

# Many Americans Feel Held Back by Their Past

Dear Teacher,

A just-released survey from The Barna Group indicates that many Americans feel held back by their past, are dealing with emotional conflict, are struggling to live up to their “fullest potential” or are wrestling with the role of church and religion.

Obviously, there is plenty to consider in those findings, and they will be the basis for this installment of **The Wired Word**.

Remember, if you wish to provide your class members with an abbreviated copy of the lesson, [click here](#), and you can send them a copy via e-mail today.

May God bless you as you teach the Scriptures this week.

The Editorial Team of **The Wired Word**



## Many Americans Feel Held Back by Their Past

*The Wired Word* for November 13, 2011

### In the News

Seventy million Americans feel held back by their past.

That’s one of four findings in a survey released late last week by The Barna Group, a Christian polling firm based in Ventura, California.

The 70 million adults (31 percent) who believe they are held back by something in their past are not distributed evenly across all demographic groupings. That outlook was more common among younger adults, blacks, divorced people, unmarried individuals and those who have some college experience but never completed their degree, the survey revealed. Members of lower-income households were more likely than average (38 percent) to feel held back by their past, but so were 25 percent of members of higher-income households.

Among those least likely to feel held back or defined by their past were people with a practicing faith. The summary report did not state what other groups were least likely to feel held back. (*The Wired Word’s* inquiry to Barna for more details had not been answered by our publication time.)

A second finding of the survey is that one-third of adults in the United States are struggling to live to their “fullest potential.” Six percent of those surveyed said they are not living to their potential at all, 26 percent said “not much,” 57 percent said “mostly” and 12 percent said they feel “completely” fulfilled. Among the most likely to feel they are fulfilling their potential are Elders (ages 65-plus), practicing Christians and Bible readers.

The survey also found that nearly 70 million Americans are dealing with emotional conflict. Thirty percent said unresolved emotional pain is a present reality. This outlook was “most common among lower-income

adults, divorcees, women and those with no faith allegiance,” the summary report said, while “married adults, Elders, men and practicing Christians were the least likely to be dealing with unresolved emotional conflict.”

Finally, the survey found that about one-sixth of Americans are wrestling with the role of church and religion. Fifteen percent of those surveyed said personal experiences with religion caused them to question God, a view most common among adults in their 20s, college grads, unmarried adults, non-Christians and unchurched adults. Some 16 percent of respondents said they had been hurt by experiences in churches, a perception most common among women, Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) and divorced adults.

The survey solicited responses from more than 1,000 adults over age 18 throughout the country. The number of adults surveyed is considered large enough to be a representative sample with a plus or minus sampling error of 3.2 percent. (Occasionally in the past, other findings of The Barna Group have been challenged as raising false alarms. See, for example, [Religion and the Bad News Bearers. \*Wall Street Journal\*.](#))

More on this story can be found at this link:

[70 Million Americans Feel Held Back by Their Past. \*Barna Group\*](#)

## The Big Questions

1. In what ways are your outlook on life and the state of your faith connected? What other factors determine your personal perspective?
2. What does it mean to be “fulfilled”? Is fulfillment ever a moving target? How can the church best help those who are dealing with emotional conflict?
3. What kinds of deliberate outreach measures should a congregation take toward someone who has been hurt by a personal experience with the church?
4. If you do not feel at peace in life, does it automatically mean there is something lacking in your faith? Why or why not?
5. To what degree do survey results revealing negative trends discourage us in our efforts to share the gospel or seek the joy of the Lord? To what degree do such results become self-fulfilling prophecies?

## Confronting the News with Scripture

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

### **Exodus 4:10**

*“O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”* (For context, read 3:1--4:17.)

When God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, Moses offered four objections (see 3:11, 3:13, 4:1, 4:10). The sentence above is the fourth objection, and in it, Moses says that he feels held back by his past experience of being “slow of speech and slow of tongue.” God doesn’t let any of Moses’ objections stand. God answers Moses’ fourth objection by saying, “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak” (v. 12).

When Moses still tries to dodge the assignment, saying, “O my Lord, please send someone else” (v. 13), God’s anger erupts at Moses. He sends Moses’ brother Aaron along to help with the speaking, but he doesn’t let Moses get away with saying “I can’t because of my past.”

