



The Global **Faith** and **Entertainment** Study

A Study of Attitudes and Perceptions Regarding Faith and Religion in Entertainment



A Landmark Study on Faith & Media

2022



2023

News

We kicked off our partnership with a first-of-its-kind global study about the portrayal of faith and religion in news media.

2024



2025

Entertainment

Now, we're continuing to understand the treatment of faith and religion in entertainment media.

Objective

- ✧ Understand perspectives on how entertainment treats themes of faith, religion and spirituality in its narratives and characters
- 🔍 Identify if there is an opportunity for more accurate and diverse representation of faith

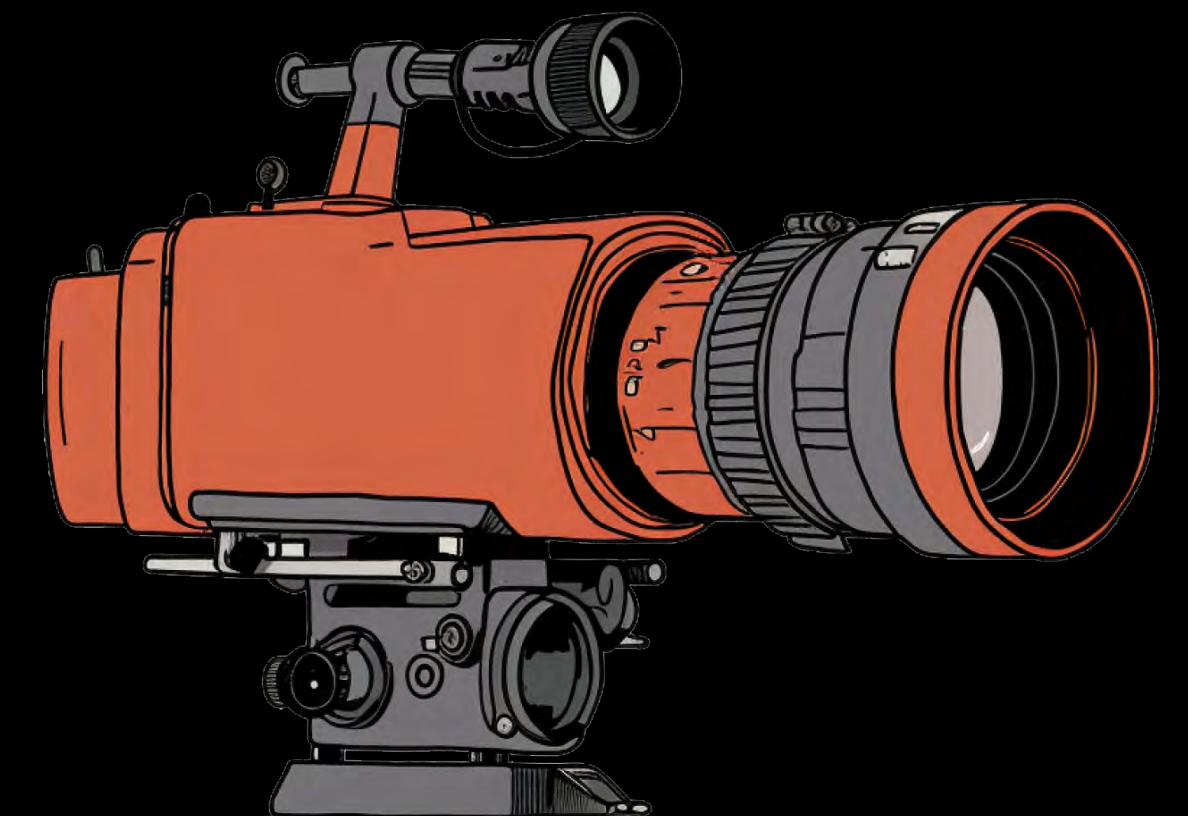


Findings At-A-Glance: Good Business & Social Impact

Current portrayals of faith and religion in entertainment are **inadequate**. People feel **underrepresented**. And when they are, they feel **misrepresented**.

There is a desire for **heightened representation, accuracy, and diversity** when it comes to entertainment that touches on **themes of faith and religion**.

This unmet consumer need is both a **good business opportunity** and an **opportunity to create understanding between people** of different beliefs.



Methodology

Online study with global entertainment consumers

9,945

Online Interviews

Gender Breakdown

Male **50%**
Female **50%**

Age Breakdown

18-24 **13%**
25-34 **20%**
35-44 **19%**
45-54 **17%**
55-64 **13%**
65+ **18%**

Country Breakdown

US **1,277**
Canada **811**
Mexico **809**
Brazil **811**
Italy **808**
Germany **801**
UK **1,000**
Turkey **806**
India **1,205**
Japan **805**
Nigeria **812**

Religion Breakdown

Christian **4,827**
Muslim **1,360**
Hindu **992**
Buddhist **305**
Jewish **116**
Other **360**
Atheist **314**
Agnostic **192**
None **1,479**



How

Professionally recruited. Online survey.

Languages

9 languages – English, Portuguese, Turkish, Hindi, Spanish, Italian, French, German, and Japanese.

Who

Adults who report consumption of entertainment media



Entertainment Industry Interviews

30+

In-depth Interviews

7+

Countries

Roles Represented

Directors
Producers
Writers
Actors
Studio Executives



Industry professionals have worked in US, Spain, Italy, Canada, Mexico, Honduras, and Nigeria.

In-depth interviews are ongoing.

Note: Online study only reaches populations with internet access. Limitations pronounced in some markets (e.g., India, Nigeria).



