

# SURVEY OF YOUTH

May 2022



**UPCI**  
YOUTH MINISTRIES

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## Executive summary

Youth Ministries launched a survey in the spring of 2022 to better understand the habits and beliefs of apostolic young people. Survey questions were primarily original but drew some inspiration from US-based surveys in the Association of Religious Data Archives. See Appendix A for more on religious survey sources.

Responses were completely anonymous and collected electronically using links distributed via email and social media platforms, specifically Instagram and Facebook. Respondents could take the survey in either English or Spanish.

The survey gathered 2,798 responses with at least one response from each of the 58 Districts in North America during the two-week period from April 21 to May 5, 2022. Youth Ministries targeted youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 30. Respondents who identified outside of this age range were excluded from this analysis. See Appendix B for more on respondent demographics.

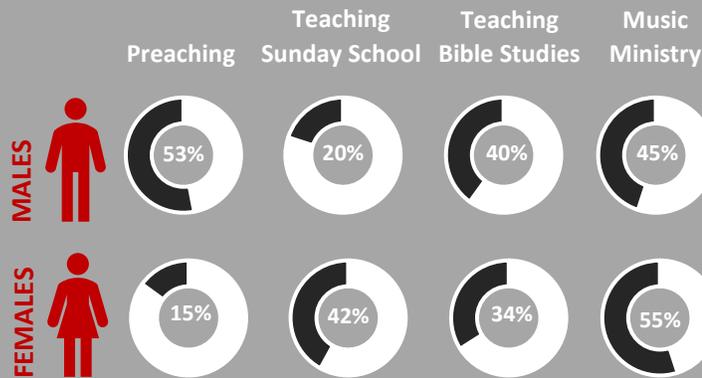
### Key findings:

- Attendance and prayer are the most frequently practiced spiritual disciplines. Roughly 9 in 10 youth attend church and pray several times a week.
- More than half of youth groups surveyed reported 25 or fewer people in their youth group.
- Concerning leadership, 72% of youth groups have a youth pastor, and 63% have a youth team. Almost half (44%) have both.
- A large majority of youth felt specifically called to at least one ministry. Music ministry, teaching, and preaching were the three most common ministries callings reported.
- Almost all youth agreed with doctrinal beliefs on the Word of God and the oneness of God, as well as statements on eternal life, salvation, and converting others.
- Majority of youth believed that sexual relations with the same-sex or outside of marriage are always wrong.
- Anxiety, depression, pornography, suicide, and premarital sex were the most common struggles. Nearly all youth surveyed reported struggling with at least one issue in the last 12 months.
- Most students (70%) attend public school for middle and high school education.
- One-quarter of youth were from divorced homes and reported less youth with a good support system and home life.

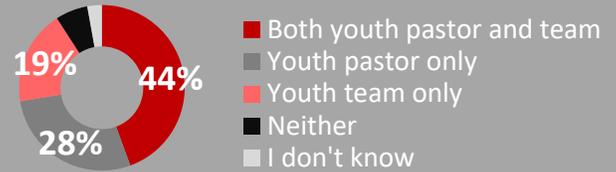
# Youth Ministries Survey

May 2022

## More than 90% felt called to at least one ministry



## Leadership structure in youth ministry

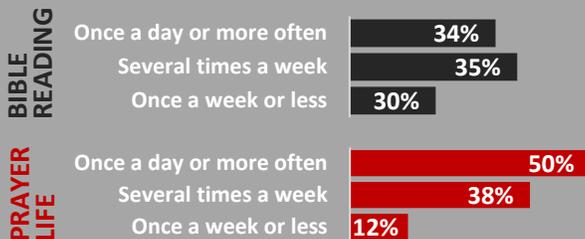
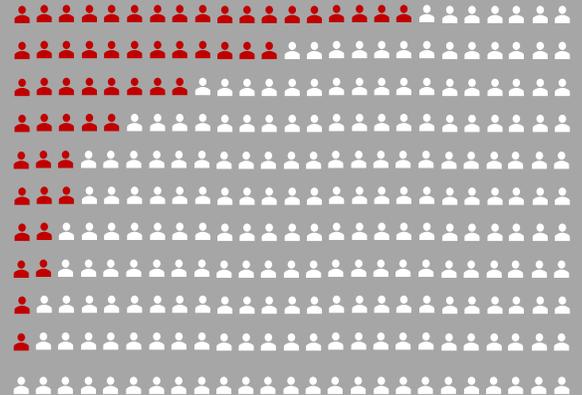


## 25 is size of typical youth group



## In the last year, for a group of 25 youth:

- 18 struggle with *anxiety*.
- 12 struggle with *depression*.
- 8 struggle with *pornography*.
- 5 struggle with *suicide*.
- 3 struggle with *premarital sex*.
- 3 struggle with *occasional drinking*.
- 2 struggle with *self-harm*.
- 2 struggle with *same sex attraction*.
- 1 struggles with *tobacco use*.
- 1 struggles with *marijuana use*.
- 0 struggle with none of the above.

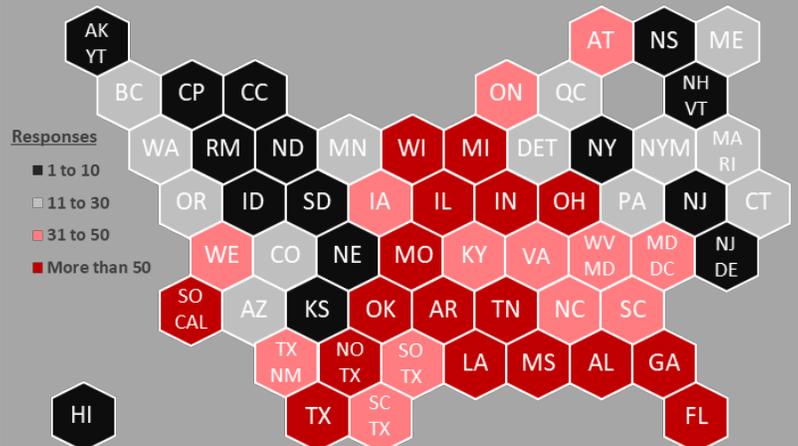


## Almost all youth believe key doctrines

- 98% believe in the **oneness of God**.
- 97% believe the **Bible** is inspired Word of God.
- 97% believe **converting others** is important.
- 97% believe the **only** way to heaven is **Jesus**.

