In the Word

Then it comes to reading the Bible, 32 percent of W Americans say their most significant frustration is they "never have enough time to read it."

The second biggest frustration?

21 percent of ages 18-27 say, "I don't feel excited about reading it."

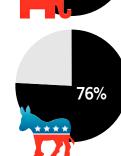
16 percent of ages 28-46 say, "The language is difficult to relate to."

Source: American Bible Society



Pro abstinence

majority of Republicans and **A**Democrats are pro abstinence, according to a survey of 1,683 likely voters with children ages 9 to 16 released in October 2012. Eightyseven percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Democrats support abstinence education, with overwhelming majorities voicing approval of sexual risk avoidance (SRA) education's major tenets, which, among other things, include:



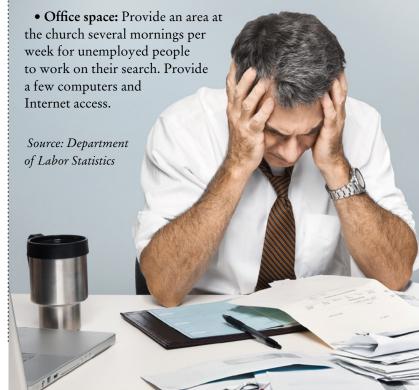
- encouraging renewed abstinence for the sexually active
- providing contraceptive information within an abstinence context
- providing information on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- informing students of the limitations of condoms
- alerting them to the emotional consequences of sex

Source: National Abstinence Education Foundation

Life Interrupted

↑ mid a sluggish economic recovery, both the number A of unemployed persons (12.1 million) and the unemployment rate (7.9 percent) showed little movement in 2012. Almost half of the current unemployed have been without jobs for 27 weeks or more – some for multiple years. While churches across the nation have felt the effects of layoffs, many are finding ways to help those in their congregations. Here are four ways to help the unemployed in your church:

- Networking: Sponsor a monthly breakfast or lunch for jobseekers and business leaders in your church. Invite a speaker to give a brief presentation on leadership skills, organizational tactics or team building. Or start a new small group or prayer group especially for jobseekers. Recruit unemployed individuals to lead the ministry to the unemployed.
- New skills: Workers released from long-held positions may need a refresher course on job hunting. Invite a career counselor to teach resume writing, online job-hunting and interviewing skills. Offer financial training to families who now are living on a tighter budget.
- Counseling: For many, career and job performance is linked to self worth. Those who have been out of work for a long period of time may begin to suffer from self-doubt in areas of their personal lives often leading to severe depression. Consider bringing in a professional counselor to serve your church for limited hours during the week or on weekends.





The church in America has become like a bear fed by tourists, Ed Stetzer said, because of so-called seekers willing to return to church to recapture their childhood religious memories.

"What happens when you feed the bear is eventually it can't fend for itself," he said. "I think the people of the church have to learn to fend for themselves by going out and proclaiming the gospel, not counting on a really cool church to preach the gospel for them."

- Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research

"You know you're on mission when it gets messy... The gospel is so powerful you can be in the middle of the mess and still be different. That's how powerful the Gospel is."

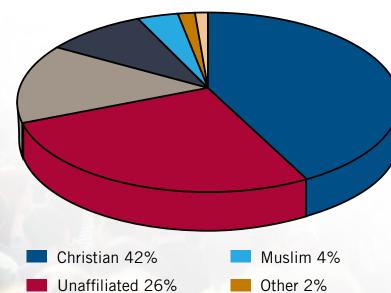
- Jeff Vanderstelt, pastor with Soma Communities, speaking at the Verge Conference



Asian Americans: A Mosaic of Faiths

↑ s the number of Asian Americans rises in the **T**U.S. (now 18.2 million), they contribute to the diversity of the religions landscape. While they have been largely responsible for the growth of Buddhism and Hinduism in the nation, most Asian Americans belong to the country's two largest religious groups: Christians and those who say they have no religious affiliation.

PHOTOS ON PAGE FROM BIGSTOCKPHOTO



Percentage of Asian American adults who say they are ...

Buddhist 14%

Hindu 10%

Sikh 1%

Source: Pew Research

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Meals and ministry

C ome 50 million Americans, including 16 million kids O(one out of five), struggle with hunger. Fortunately, churches throughout the U.S. are responding to the growing needs of those who need food.

For two years, Mission Yucaipa, in Yucaipa, Calif., has collected, sorted and distributed bags of food door to door—enough to feed 250 people. The food ministry has opened the door to meet other needs.