**Questions:** Are there times when we are tempted to believe ourselves inadequate when God has called us to do something with our abilities? Can a past failure at using a talent actually result in improvements to that skill or ability? Can a past failure simply be a way in which we discover that our talents and gifts are not in the area that we would like them to be? How can past failure help us discover what our spiritual gifts really are?

### **Genesis 33:9**

*“I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.”* (For context, read 33:1-11.)

These words were spoken by Esau to his brother Jacob, after meeting for the first time in years. The last time they’d been together, Jacob had cheated Esau out of his birthright, and Esau had been furious. As a result, Jacob had left town, fearing for his life, and the two had gone their separate ways. Now, however, Jacob wants to return to his homeland, and hoping to make peace with Esau, Jacob has sent ahead gifts of flocks and herds for his brother (see Genesis 32:13-21).

When the two finally meet, however, Esau graciously tries to refuse the gifts, speaking the words above. Esau welcomes Jacob back, and in so doing, he restores the broken relationship. Esau does not let the history between them destroy the present. Though Esau is relegated to a supporting role in the Bible, while Jacob takes center stage and becomes the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, in this encounter, Esau comes off as the better person.

**Questions:** Where might forgiving someone help you to keep the past from holding you back? What prevents you from extending such forgiveness?

### **Ephesians 3:19**

*“... and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”* (For context, read 3:14-19.)

The New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version of the Bible each use the word “fulfillment” in 10 verses, but never in the sense of “being all that you can be.” The Bible does talk about *fullness*, however, as in the verse above, where Paul identifies God as the source of that fullness.

**Questions:** The Bible speaks of fullness from God in several places. How does it make you feel if you do not experience fullness or satisfaction even though you are a follower of Jesus? Does the lack of fullness mean there is something wrong with your faith? What other explanation for the lack of a sense of fullness might there be? What help does God provide when we fail to be filled with all the fullness of God?

### **Matthew 11:28**

*“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”* (For context, read 11:28-30.)

Here’s a great invitation from Jesus to those who are dealing with emotional conflict. But we sometimes turn it from a *simple* invitation into a *simplistic* one. It becomes simplistic when we interpret it to mean that we have no need for counseling, assistance from friends, moral support from family, medical help for chronic depression, etc. if we will *only* turn to Jesus.

The great reformer Martin Luther spoke of God using “means” to do his work -- saying that God sometimes operates “by means of” (or “through”) people and circumstances, rather than always by a direct revelation or miracle.

**Questions:** The invitation from Jesus is gracious, and the rest which he offers is real, but sometimes turning to Jesus is only the beginning of the answer. Why? When might Jesus also use “means”?

### **Philippians 3:13-14**

*“Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.”* (For context, read 3:12-21.)

The apostle Paul is the writer of the verses above, and clearly *he* did not feel held back by his past, despite the fact that he’d once been a persecutor of Christians and had an ongoing physical infirmity. This is not because Paul had no conscience, however, but because Christ had redeemed him and pointed him in a new direction.

**Questions:** How much of Paul’s “press on toward the goal” mode of operation do you think was a result of his personality? How does personality type affect the way in which you follow Jesus?

### **2 Corinthians 5:17-18**

*“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation ...”* (For context, read 5:16-21.)

Paul writes that not only has Jesus Christ eliminated our past failures in God’s sight, but also that he has given to Christians the task of bringing this forgiveness and reconciliation to others.

**Questions:** How is the knowledge of Christ’s reconciliation apparent in the results reported by Barna? What does this say about the mission opportunity for reconciliation with God which exists?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. Ask class members to look up the following verses and discuss how they apply to today’s lesson topic: Psalm 55:22; Haggai 1:3-8; John 6:35.
2. Comment on the following: David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, said that this survey suggests that “perhaps Americans’ growing dissatisfaction with institutions is more influenced than they realize by their own personal expectations and experiences. While people are increasingly skeptical of external forces, like religion and government, the research shows that internal doubts about fulfillment, faith, emotion and personal history significantly define millions of the nation’s residents.”
3. We may not be able to overcome everything behind us, but what is God’s word to us when we point to the past as the reason for our failures or for our unwillingness to attempt something in the present?