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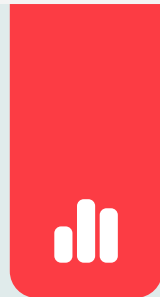


What Entertainment Consumers are Saying



A Spiritual World

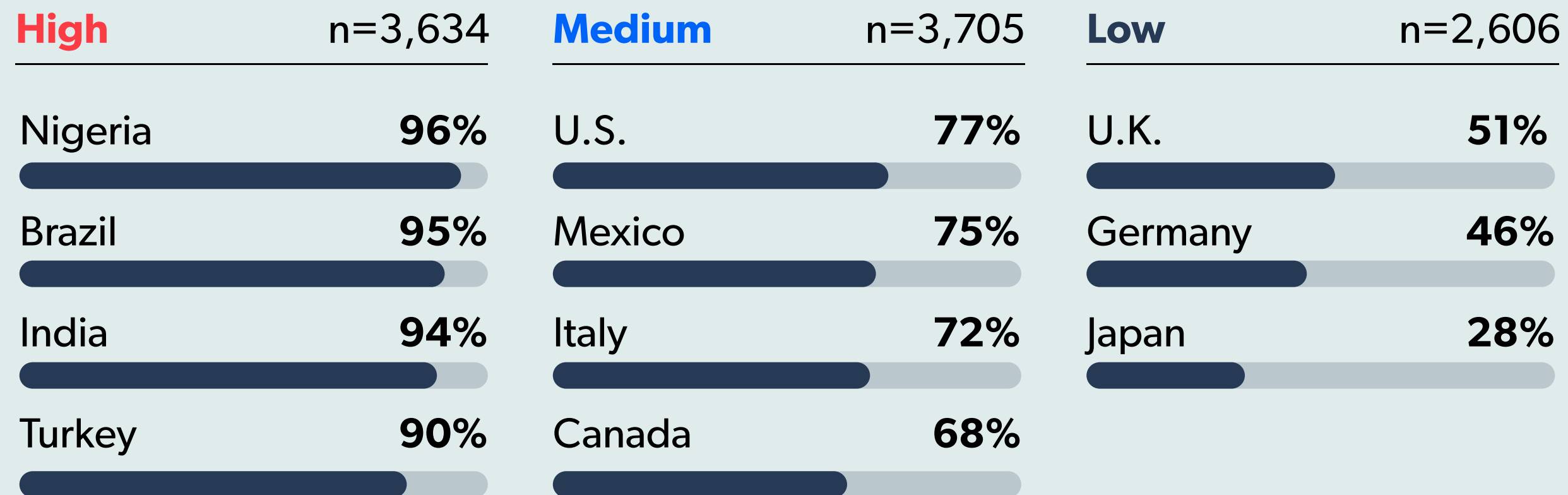
The quantitative study looks at a range of countries from high to low percentage of spiritual, religious, or faithful people in each population.



Categories created based on how many in each country identified as spiritual, religious, or a person of faith

● Spiritual, Religious, or a Person of Faith ● None of the Above

Countries by percentage of spiritual, religious, or faithful population

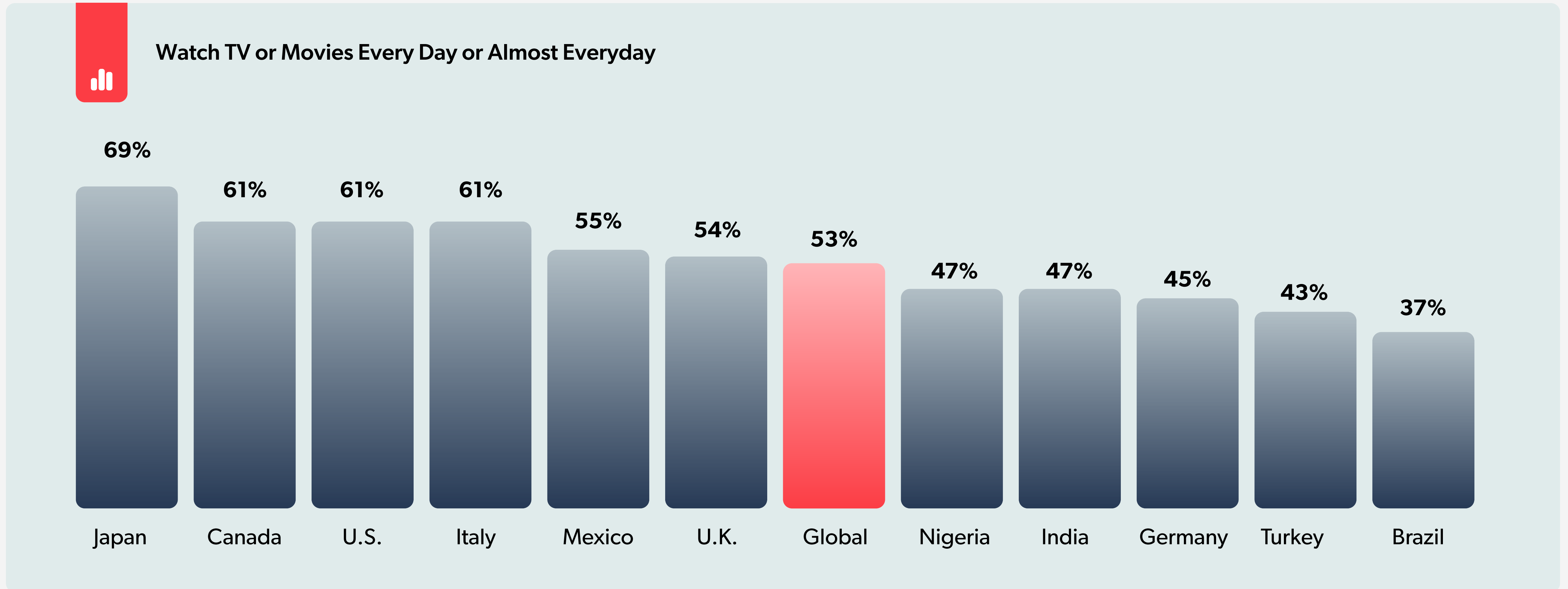


Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

D4. Do you identify as any of the following?