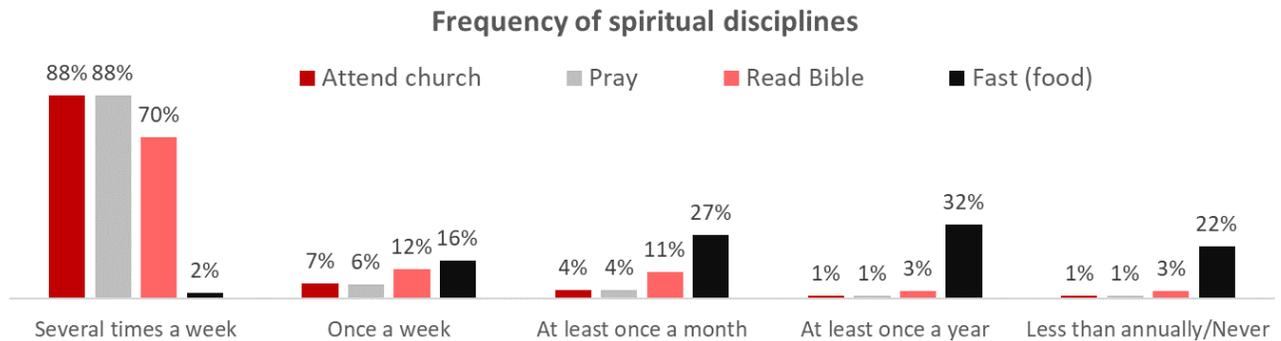
## 2,798 youth responded

with at least one response from each District in North America



## Majority of youth attend church, pray, and read the Bible weekly

The survey asked how often youth practice various spiritual disciplines. Church attendance and prayer are the most frequently practiced disciplines with almost 90% doing so several times a week. Reading the Bible is also a frequent practice with 70% doing so more than once a week. As one might expect, fasting appears to be the least frequent discipline with only 2% practicing more than once a week. In this section on spiritual disciplines, the responses for males were similar to females, and the responses for young adults were similar to teenagers.



### *Attending church*

Almost all (94%) attend church at least once a week. Majority (88%) attend church several times a week and another 7% attend once a week. Conversely, 6% attend church less often than once a week: 4% attend at least once a month, 1% attend at least once a year, and another 1% attend less often than once a year. The frequency of church attendance was very similar to the frequency of prayer.

### *Praying*

Nearly everyone (94%) reported praying outside of church services at least once a week. Half pray daily, more than a third (38%) pray several times weekly, and 6% pray once a week. On the other hand, 6% pray less often than once a week: 4% pray once a month, and 2% pray less often than once a month. The frequency of prayer was very similar to the frequency of church attendance.

### *Bible reading*

Outside of church services, majority (70%) read the Bible several times a week, and 12% read the Bible weekly. Another 11% read the Bible at least once a month. For the remaining 6% of respondents, half reported reading the Bible at least once a year and half reported less than once a year.

### *Fasting<sup>1</sup>*

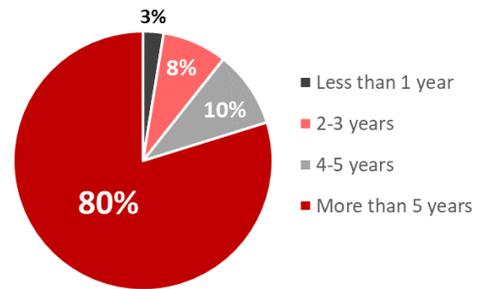
Slightly less than half (46%) reported they fast at least once a month: 27% fast once or several times a month, another 16% fast once a week, and a small number (2%) reported fasting more than once a week. About one third (32%) fast at least once a year. Almost one-quarter (22%) fast less frequently than once a year or never.

<sup>1</sup> The survey specifically asked about the practice of fasting by abstaining from food. See question 4 in Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire.

### Most students have been born again for more than 5-years

Almost all (97%) reported they have been born again of the water and the spirit according to Acts 2:38. Of those who have been born again, the majority (80%) have been born again for more than five years and 18% have been born again for at least a year. Only 3% have been born again less than 1 year.

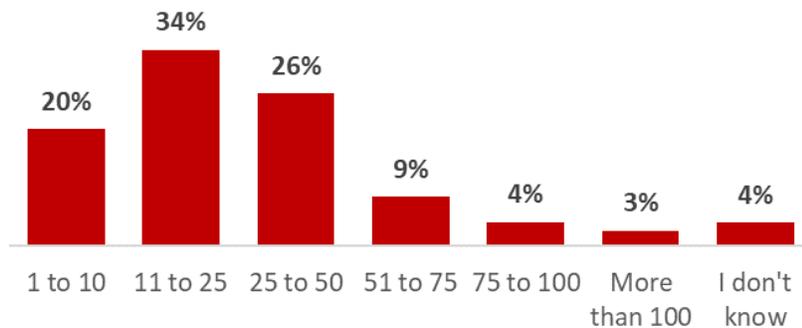
How long youth have been born again?



### 25 students is about the average size youth group

More than half (54%) of youth groups have 25 or fewer students. About a quarter (26%) are between 25 to 50. Another 9% are between 51 and 75, and the remaining 7% are larger than 75.

