



Leaving the Church

*Why some Seventh-day Adventist members
leave the church, and why some come back*

ANTHONY KENT | GENERAL CONFERENCE

Survey Accomplishments

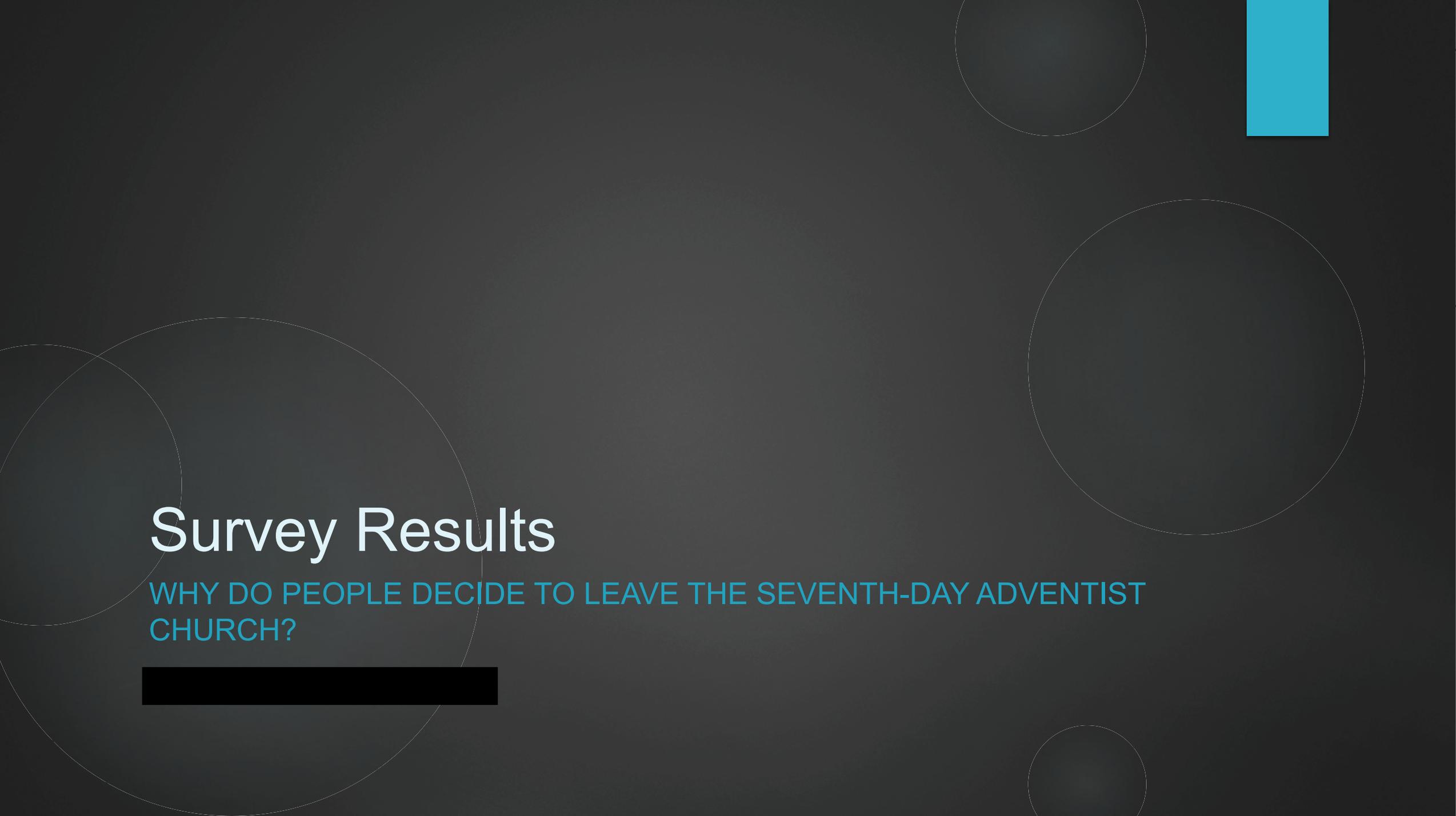
- ▶ **415** usable surveys received from former members who left Seventh-day Adventist Church
- ▶ **370** usable surveys from those previously separated from Seventh-day Adventist Church but subsequently reconnected
- ▶ Results provide insights into background, behavior, and thoughts of **785** members around the world who left the church at one point in their life, providing evidence why this occurred