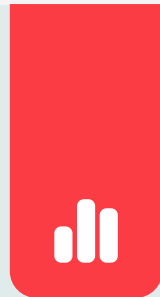
Heavy Consumption

There is heavy consumption of entertainment globally; over half who watch TV shows or movies watch them every day or almost everyday.



Positive Themes

Entertainment consumers say positive, spiritual content isn't very present in current content, but crave more.



Most Present and Most Desired Themes in TV/Movies

Themes Most Present

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Family | 10. Morality |
| 2. Friendship | 11. Politics |
| 3. Conflict | 12. Environment |
| 4. Power | 13. Faith & Religion |
| 5. Nature | 14. Work |
| 6. The supernatural | 15. Spirituality |
| 7. War | 16. The afterlife |
| 8. Inspiration | 17. Redemption |
| 9. Tradition | 18. Ritual |

Themes Most Desired

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Friendship | 10. Spirituality |
| 2. Nature | 11. The afterlife |
| 3. Family | 12. Politics |
| 4. Inspiration | 13. Power |
| 5. Environment | 14. War |
| 6. Faith & Religion | 15. Redemption |
| 7. Morality | 16. Conflict |
| 8. Tradition | 17. Work |
| 9. The supernatural | 18. Ritual |



What viewers want:

More positive themes such as family, friendship, nature, and inspiration. Less power, war, and conflict.



Source Source: "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

QE10. From the list below, please select which themes are most often present in the TV/movies you watch?

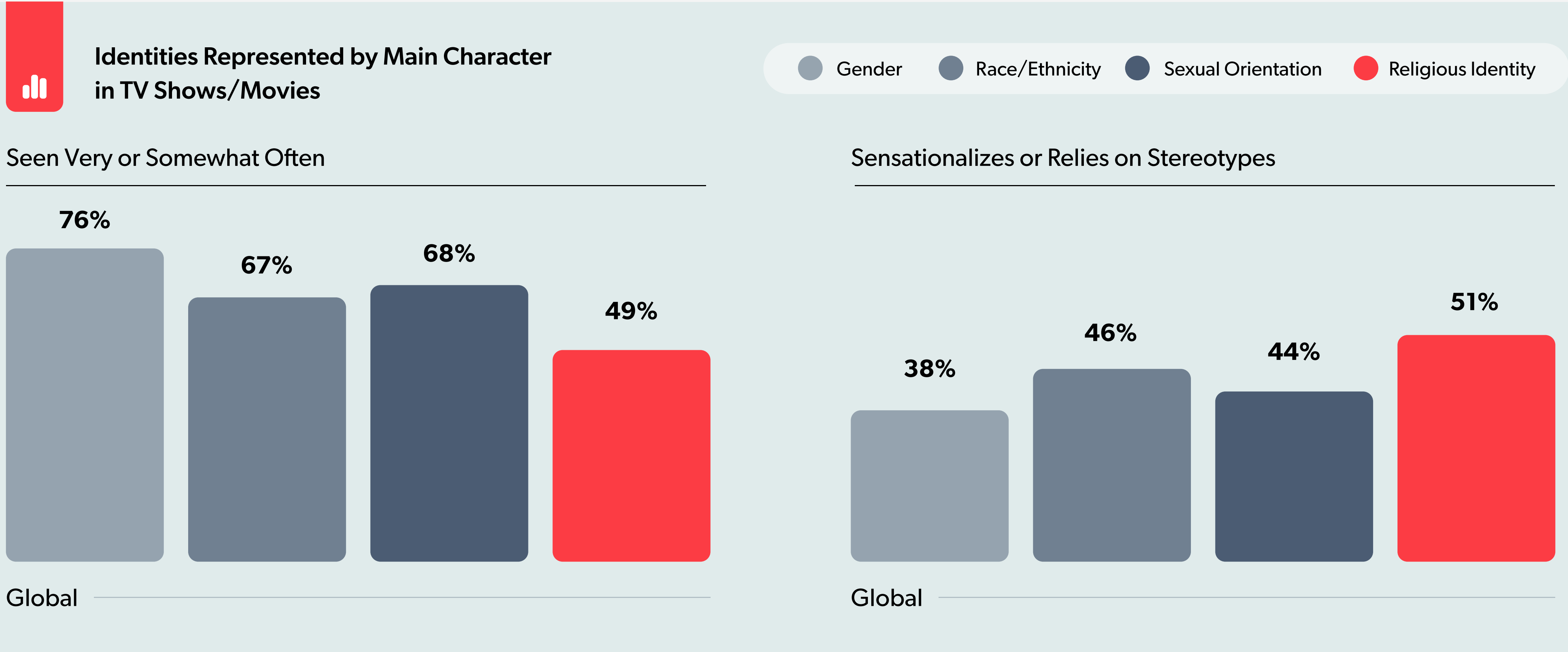
QE11. Which themes do you not see enough of in the TV/movies you watch that you want to see more of?



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Religion Sensationalized

Consumers say that their religion is the least represented and most sensationalized personal identity, compared to gender, race, and sexuality.



Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

QRepr: SUMMARY OF TOP 2 BOX – When it comes to seeing your own identity represented in TV or movies, how often have you seen TV shows/movies that have a main character with your same...?

