



TRENDS IMPACTING CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Presbyterian Assembly Brisbane 2016
Tim Dyer – The Johnmark Extension

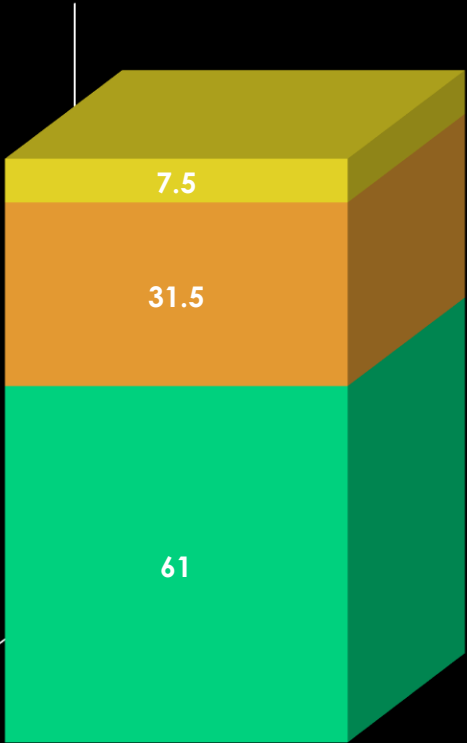
BRAINSTORM

- See Xmind PDF file: Trends impacting the church

DEMOGRAPHICS

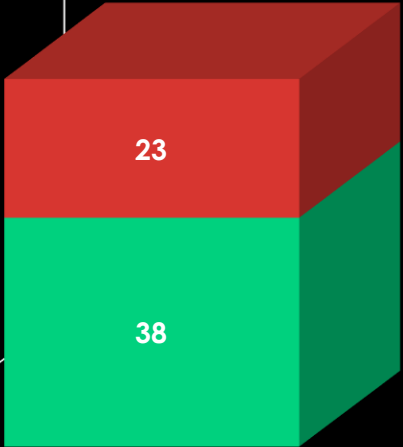
CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA

■ Christianity ■ No Religion ■ Other Religions



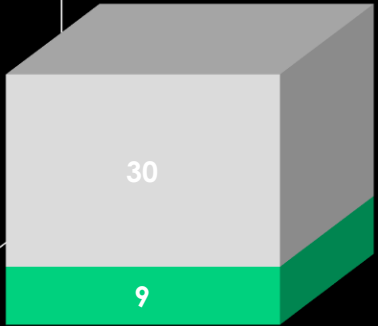
CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITUALITY

