

Confirmation Work in the United Methodist Church in Germany

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A Brief Introduction to the History of Methodism

- The Methodist movement was founded by the Anglican priest John Wesley (1703–91).
- Strict rules (bible reading, prayer, fasting etc.) and social commitment (visiting prisoners, education programs, micro credits etc.).
- The movement was nicknamed “Methodists”.



The Methodist Church Family: Today's Facts and Figures

World Methodist Council (WMC) 76 Denominations worldwide	80,5 mill.
United Methodist Church (UMC) worldwide	12 mill.
UMC in Germany (0.067% total population)	53.000
UMC in USA	7,1 mill.



Confirmation Work in the EmK

The Sample

Confirmands addressed t0 (2012)	1058
Confirmands t1 (2012) valid datasets	761 (73%)
Confirmands t2a (2013)	346
Confirmands t2b (2014)	282
Confirmands t3 (2015)	227



Confirmation Work in the EmK

The Sample

Leaders and workers t1 (2012) matched files:	138	100%
Leaders t1-t2 (2013)	102	74%
Workers t1-t2 (2013)	24	17%
Volunteer workers t1-t2 (2013)	12	9%



Some Terminology...

Confirmation Work	Kirchlicher Unterricht / Course of Christian education
Confirmation	„Einsegnung“ / reception of an individual blessing, >> remain <i>affiliated (baptized) members</i>
	„Gliederaufnahme“ / confirmation >> reception as <i>full (professing) members</i> of the worldwide UMC

Confirmands: Motivation (t1)

Item Code	I take part in confirmation time,...	Approval
CB01	to learn more about God and faith.	73%
CB03	to come to my own decision	65%
CB04	to make an important step in growing up	40%
CB08	to be strengthened in my faith.	71%
CB11	to receive a blessing on the day of „Einsegnung“ (cf. confirmation).	73%

Confirmands: Motivation (t1)

Item Code	I take part in confirmation time,...	Approval
CA01	because my friends did so as well.	18%
CB09	to have a beautiful celebration with family and friends on the day of my „Einsegnung“ (cf. confirmation).	36%
CB 10	to get money or presents at the end.	24%

Attitudes toward Christian Beliefs (t1)

Item Code		Approval
CE01	God created the world.	80%
CE04	Jesus has risen from the dead.	85%
CG05	The Church does a lot of good things for the people.	83%

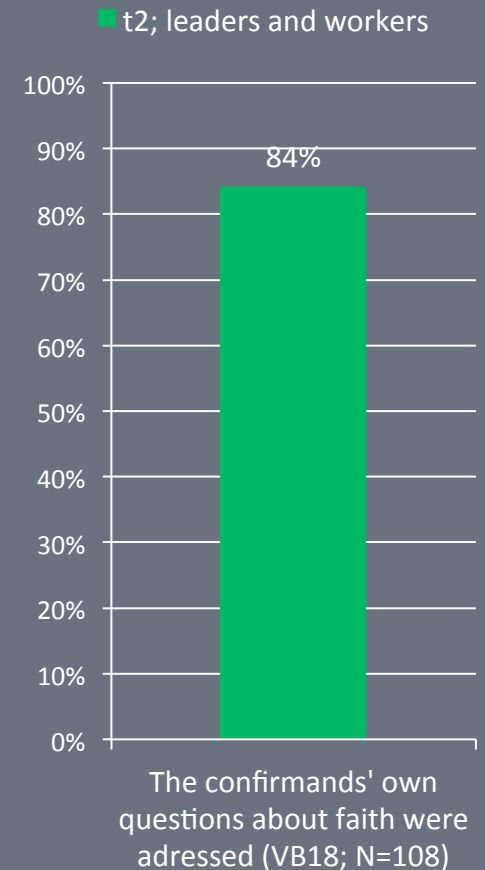
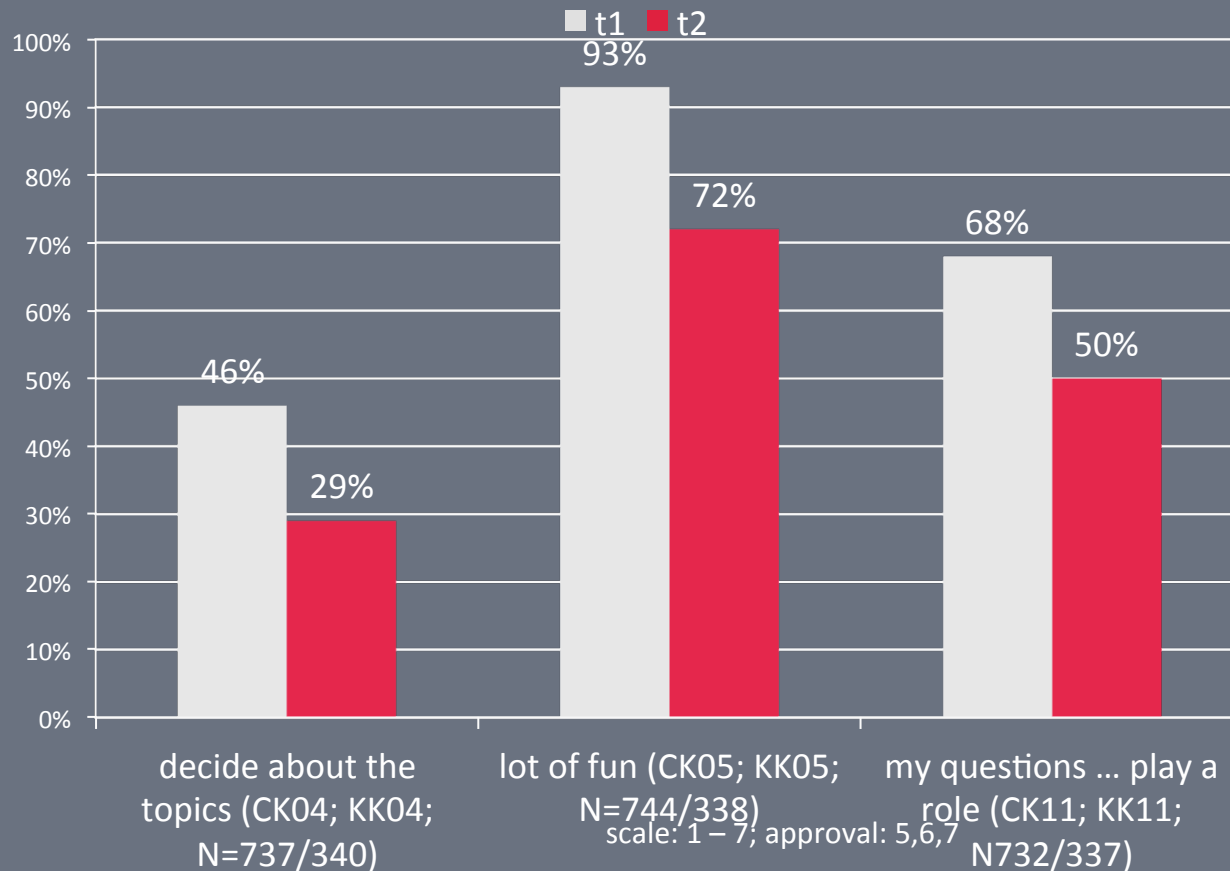
Confirmands: Expectations (t1)

