



**Church Legal Guidance for Non-Discrimination and Same-Sex Issues.** On July 8, Christian Legal Society and the National Association of Evangelicals co-produced a webinar to inform churches about the impact of the same-sex marriage decision and the application of non-discrimination laws. To listen to the recording of this webinar, please [click here](#). To download the Church Guidance for Same-Sex Issues whitepaper, [click here](#).

**ECFA's First Annual Church Financial Management Survey.** While the final report on this survey will not be released for a few weeks, here is a sneak peek at some of the key findings:

- **Budgeting assumptions.** Over 80% of the churches responding to the survey said they “are definitely learning how to do more with less.” 54% agreed or strongly agreed that they have increased and/or will be increasing employee contributions for health insurance.
- **Budget transparency.** Another interesting finding was that the annual budget is always shared with the congregation in 42% of churches surveyed, while 52% of the church only share the annual budget sometimes, rarely, or never with the congregation.

Watch for the release of this groundbreaking survey report to be released in September.

**Unchurched Not Always Unbelievers.** According to the Barna Group, the majority of unchurched Americans are non-practicing Christians: They claim Christianity as their faith, but they haven't been to church in a long time. Skeptics represent 25% of all unchurched adults, of which 31% have never attended a Christian church service in their lives. That's nearly double the proportion of “virgin unchurched” who are not skeptics (17%). (*Barna Group 3/14/15*)

**Churchgoing No Longer Mainstream.** Churchgoing is slowly but incontrovertibly losing its role as a normative part of American life. In the 1990s, roughly 14% of unchurched adults had never experienced regular church attendance vs. 25% today. As a result, church is becoming increasingly unfamiliar to millions of Americans. (*Barna Group 10/9/14*)

**Interfaith Marriage** is rising in the U.S. with each generation. Among Americans who have gotten married since 2010, 39% report they are in religiously mixed marriages, compared with 19% among those who got married before 1960, according to Pew Research's latest America's Changing Religious Landscape report. (*America's Changing Religious Landscape*)

**Modern American Young Men** are less violent than in the past, but prolonged use of video games and porn are causing unhealthy rewiring of their brains. A study of 20,000 young men showed less violence, lower drug use, and less drinking than in the past, but the replacement of father figures with video games and porn is leading to erectile dysfunction and other negative physical and psychological consequences. Overstimulation via video games and porn begins to change brain function. It begins to change the reward center of the brain and produces a kind of excitement and addiction. While boys get “psychologically excited” by porn and video games, physiologically boys are less aroused—and also face obesity, Type II Diabetes, and erectile dysfunction. Experts attribute much of the problem to the lack of fathers in the home. (*LifeSite News 5/12/15*)

**Evangelicals More Diverse.** The share of U.S. evangelicals who are not white increased from 19 to 24% between 2007 and 2014. Catholics and mainline Protestants saw a similar growth in non-whites. Among those three, Catholics have the smallest proportion of whites at 59%, and mainline Protestants have the largest at 86%. (*Pew Research Center's America's Changing Religious Landscape*)

**Two-Parent Homes.** A new Rasmussen Reports survey finds 92% of American adults believe it is important for children to grow up in a home with both parents, with 70% considering it very important. 7% say it's not very or not at all important. (*Rasmussen Reports 5/13/15*)

**Boardroom Body Language.** Have you experienced these irritants in your board meetings: unintentional lack of eye contact, intentional lack of eye contact, folded arms and closed heart? Read [ECFA's Governance blog](#) by John Pearson to discover the solution.

**More Immigrants Non-Religious.** Immigrants to the U.S. are increasingly identifying themselves as religiously unaffiliated, according to a new [Pew Research Center study](#). Recent immigrants (those who have arrived since 2000) are as likely to have no religious affiliation as the country's overall adult population. 1 in 5 said they did not belong to any religion—up 4 percentage points since 2007, when it was 16%. The share of Christian immigrants has also slipped from 75% to 68%. In addition, there also has been growth in the percentage of immigrants who are adherents of non-Christian faiths, rising from 8% to 12% in the past years. Muslims now account for 4% of foreign-born U.S. residents vs. 2% in 2007. (*Fact Tank 5/19/15*)