■ More Spirituality than Christianity
■ More Christianity than Spirituality



ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

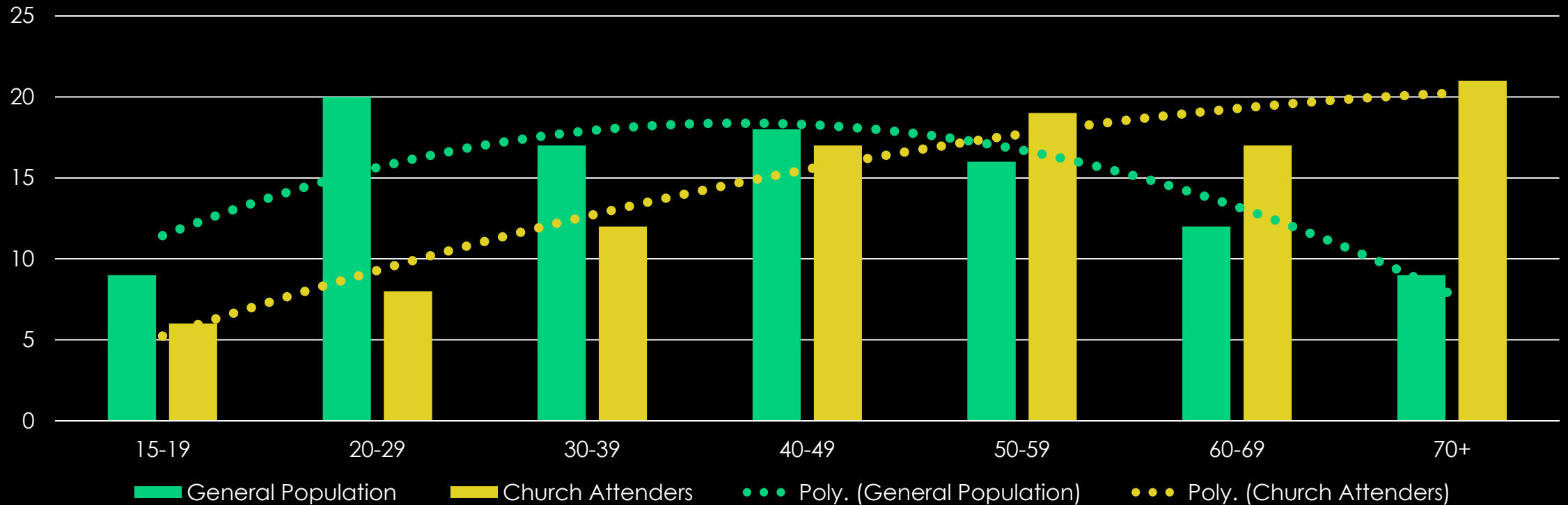
■ Not active occasional attendance
■ Active Regular Participation