Item Code	During the time of my confirmation training it is important for me ...	Approval
CK04	to be allowed to decide about the topics...	46%
CK05	to have a lot of fun.	93%
CK11	questions about faith.	68%
CB02	Experience community	56%

N = 732-745



Expectations and Experiences (t1 – t2)





Experiences (t2)

Item Code	To what extent are you satisfied with...	satisfied
KN07	the minister/person primarily responsible for confirmation work.	84%
KN11	the camp(s).	78%
KN01	the whole confirmation time.	81%

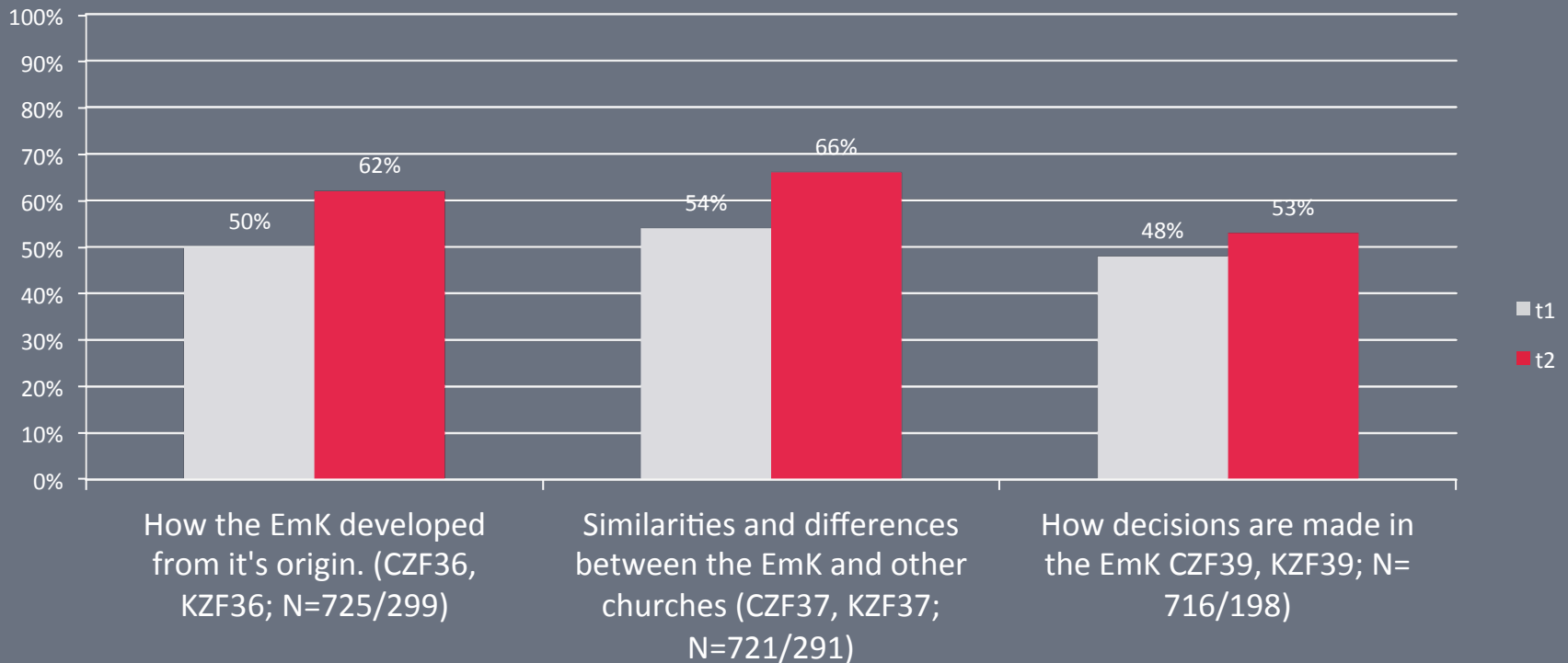