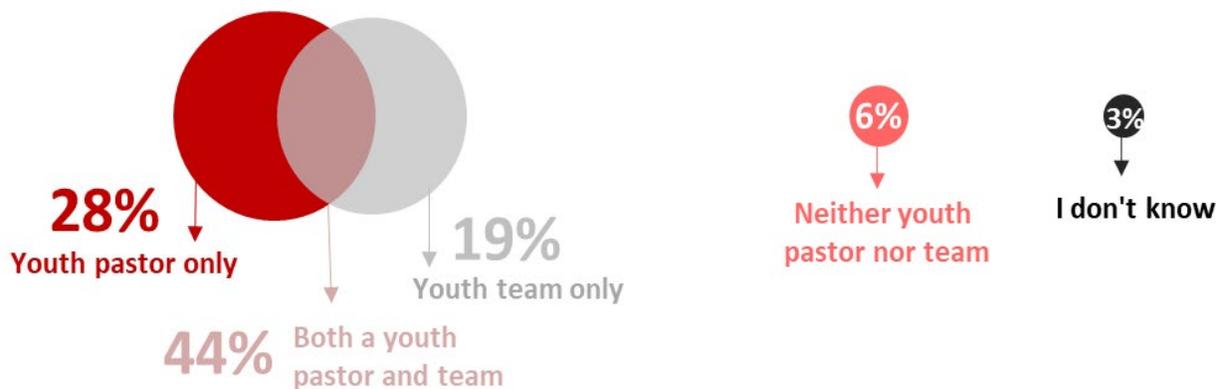
Size of youth group



### Combination of youth pastor and team is most common model for youth ministry

More than 90% of youth groups have either a youth pastor or team.<sup>2</sup> Almost half (44%) reported having both a youth pastor and team. Another 28% reported only a youth pastor, so 72% of youth groups have a youth pastor. 19% reported a youth team without a youth pastor. Only 6% reported no youth pastor or team structure.

Youth leadership structure



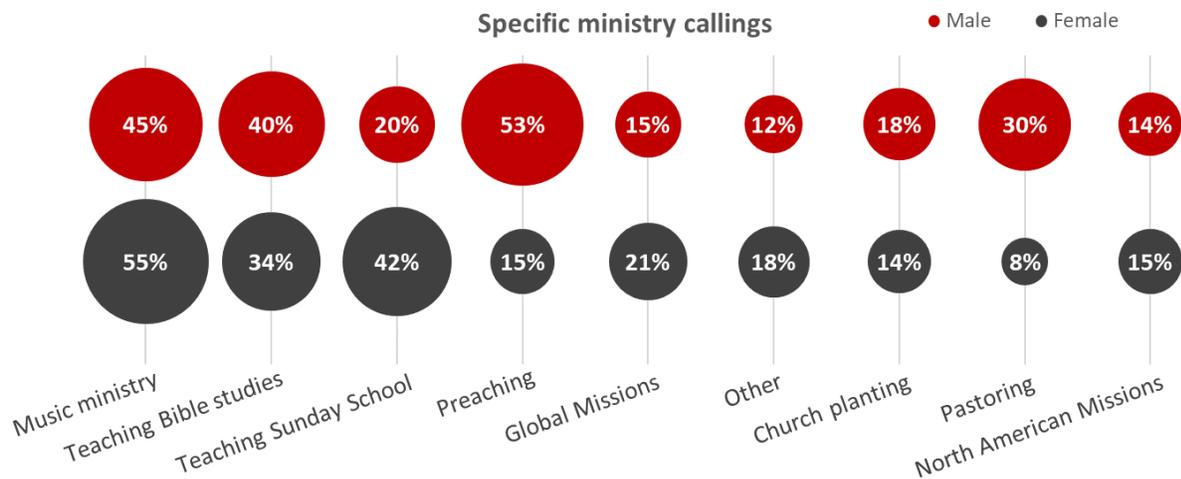
<sup>2</sup> This does not imply that either the youth pastor or youth team members are compensated or hold a paid position with the church.

### Music, teaching, and preaching are most common ministry callings

Youth were asked to select any and all ministries they felt specifically called to, and more than 90% selected at least one. More than half indicated a calling to music ministry. More than a third felt called to teaching Bible studies or Sunday school, and about a quarter feel called to preach.

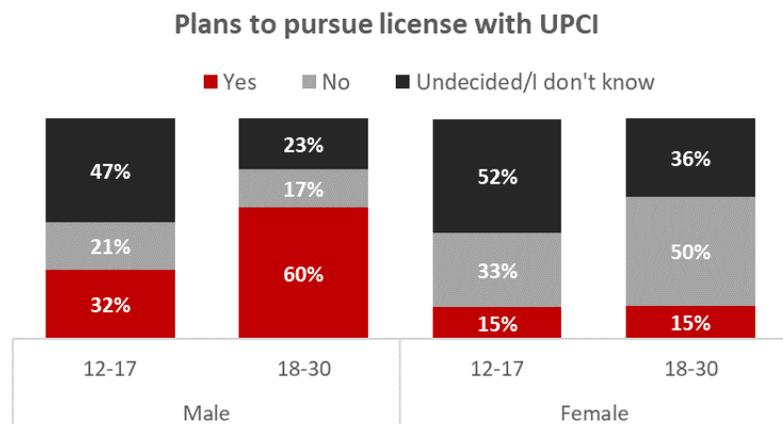
The most common ministry callings for males are preaching (53%), music (45%), teaching Bible studies (40%) and pastoring (30%). For females, the most common callings were music (55%) and teaching Sunday school (42%) or Bible studies (34%).

Overall, 16% felt called to other specific ministries. Many comments indicated they felt called to youth ministry (4%) or media ministry (3%), including social media, visual media, lighting, camera, etc. Several comments for other ministries mentioned children’s ministry, deaf ministry, and prayer.



### Young men are most likely to plan to become a licensed minister

Overall, 28% of all respondents plan to become a licensed minister with the UPCI. Majority (60%) of men over 18 intend to become a licensed minister compared to only 15% of women the same age. Almost one-third of teenage males plan to pursue a ministers license – more than double the share of teenage females (15%). Interestingly, half young women do not plan to become a licensed minister.



Majority of those who indicated a specific call to pastor (72%), preach (69%), and church plant (53%) also plan to become licensed ministers with the UPCI.

## Doctrinal beliefs held by nearly all surveyed youth

A series of questions were designed to identify sentiments about the Bible, God, and eternity.

Almost all (97%) felt that “the Bible is the inspired Word of God and should be applied to every part of [their] life”. Only 2% felt that the Bible “only applies to certain times or parts of my life”.

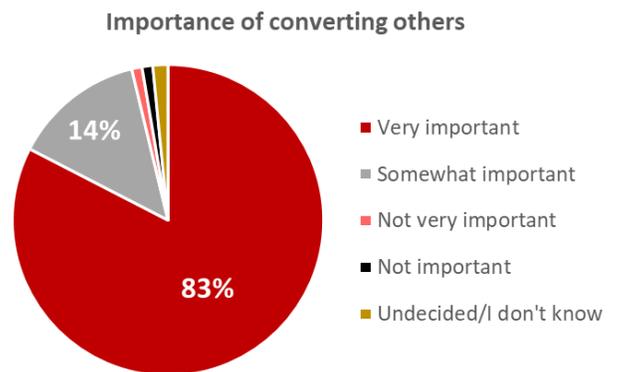
Given the statements “God is one” and “God is three separate persons”, 98% indicated the oneness statement best describes their belief about God. A very small number identified in support of the trinitarian statement (1%) or was undecided (1%).