The first week mission pastor Freddie Rodriguez and his wife, Yvonne, and other volunteers went door-to-door in a mobile home community to offer bags of food, they met a middle-aged woman who answered her door and invited Yvonne in with one insistent question: "Who told you to knock on my door?" Yvonne tried to explain, but the woman interrupted: "No, who told you to knock on my door right now?" The woman said she had just turned on her gas stove with the intention of committing suicide when she heard the knock on her door. "God brought you to my house," she exclaimed. She recommitted her life to Christ that day.

"The most powerful impact is the door-to-door approach," Freddie says. "There are so many needs, and you just don't know them till you knock."

Most of the food recipients are Hispanic single mothers or elderly Anglos who are sick or disabled, explains Rodriguez.

"We just knock on the door, ask how they're doing and say, 'We've been blessed with so much. How can we bless you?" -Amanda Phifer



Pastors split on performing

marriages for divorced people

Mainline and evangelical pastors are divided on the issue of performing marriages for divorced people. In response to the question, "When asked to do so, will you perform a marriage ceremony if the man or woman has been divorced?"

Mainline

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41 percent of mainline and 29 percent of evangelical pastors say, "Yes, regardless of the reason."

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55 percent of mainline and 65 percent of evangelical pastors answer, "Yes, depending on the reason."

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Only two percent of mainline pastors and five percent of evangelical pastors answer, "No."

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Saying I Do

Source: Baptist Press

The U.S. Episcopal Church became the largest American denomination to put its stamp of approval on same-sex unions, as delegates at its triennial convention last year adopted a provisional liturgy for such occasions.



5,000

The number of congregations that host worship services at more than one physical location. Multisite churches have grown from fewer than 200 in 2001 to 1,500 in 2006, to more than 5,000 today. Source: Leadership Network

Pastor education and compensation

When it comes to determining pastors' compensation rates, education level, tenure at current church and higher weekly attendance resulted in more compensation. In fact, each additional educational degree level adds, on average, \$2,878 in annual compensation. Seminary graduates receive, on average, \$7,012 more in total annual compensation than non-seminary graduates and they receive more vacation time.

Source: LifeWay Research (LifeWay.com/ CompensationSurvey)

Time for family

Roughly 10 percent of Protestant pastors nationwide say they spend nine hours a week or less with their family members.

Source: LifeWay Research

Are all faith books true?

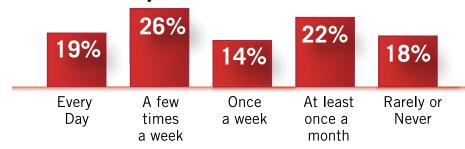
46 percent believe the Bible, the Koran and the Book of Mormon are different expressions of the same spiritual truths; 46 percent disagree.

Source: American Bible Society

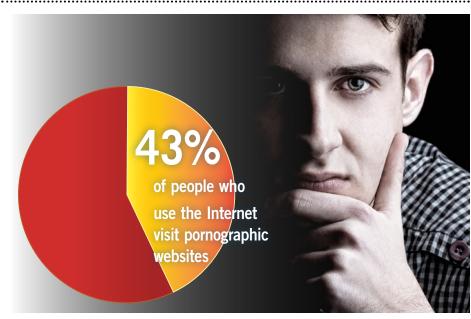
What they say/What they do

Tinety percent of American Protestant churchgoers say they desire to honor Christ with their lives and even profess to think on biblical truths, but few actually engage in personal reading and study of the Scriptures. In this survey by LifeWay Research, 2,900 Protestants were asked,

"How often do you read the Bible?"



Source: LifeWay Research



Internet porn viewing

Plose to half (43 percent) of people who use the Internet visit pornographic websites. Some 40 million Americans are regular visitors to porn sites, with pornographic downloads representing 35 percent of all Internet downloads.

Of the 40 million regular visitors, 33 percent are women. A full 70 percent of men age 18-24 visit porn sites monthly. Not sure how to help those in your church struggling with this addiction? Pick up a copy of John Bisagno's Pastor's Handbook (B&H) for practical insight on handling issues like porn addition. And *Picking Up the Pieces Series: The Secret Seductress* is a resource for men's groups. Visit LifeWay.com to order or visit your local LifeWay store.