### **Responding to the News**

Although God promises to fill our lives, we often fail to receive that fullness, or we let it be crowded out by other cares. Even in the midst of our failures -- both real and self-judged -- God promises to be with us. God

also gives us the work of sharing this fullness with others. Now is a good time to meditate on how we often fail to recognize God's actions, how he forgives us for that failure and how we can pass on the message of his reconciliation.

### **Closing Prayer**

O God, help all of us who experience the struggles of being citizens of this world to also discover the joy of being citizens of your kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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*Dear Class Member,*

*A just-released survey from the Barna Group indicates that many Americans feel held back by their past, are dealing with emotional conflict, are struggling to live up to their “fullest potential” or are wrestling with the role of church and religion.*

*Obviously, there is plenty to consider in those findings, and they will be the basis for our next class.*

*If you wish to start thinking about our topic in advance, below is some introductory material.*



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*The Wired Word for November 13, 2011*

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[70 Million Americans Feel Held Back by Their Past. Barna Group](#)

### **The Big Questions**

*Here are some of the questions we will discuss in class:*

1. In what ways are your outlook on life and the state of your faith connected? What other factors determine your personal perspective?
2. What does it mean to be “fulfilled”? Is fulfillment ever a moving target? How can the church best help those who are dealing with emotional conflict?
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4. If you do not feel at peace in life, does it automatically mean there is something lacking in your faith? Why or why not?
5. To what degree do survey results revealing negative trends discourage us in our efforts to share the gospel or seek the joy of the Lord? To what degree do such results become self-fulfilling prophecies?

### **Confronting the News with Scripture**

*We will look at selected verses from these Scripture texts. You may wish to read these in advance for background:*

Exodus 3:1--4:17

Genesis 33:1-11

Ephesians 3:14-19

Matthew 11:28-30

Philippians 3:12-21

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

*In class, we will talk about these passages and look for some insight on the big questions, as well as talk about other questions you may have about this topic. Please join us.*

## Scriptures for The Wired Word Online Bible Study for November 13, 2011

### Exodus 3:1-4:17

<sup>1</sup>Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." <sup>4</sup>When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup>Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup>He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup>He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup>But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

<sup>16</sup>Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. <sup>17</sup>I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.' <sup>18</sup>They will listen to your voice; and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; let us now go a three days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' <sup>19</sup>I know, however, that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. <sup>20</sup>So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with

all my wonders that I will perform in it; after that he will let you go. <sup>21</sup>I will bring this people into such favor with the Egyptians that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed; <sup>22</sup>each woman shall ask her neighbor and any woman living in the neighbor's house for jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; and so you shall plunder the Egyptians."

<sup>1</sup>Then Moses answered, "But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" <sup>2</sup>The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff."  
<sup>3</sup>And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. <sup>4</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail" —so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand— <sup>5</sup>"so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." <sup>6</sup>Again, the Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." He put his hand into his cloak; and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. <sup>7</sup>Then God said, "Put your hand back into your cloak" —so he put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored like the rest of his body— <sup>8</sup>"If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign. <sup>9</sup>If they will not believe even these two signs or heed you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

<sup>10</sup>But Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."  
<sup>11</sup>Then the Lord said to him, "Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? <sup>12</sup>Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak." <sup>13</sup>But he said, "O my Lord, please send someone else." <sup>14</sup>Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "What of your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad. <sup>15</sup>You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. <sup>16</sup>He indeed shall speak for you to the people; he shall serve as a mouth for you, and you shall serve as God for him. <sup>17</sup>Take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs."

## **Genesis 33:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. <sup>2</sup>He put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. <sup>3</sup>He himself went on ahead of them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. <sup>4</sup>But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

<sup>5</sup>When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." <sup>6</sup>Then the maids drew

near, they and their children, and bowed down; <sup>7</sup>Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down; and finally Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. <sup>8</sup>Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find favor with my lord.” <sup>9</sup>But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Jacob said, “No, please; if I find favor with you, then accept my present from my hand; for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor. <sup>11</sup>Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything I want.” So he urged him, and he took it.

## **Ephesians 3:14-19**

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, <sup>17</sup>and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

## **Matthew 11:28-30**

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

## **Philippians 3:12-21**

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

<sup>17</sup>Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup>For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. <sup>19</sup>Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>21</sup>He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

## 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



# 70 Million Americans Feel Held Back by their Past



November 3, 2011

In the middle of the economic recession and the Occupy Wall Street protests, residents' economic mood and outlook has been well documented. Yet, underlying emotional and identity factors are often overlooked, such as whether Americans feel they are fulfilling their own personal potential or not.