Majority (95%) of youth believe that there is life after death. Specifically, 87% strongly agreed and 8% agreed that life after death exists. Few disagreed (2%) or were undecided (2%).

Interestingly, a slightly larger majority (98%) believe in a place of eternal punishment, hell. More than 90% strongly agreed and another 9% agreed that hell exists. Not many a disagreed (1%) or were undecided (1%).

When asked about their beliefs on salvation, 97% believed that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Only 1% felt that “there are many ways to heaven”. Less than 1% believed that “good people still get to go to heaven” (0.7%) or that “other religions will go to their own version of heaven” (0.7%). The remaining 1% was undecided.

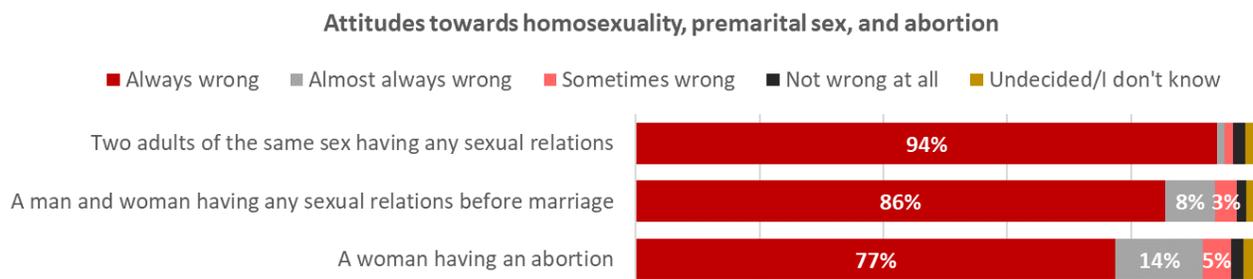
Nearly all (97%) indicated converting others to their faith is important. Majority (83%) felt it was very important, and another 14% felt it was somewhat important. Few felt it was not important (2%) or were undecided (2%).



One question examined the idea that humans evolved from primates over millions of years. Majority (87%) disagreed with this belief of evolution. Three-fourths strongly disagreed, and another 12% disagreed. Only 5% agreed with the statement. Several (8%) were undecided.

## Large majority of youth maintain Biblical principles of morality

Almost all respondents (95%) felt it was always or almost always wrong for the two adults of the same sex to have any sexual relations. Similarly, 94% agreed it always or almost always wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relationships before marriage. More than 90% felt it was always or almost always wrong for a woman to have an abortion.

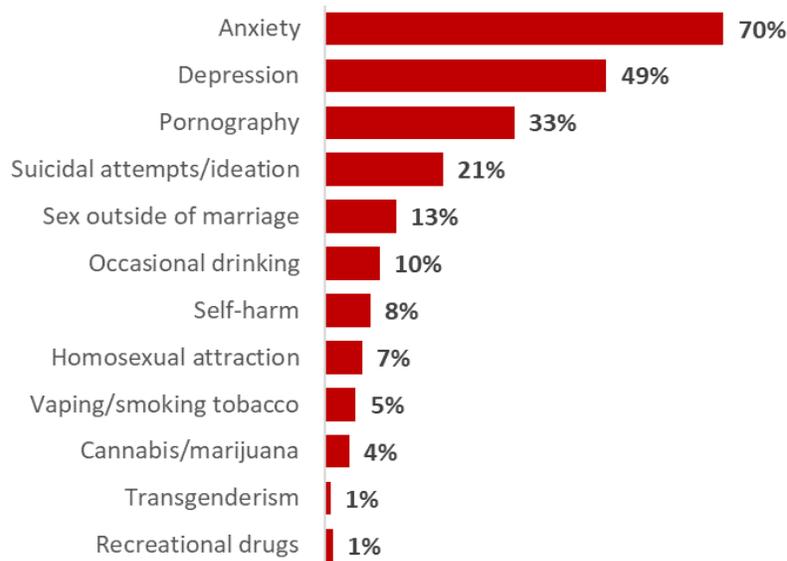


## Majority of youth reported struggling with mental health issues

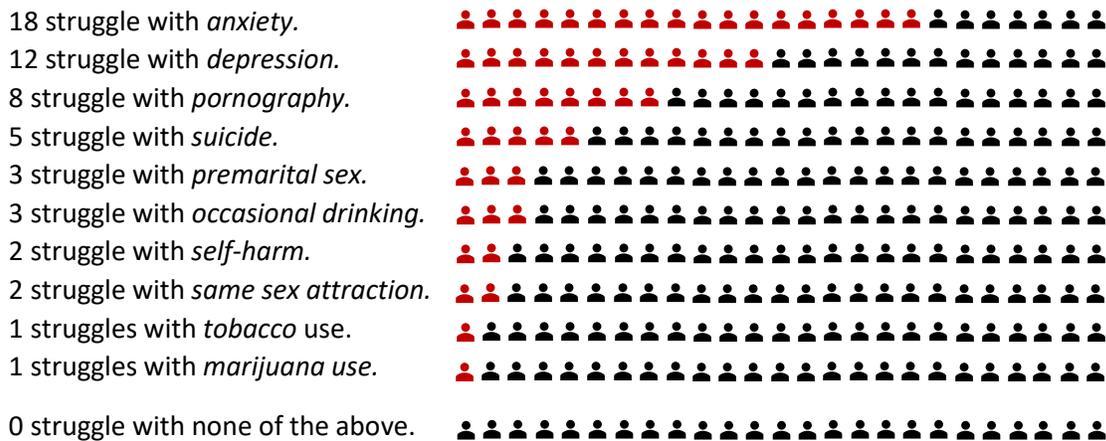
Youth were asked if they had struggled with a variety of subjects in the last 12 months. Less than 1% indicated no to all the options presented. Keep in mind the survey primarily represents youth that attend church several times a week, have been born again for more than 5 years, and their parents attend church.