Top Ten Topics (t2)

	Item-code	How about your interest in these topics?	
1.	KL09	Friendship	89%
2.	KL22	God	89%
3.	KL05	Jesus Christ	85%
4.	KL11	The meaning of life	83%
5.	KL08	Justice and responsibility for others	78%
6.	KL06	The bible	73%
7.	KL24	Resurrection	73%
8.	KZF38	The Meaning of Baptism and Professing Membership	72%
9.	KZF37	Similarities and differences between the UMC and other churches	70%
10.	KL04	Your own parish	68%

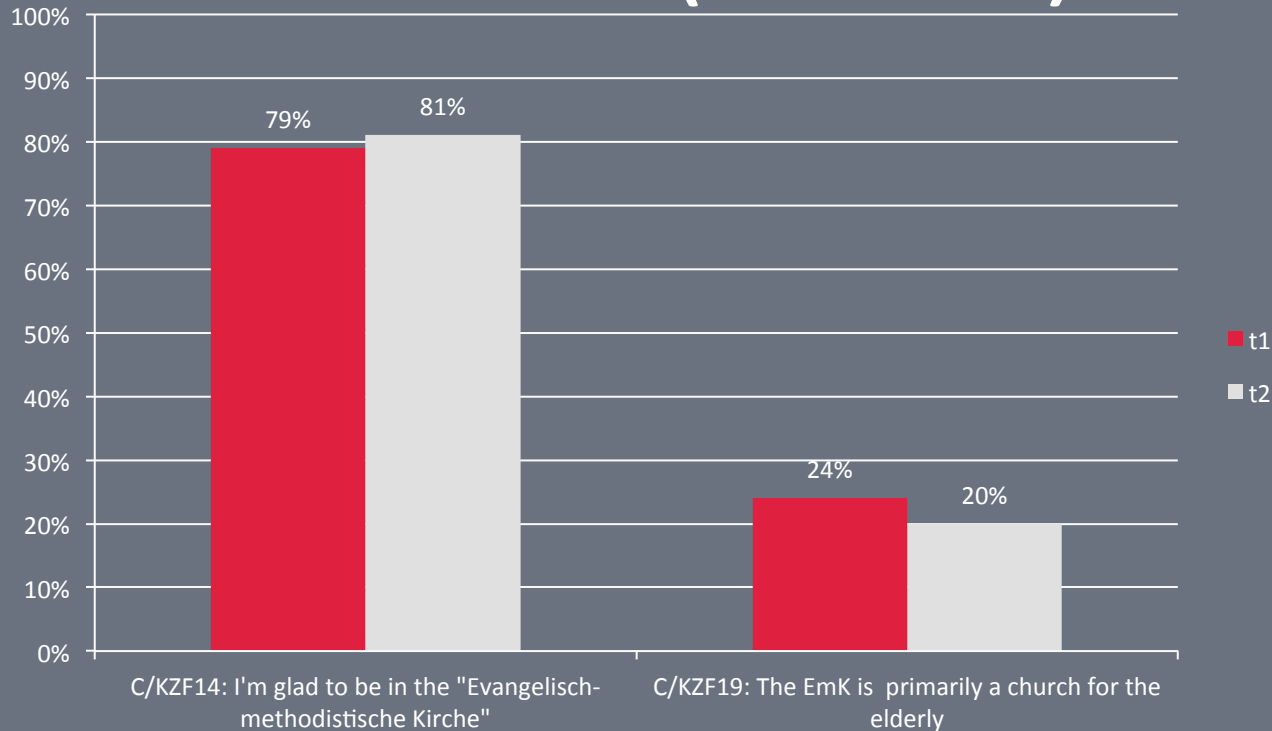


Increasing Interest in Specific Methodist Topics (t1+t2)