A new study by Barna Group examines these kinds of indicators, looking at how Americans think about their lives these days. Four characteristics of millions of residents emerged from the survey.

## 1. One-third of Americans are struggling to live to their "fullest potential."

One out of every three adults in this country say they are not living life to their fullest potential, including those who say they are "not at all" (6%) or "not much" (26%). A slim majority of adults (57%) feel they are "mostly" fulfilling their potential, while about one out of eight (12%) feel "completely" fulfilled. Those most likely to feel they are fulfilling their potential include Elders (ages 65-plus), practicing Christians, and Bible readers.

Interestingly, education was correlated with fulfillment, but only to a certain point: college graduates were some of the least dissatisfied, but they were also some of the least likely to feel completely fulfilled. A similar pattern emerged with regard to personal economics: the wealthiest Americans were some of the most likely to give extreme responses, either very fulfilled or very unfulfilled.

## 2. Seventy million Americans feel held back by their past.

Overall, 70 million Americans (31% of adults) feel "held back or defined by something in their past." This perception was most commonly expressed by younger adults, blacks, divorced adults, unmarried individuals, and those who have some college experience but never completed their degree. Those with a practicing faith were among the least likely to feel defined or held back by their past. Lower-income households were more likely than average (38%) to feel defined by their past, though 25% of higher-income households were also likely to share this perception.

## 3. Nearly 70 million Americans are dealing with emotional conflict.

When asked if they are dealing with unresolved emotional pain or conflict in life, three out of 10 adults (30%) confirm this description is a present reality for them. This perception was most common among lower-income adults, divorcees, women, and those with no faith allegiance. Married adults, Elders, men, and practicing Christians were the least likely to be dealing with unresolved emotional conflict.

## 4. One-sixth of Americans are wrestling with the role of church and religion.

In total, 15% of Americans said their experiences with religion have caused them to question God, a sentiment that was most common among twentysomethings, college graduates, unmarried adults, non-Christians, and unchurched adults. Similarly, 16% of Americans said they have been hurt by experiences in churches. This perception was most common among women, Boomers (the generation born between 1946 and 1964), and divorced adults.

## Conclusions

David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, directed the survey. He pointed out: "In recent weeks the Occupy Wall Street movement has focused on the economic gap between the wealthiest one percent of the population and the remaining 99 percent. As others have observed this movement reflects a mix of anti-institutionalism and disillusionment with the economy, government and financial industry.

"But perhaps Americans' growing dissatisfaction with institutions is more influenced than they realize by their own personal expectations and experiences. While people are increasingly skeptical of external forces, like religion and government, the research shows that internal doubts about fulfillment, faith, emotion and personal history significantly define millions of the nation's residents."

This study was conducted in conjunction with the development of a new Barna Books project, *Whittle*, by Lisa

Whittle

[Read](#) a blog about *Whittle* from David Kinnaman

[Purchase](#) the book

### About the Research

This report is based upon interviews conducted in Barna Group's nationwide study called OmniPollSM. The research included 1,014 online surveys conducted among a representative sample of adults over the age of 18 throughout the United States. The survey was conducted in April 2011.

The maximum margin of sampling error associated with the aggregate sample is  $\pm 3.2$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Minimal statistical weighting was used to calibrate the aggregate sample to known population percentages in relation to several key demographic variables.

The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. Created by Knowledge Networks, the panel is a probability-based online non-volunteer access panel. Panel members are recruited using a statistically valid sampling method with a published sample frame of residential addresses that covers approximately 97% of U.S. households. Sampled non-Internet households, when recruited, are provided a netbook computer and free Internet service so they may also participate as online panel members. KnowledgePanel includes persons living in cell phone only households.

"Unchurched" adults are those individuals who have not attended a Christian worship service in the last six months, not including special events such as weddings or funerals.

"Practicing Christians" are those who strongly agree their religious faith is very important in their life, who attend worship services at least monthly, and who identify as Christians.

Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization under the umbrella of the Issachar Companies. It conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries.

Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984. If you would like to receive free e-mail notification of the release of each new, bi-monthly update on the latest research findings from the Barna Group, you may subscribe to this free service at the Barna website ([www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)). Additional research-based resources are also available through this website.

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