

Barna Trends

2018

**What's New and
What's Next at the
Intersection of
Faith and Culture**



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Barna Trends is an annual guide to the latest cultural, religious, and political trends designed to help you navigate a complex and ever-changing world.

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Barna Group is a visionary research and communications company headquartered in Ventura, California, with locations in Atlanta and London. Widely considered to be a leading source for actionable insights on faith and culture, Barna Group has conducted more than one million interviews over the course of hundreds of studies. Since it was founded by George and Nancy Barna in 1984, Barna Group has carefully and strategically tracked the role of faith in America, developing one of the nation's most comprehensive databases of spiritual indicators.

Barna Research provides a clear view of your key audiences and actionable insights through custom research, consulting, and resources. To find out more, visit barna.com/services.

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Data and Truth

**An Introduction by David Kinnaman,
President of Barna Group**

Welcome to *Barna Trends 2018*. Like the 2017 edition, this book is a compilation of our company's best research and most significant insights from the past year. In these pages, you'll find lots and lots of data (obviously) and also infographics, in-depth analyses, personal stories, and guest commentaries to tease actionable wisdom out of the information.

One of the differences in this edition of *Barna Trends* is a main feature in which we focus on "The Truth about a Post-Truth Society" (page 116). The phrase "post-truth" has caught on among political observers as a tidy encapsulation of our cultural moment, a time when it's hard for many people to tell the difference between facts and "alternative facts" or between truth and "my truth." Yes, it is glib, but post-truth is also a fair summary of broader cultural realities that have massive implications now and in the coming years for how Christians live, work, and serve. If there are no facts that everyone accepts as fact, is it possible to change anyone's mind—including our own? What does it look like to raise godly children in a culture where moral and ethical standards are based on what is fair to the exclusion of other considerations—such as what is *true*?

Barna's mission is to help spiritual influencers understand the times and know what to do. We believe that understanding the reality of this post-truth society and knowing how to wisely respond is more urgent than ever for Christian leaders, parents, and teachers—not just for ourselves but also as we raise up the next generation of Jesus followers.

Gen Z (teens born after 1998) pops up quite a bit in this new edition of *Barna Trends*, including what they believe and why (page 175), who they spend time with (page 106), how they use tech (page 84), who and what influences them (page 158), their involvement in community and church youth programs (page 145), and how they view the world and their place in it. What they tell us indicates that some of the trends we've long identified among Millennials—24/7 access to everything, alienation from institutions and tradition, distrust of external authority—are further amplified in Gen Z. Plus, we're uncovering perspectives and ideas unique to this upcoming generation; they're not just "little Millennials." For example, Gen Z



is the first age cohort not to consider family as central to their sense of identity, even though the vast majority of them still lives at home. Mediated by social technologies, other influences exert enormous power to form young hearts and minds—and it's too early to say who these young people will become outside the formative structures that have shaped previous generations.

This is reality. What should the Christian community do about it?

In this post-truth moment lived both virtually and physically—of political and religious polarization (page 36), of too much information and too little understanding, of conversations that shed more heat than light—we want to say true things. More than that, we want to say true things that matter. The Barna team does this through well-designed research, obsessive number crunching, and careful analysis. Our hope is to wed data to truth in a union that bears the fruit of wisdom—on and offline, in ministry, in families, in churches, in schools, in businesses, and in communities—all to God's glory.

Barna Trends is part of that effort.



How to Use This Book

Barna Trends is packaged to suit a variety of reading experiences: personal interest, group discussion, sermon preparation, academic study, market research, and so on. Its content is divided into three broad sections:

- **Culture** covers mindsets and movements within the broader public, from the internet to the voting booth.
- **Life** has a more personal lens, taking a closer look at our workplaces, homes, schools, and daily routines.
- **Faith** focuses on the state of our spiritual lives, individually and collectively, in America and around the world.

Each of these topics is divided further into additional subcategories, feature-length reports, fast facts, and eye-catching infographics, shaped by Barna's most recent and relevant research.

The Barna team or trusted experts sometimes share personal observations and predictions in **Barna Takes** or **Q&As**, while **At a Glance** sets the stage for each section with concise, easily digestible blurbs and quotes.

