



LEADING SAINTS

Tension Part I: Balancing Tradition and Change

PRESENTED TO LEADING SAINTS IN JUNE OF 2025

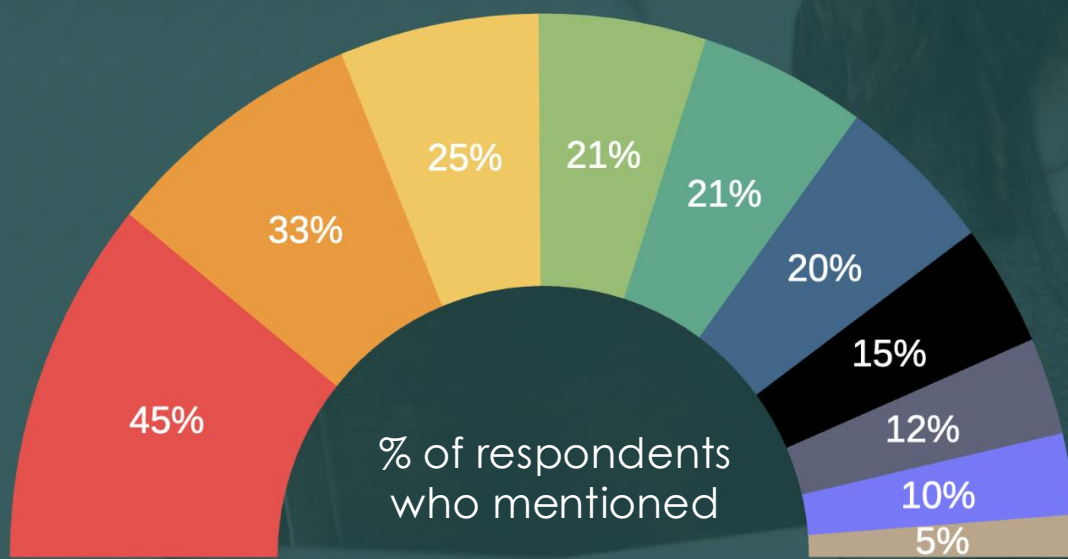
Episode I – Tension Between Tradition and Change

What do you value most about the Church?

A.I. summary of text entry answers to this open-ended question (n = 1,354).

Scripture Central and Faith Matters Audience

Testimony of the gospel, a relationship with Jesus Christ, the sense of belonging and support in the Church community, and the Plan of Salvation were most often mentioned.



Source: Strong and Dotson, 2025.

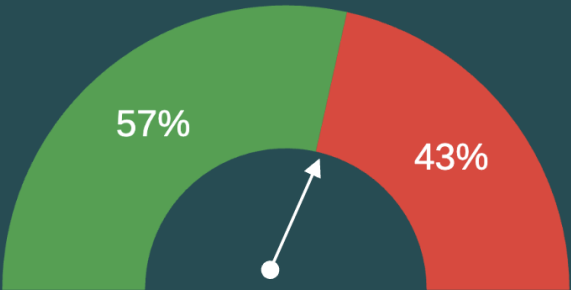
Testimony	The personal conviction of Church members regarding the truthfulness of the gospel and their relationship with Jesus Christ.
Community	The sense of belonging and support found in the Church community, fostering deep friendships and mutual assistance.
Plan of Salvation	The Plan of Salvation as a guiding doctrine that provides purpose and direction in life, emphasizing eternal perspectives.
Atonement	The Atonement of Jesus Christ as a source of peace, hope, and redemption, enabling individuals to overcome imperfections.
Prophets	The role of modern day prophets and apostles in providing continuous revelation and guidance to Church members.
Covenants	The importance of making and keeping covenants with God, which bind individuals to Him and provide a path to eternal life.
Temple	The importance of temples in providing sacred ordinances and space for spiritual connection and growth with God.
Scriptures	The scriptures, including the Book of Mormon, as the foundational texts that guide beliefs and practices.
Priesthood	Priesthood authority and ordinances, which are seen as essential for spiritual growth and connection to God.
Sacrament	Partaking of the sacrament as a means of renewing covenants and fostering a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.