Survey Results

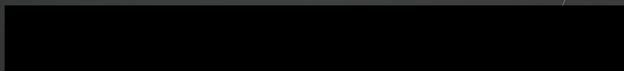
FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT IN SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO
DEPARTURE FROM CHURCH

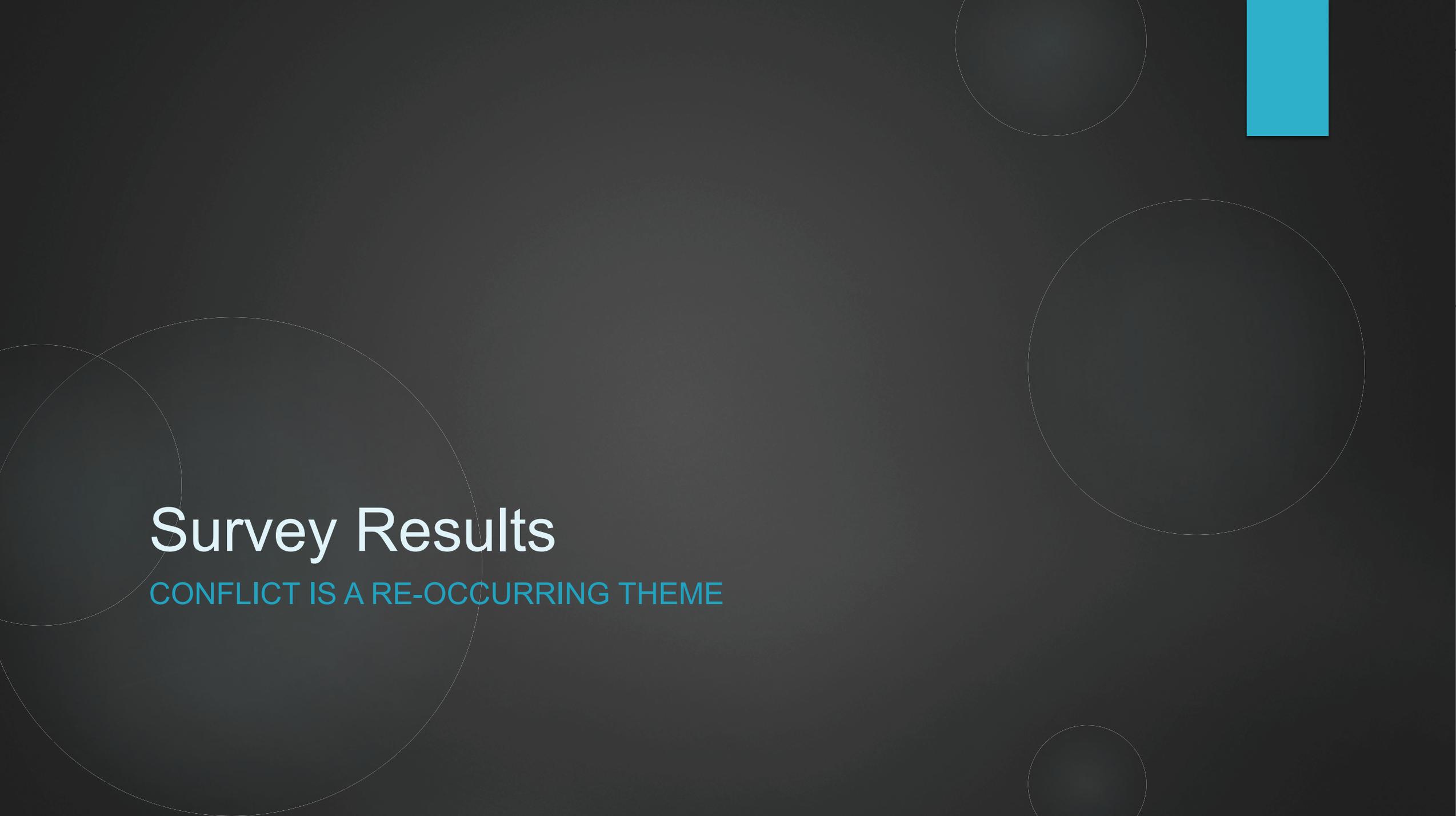




Survey Results

WHY DO PEOPLE DECIDE TO LEAVE THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH?