Source: Education Database Online

Evangelical Source: LifeWay Research Facts and Trends • 13 12 • Winter 2013

Suburbs becoming more diverse

The U.S. is rapidly becoming more diverse says a ▲ new demographic study by Brown University. While big cities traditionally have been the nation's melting pots, today it is smaller cities and suburbs that are on the front lines of changing demographics and culture.

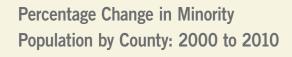
According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau figures, 44 percent of suburban residents live in a diverse community, defined as places that are 20-60 percent nonwhite – up from 38 percent in 2000.

The booming Hispanic and Asian populations are driving today's demographic changes. Hispanics, at 50.5 million, now account for 1 in 6 Americans and constitute the biggest minority group in the nation. Asians account for 6 percent of the total U.S. population.

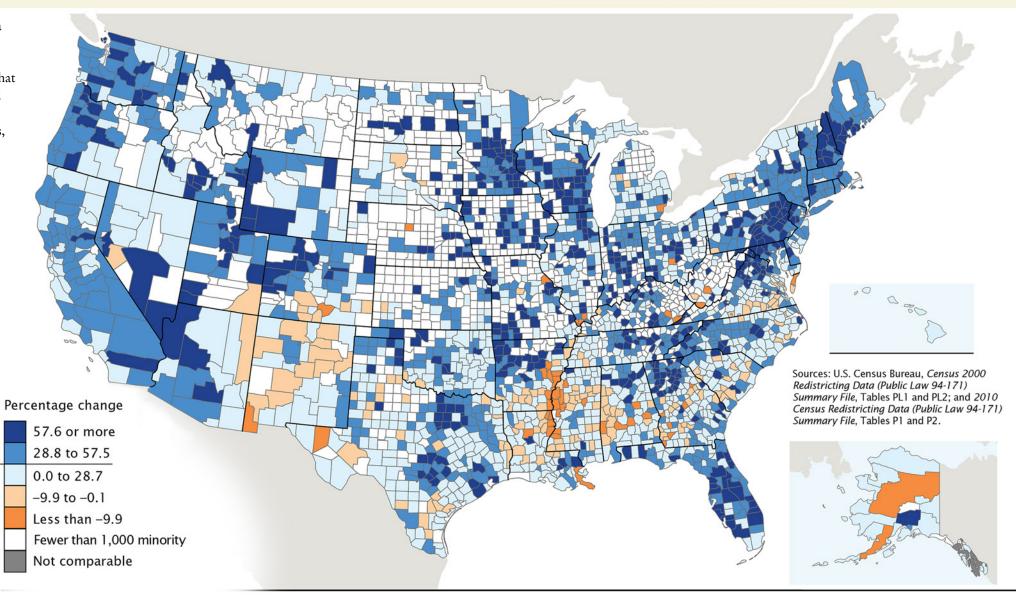
A perfectly diverse city or town would have a population with exactly 20 percent of each category, and would get a diversity score of 100 on the diversity scale.

In 2010, the most diverse metropolitan area in the country was Vallejo, Calif., north of San Francisco. It had a score of 89.3 and the population was 41 percent white, 24 percent Hispanic, 15 percent Asian, 14 percent black and 6 percent

Source: Wall Street Journal and U.S. 2010 Project, Brown University



(Counties with a minority population of at least 1,000 are included in the map. Minority refers to people who reported their ethnicity and race as something other than non-Hispanic White alone in the decennial census. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf)



Highest church attendance Sundays

- 1. Easter
- 2. Christmas
- 3. Mother's Day Source:
- LifeWay Research

Increase in Islam

The number of Islamic houses of worship in the U.S. has increased significantly in the past decade. The nation saw a 74 percent increase in the number of mosques from 2000 to 2010, bringing the number from 1,209 to 2,106. With the religious landscape of the United States steadily changing, consider how your church can best reach out to those of other religions living in your community. Source: USA Today, February 29, 2012

The generous South

Religion plays a major role in how much money

Americans give to charity, according to a study by The Chronicle of Philanthropy. The parts of the country that give the highest percent of their discretionary income to charity are also the most religious. Seven out of the top 10 giving states are in the Bible Belt:

10.6%

U.S.

28.8

change

Source: The Chronicle of Philanthropy

7.2%

7.1%

6.6%

6.4%

6.4%

6.3%

6.2%

5.9%

5.7%

Utah

Arkansas

South Carolina North Carolina Maryland Alabama Idaho Georgia Mississippi Tennessee