Tension Selfie

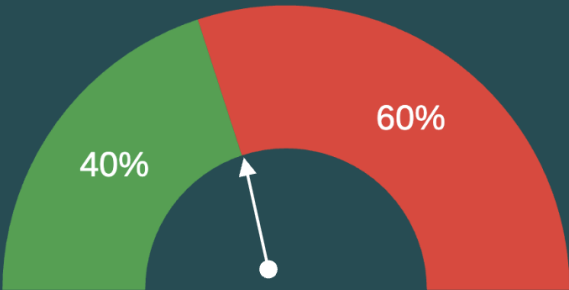


Conflict



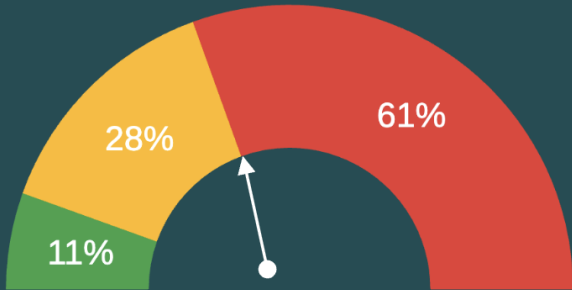
Among those who are still participating, nearly half feel significant conflict.

Belonging



More than half do not feel a strong sense of belonging in their ward or branch.