Barna Trends is bookended with a number of resources to aid your reading and learning experience. Over the next



Interested in other projects from Barna Group? More information about Barna's research, services, speaking, books, and resources is available at barna.com

few pages, a special **Behind the Scenes** section (page 9) will give you a peek into how our data are collected and analyzed. Then an introductory **Glossary** (page 13) will define key terms that are foundational to our reporting. At the end of the book, there is a breakdown of the **Methodology** (page 214) used for the surveys and studies that make up *Barna Trends*. (You'll also catch brief summaries of this information throughout the book; for example, *n=1,000 | December 2017* means the corresponding data is from the survey responses of 1,000 individuals in December of 2017. Unless otherwise stated, all percentages refer to nationally representative samples of U.S. adults.) If you're looking for a specific subject or statistic, the **Index** (page 220) will direct you to the major themes, contributors, and topics of *Barna Trends*.

Finally, if you want more information, definitions, or commentary, visit barna.com or follow us on social media for updates about current and upcoming projects.

Behind the Scenes with Barna

As a religion and social research company, Barna has a mission to provide spiritual influencers with credible knowledge and clear thinking, enabling them to navigate a complex and changing culture through their ministry, work, or personal context.

That is *why* we do what we do—but along the way, we get a lot of questions about *how* we do it. For those curious about the nitty-gritty details of conducting research itself or about Barna’s role in collecting and interpreting data, we put together the following FAQ.

How does Barna choose topics to study and report on?

While Barna’s researchers and writers sometimes explore questions in regular population surveys related to their own cultural or religious interests, the majority of the topics comes from partner organizations. Parachurch ministries, foundations, and private companies come to Barna with particular questions about trends in culture, ministry, politics, education, and so on, and we work with them to devise a research approach to effectively study that subject.

Occasionally, these studies become online reports or printed monographs, magazine-style research reports published by the Barna team and client partners. These projects provide a deep dive into the data, incorporating different types of research with expert interviews and infographics to provide a holistic picture of the findings and help a particular audience implement them.

What do you mean when you refer to a “nationally representative sample”?

When surveying the general population, the goal of a nationally representative sample is to mimic the population among the U.S. as a whole. In other words, a completed survey is designed to represent the distribution of the U.S. adult population by region, ethnicity, age, gender, and educational attainment. We establish minimum and maximum ranges on respondents of various profiles. To make certain that the sample is representative of the general population, after completion of a survey, our researchers often apply minimal statistical weighting to balance those in categories with lower response rates.

Depending on the questions at hand, research can be focused organizationally—on an institution, network, or market—or

geographically—on a city, region, nation, or even group of nations. Each type of research focus takes on different requirements for audience and data collection methods. For example, if we’re doing internal research on an institution or network, we may not need or want the data to be representative of the nation but instead representative of that organization. Similarly, if we’re studying a research question in a city or region, we may want to supplement research in the general population with research on local influencers or leaders to better understand and compare their experiences to the experience of the broader community.

How do you find people to survey?

Due to an increasing number of households that do not have a landline telephone, at least half of a Barna phone survey includes adults interviewed on their cell phone. Telephone numbers are obtained through several reputable list brokers that offer consumer lists for purchase. Telephone samples include both listed and unlisted phone numbers. Interviewers place calls at various times of the day, various days of the week, and multiple times if necessary in order to minimize bias in respondents.

An increasingly common way that our team conducts research is via online surveys conducted with an online research panel. Our panel partners are carefully vetted to ensure we are finding “real people” to respond to our surveys. Participants in the panel are recruited using a controlled,

invitation-only method and are then put through multiple identity checks. For example, they must have a physical address and a working email address. All panelists are also required to double-opt in by confirming their interest through an additional email they receive. Digital fingerprinting collects data on their computer (operating system, browser version, etc.) that allows us to ascertain that they are a real person and that there are no duplicates in the file. Quality control checks are also included in the survey to make sure those who speed through the survey, give answers that don't make sense, fail trick questions, or appear unengaged are eliminated from our surveys, and, if multiple violations occur, from the research panel. Panelists are typically offered an incentive for their participation in the form of a gift certificate of some sort. Just as in telephone interviews, multiple reminders are sent to panelists to ensure that respondents are not just those who are the most eager to take the survey or who are more apt to check their email or answer the telephone often.

Using online and phone samples together allows the broadest distribution of individuals in the population an equal chance of participating in a survey, regardless of age, socioeconomics, geographical location, or other factors.

What is the state of phone vs. online polling?