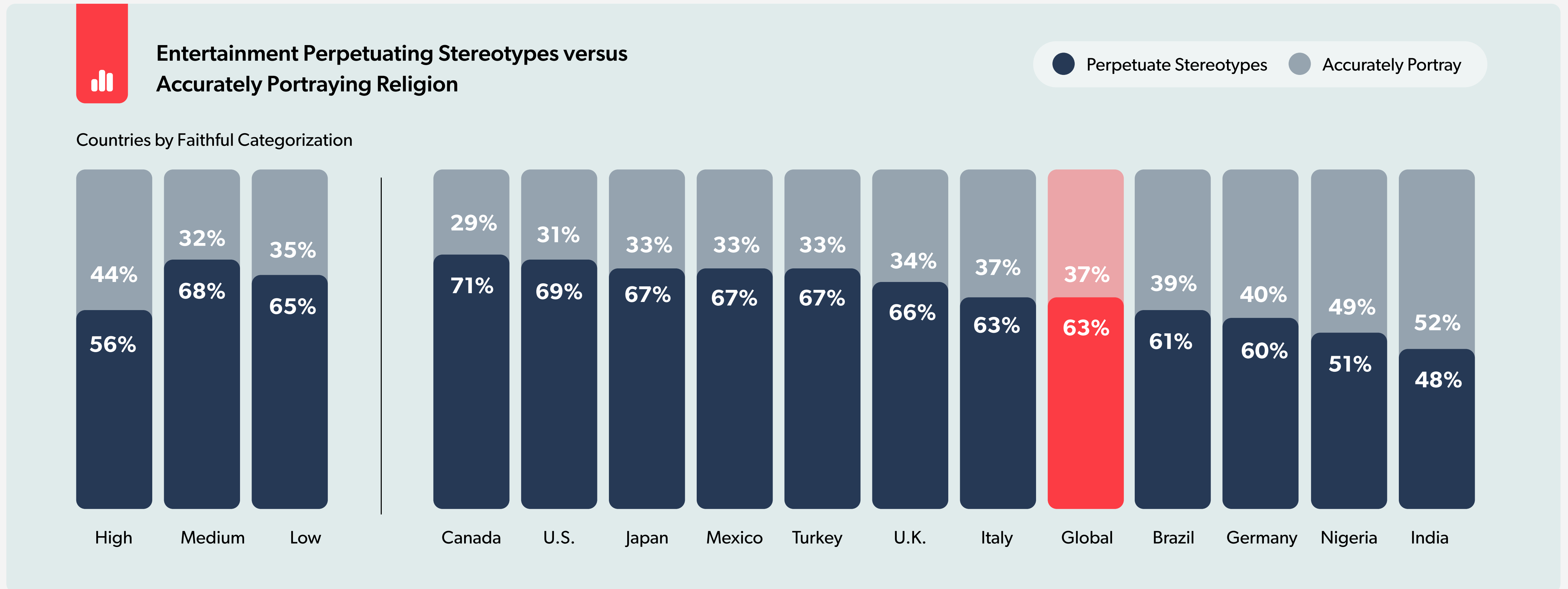
QAccr: SUMMARY OF SENSATIONALIZES OR RELIES ON STEREOTYPES – And when you see your identity portrayed in TV or movies, would you say the portrayal is mostly accurate, or that it sensationalizes or relies on stereotypes about that identity ...



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Religious Stereotypes

Most countries agree that existing entertainment media perpetuates religious stereotypes.



Source: "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

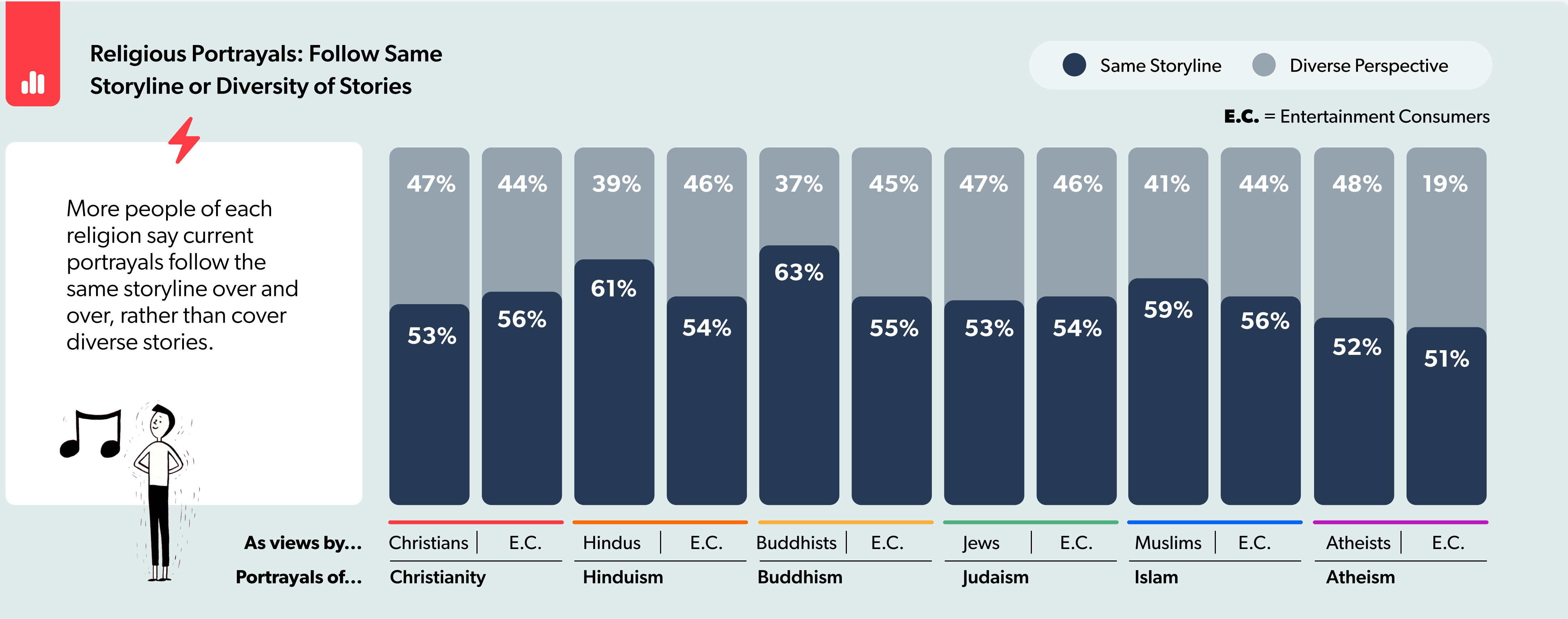
QAaccB2: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