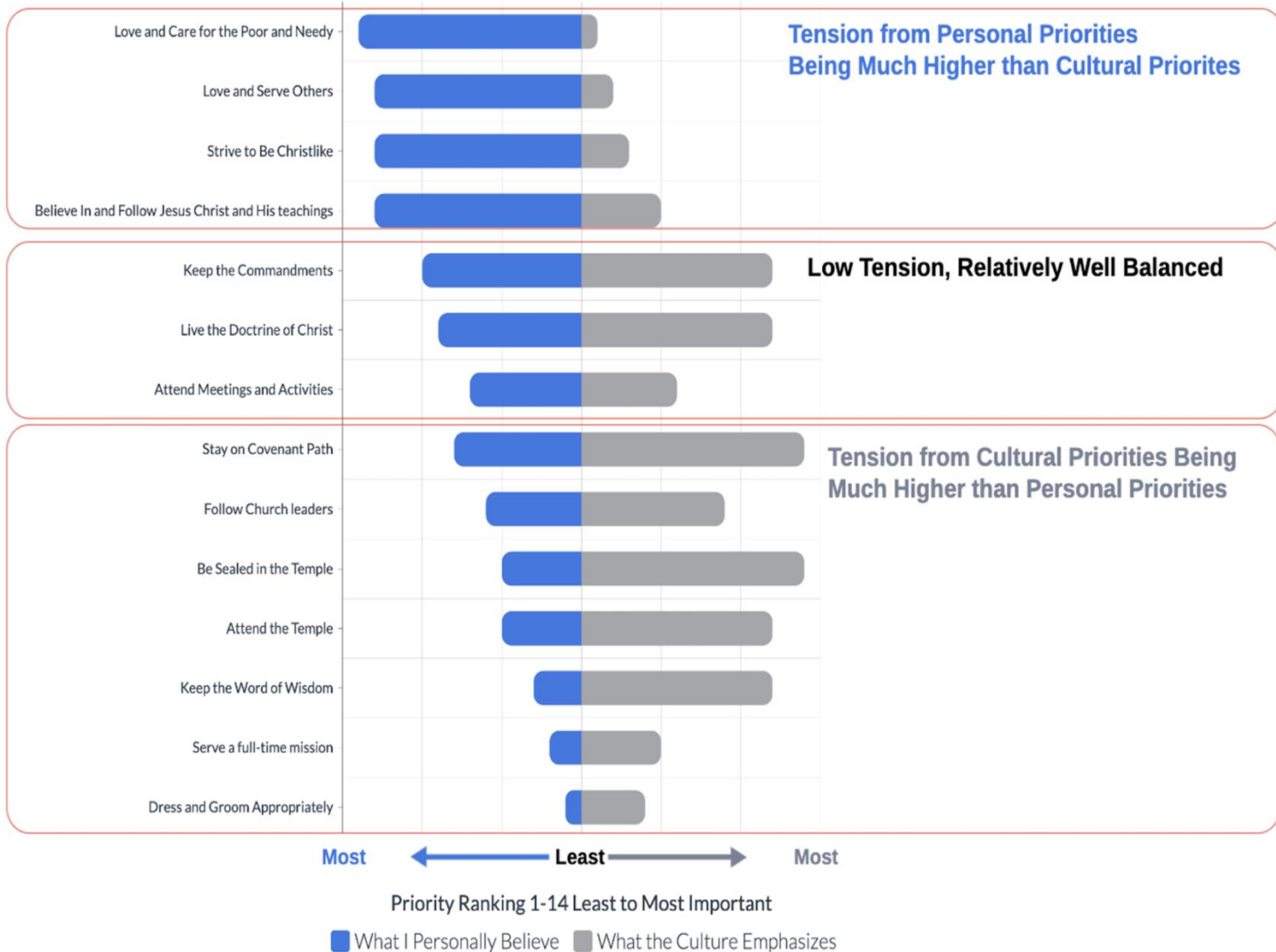
Comfort



More than half said they are often not comfortable with the culture.

**There is great tension between what most members personally believe is important
and what they feel the culture expects them to believe³**

**How Important Are Each of These Things
To You Personally and in the Culture of the Church**



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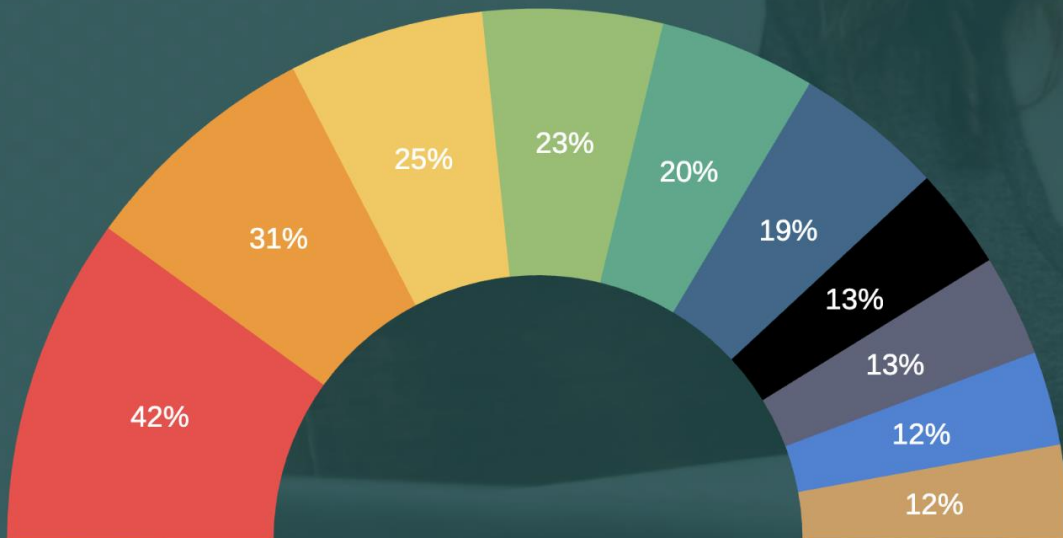
Why is there tension?

Why do you think the culture is the way it is?

6

A.I. analysis of respondent's text entry answers—comment categories, frequency, and explanation.

The significant influence of our traditions, the expectations of the community, the significant influence of leaders, and some doctrinal misunderstanding are cited most often as the drivers of the culture.



