

November 5, 2012

Traditional Values Out of Favor Gallup.com reports a majority of Americans now say the government should not favor any particular set of values in society. This is the first time in history of asking the question since 1993 that Americans haven't favored the government's promotion of traditional values. 52% of Americans said the government should not promote any set of values, while 44% believe it should promote traditional values. (*ChurchLeaders.com* 10/12/12)

Scripture Memory LifeWay Research recently asked more than 4,000 Protestants in the U.S. and Canada, "In the past 6 months, how many times have you memorized a Bible verse?" 9% said 6 or more times, 13%: 3-5 times, 23%: 1-2 times, and 55% didn't do it a single time. (*Facts & Trends*, Fall '12)

Christian Divorce: Setting the Record Straight A recent article at the Gospel Coalition shows some new data that corrects some erroneous divorce rate stats that seem to get thrown around the Internet, in the media and, unfortunately, in the pulpit. The stat in question was that Christians divorce at roughly the same rate as the world. The research actually showed couples who regularly practice any combination of serious religious behaviors and attitudes (attend church nearly every week, read their Bibles and spiritual materials regularly; pray privately and together; generally take their faith seriously) enjoy significantly lower divorce rates than mere church members, the general public and unbelievers. The research shows couples who are active in their faith are much less likely to divorce. Catholic couples were 31% less likely to divorce, Protestant couples 35% less likely, and Jewish couples 97% less likely. (*Pastors: That Divorce Rate Stat You Quoted Was Probably Wrong* by Ed Stetzer, *Church Report* 9/28/12)

Obedience and Sacrifice LifeWay Research recently asked more than 4,000 Protestants in the U.S. and Canada, "In the past 6 months, how many times have you made a decision to obey or follow God with awareness that choosing His way might be costly to you in some way?" 37% reported zero times, 36% said 1-2 times, 14% did it 3-5 times, while 13% did so 6 or more times. (*Facts & Trends*, Fall '12)

Overhead Americans believe nonprofits spend 36.3% of the average donor's dollar on overhead costs, while they believe 22.4% would be reasonable. The fact is that 7 in 10 charities spend 25% on overhead costs on average. (*Christianity Today* 10/12)

Digital Invasion Dr. Archibald Hart, Sr. Prof. of Psychology at Fuller Seminary's School of Psychology, maintains digital addictions have created a spiritual deficit. With 1 in every 9 people on the planet now on some form of social media, he calls it the "digital invasion." Humans spend roughly 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook alone. Dr. Hart says, "It is making such an inroad to our lives that it is robbing us of the time that we need for spiritual discipline ... to be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10). But we can't be still anymore. People are not spending time in prayer as they used to because they are distracted all the time. It's our misuse of technology that is the problem, and the misuse of it being reprogrammed for speed and not for content. But more than that, this wonderful technology that comes from the fantastic brain that God has given us is now actively coming between us and God." (*OneNewsNow* 10/13/12)

African-Americans In '12, the number of blacks in America reached 43 million or 13.7% of the population. Since '00, the total U.S. population only

increased 11.3%, while the black population increased by 17.9%, a rate 1.6 times greater than overall growth. While the black population continues to be the largest racial minority in the U.S. (Hispanic is an ethnicity, not a race), it must be noted that in '12, for the first time, total Hispanic households slightly outnumbered black households (14.81 million and 14.46 million respectively). (*Center for Media Research Brief* 10/2/12)

Megachurch Trends LifeWay Research's Thom Rainer recently cited 7 major trends in megachurches. #1: Further consolidation of people attending church in megachurches and other large churches. While megachurches account for less than 0.05% of all U.S. churches, more than 10% of church attendance is concentrated in these churches. #2: A significant increase in the number of megachurches. In '70 there were approximately 50 megachurches in America vs. 1,600 today. #3: An increased interest in the long-term sustainability of a megachurch. #4: More youthful megachurch pastors. The average age of the pastors of the largest 100 churches in the U.S. is 47. #5: More multi-venue, multi-campus churches. Pastors are becoming increasingly attuned to the stewardship of using more facilities more often. #6: A greater interest in groups. Megachurch leaders have a growing interest in groups as the church mechanism for assimilation, evangelism, fellowship, ministry and more in-depth teaching. #7: A greater interest in the source of megachurch growth. There will be more and more analysis of the type of megachurch growth. Is it transfer from other churches? Is it unchurched Christians returning to church? Does it represent a true evangelization of the communities in which the church is located? (Thom Rainer, *Outreach Magazine* 10/2/12)

Women Mobile Gamers Women now make up nearly 60% of players on mobile devices and are more likely than men to play mobile games, especially multiplayer games that involve social engagement such as *Words With Friends* and *Draw Something*. 63% of female mobile gamers play social multiplayer games vs. 52% of men who play mobile games, according to a new EEDAR survey. In '02, men made up 72% of video game players. Women also have a strong influence on what games are played at home. The reasoning is that they are more likely to play multiplayer games with family members and are more likely to send and accept