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One-Note Storylines

There is a lack of diverse storylines across faith portrayals.

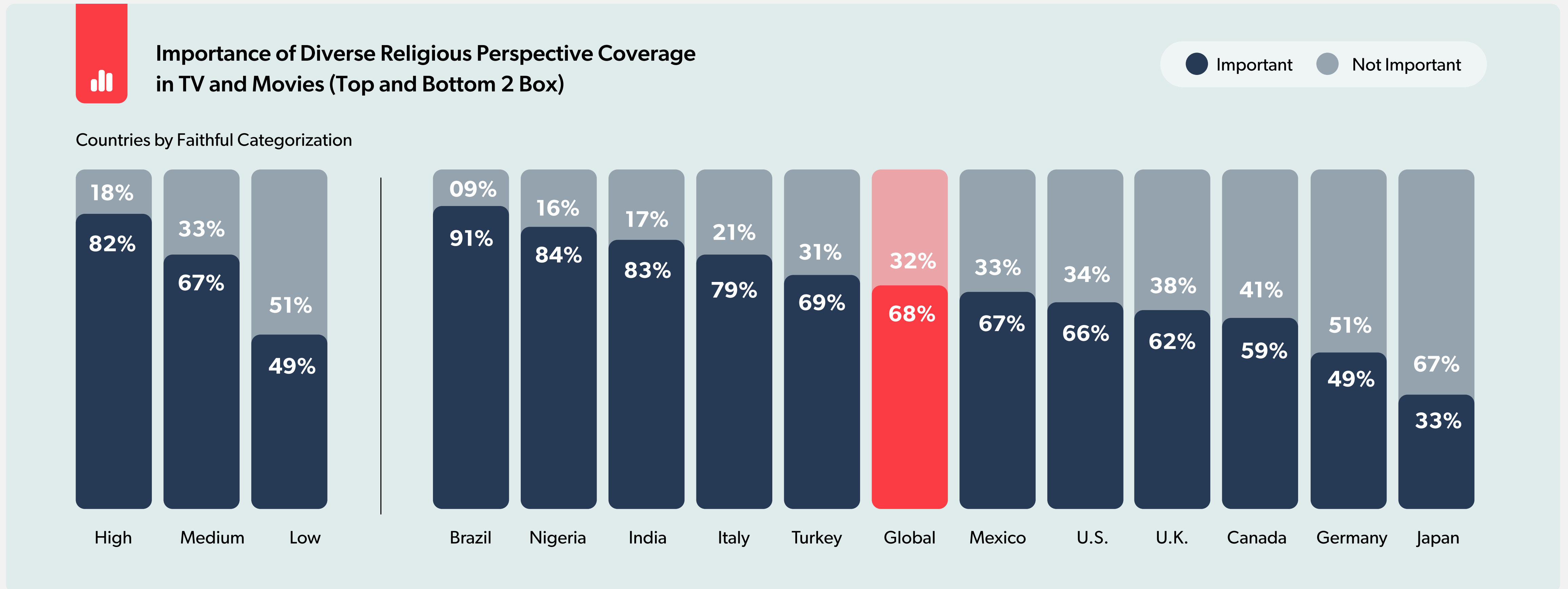


Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.
 Among entertainment consumers who have seen a portrayal of each religion: Christianity (n= 7,910), Judaism (n=5,840), Hinduism (n=5,233), Buddhism (n=5,517), Islam (n=6,850), Atheism (5,317)
Q15br: Would you say current portrayals of each of the following religions in entertainment follow the same storyline or perspective or is there diversity in the stories told about this religion?



Consumers Want Diversity

Entertainment consumers want more diverse perspectives on various faiths, especially those from countries with more religious populations.



Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

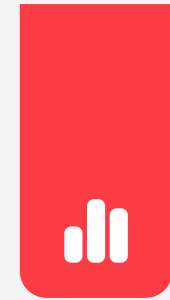
QAacd: How important or unimportant is it to you that television and movies cover diverse perspectives on different religions?



