

Majority of Unchurched Adults Identify Themselves as 'Christians'

✖ Nearly two-thirds of all unchurched adults—people who have not attended a church activity in the last six months—identified themselves as “Christians,” according to a recent study by the Barna Group.

The survey revealed that 28 percent of the population—some 65 million adults—have not participated in any church activities or services in the past six months. As many churches try to attract this group to worship on Sunday, the study showed that the makeup of unchurched Americans may be surprising.

For example, 18 percent of unchurched Americans say they are born again, that they have “made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today” and that they will go to heaven only because they have accepted Him as their Savior. Two-thirds (68 percent) say God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the universe. However, slightly more than one-third (35 percent) agree that the Bible is totally accurate in all its principles, and only 15 percent say their religious faith is very important in their life.

Demographically, among the unchurched, women outnumber men, baby boomers and older generations outnumber younger generations, and conservatives outnumber liberals. Why does such a large group of people who believe in God avoid church? The Barna Group claims that a previous study may shed some light on the question. The study showed that 37 percent of non-churchgoing Americans avoid churches because of negative past experiences in churches or with church people. [, 4/12/10]