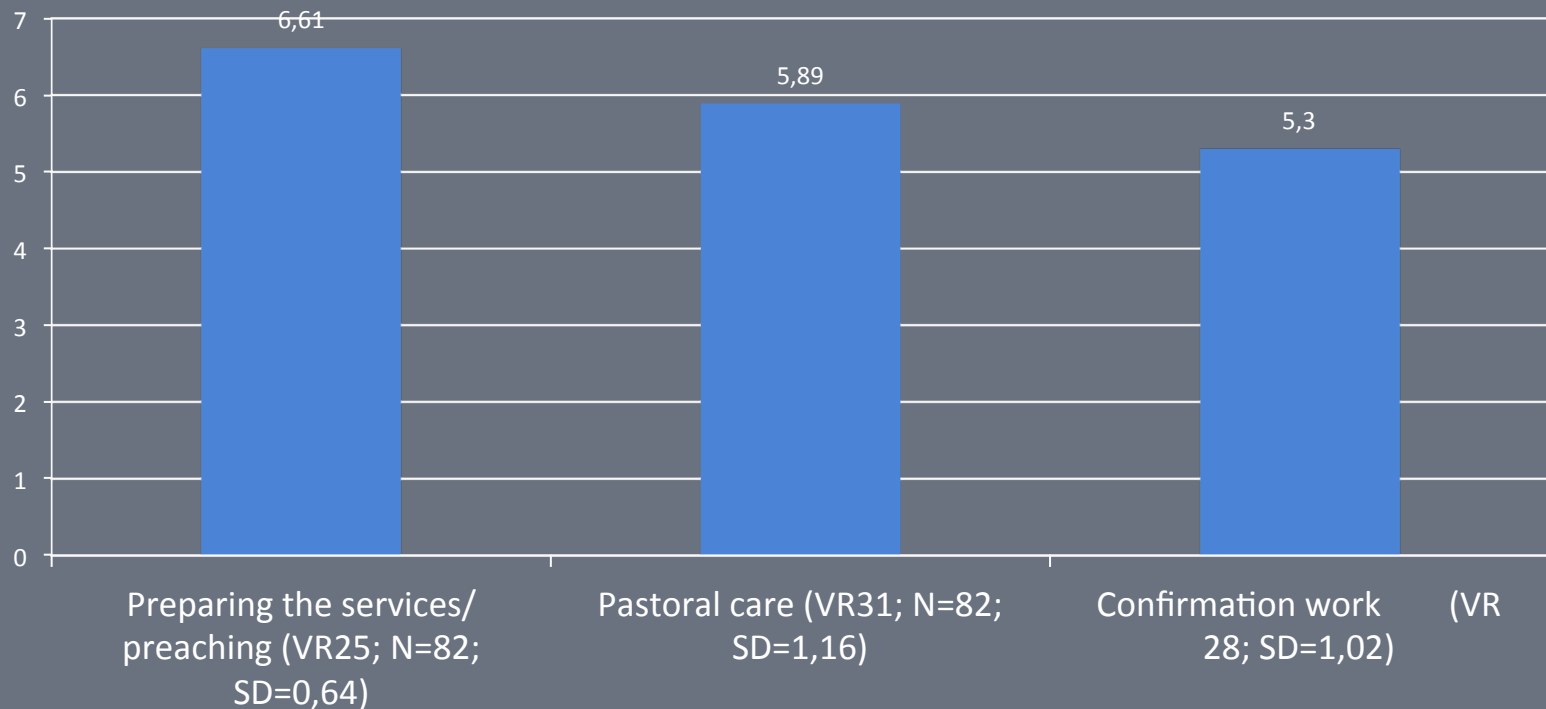
Attitudes toward the EmK (t1 – t2)



