

Are the Younger Unchurched Still Spiritually Open?

There's an idea that Christianity in America is dying. No serious researcher—not one—thinks that. However, I still am surprised that some people think this. (For a quick analysis, see this article).

Facts are our friends—in this and in every situation—and what do the facts really show about the situation?

The Unchurched Are Open

A few years ago, LifeWay Research did some significant research on the faith of young adults to see where they stood. Here are a few stats from that study:

- 73 percent of unchurched 20- to 29-year-old Americans consider themselves “spiritual” because they want to know more about “God or a higher supreme being.”
- 89 percent of unchurched young adults say they would listen to what someone believes about Christianity.
- 63 percent of young adults said they would attend church if it presented truth to them in an understandable way “that relates to my life now.”
- 58 percent of 20-somethings would be more likely to attend if people at the church “cared for them as a person.”

What's surprising to me is the degree to which the young “unchurched” believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, even though it is not having much impact in their lives. But—and don't miss it—two-thirds of those young people who do not attend church outside of weddings, funerals and holidays believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead.

That's fascinating to me because if I thought there was a guy

who was dead on Friday but on Sunday was, well, not so much, I'd be going with that guy. However, 66 percent of those who don't go to church believe that yet still don't go.

Perhaps even more fascinating is this: 77 percent of those young people who self-identify as unchurched think that believing in Jesus makes a positive difference in a person's life, yet they seem to be staying away from church.

Why?

A lot of it has to do with their perception of church.

The overwhelming majority believes the church is full of hypocrites (67 percent of young unchurched). A significant group, approximately 39 percent, believe their lifestyle wouldn't be accepted at most Christian churches. Finally, about 90 percent of young unchurched think they can have a good relationship with God without the church.

It is a mistake to say that young adults now are as connected to church as previous generations—they aren't. But it is a bigger mistake to think they are not open to spiritual things—because they are.

The younger unchurched are actually more open to the Christian faith than their older unchurched peers.

The Church Needs to Share

We live in a mission field. We need a mission force. Christian influence is on the wane, but as we just saw, the unchurched are interested and open.

Unfortunately, most Protestant churchgoers aren't sharing the gospel.

So, 61 percent of Christians haven't shared the gospel in the last six months. However, 79 percent of them know it's their responsibility.

When culturally Christianity declines, convictional Christianity has the chance to shine. We know it's our responsibility to share the gospel with our friends and family, might we have the courage to begin doing so.

For more information and more statistics, please visit .