The five most reported struggles were anxiety (70%), depression (49%), pornography (33%), suicidal attempts or ideation (21%), and premarital sex (13%).<sup>3</sup>

Struggles youth faced in the last 12 months



To visualize the prevalence of these statistics, consider the following. More than half of youth surveyed indicated their youth group size was 25 or fewer students. For a group of 25 students, these results would suggest that:



<sup>3</sup> Results will not sum to 100% because respondents can indicate yes to more than one category.

This section analyzes the relationship between struggles and demographic factors such as age and gender.

### *Anxiety and Depression*

While males and females both report anxiety and depression as common struggles, it is more prevalent among females. More than half of females struggle with anxiety (79%) or depression (55%). Female teens responded almost identically to those aged 18 to 30. Still, 51% of males struggle with anxiety and 38% with depression. Males aged 18 to 30 were more likely to struggle with anxiety (57%) or depression (41%) compared to male teens (50% or 31% respectively).

### *Pornography*

More than half (54%) of males and almost a quarter (23%) of females struggled with pornography. In both cases, young adults reported higher shares struggling with this issue compared to teens. For males, 41% of male teens and 59% young men struggled with pornography. Similarly, 16% of female teens and 26% of young women indicated a struggle with pornography.

### *Suicidal attempts or ideation*

Almost one quarter of females reported struggling with suicidal attempts or ideation. Suicide was most prevalent among female teens. Specifically, 27% of female teens struggled with suicide compared to 22% of young women. In both age groups, 15% of males struggle with suicidal thoughts or ideation.

### *Premarital sex*

Struggling with sex before marriage was equally reported among males and females, however, this issue was more than twice as common with older youth. 15% of those aged 18 to 30 struggled with premarital sex compared to 6% of teens.

### *Occasional drinking*

Drinking alcohol occasionally was reported by 12% of young adults compared to 3% of teens. Males and females reported similar shares of youth struggling.

### *Self-harm*

Teenage females were most likely struggle with self-harm. 15% reported struggling with self-harm compared to 7% of young females aged 18 to 30 or 5% of males.

### *Homosexual attraction*

Overall, 7% of youth surveyed reported struggling with attraction to the same sex. This is consistent for females and young males aged 18 to 30. Teen males reported a slightly lower share, 4%.

### *Tobacco use*

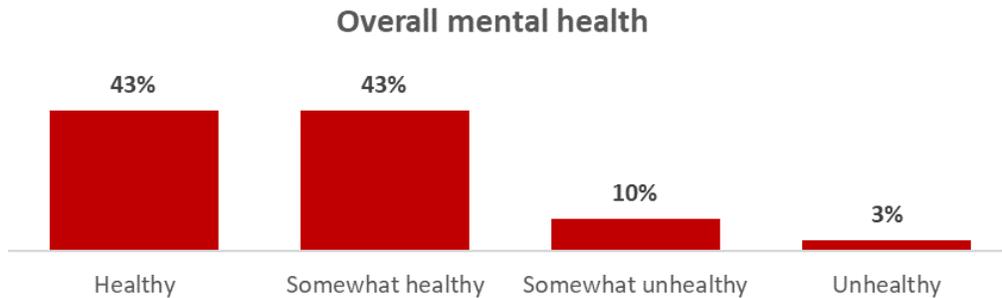
Struggling with tobacco products appears to be slightly more common for young men. 7% of males aged 18 to 30 reported struggling with this compared to 5% of females or teen males.

### *Marijuana use*

Slightly more young adults reported struggling with marijuana. Only 3% of teens indicated compared to 5% of young females and 6% of young males.

**85% of youth report good overall mental health but continue to struggle with mental health issues**

Majority felt their mental health was healthy or somewhat healthy. Several (10%) felt it was somewhat unhealthy, and 3% reported unhealthy. Interestingly, mental health responses were nearly identical for teens and young adults. Youth from divorced homes also gave similar responses to those not from divorced homes.



These results might indicate a different story from the previous section where the majority of youth reported struggling with anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, etc. While many explanations are plausible, this report offers two interpretations. First, perhaps mental health issues have been normalized in society and living with such conditions are considered “healthy”. For example, an ideology like the following: “Sometimes I struggle with my self-worth and have had really bad days where I thought about ending my life. My friends have the same issues, so I think I’m okay.” Alternatively, perhaps youth are inappropriately labelling ordinary feelings with those of serious mental health issues. For example: “I have a big test this week, and I’m stressed and anxious because I didn’t study. I have severe anxiety.”

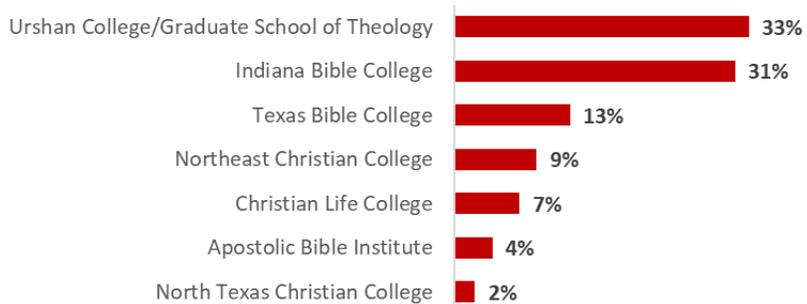
Those who rated their mental health as “healthy” also reported slightly lower shares struggling than those with poor mental health. However, a significant number struggled with mental health issues in the last 12 months. Almost half (48%) struggled with anxiety, and almost a quarter (23%) struggled with depression. Youth reported good mental health while struggling with pornography (27%), premarital sex (9%), and drinking alcohol (6%). 5% struggled with suicide in the last 12 months and still rated themselves as healthy.

**Majority of students receive public education in middle school and high school**

Most (70%) students attend public school in grades 8 to 12. Several (18%) are home schooled. The remainder attended Christian (10%) or secular (2%) private school.

Of those over the age of 18, several (14%) have attended a UPCI-endorsed Bible College. The majority of these attended schools in the Midwest: Urshan College and Graduate School of Theology (33%) and Indiana Bible College (31%).