Source: Mark McCrindle Demographic Snapshot 2014

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Relative Percentage in each cohort



Source: ABS, NCLS, McCrindle *Christianity in Australia 2012*

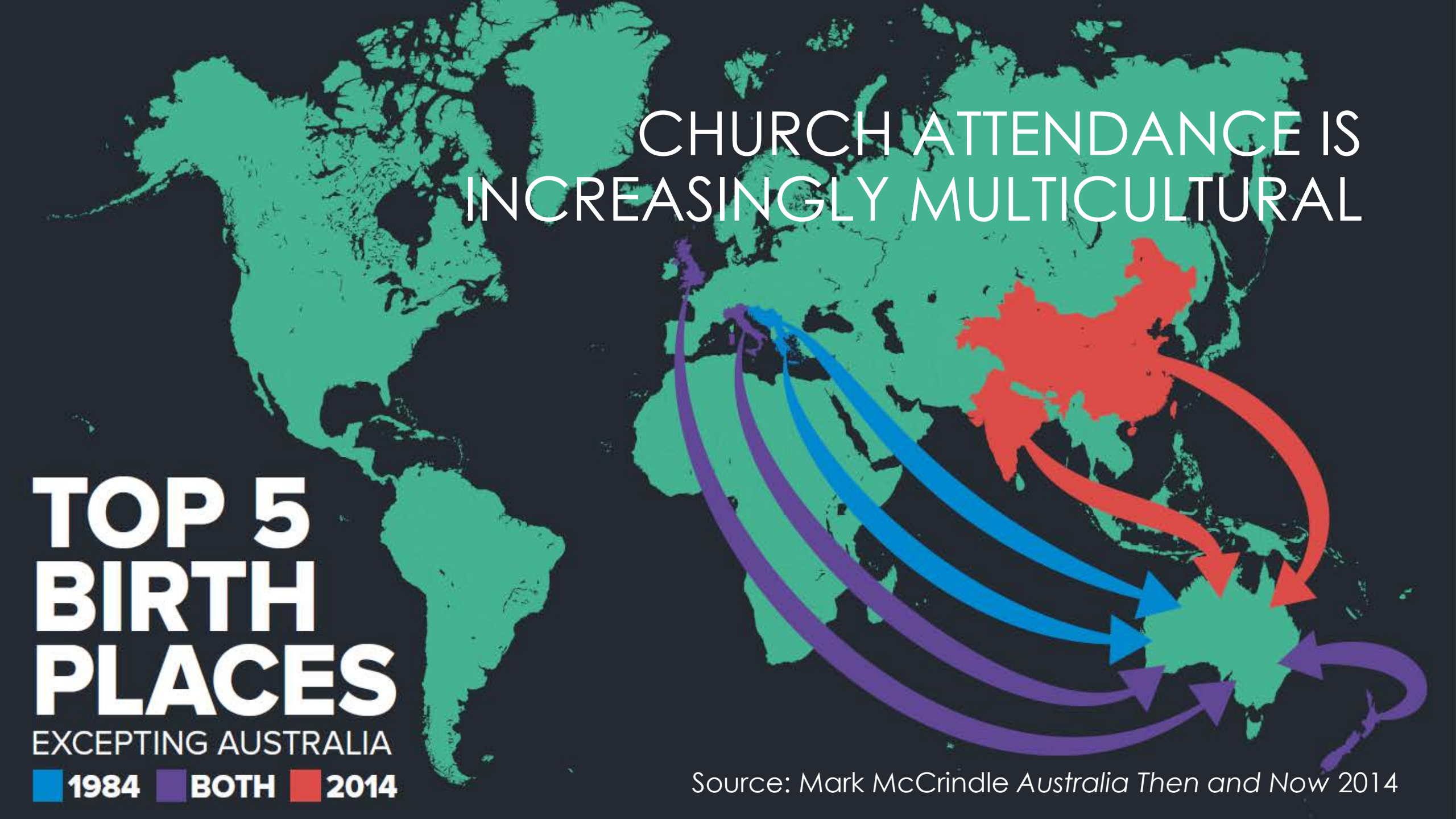
CHURCH ATTENDANCE IS INCREASINGLY MULTICULTURAL