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Accuracy is Crucial

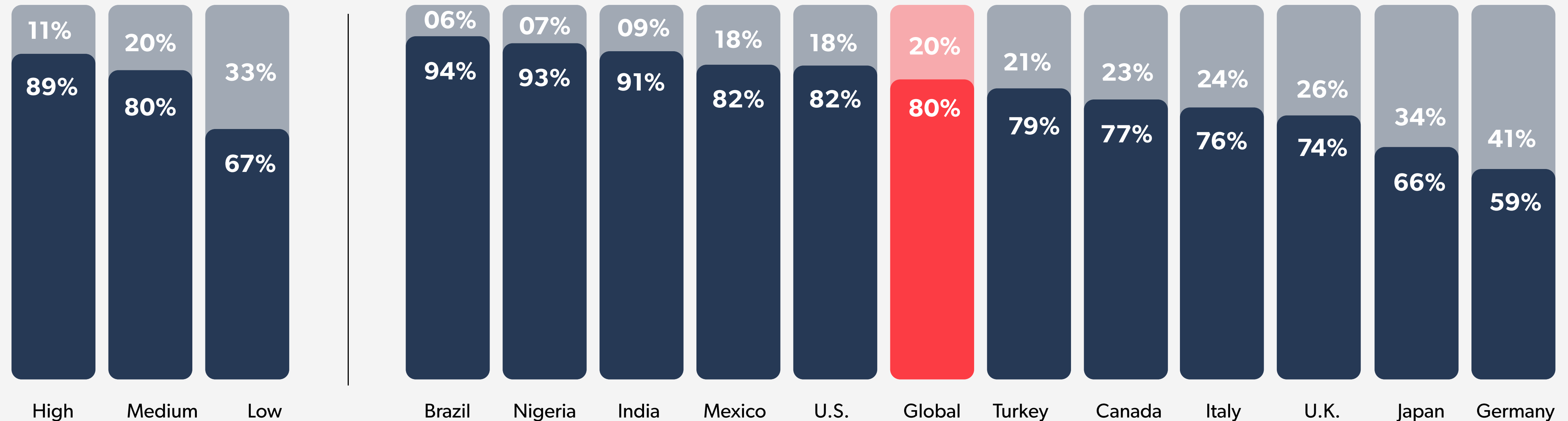
A large majority of entertainment consumers say it's important that the industry improves their portrayals of faith to make them more accurate.



Importance that Entertainment Industry Makes Portrayals of Faith More Accurate (Top and Bottom 2 Box)

● Important ● Not Important

Countries by Faithful Categorization



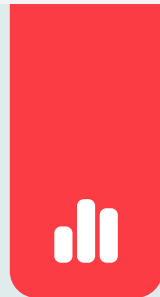
Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

QNEED: How important or unimportant is it that the entertainment industry improves their portrayals of faith to make them more accurate?



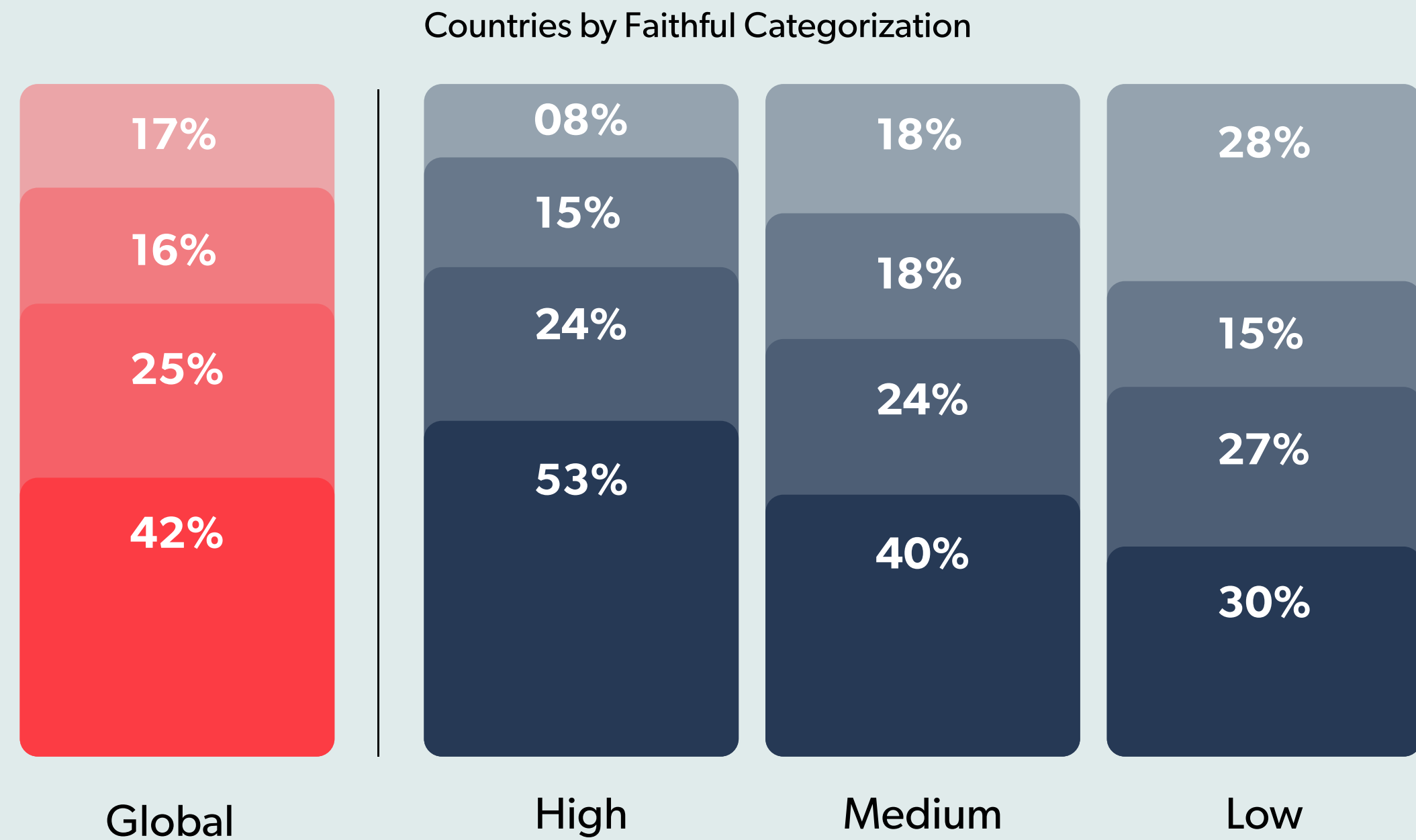
Opportunity for Understanding

Even countries with a lower faithful population think accurate portrayal of religion is crucial to foster global understanding.