**Attendance at UPCI endorsed Bible colleges**

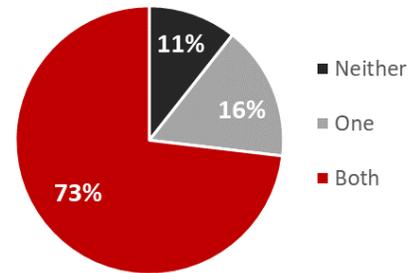


### Almost two-thirds of youth reported a great home life

When asked about their home life, 63% indicated: “One the whole, I have a great home life and support system.” More than a quarter feel they “have a good support system, but there are some real issues at home.” A small group (7%) indicated they “struggle with a lot of situations at home and don’t have a support system.”

Almost all (97%) of surveyed youth currently attend an apostolic church. About a third of those over 18 live independently. For the two-thirds of teens and young adults who live at home, 73% reported both parents also attend an apostolic church, and 16% reported one parent attends. The remaining 11% reported neither parent attend. More young adults (13%) reported neither parent attending compared to teens (6%).

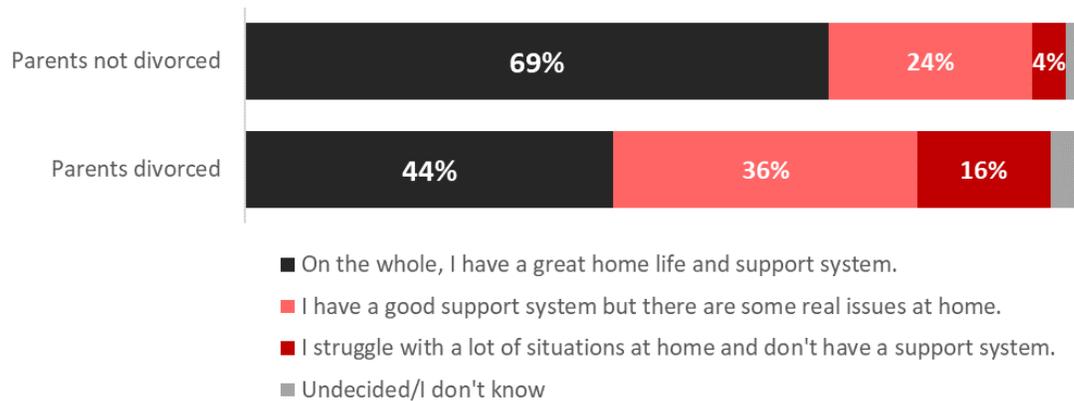
Parent church attendance of youth living at-home



### Youth from divorced home more likely to lack support system

About 1 in 4 students indicated they were from a divorced home. These respondents are more likely to have neither or one parent attending an apostolic church. Only 22% from divorced homes reported both parents attend an apostolic church compared to 69% of youth not from a divorced home.

Support system and home life



Less than half of youth from divorced homes felt they had a great home life and support system. This group was four times as likely (16%) to report struggling with situations at home without a support system compared to youth not coming from a divorced home (4%).

There appears to be some relationship between parents’ marital status and other factors such as parental church attendance and home life. However, youth from divorced homes report similar proportions struggling with various issues. For example, 1 in 4 youth from divorced home struggled with suicidal thoughts and ideation compared to 1 in 5 youth not from divorced homes. This suggests that the struggles youth face are not primarily explained by their home life or parents’ marital status.

## Appendix A: Religious survey sources

While the survey questionnaire by Research and Development and Youth Ministries was largely original, inspiration was drawn from other religious surveys available through the Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA). Specifically, this survey referenced questions on the following topics from the Baylor Religion Survey and the 2014 General Social Survey:

- Religious service attendance, frequency of prayer, view of the Bible, support abortion for any reason, homosexuality, sex before marriage, born again experience, life after death (Smith, 2019)
- Reading sacred texts, importance of converting others, evolution, belief in hell, religious salvation (Bader et al., 2007)

### *Citations*

Bader, C. D., Froese, P., Johnson, B., Mencken, F. C., & Stark, R. (2019, February 10). Baylor Religion Survey, Wave II (2007). <https://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/BAYLORW2.asp>

Smith, T. W. (2019, February 10). General Social Survey 2014 Cross Section and Panel Combined. <https://www.thearda.com/archive/files/descriptions/GSS2014.asp>

For more statistics from the ARDA, visit the QuickStats page: <https://www.thearda.com/quickstats/>.

## Appendix B: Respondent demographics

Respondents were well distributed across targeted age groups. Approximately half of respondents were between the ages of 12 and 20; conversely the other half of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30.

Two-thirds of respondents were female, which is consistent with attendance statistics for the UPCI fellowship.

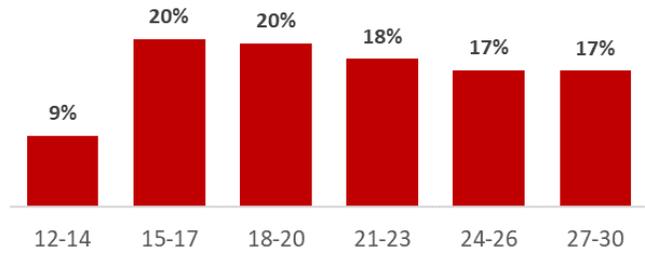
The survey was available in English and Spanish. Almost all (99.5%) of respondents completed the survey in English.

Majority (68%) of youth surveyed identified as white, non-Hispanic. Almost one-third of youth identified as other minorities: 15% Hispanic, 9% black non-Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% indigenous people, and 4% identified as 2 or more races.

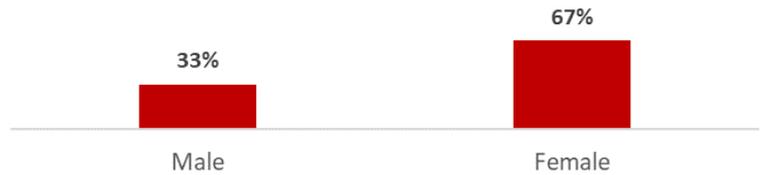
Roughly a quarter of respondents had a level of education in each of these categories: less than high school, high school graduate, some college or training, and college graduate. Few respondents (5%) completed postgraduate degree work, which is consistent with the age demographics targeted in the survey.

Majority of the responses (79%) were from social media distribution. Almost half of respondents accessed the survey from Facebook and an additional third from Instagram. Another 19% completed the survey via the email distribution list. A few responses came from distributing a QR code.