Facebook game invitations. (*USA Today News* 10/1/12)

The Church in Brazil is growing rapidly, welcoming approximately 6,500 new believers each day and opening new churches each week. (*Wycliffe USA* 10/1/12)

What Inheritance? Nearly 40% of Generation-Z (ages 13 to 22) expects to receive an inheritance, according to a recent TD Ameritrade study. As a result, they don't believe they will need to save for retirement. In reality, the odds are slim young adults will inherit wealth because their parents face a less secure retirement world, with stock market turmoil and mounting health care costs. Only 16% of parents expect to provide an inheritance. Among adults with at least \$100,000 in investable assets, 58% say leaving an inheritance is not a primary concern, according to a PNC survey. Instead, 42% say saving for retirement is their primary financial goal, while passing on money to a future generation is a priority for only 2%. However, many parents are helping pay for the rising cost of a college education, and they don't expect their kids to help if they run out of money in retirement. (*NY Times* 9/10/12)

Is College Debt Worth It? Two-thirds of America's college class of 2011 finished school with loan debt, and those who borrowed owe on average \$26,600 — up about 5% from the class before. The report from the Institute for College Access and Success likely underestimates the problem because they don't include most graduates of for-profit colleges, who typically borrow more than their counterparts elsewhere. Still, while 2011 college graduates faced an unemployment rate of 8.8% in '11, even those with debt remained generally better off than those without a degree. The report emphasized research showing the economic returns on college degrees remain, in general, strong. It noted the unemployment rate for those with only a high school credential last year was 19.1%. (*USA Today* 10/18/12)

More Multigenerational Homes Almost a third of homeowners expect their grown children or aging parents to eventually move in with them, according to a survey by PulteGroup, a large home builder. 1 in 7 say they already have a boomerang kid or

elderly parent living under their roof. A recent Pew Research report showed the share of Americans living in multi-generational households is at its highest since the '50s. Young adults 25 to 34 are most likely to return to the nest. Almost 22% of young adults were living at home in '10, up from 16% in '00. Average U.S. family size has gone up more than 3% since '00, largely due to tough economic times. The rise in immigrants from countries accustomed to several generations living together also pushed the number. (*USA Today* 10/16/12)

More Unaffiliated The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion is growing at a rapid pace. A new Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life report finds about a fifth of the U.S. public (and a third of adults under 30) are religiously unaffiliated today. Those are the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling. In just the last 5 years, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15% to just under 20% of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%). This large and growing group of Americans is less religious than the public at large on many conventional measures, including frequency of attendance at religious services and the degree of importance they attach to religion in their lives. Yet, many of the country's 46 million unaffiliated adults are religious or spiritual in some way. 66% say they believe in God and regular church attendance continues to hold steady at about 40% of U.S. adults. More than half say they often feel a deep connection with nature and the earth, more than a third identify as "spiritual" but not "religious," and 20% say they pray every day. (*Charisma News* 10/9/12)

Time Reading E-mail According to the McKinsey Global Institute, 28% of a knowledge-worker's time is spent managing e-mail. The average e-mail user gets 147 messages per day and deletes 71 (48%). Deletion takes an average of 3.2 seconds. That doesn't sound like much (about 4 minutes per day), but if you're deleting 350 emails per workweek, that takes around 20 minutes per week, which adds up to more than 16 hours per year. According to the American Time Use Survey, the average married,

employed father who has children under age 6 spends just 2.4 minutes per day reading to them, which is less time than the average e-mail user spends deleting emails. (*CNN Money* 10/8/12)

Faith Doubting Teens A recent survey reported in *Biola Magazine* revealed that 70% of teens surveyed expressed persistent, measurable doubts that what the Bible says about Jesus is true. Youth expert Mike Nappa, in his survey, confirms 67% of teens say they seldom read their Bibles. (*Rock Solid Faith Bible Study for Teens*, Zondervan 2012)

Membership Uncertainty Fewer than half of churchgoing Americans realize their house of worship offers official membership, according to a new Grey Matter Research study. 33% believe their church does not offer any sort of official membership, 19% weren't sure, and 48% believe their church does offer official membership. Among the original 48% who believe their church offers membership, 78% are members, with 21% saying they attend but are not members. That translates to 37% in total who claim to be official members of their church and 10% who say they are non-members. The 10 largest Christian denominations in the U.S. all offer some sort of official membership, but only 44% of people belonging to those faiths knew that. About 39% believe their church doesn't offer membership, and 19% are not sure. Those with evangelical beliefs were most likely to believe their church offers membership (72%). (*Non-Profit Times* 8/29/12)

The Lord's Supper New LifeWay Research survey data revealed 57% of Southern Baptist churches observe the Lord's Supper quarterly, 1% weekly, 18% monthly and 15% from 5 to 10 times a year. Another 8% conduct the sacrament less than 4 times a year. 52% of SBC churches offer communion to "anyone who has put their faith in Jesus Christ." 35% say "anyone who has been baptized as a believer" may participate. 5% serve it to "anyone who wants to participate," while 4% don't specify any conditions for participation. (*Baptist Press* 9/17/12)

