

These Are the Top 5 Reasons People Leave Church, Study Reveals

New research reveals that 31 percent of the adult U.S. population, approximately 65 million people, were at one time involved in church but have since left. This is approximately equal to the number of people still regularly attending church.

The study also found that more than 10 percent of adults still attending church are on their way out the door.

The top five reasons people gave for leaving are:

1. The church was too judgmental.
2. The church bureaucracy was stifling.
3. They didn't like the lecture style of preaching.
4. The church was not where they encountered God.
5. The church took a social or political stance they disagreed with.

The research was conducted by Dr. Josh Packard, director of the Social Research Lab at the University of Northern Colorado, for the purpose of understanding the size, make-up and motivations of the formerly churched population in the U.S.

Packard's findings are summarized in a newly released report titled, *Exodus of the Religious Dones*. Packard also wrote about these trends in his book *Church Refugees: Sociologists Reveal Why People Are DONE With Church but Not Their Faith*

(Group).

According to Packard, "The people who are leaving the church in droves are not simply marginal Christians who decided to leave on a whim. They were at one time the church's staunchest supporters and leaders. And when they leave, they take irreplaceable institutional knowledge, experience and relational connections that will be hard to replace."