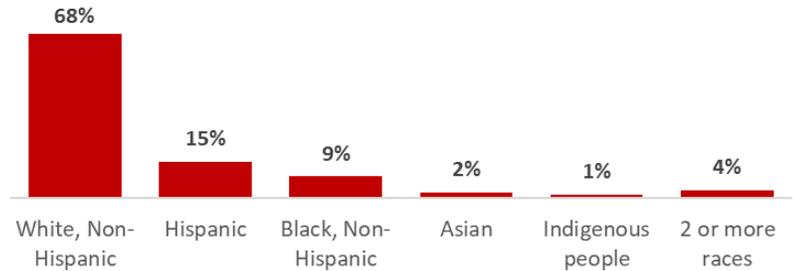
### Respondents by age



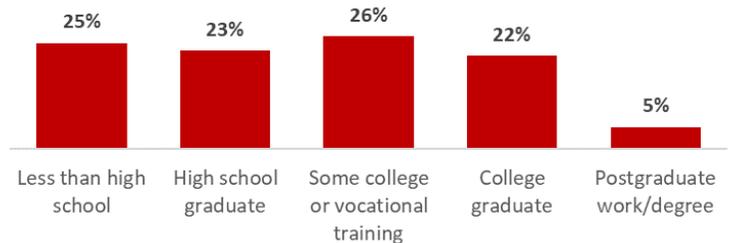
### Respondents by gender



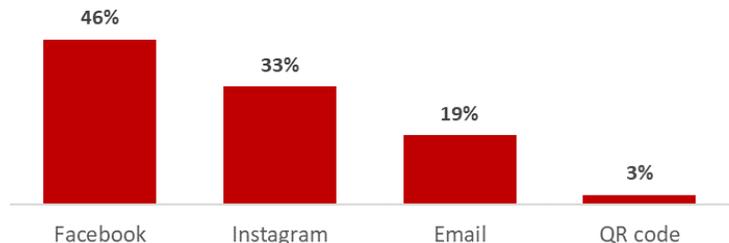
### Respondents by race and ethnicity



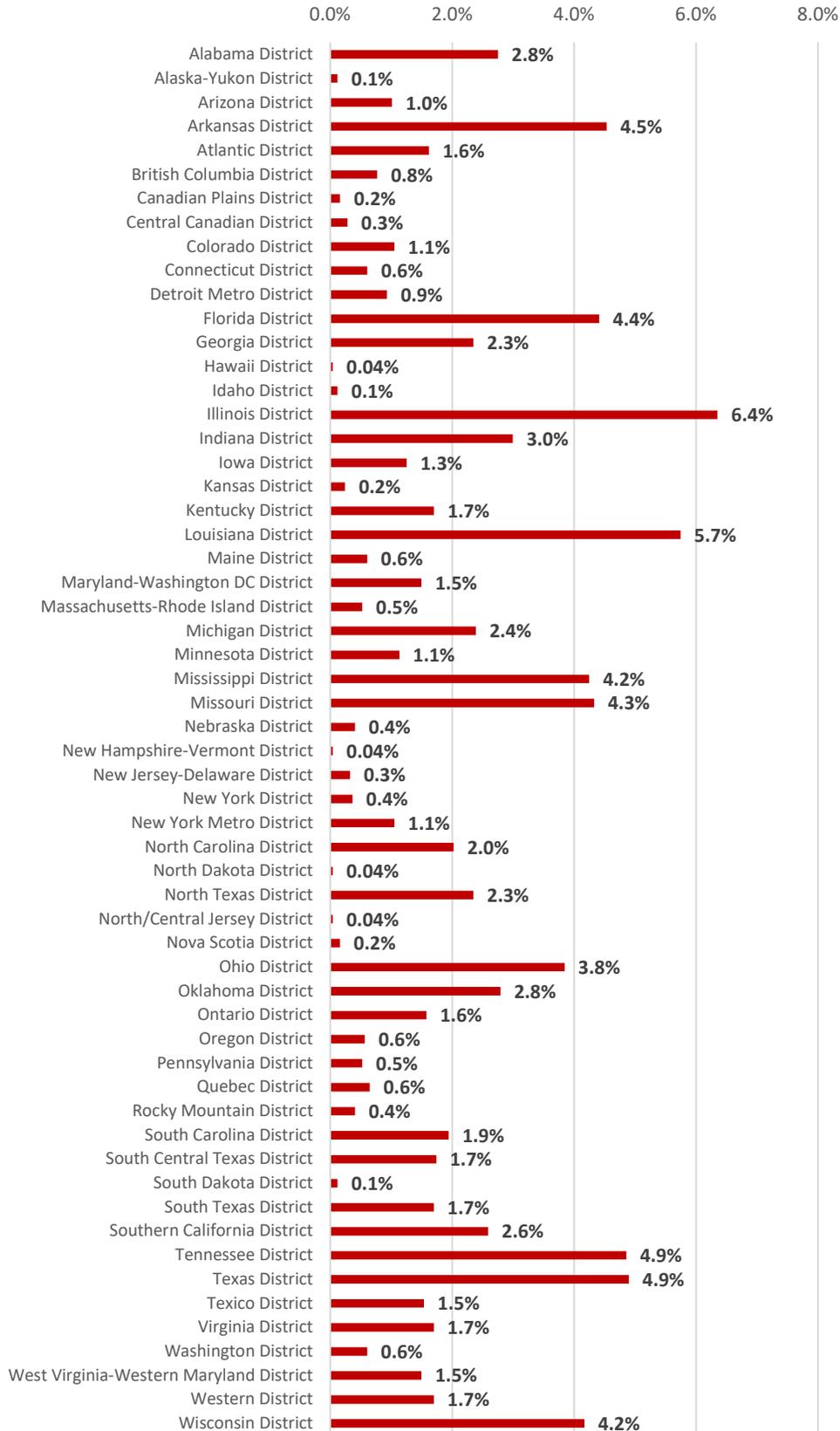
### Respondents by education



### Respondents by survey distribution methods



## Respondents by District



## Appendix C: Survey questionnaire

1. How often do you attend church/youth services? (Select one option)
  - Several times a week
  - Once a week
  - Several times a month
  - Once a month
  - Several times a year
  - Less than once a year
  - Never
  