Almost all American adults (95%) own a cell phone, including more than three out of four (77%) who own a smartphone, according to Pew Research.¹ A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control reports that as of May 2017, half of households (51%) did not have a landline telephone at home.² Additionally, more than one-third of households who own a cell phone and still have a landline (37%) say they answer all or most of their calls on their wireless phones. If combining cell phone-only households with the 15 percent of all households who have both a cell and landline phone but primarily or exclusively take their calls on their cell phone, nearly two-thirds of the adult population is considered unreachable by landline.

Barna found that the average adult cell phone user is 35 years old, compared to landline users, whose average age is 54. Cell users are also more likely to be male than female, more educated, a high earner, and an ethnic minority (though many of these numbers are also unlisted).

With declining response rates in telephone surveys (not as many people answer calls from an unknown caller or are willing to stay on the phone for a 15-minute survey) and rising costs of including cell phone interviews, researchers are finding the reliability of online surveys is increasing while the reliability of phone interviews is decreasing. Additionally, online surveys are less expensive to

run, offer the researcher the opportunity to show graphics or videos, and are easier for respondents to complete at their convenience when they are able to pay attention. The differences between data collected online and by telephone is relatively small, with a 3–5 percent difference in responses.

Of most importance, telephone surveys are more susceptible to “social desirability bias,” meaning that people are more likely to give answers that paint them in a positive light when they are speaking with a live interviewer. Subjects covering sensitive topics are best conducted online, allowing people to answer anonymously or express negative attitudes. Barna’s area of research—covering faith topics as well as some intimate subjects like financial giving or use of pornography—often lends itself to online surveys as a more appropriate channel.

How do you go about interviewing pastors specifically?

Barna has developed a strong expertise in research with church leaders. Our participation rate in surveys with pastors is high; we’ve done over 14,000 interviews with pastors since 2006. Whether interviewed by phone or online, senior pastors are recruited from publicly available church listings covering 90 percent of U.S. churches that have a physical address and a listed telephone number or email address. Minimum and maximum ranges are placed on church size, denomination, and region to ensure representation. Minimum weighting is also used to match church characteristics from the National Congregation Study (by Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies).

Unlike the general adult population, senior pastors are often best reached by telephone. However, Barna also has

recruited a pastor panel from its phone surveys, and these pastors participate in frequent online surveys as well.

What is the significance of a survey sample's size?

What is the potential for error?

Like most survey researchers, Barna uses polling that includes a minimum of 1,000 people in each survey for a general population sample. You may wonder, *Can only 1,000 people be representative of the entire U.S. population of 235 million adults?* The answer is yes! Because it is not physically possible to survey everyone in the U.S., researchers use a sample, or a small selection of the population as a whole, rather than a census.

Assuming that the respondents are chosen in a random, representative way, we know that with 1,000 interviews, the sample has a 95 percent chance of being accurate by plus or minus 3 percent. That means there is a 95 percent chance that the true percentage of the group being sampled is in that range. If we surveyed 1,000 new people and asked them the same questions, we would see similar answers varying by no more than 3 percentage points for any given question.

The larger the sample size, the lower the error rate. When comparing the results of two subgroups (e.g., men vs. women), a different statistical testing procedure is followed and usually requires a greater sample size.

What is an "oversample"?

Sometimes Barna and its clients desire to target a specific demographic group and may conduct a larger portion of interviews among that group to look at subgroups within it. These additional interviews are conducted and combined with those who qualify naturally as part of the main sample (weighted to reflect the total

population). Larger sample sizes allow us to improve the reliability of predictions of smaller subsegments. For example, if we wanted to more closely examine the results among women—say, younger vs. older women—we may survey a larger number of women to decrease the error rate.

How does Barna approach analysis?

Albert Einstein said, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." While making an "evidence-based" or "data-driven" decision is important, it's not just enough to have data; decision-makers need to have the right data in the right context. Today, people have more data at their fingertips than ever before, and yet we're starved for wisdom. Many of us are trying to understand how, on a fundamental level, what we know really changes what we do.

Analysis and interpretation are the heartbeat of Barna's work, and we hold up as our standard the tribe of Isaachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32 (KJV) who "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." We rely on different elements to transform data from dry information into actionable wisdom by 1) committing ourselves to understanding the needs, pain points, and opportunities of our readers and partner(s); 2) exploring deeper insights through mixed methods and qualitative research; 3) employing advanced statistical analysis where needed to highlight relationships and interdependencies in the results; and 4) drawing on our experience of serving different ministries and arms of the Church for decades. Altogether, our team's goal is to help solve some of the most pressing problems and vexing concerns our partners and Christians face. Data are a foundational tool for understanding ourselves and our society, but it takes the in-depth relationships with our partners, our community, and our research topics to transform data into insight.