Views about Impact of Representations of Faith/Religion in Movies and TV

- It is **crucial** to portray faith/religion accurately to promote understanding and respect for diverse beliefs concerning faith/religion.
- Accurate portrayals of faith/religion in movies and TV are **important, but ultimately do not impact** how people view faith/interact with others with different beliefs.
- Writers, producers, and directors should have artistic **freedom** to portray faith/religion as they see fit, **even if it includes negative perspectives** on a faith/religion.
- I don't have a strong opinion



Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

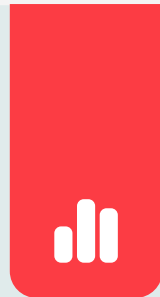
Q112: Which of the following statements best represents your own point of view about representations of faith/religion in movies and TV?



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Why Consumers Care

Consumers want the entertainment industry to foster understanding, dispel stereotypes, and write authentic stories about more kinds of people, rather than be preached to.



Why is it important to make portrayals of faith in entertainment more accurate?

Countries by Faithful Categorization

	Total	High	Medium	Low
1. Fostering understanding between people of different faiths, religions, and beliefs	43%	43%	43%	42%
2. Dispelling stereotypes, prejudices and misinformation about faith and religion	39%	35%	41%	44%
3. Creating more authentic stories about lived faith/religious experiences	33%	36%	34%	26%
4. Strengthening the ability for viewers to freely practice/express their faith/religious beliefs	31%	38%	28%	24%
5. Telling stories that are more culturally relevant for viewers	24%	26%	22%	25%
6. Ensuring entertainment reflects diversity in beliefs	24%	26%	22%	23%
7. Adding depth and complexity to characters and storylines	20%	19%	21%	20%
8. Allowing writers to explore personal beliefs around religion/faith	18%	21%	17%	14%
9. Provoking dialogue on societal issues	17%	18%	17%	17%
10. Don't know	3%	1%	4%	3%

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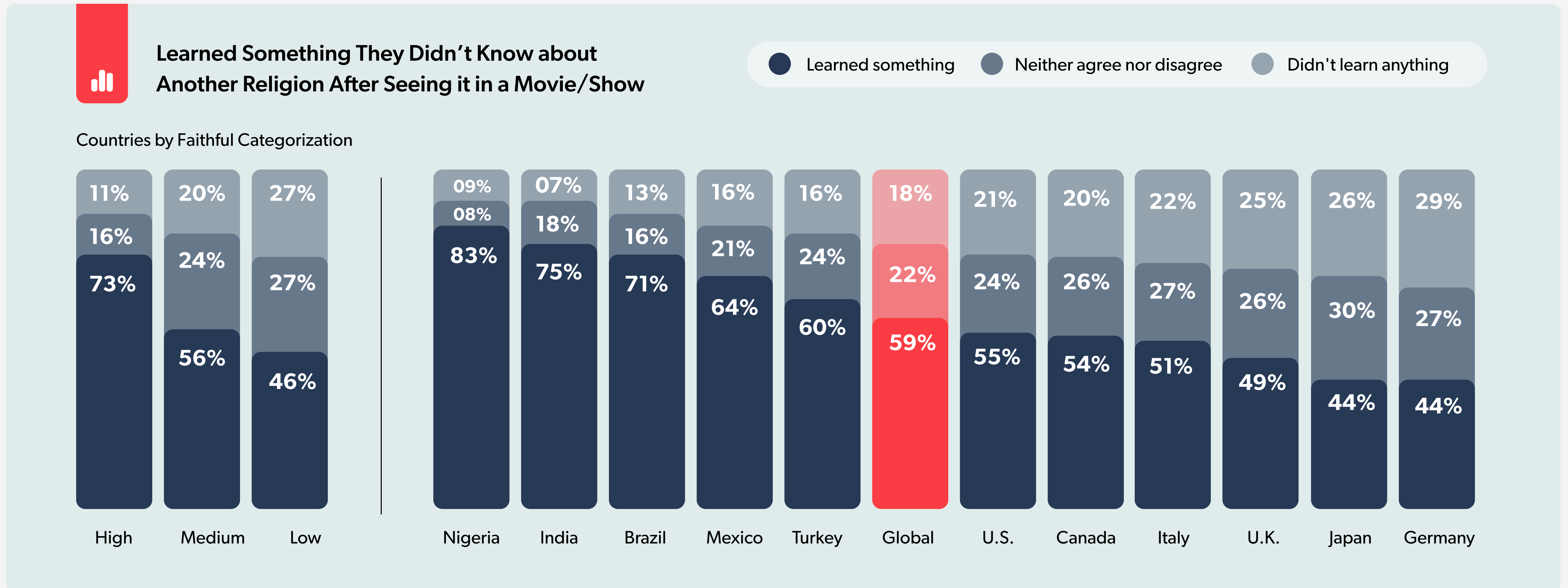
QNEED2. Which of the following BEST explains why you think it is important to make portrayals of faith in entertainment more accurate? Of those who think it is important for the entertainment industry to make portrayals of faith in entertainment more accurate (n=7962).



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Insight and Understanding

Consumers recognize that they can learn about other religions through entertainment.



Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.

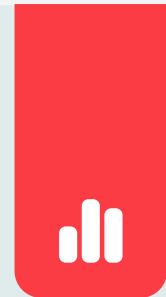
Q110r1: I have learned something I didn't know before about another religion after seeing it in a movie/show - Please let us know if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about faith in entertainment media.