2. Outside of attending services, how often do you pray? (Select one option)
  - Once a day or more often
  - Several times a week
  - Once a week
  - Several times a month
  - Once a month
  - Several times a year
  - Less than once a year
  - Never
  
3. Outside of attending services, about how often do you read your Bible? (Select one option)
  - Once a day or more often
  - Several times a week
  - Once a week
  - Several times a month
  - Once a month
  - Several times a year
  - Less than once a year
  - Never
  
4. About how often do you fast (by abstaining from food)? (Select one option)
  - Several times a week
  - Once a week
  - Several times a month
  - Once a month
  - Several times a year
  - Less than once a year
  - Never
  
5. Do you have a youth pastor or a youth team/committee at your church? (Select one option)
  - Yes, youth pastor only
  - Yes, youth team/committee only
  - Yes, both a youth pastor and youth team/committee
  - No, neither a youth pastor nor youth team/committee
  - I don't know

6. How many students are in your youth group, including youth or young adults (ages 12 to 35)? (Select one option)
- 1 to 10
  - 11 to 25
  - 25 to 50
  - 51 to 75
  - 75 to 100
  - More than 100
  - I don't know

7. Have you been "born again" of the water and the spirit according to Acts 2:38? (Select one option)
- Yes
  - No
  - Undecided/I don't know

NOTE : Answer the below question only if answer to Q#7 is Yes

8. How long have you been born again? (Select one option)
- Less than 1 year
  - 2-3 years
  - 4-5 years
  - More than 5 years
9. Do you feel called to a specific area of ministry? Check all that apply.
- Teaching Bible studies
  - Teaching Sunday school
  - Preaching
  - Pastoring
  - Music ministry
  - Global Missions
  - North American Missions
  - Church planting
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you plan to become a licensed minister with the UPCI? (Select one option)
- Yes
  - No
  - Undecided/I don't know

11. How important is it to convert others to your faith? (Select one option)
- Very important
  - Somewhat important
  - Not very important
  - Not important
  - Undecided/I don't know
12. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement:  
There is life after death. (Select one option)
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - Undecided/I don't know
13. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement:  
There is a place of eternal punishment/hell. (Select one option)
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - Undecided/I don't know
14. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement:  
Humans evolved from primates over millions of years. (Select one option)
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - Undecided/I don't know
15. Which statement comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible? (Select one option)
- The Bible is the inspired Word of God and should be applied to every part of my life.
  - The Bible is the inspired Word of God and only applies to certain times or parts of my life.
  - The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts.
  - Undecided/I don't know

16. Which statement comes closest to describing your belief about salvation/heaven? (Select one option)

- Jesus is the only way to heaven.
- There are many ways to heaven.
- Other religions will go to their own version of heaven.
- Good people still get to go to heaven.
- Undecided/I don't know

17. Which statement comes closest to describing your belief about God? (Select one option)

- God is one.
- God is three separate persons.
- Undecided/I don't know

Remember that all responses are anonymous. Please answer the following questions honestly to help Youth Ministries better understand and serve you.

18. If a man and woman have any sexual relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes wrong or not wrong at all? (Select one option)

- Always wrong
- Almost always wrong
- Sometimes wrong
- Not wrong at all
- Undecided/I don't know

19. If two adults of the same sex have any sexual relations, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes wrong or not wrong at all? (Select one option)

- Always wrong
- Almost always wrong
- Sometimes wrong
- Not wrong at all
- Undecided/I don't know

20. If a woman has an abortion, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes wrong or not wrong at all? (Select one option)

- Always wrong
- Almost always wrong
- Sometimes wrong
- Not wrong at all
- Undecided/I don't know

During the last 12 months, have you had tendencies towards or taken part in any of the following?

21. Please indicate if you have struggled with any of the following:                      Yes      No
- (a) Occasional drinking (alcohol)
  - (b) Suicidal attempts/thoughts (ideation)
  - (c) Vaping/smoking tobacco (nicotine)
  - (d) Gender distinction (transgenderism)
  - (e) Anxiety
  - (f) Sex outside of marriage
  - (g) Pornography
  - (h) Attraction to same sex (homosexuality)
  - (i) Depression
  - (j) Self harm
  - (k) Cannabis (marijuana) use
  - (l) Other recreational drug use
22. Do you currently attend a UPCI church? (Select one option)
- Yes
  - No
23. How would you rate your overall mental health? (Select one option)
- Healthy
  - Somewhat healthy
  - Somewhat unhealthy
  - Unhealthy
24. Are you from a divorced home? (Select one option)
- Yes
  - No
25. If you live at home, how many parents or guardians in your home attend a UPCI/apostolic church? (Select one option)
- Neither
  - One
  - Both
  - I live independently

26. Which statement comes closest to your feelings about your home life? (Select one option)
- On the whole, I have a great home life and support system.
  - I have a good support system but there are some real issues at home.
  - I struggle with a lot of situations at home and don't have a support system.
  - Undecided/I don't know
27. What type of school do/did you attend for the majority of 8th to 12th grade? (Select one option)
- Public school
  - Christian private school
  - Secular private school
  - Home school
28. Have you attended or do you currently attend a UPCI endorsed Bible College? (Select one option)
- Yes
  - No
  - Does not apply

NOTE : Answer the below question only if answer to Q#28 is Yes

29. Which Bible/Christian college did you attend? (Select one option)
- Apostolic Bible Institute
  - Centro Teologico Ministerial
  - Christian Life College
  - Indiana Bible College
  - North Texas Christian College
  - Northeast Christian College
  - Texas Bible College
  - Urshan College (Gateway College of Evangelism)
  - Urshan Graduate School of Theology

30. Select your District: (Select one option)

[ DROP DOWN LIST OF 58 DISTRICTS ]

31. Select your age: (Select one option)

- Less than 12
- 12-14
- 15-17
- 18-20
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-29
- 30-32
- 33-35
- 36 +

32. Select your gender: (Select one option)

- Male
- Female

33. Select your race or ethnicity: (Select one option)

- White, Non-Hispanic
- Black, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Indigenous people
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

34. Select your highest level of education: (Select one option)

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college or vocational training
- College graduate
- Postgraduate work/degree