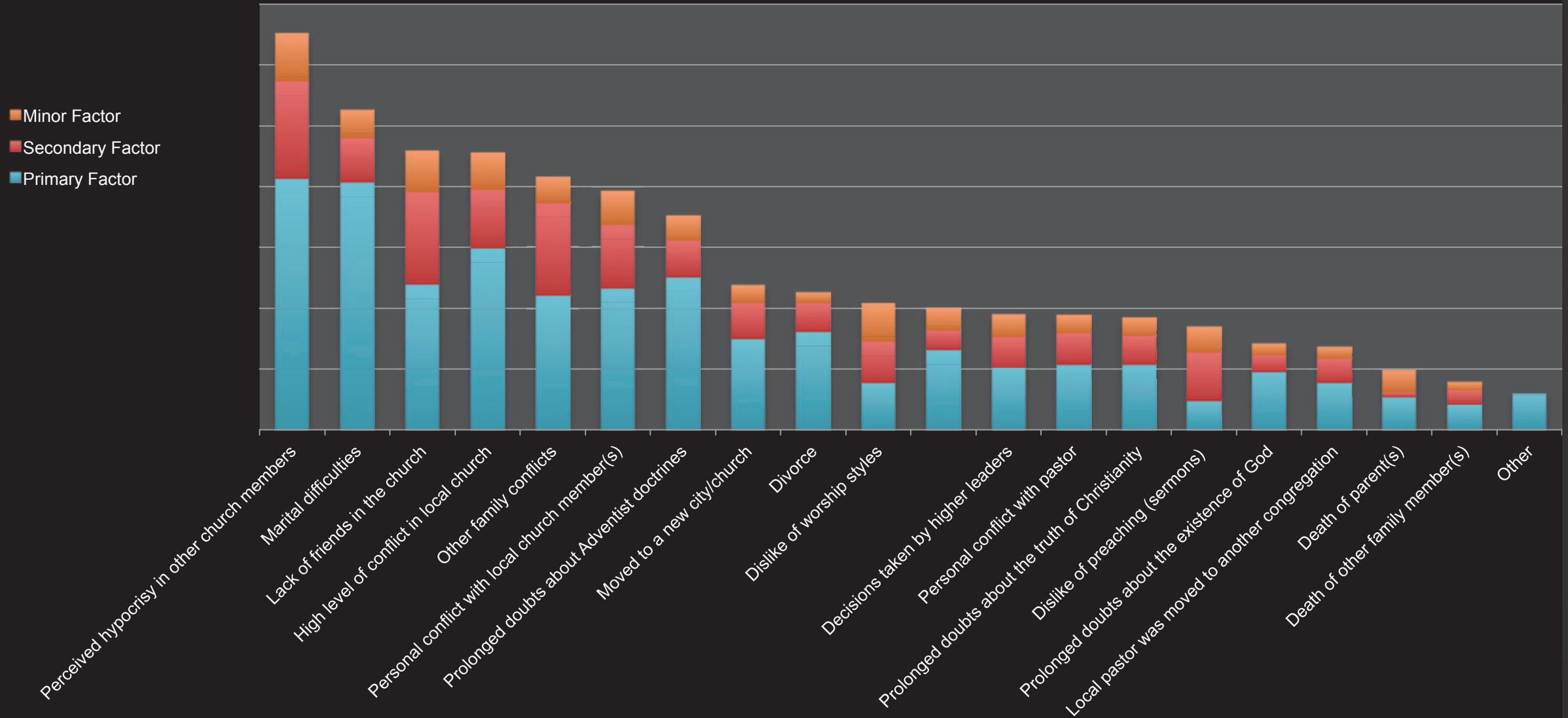




Survey Results

CONFLICT IS A RE-OCCURRING THEME

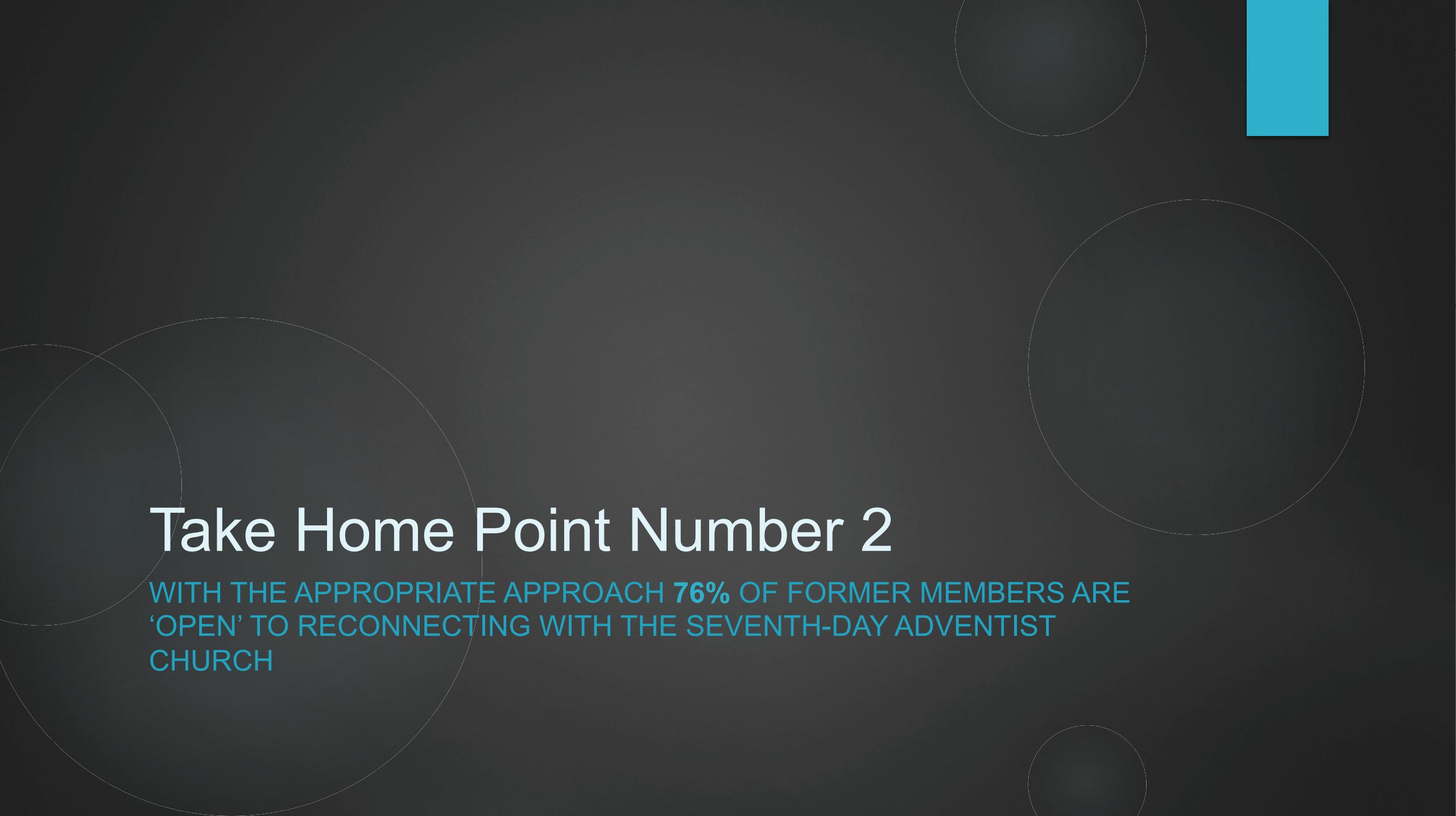
Table 12: What event triggered your decision to leave? (Listed in weighted rank order –Members who left)





Take Home Point Number 1

THE BIBLE STILL RETAINS AUTHORITY & SIGNIFICANCE



Take Home Point Number 2

WITH THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH **76%** OF FORMER MEMBERS ARE
'OPEN' TO RECONNECTING WITH THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Conclusions

- ▶ Respondents who returned to the church appear to have left the church at a younger age and to have fewer children.
- ▶ The five most important ways by which respondents came to be Seventh-day Adventists are being raised an Adventist by parent(s), the influence of other relatives, the influence of friends, evangelistic campaign, and personal Bible study.
- ▶ The top six reasons for leaving are perceived hypocrisy in other members, marital difficulties, lack of friends in the church, other family conflicts, high level of conflict in the local church, and personal conflict with local church member(s).