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Ideas for Change

Consumers believe using expert consultants and writing more characters with diverse faiths and backgrounds would create the most impact.



Getting better: What changes would have a positive impact on how faith is portrayed?

Country	Top	2nd	3rd
United States	● Enlisting expert consultants 64%	● Writing more diverse characters 61%	● Writers share faith of characters 58%
United Kingdom	● Enlisting expert consultants 57%	● Writing more diverse characters 55%	● Diverse cast, writers, crew 53%
Canada	● Enlisting expert consultants 59%	● Writers share faith of characters 56%	● Diverse cast, writers, crew 56%
Mexico	● Writing more diverse characters 66%	● Enlisting expert consultants 65%	● Writers share faith of characters 61%
Brazil	● Writing more diverse characters 80%	● Enlisting expert consultants 80%	● Actors share faith of characters 76%
Italy	● Enlisting expert consultants 58%	● Writing more diverse characters 58%	● Diverse cast, writers, crew 50%
Germany	● Writing more diverse characters 41%	● Diverse cast, writers, crew 35%	● Enlisting expert consultants 34%
Turkey	● Enlisting expert consultants 61%	● Writing more diverse characters 58%	● Rating system for diversity 57%
Nigeria	● Enlisting expert consultants 85%	● Actors share faith of characters 83%	● Rating system for diversity 81%
Japan	● Enlisting expert consultants 34%	● Diverse cast, writers, crew 33%	● Writing more diverse characters 31%
India	● Enlisting expert consultants 75%	● Writers share faith of characters 73%	● Rating system for diversity 73%

Source "The Global Faith and Entertainment Study" by HarrisX (The Faith and Media Initiative commissioned a global online survey of among 9,945 adults in 11 countries), Jul 26 – Aug 22, 2023.
 Q19: TOP 2 BOX - Would each of the following changes have a strong positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or strong negative impact on how faith is portrayed?

What Entertainment Industry Professionals are Saying



Qualitative Themes

Emerging trends and common themes surfaced among those interviewed:



Hollywood is a Business

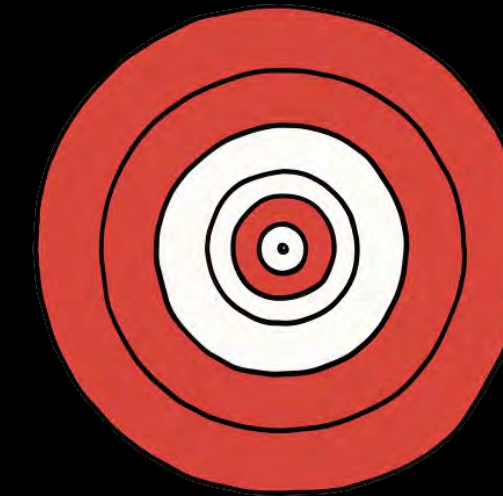
Financing influences what stories are told.

Demonstrated financial success can lead to an increase in stories that include faith-related themes and characters.



One-note Narratives

Hollywood often relies on sticky stereotypes as narrative devices and doesn't represent religion and faith multi-dimensionally.



Myopic Perspectives

Hollywood as an industry does not currently recognize the untapped market for spiritual content.

Religion is seen as a controversial, niche topic with a finite audience, so it is sidelined out of fear of offending and financial failure.



Spirituality & Representation

Despite fear in the industry, many creators acknowledge that audiences crave positivity, spirituality, and stories that bind, not separate.

Telling more representative stories about different people, cultures, and beliefs – including religion – is desired.

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Q19: TOP 2 BOX - Would each of the following changes have a strong positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or strong negative impact on how faith is portrayed?

“While we’ve seen many positive changes in making the media industry more diverse, it is still lacking representation of religious diversity in its content and in key positions of power and influence. While many aspects of inclusion and representation push forward, attention to religious diversity lags.”

Aspen Institute, Religion & Society Program



Source: *Is the Film Industry Enacting Change... or Merely Performing?* (March 2023)



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In the words of industry insiders' ...

"You need to demonstrate there's a marketplace for it... once they realize it's a real marketplace, people dive into it...if they can make a profit off it, they'll do more of it."

"Everyone is afraid of offending, so you end up getting systems that homogenize everything out of fear."

"We don't want to create stories that are going to separate us more. We need to tell stories to bring us together."

"There's this middle space of values, and things that we all celebrate. And I think that there's an incredible hunger for that type of content right now."

"I think it creates a large audience that feels under seen, and under celebrated, which I think on the one hand is a business opportunity. But I also think it's a moral obligation to represent society."

"Statistically [religion] is probably underrepresented...I think is not very much a topic they think of because unconsciously...they prefer to avoid potentially controversial topics."

"There's going to be a market for films that are uplifting and show the values of all the faiths...I think there's a lot of people like me, that want to see films that show love and kindness and mercy and compassion."



A Summary: Opportunities

Industry Professionals Findings

An opportunity exists to reach and connect with a large, underserved audience.

While complex and nuanced, entertainment consumers want more representation of faith in content, making it a good business opportunity.

Expanding and improving upon this content can demystify what consumers know about other faiths and create understanding between people of different beliefs.



A Summary: **Next Steps**

Industry Professionals Findings

Industry figures do want to tell stories that include faith and spirituality. Financial successes will demonstrate there is broad appeal and a market for this type of content, helping bring about change.



About Us



Radiant Foundation's Faith & Media Initiative works to create more accurate, diverse, and positive representation of faith in news and entertainment.

hello@faithandmedia.com



HarrisX is a global consumer and voter research, data analytics, and technology company that leverages data and creativity to design impactful strategies for businesses, leaders, and NGOs.

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