scale: 1 – 7; approval: 5,6,7



Self-Understanding of Pastors – the Top Three Priorities



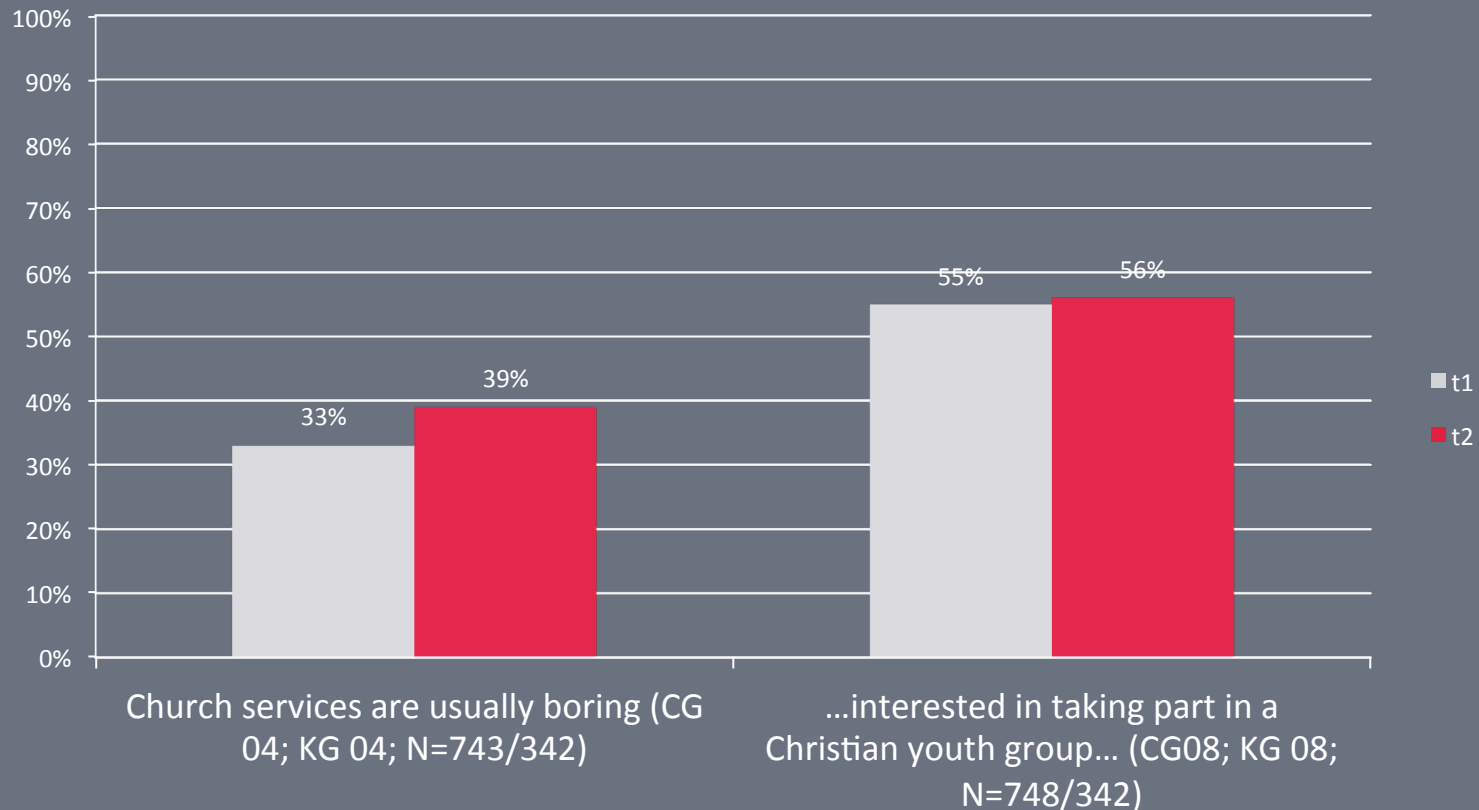
scale: 1 – 7; mean



Three key findings concerning workers in Confirmation Work

- 85% of the workers like to do CW
- 69% of the workers are satisfied with their CW
- Teamwork increases satisfaction of confirmands and workers

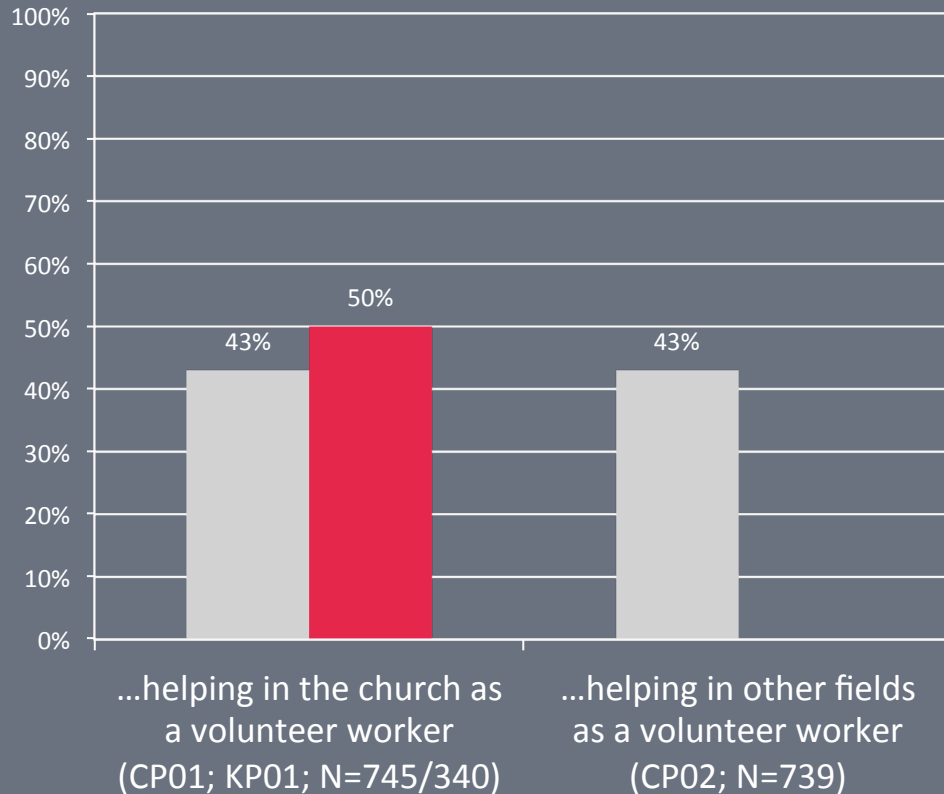
Challenges (t1 – t2)