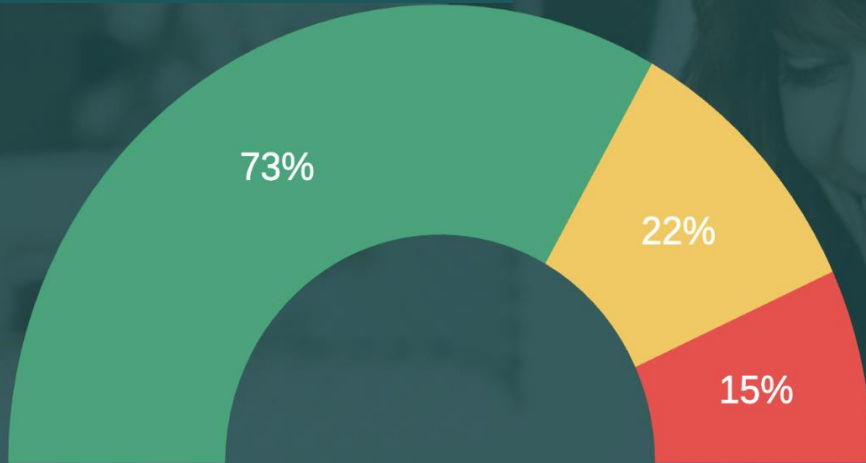
n = 2,288

Tradition	Persistent, long-standing customs and practices that are resistant to necessary change and adaptation
Community	The expectations of conformity to group norms to be accepted and belong in the church
Leadership	Church leader influence on member beliefs and behaviors via teachings, policies, and hierarchy
Misunderstanding	Inconsistent understanding of Church teachings and doctrines creates confusion and misapplication
Judgment	Members often evaluate each others worthiness based on appearance and adherence to standards.
Generational Influence	Beliefs, practices, and traditions passed down through generations can perpetuate issues
Fear	The common use of fear as a tool to get member compliance to church and social expectations
Isolation	Member's tendency to isolate from broader society, leading to lack of valuable exposure and experience
Complacency	Comfort and resistance among current members leading to stagnation in understanding and growth
Arrogance	"Only true church" mindset and belief creates a sense of superiority and dismissiveness

How comfortable are you in the culture?

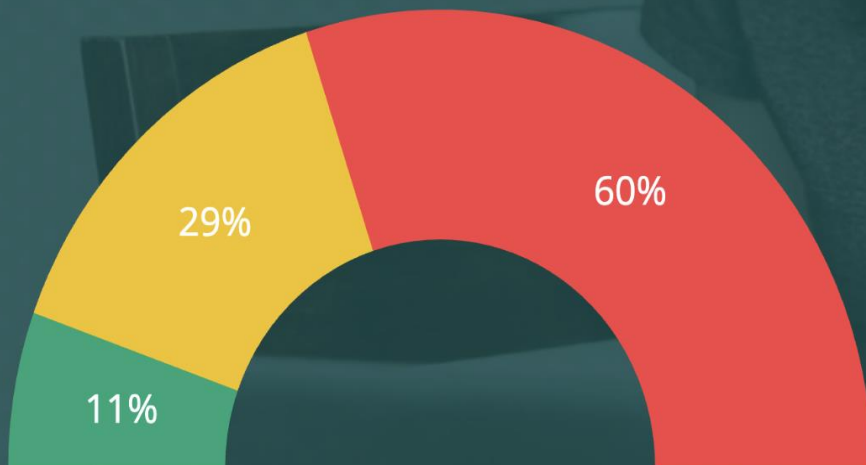
Multiple choice and A.I. summary of text entry answers to this open-ended question.

More Traditional Church Members



The more traditional members are very comfortable with Church culture—it is their culture and they generally feel very much at home in it. This is quite different than the general church population who are much less comfortable.

