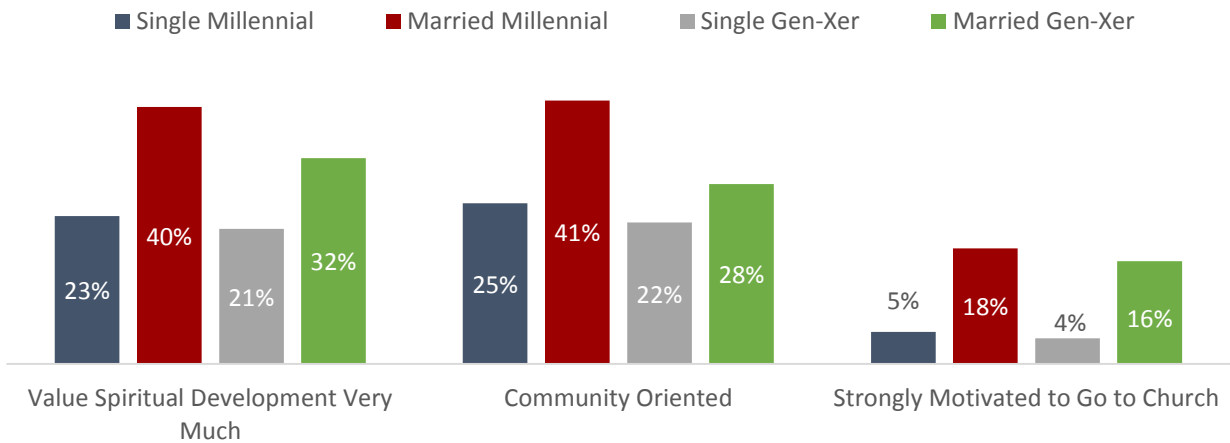
### 3. COMPARING LIFE STAGES

Single Millennials, then Single Gen-Xers, have the largest proportions of Seekers, as well as the smallest shares of current church-goers.



Base: Gen Pop (n=500)

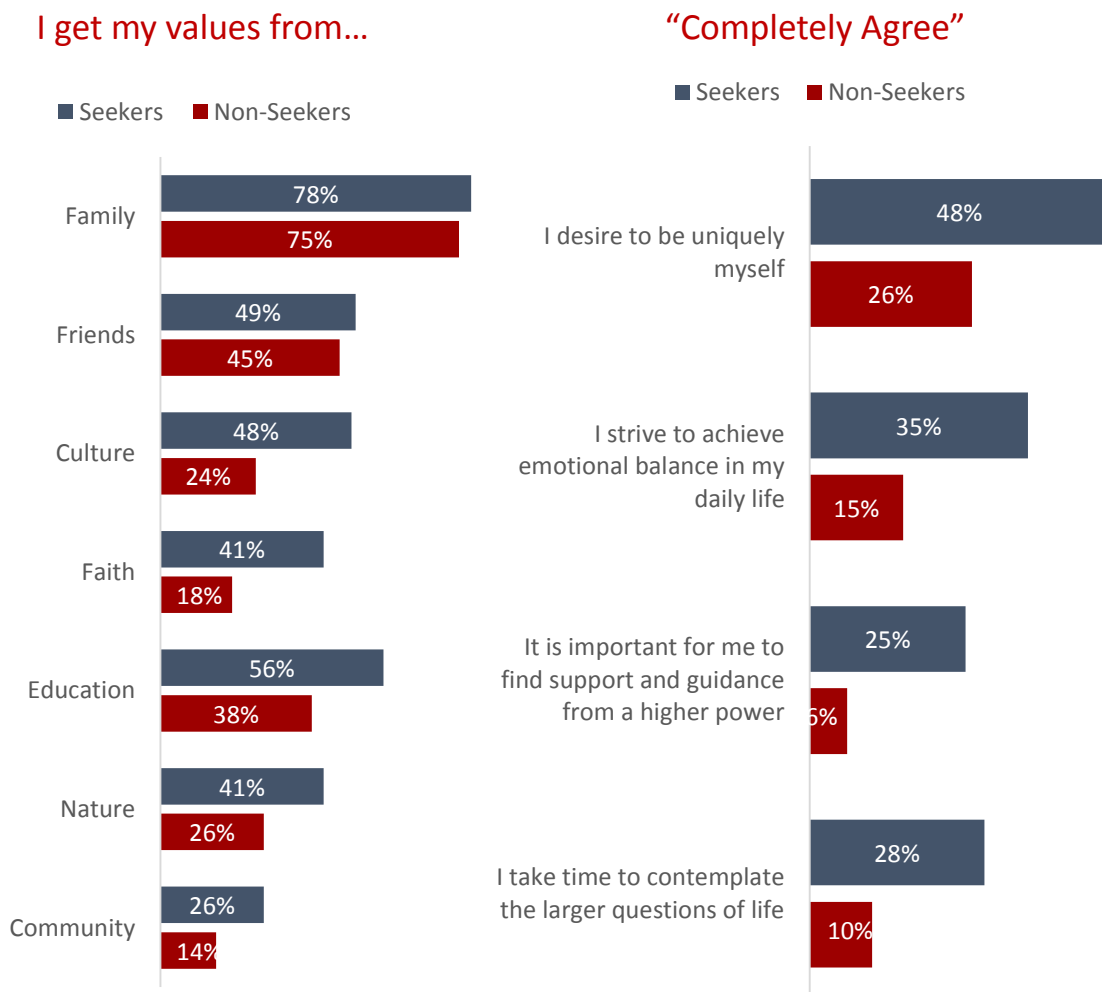
However, looking at the three categories of church interest created in the previous section, married Millennials, then married Gen-Xers, are most motivated to go to church and also more likely to value spiritual development and community.