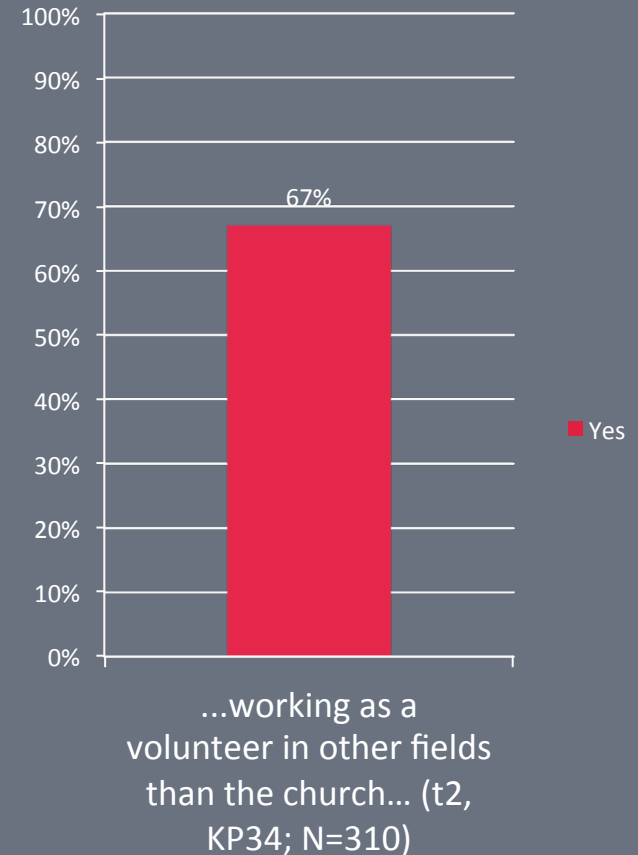
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Challenges (t1 – t2)



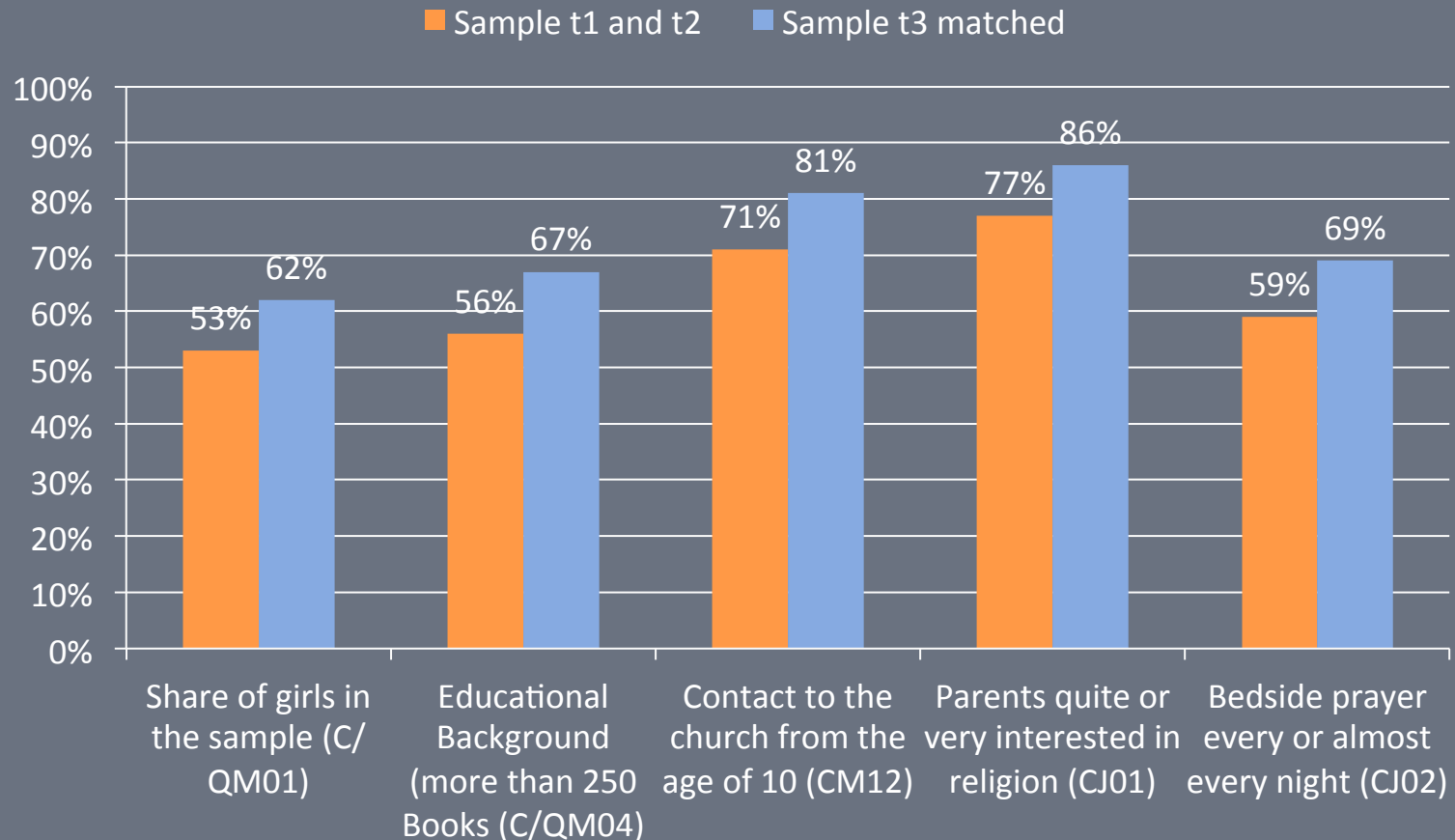
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scale: yes, no