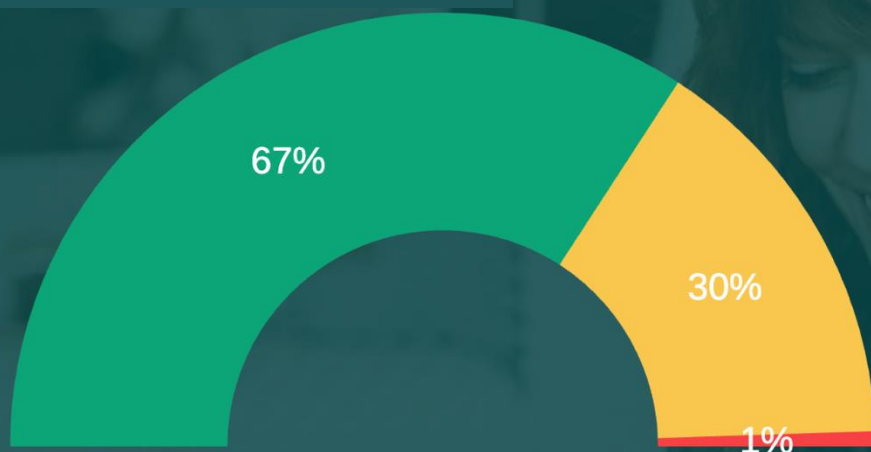
General Church Population



How Christ-centered do you feel the culture is?

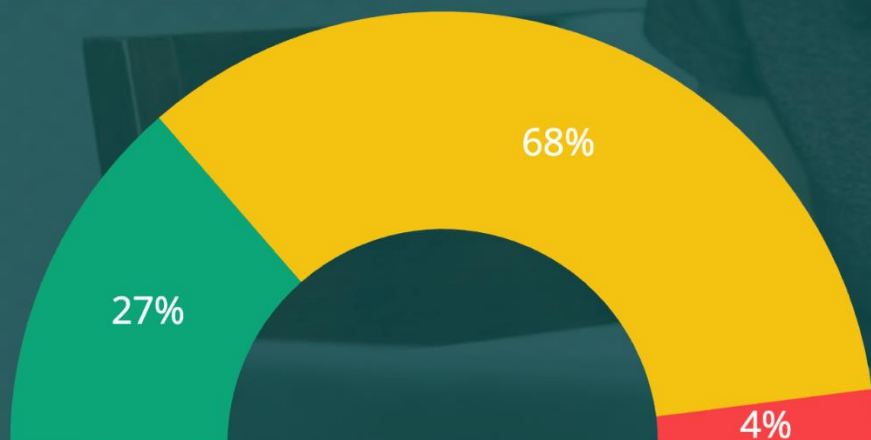
Multiple choice and A.I. summary of text entry answers to this open-ended question.

More Traditional Church Members



Overwhelmingly, more traditional members feel the culture is very Christlike. This is quite different than the church community in general, which overwhelmingly feels the culture is only somewhat Christ-centered.

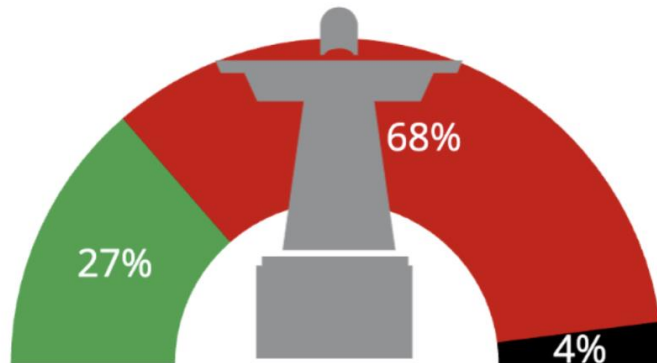
General Church Population



Why are these perspectives so different?
Different criteria?
Different experience?



Is the Church Christ-centered?

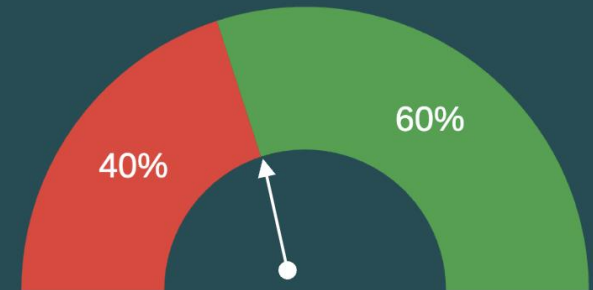


■ Very much ■ Somewhat/Somewhat Not ■ Very Much Not

#1 Issue:

The tension between Church culture, focusing on conformity and tradition, versus the teachings and example of Christ.

Faith Transition



40% are experiencing some kind of transition in their faith or with the Church

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