## 4. SEEKER PROFILE

By looking at differences between Seekers and Non-Seekers, we can learn more about the distinguishing factors of Seekers. Seekers are about as likely as Non-Seekers to get their values from family (78%) and friends (49%). However, they are significantly more likely to get their values from are education (56%), culture (48%), and faith (41%).

Nearly half of Seekers completely agree that they desire to be uniquely themselves (48%), compared to just 1 in 4 Non-Seekers. About a third of Seekers are striving to achieve emotional balance in their lives (35%), while only 15% of Non-Seekers say this is true of them.



Seekers report many reasons that may encourage them to attend church. Compared with Non-Seekers, they are significantly more interested in insightful teaching, being around people and feeling like part of a community, and the authenticity of the experience.

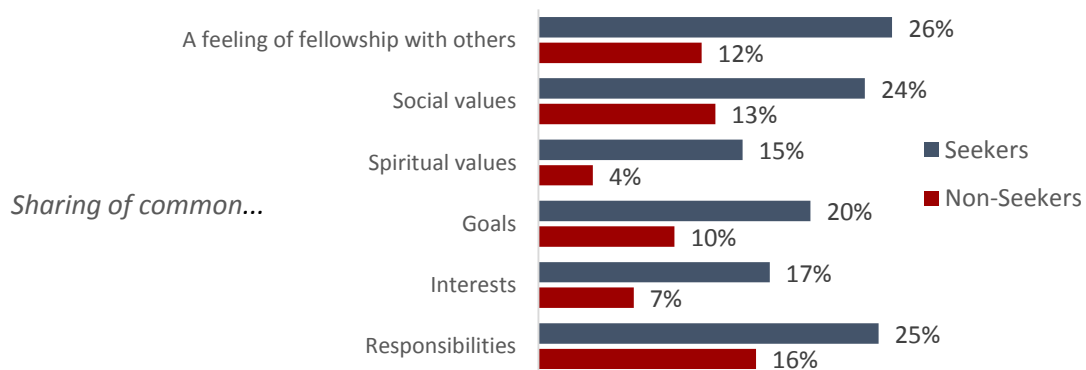
### Reasons that Encourage You to Attend Church



*Q: What are some reasons that would encourage you to attend a Christian church? [Check all that apply]*  
*Q: What aspects of a church service would motivate you to attend?*

For a Seeker, community is more about a feeling than proximity. The top 3 most important community factors for Seekers are a feeling of fellowship (26%), sharing common responsibilities (25%), and sharing common social values (24%).