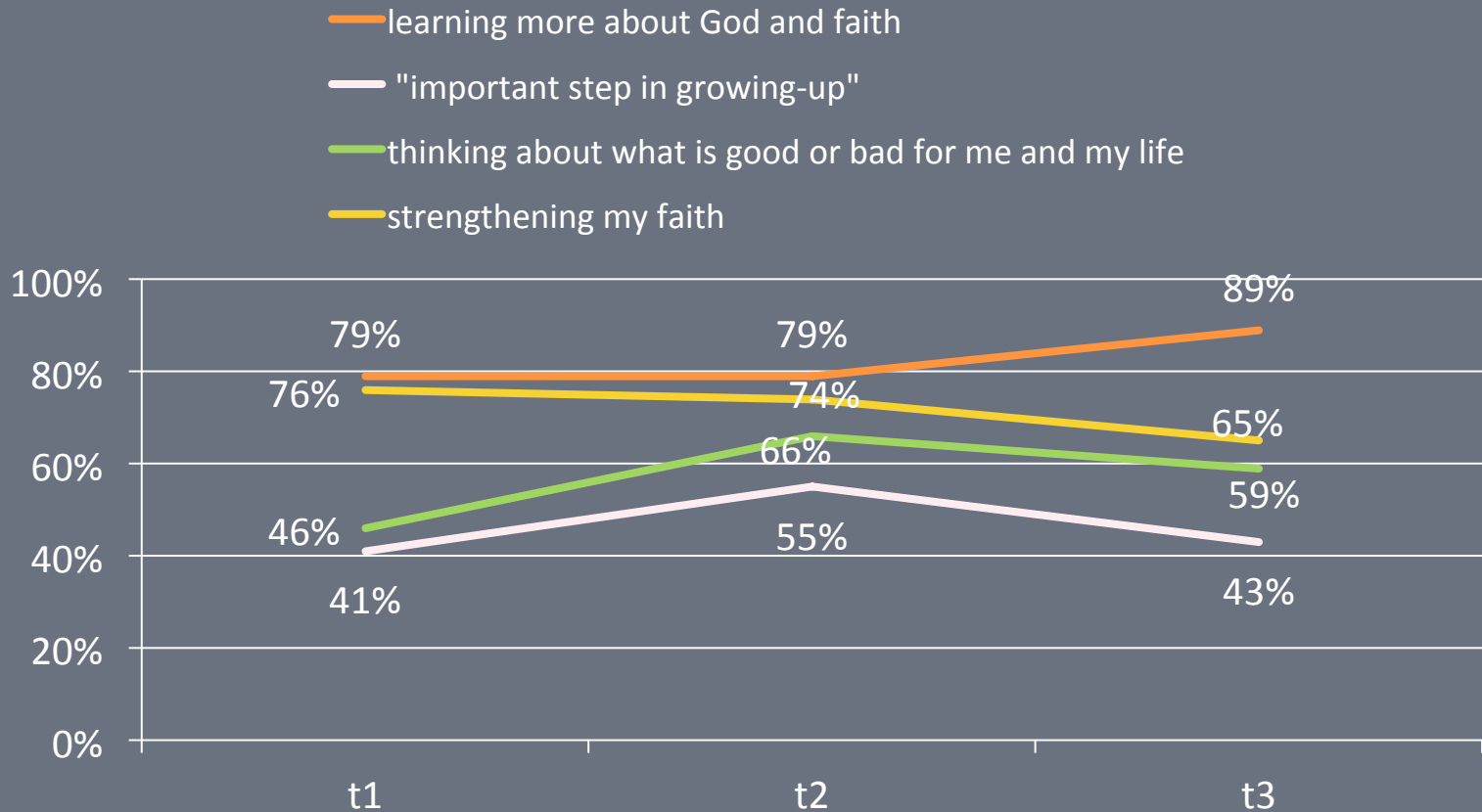


The Logitudinal Study (t1 – t2 – t3)