Conclusions

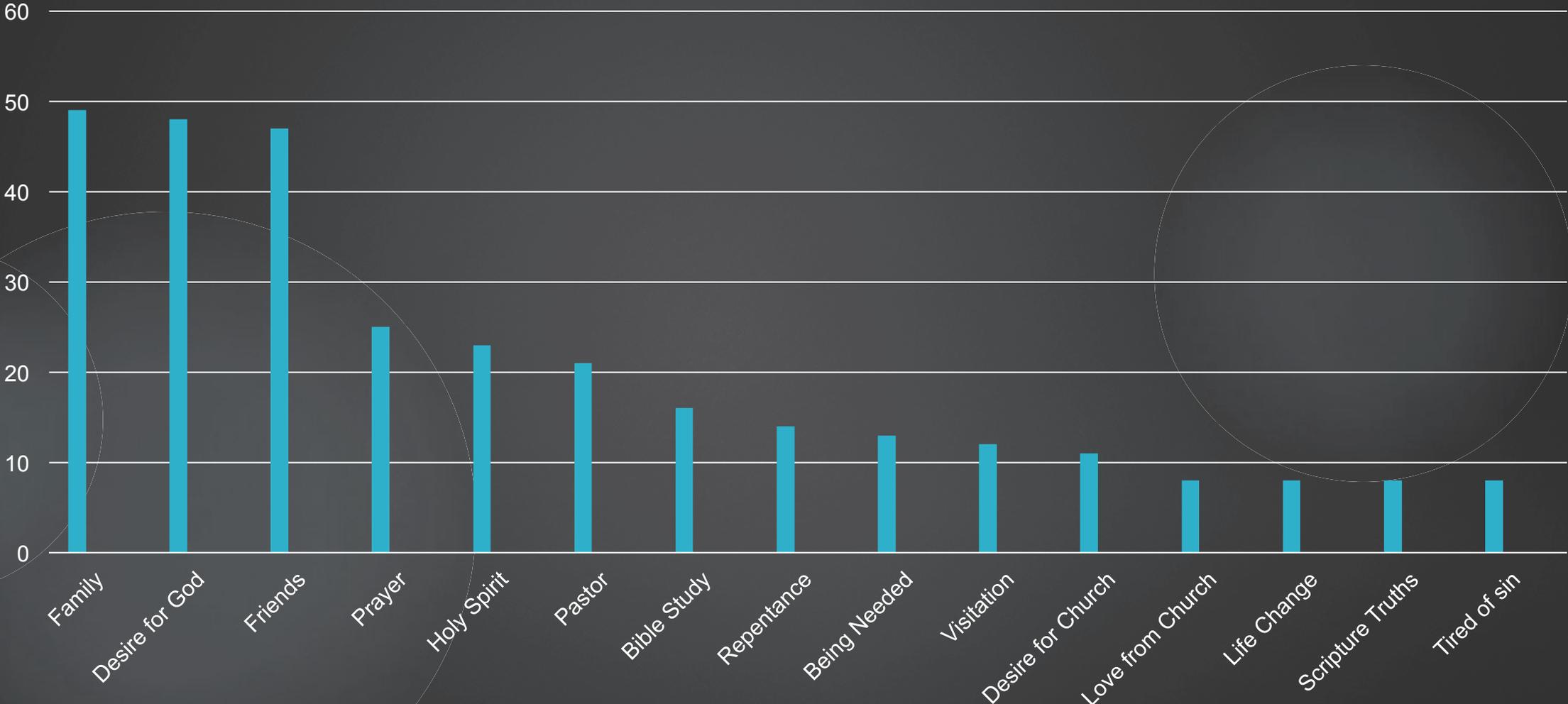
- ▶ Participation in church-related activities does not appear to be an indicator of whether a person who leaves the church will return.
- ▶ Those who leave and still consider themselves to be nominal Adventist are more likely to return to the church.
- ▶ Those who leave but still remain in touch with Adventism, particularly through family and friends who make continued visitations to encourage reconnecting are more likely to return to the church.



The BIG Take Home Point

REASONS WHY THEY RETURNED

Reasons for reconnecting with the Seventh-day Adventist Church: *Returned*



Recommendations

- ▶ Comprehensive, widespread, practical and effective training in **conflict resolution** and **reconciliation** be implemented throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- ▶ **Mentoring discipleship** be incorporated into the DNA of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- ▶ Initiate: **'Operation Reconnect'**