### Characteristics of a Community that are "Very Important"



*Q: The following are defining characteristics of a "community." How important are each one of them to you?*

## METHODOLOGY

### SEEKER STUDY

The Seeker Study used a national, random, and representative sample of 406 young adults across the country, drawn from an online panel. Individuals on the panel were screened to identify people who met the criteria of a seeker (below). This sample was then weighted by gender and region to be nationally representative. Research was conducted from November 26 to December 7, 2015. The research results for the total Seeker sample are accurate to within plus or minus 4.7 percent points, at the 95% confidence level.

The Seeker target audience was defined as those who (1) are currently ages 18 to 34, (2) are *not* affiliated with the United Methodist church, (3) are *not* an active church goer (infrequent church attendance) **OR** are *not* committed to a church (frequent church attendance), and (4) answer ‘*Yes*’ to at least **four** of the following statements:

- Searching for meaning & purpose
- Something feels missing from your life
- Have emotional pain or frustration that you’d like to resolve
- A spiritual person
- Seeking something better spiritually in life
- On a quest for spiritual truth
- Want to have a difference with your life
- Have a passion for social justice
- Contribute to the common good of your community

### EXPANDED STUDY

An expanded survey was conducted with a total of 500 adults ages 18 to 49. Data was collected from November 18 to December 2, 2015 using an online panel. There were no screening criteria other than age, meaning this survey (with similar, but not the same questions) was conducted among the general population, including current church-goers. Focused topics include: defining the spiritual person, spiritual development, community orientation, motivations for church, and generational life stage.

The survey is nationally representative by gender and region. The sample of 500 adults means the research results for the total sample are accurate to within plus or minus 4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



## GUIDE TO SURVEY DATA

Do you remember reading the results of a survey and noticing the fine print that says that the results are accurate within plus or minus three percentage points (or some similar number)? That figure refers to the "range of sampling error." The range of sampling error indicates the accuracy of the results and is dependent upon two factors: 1) the sample size and 2) the degree to which the result you are examining is close to 50 percent or the extremes, 0 percent and 100 percent.

You can estimate the accuracy of your survey results using the table below. First, find the column heading that is closest to your sample size. Next, find the row whose label is closest to the response percentages observed for a particular question from your survey. The intersection of the row and column displays the number of percentage points that need to be added to, and subtracted from, the observed result to obtain the range of error. There is a 95 percent chance that the true percentage of the group being sampled is in that range.

**SAMPLE SIZE**

Result	100	200	300	400	500	600	800	1000	1200	1500	2000	2500
5 or 95	4.4	3.1	2.5	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	.96	.87
10 or 90	6.0	4.3	3.5	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.1	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.2
15 or 85	7.1	5.1	4.1	3.6	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.4
20 or 80	8.0	5.7	4.6	4.0	3.6	3.3	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.6
25 or 75	8.7	6.1	5.0	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.0	2.8	2.5	2.3	1.9	1.7
30 or 70	9.2	6.5	5.3	4.6	4.1	3.8	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.8
35 or 65	9.5	6.8	5.5	4.8	4.3	3.9	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.9
40 or 60	9.8	7.0	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.0	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.2	2.0
45 or 55	9.9	7.0	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0
50	10.0	7.1	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0

Note that the above statistics only relate to the sampling accuracy of survey results. When comparing the results of two subgroups (e.g., men versus women), a different procedure is followed and usually requires a greater sample size. Further, there is a range of other errors that may influence survey results (e.g. biased question wording, inaccurate data tabulation) – errors whose influence cannot be statistically estimated.