TOP 5 BIRTH PLACES

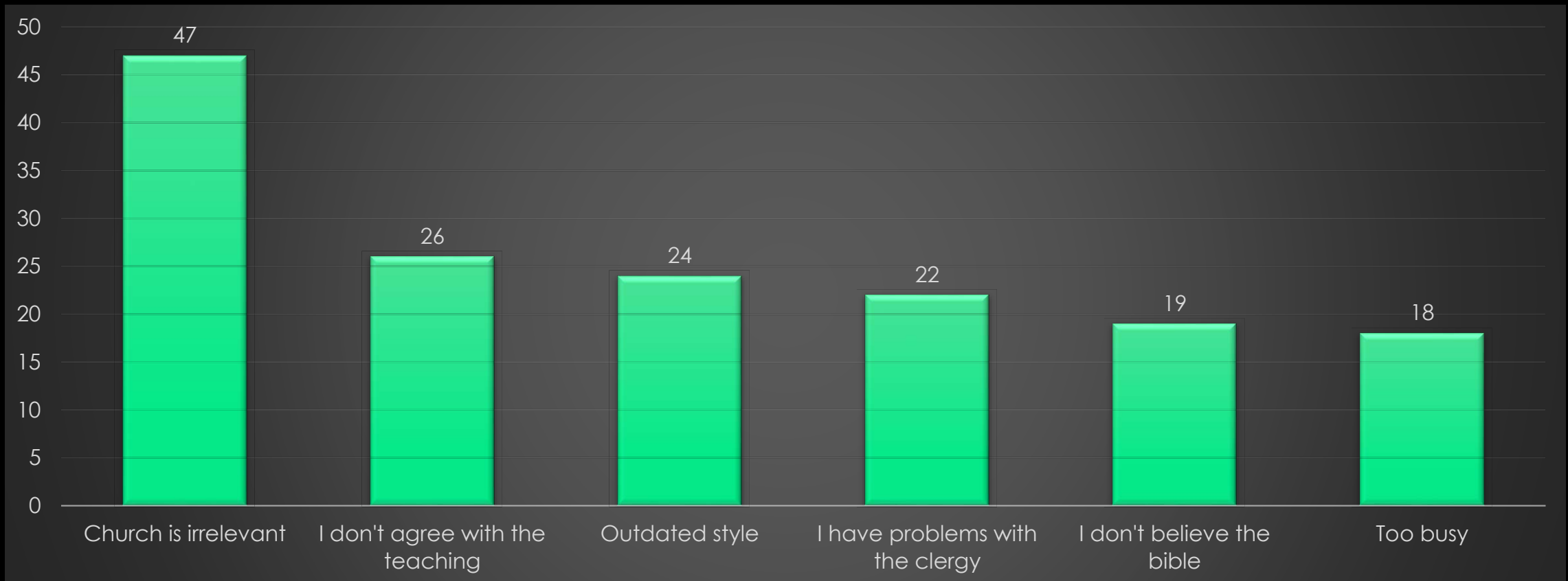
EXCEPTING AUSTRALIA

■ 1984 ■ BOTH ■ 2014

Source: Mark McCrindle *Australia Then and Now 2014*



REASONS AUSTRALIANS DON'T ATTEND CHURCH



Source: Mark McCrindle *Church Attendance in Aus 2013*

ATTITUDES TO CHURCH

- 88% of non-attenders see the church as somewhat beneficial to society in general
- Less than ½ of this group do not see any personal benefit in what the church offers
- Faced with choices about what services they value and benefits they see in various community programs and facilities, church ranks near the bottom of the list

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO CHURCH

- The average Australian increasingly sees the church as irrelevant to life and society. It has been tolerated because it does some good – especially in education, health and welfare. However....
- Within the last 2-3 years, Christianity is increasingly seen as a potentially damaging religion that should not be publicly promoted within an educated and civilised society (i.e Challenges to Religious Instruction in state schools)

ATTITUDES TO TERMS DESCRIBING CHRISTIANS

• Practicing Christian	+ 28
• Ordinary Christian	+ 18
• Protestant Christian	+ 13
• Born Again Christian	- 5
• Evangelical Christian	- 11
• Fundamentalist Christian	- 31

REASONS FOR THE SHIFT

- All 'fundamentalist' sects are under suspicion of having exclusive truth claims and of being potentially violent
- Religion is seen to oppose a 'self-evident' positive progressive social agenda (sexuality & gender, 'life' issues)
- The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has raised significant credibility issues for the Christian church
- The loss of confidence and credibility is fuelled by popular Atheism

EVEN CHRISTIANS ARE ATTENDING LESS OFTEN

- Affluence, travel, Sunday as a social day
 - Kids, sport and children's activities
 - Blended and single parent families
 - Self directed spirituality and online options
-
- We are steadily losing the less engaged attenders and tending to keep those who are active participants and those with questions about faith

FAITH ONLINE

- The large attractional churches that grew towards the end of the last century built their communities through quality contemporary music and dynamic preaching – you attended to hear it
- Technology has changed this model
- The very best from around the world is now available whenever a person wants to connect in on any internet device – and they are...

POST MODERN PLURALISM

- Significant loss of trust in key structures and institutions
 - In any form of given truth
 - Educational institutions including Universities
 - Politics and the political system
 - Religious systems and institutions
- Spirituality is in – the church as an institution is out

INCREASED INDIVIDUALISM

- Changes in consumer mass marketing (Hugh McKay)
 - Everything is about the individual and the right to be well off, happy and successful
 - We do not owe society, others less well off, or those in need anything
 - Look after your self and the world will look after itself

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP CRISIS

- Levels of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry
 - Burnout and Stress
- Conflicted churches
- Loss of Meaning in Ministry
 - Key leaders leaving ministry in mid-life

STATE OF CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES

- Most mainline denominations are closing more churches than they are opening
- There is small growth in Pentecostal churches and in some ethnic churches (Chinese)
- Significant numbers of clergy continue leave ministry however there is an increase in the number of clergy training later in life as a second / third career