Anti-Dad Bias 82% of new dads say they share work equally with their partners. The same number feel there is an anti-dad bias in the American culture. (*Adweek* 9/2/12)

Religious Restriction Rises Between mid-2009 and mid-2010, religious restrictions rose not only in countries that began the year with high or very high restrictions, such as Indonesia and Nigeria, but also in many countries that began with low or moderate restrictions, such as Switzerland and the U.S. (*Pew Forum* 9/20/12)

Multi-site Churches There are more than 5,000 multi-site churches in North America. That's more than 5,000 different churches, each of which has 2 or more different geographic campuses, according to data from a Leadership Network survey. (*Advance* 9/11/12)

Shorter Life Spans The most educated Americans are making the biggest gains in life expectancy, but now they say mortality data show that life spans for some of the least educated Americans are actually contracting. Four studies in recent years identified modest declines, but a new one that looks separately at Americans lacking a high school diploma found disturbingly sharp drops in life expectancy for whites in this group. The reasons for the decline remain unclear, but researchers offered possible explanations, including a spike in prescription drug overdoses among young whites, higher rates of smoking among less educated white women, rising obesity, and a steady increase in the number of the least educated Americans who lack health insurance. The steepest declines were for white women without a high school diploma, who lost 5 years of life between '90 and '08. White men lacking a high school diploma lost 3 years of life. Life expectancy for both blacks and Hispanics of the same education level rose. But blacks overall do not live as long as whites, while Hispanics live longer than both whites and blacks. (*NY Times* 9/21/12)

Kluth Rule of 1/3rds on Church Giving Ministry generosity expert, Brian Kluth has discovered that on average a church's givers are likely to be as follows; 1/3 give \$0 per year, 1/3 give under \$500 per year, and 1/3 give over \$500 per year. In larger churches with 1000 or more in attendance, 1/2 probably give \$0, 1/4 give under \$500, and 1/4 give over \$500 per year. He has developed a Giving Statistics Worksheet that allows any church to easily determine the stats for its congregation. Go to

<http://kluth.org/worksheet.htm> to obtain a free copy. (*Maximum Generosity* 9/27/12)

Background Check Boom The number of churches signing up for LifeWay Christian Resources' background check program increased by 100% over the last year. In '08, LifeWay endorsed www.LifeWay.com/backgroundchecks to offer background screenings for churches and religious organizations. Last year nearly 2,800 churches and organizations conducted more than 55,000 background checks. Of those, 35% returned a criminal hit, which is any kind of incident ranging from minor traffic violations to felony convictions. More than 33% of the criminal hits (12%) returned records with misdemeanor or felony offenses. (*Baptist Press* 9/26/12)

Crushing Debt *USA Today* reports that only 1 in 5 people use a monthly budget. As a result, the majority are swimming in debt. In fact, half of the families surveyed spend between \$2,500 and \$5,000 a month on debt payments alone! Meanwhile, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports Americans put barely 1% of their income in savings. (*Thriving Pastor* 10/1/12)

Fast Facts:

- 1.8 million Gen-Xers became non-denominational Christians since '90.
- 0.9 million Gen-Xers no longer identify as Catholic since '90.
- More than 50% of U.S. and Canada church attendees attend the largest 10% of churches.
- Just 48% of U.S. and Canada Protestants set aside time for prayer of any kind on a daily basis.
- A mere 19% of U.S. and Canada Protestants set aside time for daily Bible reading.
- 78% of Christian women disagree that the Bible prohibits them from being leaders in the church.
- 1 in 4 multi-site churches has at least one campus in another language.
- 66% of multi-site churches are affiliated with a denomination.
- The combined population of people groups in the world that are primarily Muslim is 1.61 billion people.
- 17% of online Americans read a religious blog once a month or more.

- 2.2 million Gen-Xers changed their religious affiliation to “none” between ’90 and ’06.
- Planned Parenthood has performed 6 million abortions during its 96 years of existence.
- Tablet users spend an average of 14 hours per week with their tablets.
- 60% of American parents feel their kids are smarter today because of exposure to media and technology.
- By age 8, 16% of American kids have a social profile.
- The percentage of U.S. preschool kids that read a book or magazine has dropped from 66% to 55% since last year, primarily due to increased time spent on digital devices.
- 68% of average Americans exercise their dog daily.
- Family members related by birth or marriage comprise 66% of all American households.
- 88.8% of U.S. blacks prefer the term “African-American.”
- Black households are 127% more likely to include a single parent, most often a woman.
- Facebook has just topped 1 billion users.
- There are roughly 79 million Baby Boomers, 41 million Gen X-ers and 85 million Gen Y-ers in the U.S. today.
- 12% of Americans are without a high school diploma today vs. 22% in ’90.
- 43% of U.S. working-age adults with less than a high school diploma do not have health insurance vs. just 10% of those with a college degree.

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