**Least Religious Generation.** A recent San Diego State Univ. study found Millennials appear to be the least religious generation ever recorded. Psychology professor Jean M. Twenge suggested one main reason for them abandoning religion is rising individualism in American culture which puts self first and is less prone to showing commitment to institutions. The study found twice as many 12th graders and college students today never attend religious services compared to those in the 1960s–70s. Findings also noted Millennials are the least religious generation of the last six decades and possibly in the nation’s history. (*Christian Post* 5/29/15)

**Evangelicals Lost Fewer.** Pew’s [2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study](#) reports evangelicals have lost less than 1% of their share of the population since 2007 and have even added more than 2 million, remaining the largest religious segment (and a majority of the Protestant segment) in the U.S. at 1 in 4 American adults. In contrast, mainline Protestants have lost 3.5% of their population share and are currently less than 15% of American adults, while Catholics lost 3% of their population share and are currently 21% of adults. (*ChurchLeaders.com* 5/22/15)

**Getting Worse.** Most Americans, even most liberals, believe the state of moral values in the U.S. is getting worse, according to a Gallup poll. When asked, “Right now, do you think the state of moral values in the country as a whole is getting better or getting worse?” 72% of Americans said “getting worse” and 22% said “getting better.” (*Christian Post* 6/3/15)

**Healthcare Reimbursement Relief Expired on June 30.** The transition relief for small churches who reimburse health care costs ended June 30. Churches with fewer than 50 full-time equivalent employees who reimbursed healthcare expenses, including individual policy premiums enjoyed transition relief until June 30 from penalties of up to \$100 per employee, per day, per violation. That relief has now expired. [Click here to read more.](#)

**Faith Based Retirement Plan Survey.** In addition to the surveys undertaken by ECFA directly, there is another Survey conducted by Christian Leadership Alliance in conjunction with Envoy Financial. The Faith Based Retirement Plan Survey™ is going into its third year. Please participate in this year’s survey by adding your voice to the research as we will all benefit. [Click this link](#) and you will be taken directly to the website which includes the current survey and the results of the previous two years surveys.

**Healthcare Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) and Self-Insured Plans** must pay an annual fee, due July 31, under the Affordable Care Act. [Click here for more information.](#)

**The Unprecedented Generation.** According to Ken Dychtwald in *The Age Wave*, “two-thirds of all the men and women who have lived beyond the age of 65 in the entire history of the world are alive today.” Not since the days of Noah has God given a generation such extended life, good health and adequate resources. Today the fastest-growing segment of the senior adult population is the 85-and-up group. (*BP News* 5/19/15)

**The Median Age of U.S. Worshipers** overall is 54, while that of conservative Protestants is 47, mainline Protestants is 59 and Catholics is 53. (*U.S. Congregational Life Survey*)

**Nondenominational Churches Are Growing.** LifeWay Research’s president Ed Stetzer claims many analyses of religious data in the U.S. miss the growing presence of nondenominational churches, particularly evangelical ones. For example, the share of Southern Baptists in the U.S. population fell by 1.4% in the past 7 years while non-denominational evangelical Christians grew by 1.5%. If current trends continue, the largest evangelical “denomination” will soon be nondenominational. (*Ed Stetzer, CNN.com* 6/12/15)

**Who Tithes?** Just 18% of all U.S. worshipers give 10% of their income to the church vs. 44% for conservative Protestants, 16% for mainline Protestants and 10% for Catholics. (*U.S. Congregational Life Survey*)

**Not Interested.** The bulk of U.S. religious “nones” (15.8% of the population) don’t commit to any view on God. Instead, they say they believe “nothing in particular.” Yet 30% of “nones” say religion is still at least somewhat important to them, but 39% are not agnostic, atheist or vaguely spiritual; they’re just not interested. Religion is not even somewhat important to them. Most Christians are women (55%) and most “nones” are men (57%). However, women’s unbelief numbers are growing. (*USA Today* 5/12/15)

**Evangelicals Retain Their Children.** Evangelicals retain two-thirds of their children, placing fifth among all religious groups and second among Christian groups according to [a study](#). By comparison, Protestants at large retain less than half of their children. 47% of Protestants remain in their childhood denomination. 27% now identify with a different Protestant group, while 3% became Catholic, 4% non-Christians, and 19% unaffiliated. (*ChurchLeaders.com* 5/22/15)

**ECFA member?** If you are serving with one of ECFA’s 1,956 members, committed to observing high standards of excellence, THANK YOU!

If not, learning whether your church may qualify for ECFA membership just takes 7 minutes. Call Michael at 1-800-323-9473. It may be one of the most important calls you make in 2015!

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