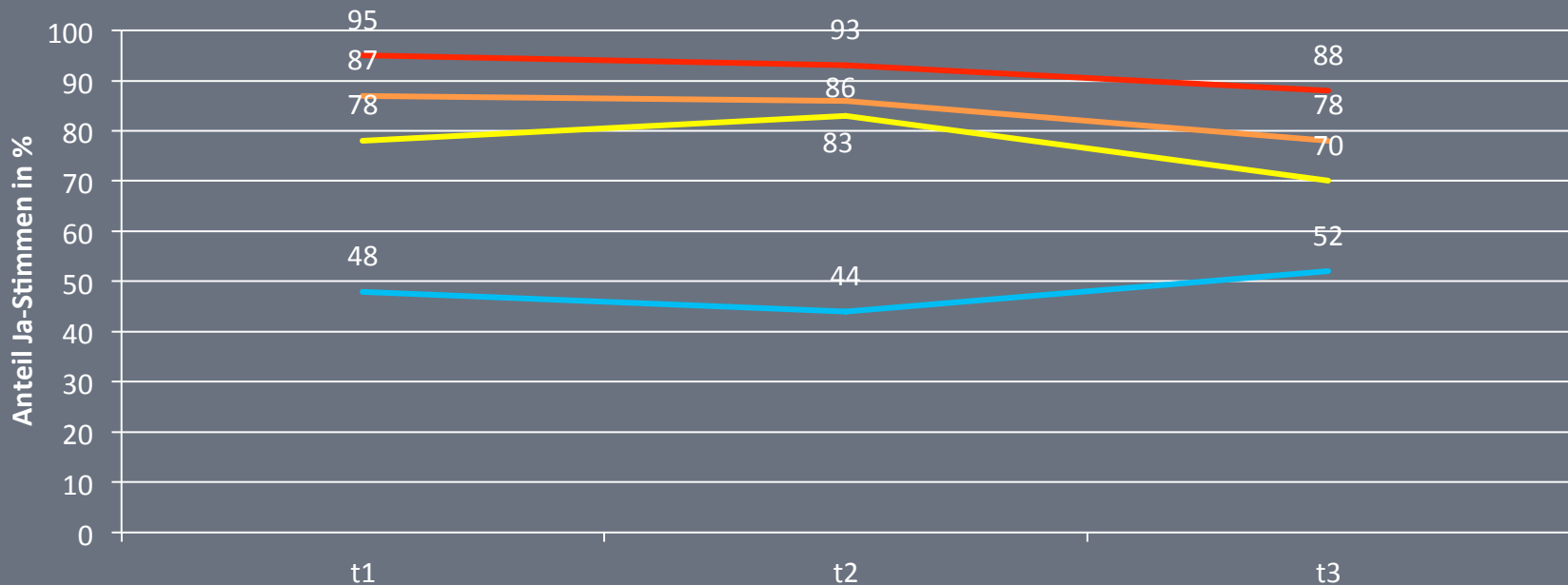


The Logitudinal Study (t1 – t2 – t3)



The Logitudinal Study (t1 – t2 – t3)

- C/K/QE08 (parents rather/very religious): In difficult situations my faith in God helps me.
- C/K/QE08 (parents less/not at all religious): In difficult situations my faith in God helps me.
- C/K/QE09 (parents rather/very religious): I believe in God.
- C/K/QE09 (parents less/not at all religious): I believe in God.





Summary

- Confirmation Work in the EmK is in high regard (adolescents & workers).
- High potential of CW for adolescents (faith development, voluntary work etc.)
- Minority situation fosters an intrinsic motivation for CW and a personal interest for questions of faith and methodist identity.



Challenges

- How can the Church support the adolescents' faith development after Einsegnung?
- How can the Church support Christian education in families?
- How can CW and Youth Work be linked up more efficiently?
- How can the Church involve more teamers in CW?



Central Conference (2017): Resolutions

- Adolescents can contribute to church work (internships, projects etc.)
- Adolescents can contribute to worship services (style, issues, culture etc.)
- Adolescents are to be encouraged to become full members of the EmK



Central Conference (2017): Resolutions

- KU and Youth Work will be linked more closely
- KU is a task of the congregation as a whole, it is generally led by a team, including young confirmed volunteers
- KU includes camps with 3+ overnight stays
- Adolescents can propose topics, their questions of faith are going to be addressed