Because Barna has been working with churches and ministries for over 30 years, and because our staff is steeped in the Christian community, we are able to approach questions and topics of faith from an "insider" perspective. This means we don't just define someone's faith based on self-description ("I am an evangelical" or "I am a Christian") as mainstream research groups do, because we know that this can mean many things! Rather, we have a set of questions to assess both theological beliefs (such as "what will happen when you die?") and personal values ("my faith is very important in my life today"). Using a collection of questions we call Theographics™, Barna has tracked specific Christian subsegments for three decades (see page 13 for a full Glossary). We have conducted analysis on hundreds of thousands of interviews to identify and understand the relationships between someone's faith and who they are demographically, as well as how they live out their faith.

The Milestones of Research



Conception

Barna spends weeks honing in on the key questions to be answered in a study. This is the most critical phase for keeping sight of objectives before diving into the logistics. Focus groups may also be helpful during this time to gain a better understanding of how the general public or a specific audience regards the subject at hand.



Questionnaire Development

Our team uses a proprietary approach to map objectives to specific questions. Our editorial team, our researchers with various backgrounds, and even outside experts may add valuable insight at this stage, often in addition to a client's unique perspective. This phase sometimes takes longer for a really tricky topic (like Barna's study on pornography) or a unique approach (such as using visual polling to test emotional ideas).



Analysis

Typically, it takes a few weeks to organize and analyze the data from a survey. This also involves data checks for quality control and to ensure that our data are reliable. The analysis phase can be shorter for a simpler survey, or longer for one in which we are using more advanced analytics (we love a good regression model!) or searching for relationships between different data or subgroups of the population.



Fielding

Data collection usually takes one or two weeks for a broad sample of the population, or up to five weeks for a narrower or harder-to-reach audience, such as youth pastors.



Narrative Development

Finding the story (or stories) in a data set is the part our team loves most, as data never exist in a vacuum. Again, a variety of team members and stakeholders help offer a well-rounded interpretation of the findings, often referring back to the objectives mapped out prior to data collection.



Reporting

If producing a printed monograph or online report, Barna may take up to a few months to write and depict the data and create infographics. Our team also may link a survey to other existing Barna research or secondary information about a particular market or issue. Though some research is commissioned only for clients' private use, we thrive on providing critical context that helps readers make use of it.

Glossary—Theographics

Affiliation, Beliefs, and Practice

Self-identified Christians (sometimes called “all Christians” or just “Christians”) choose “Christian” from a list of religious affiliations.

Other faith choose a faith other than Christianity from a list of religious affiliations.

No faith choose “atheist,” “agnostic,” or “none” from a list of religious affiliations.

Born again Christians are self-identified Christians who have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important in their lives today and believe that, when they die, they will go to heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Non-born again (or notional) Christians are self-identified Christians who do not qualify as born again.

Practicing Christians are self-identified Christians who say their faith is very important in their lives and have attended a worship service within the past month.

Practicing Catholics are practicing Christians who describe themselves as Catholic.

Practicing mainline Protestants are practicing Christians who attend a church affiliated with a mainline Protestant denomination: American Baptist Churches USA, the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Presbyterian Church USA.

Practicing non-mainline Protestants are practicing Christians who attend a non-mainline church: charismatic/Pentecostal churches, churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, churches in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, and non-denominational churches, among others.

Non-practicing Christians are individuals who self-identify as Christian but do not qualify as practicing.

Churched adults have attended church, other than a special event such as a wedding or funeral, in the past 6 months.

Unchurched adults do not report attending a church service in the past six months.

Dechurched adults previously attended church but now qualify as unchurched.

Never churched adults have never attended church.

Evangelicals meet nine criteria, which include having made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and believing that, when they die, they will go to heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. The seven other conditions include saying their faith is very important in their lives; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent on church attendance or denominational affiliation, and respondents are not asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.”

To qualify as **post-Christian**, individuals must meet nine or more of the following factors: do not believe in God; identify as atheist or agnostic; disagree that faith is important in their lives; have not prayed to God in the last week; have never made a commitment to Jesus; disagree that the Bible is accurate; have not donated money to a church in the last year; have not attended a Christian church in the last 6 months; agree that

Jesus committed sins; do not feel a responsibility to share their faith; have not read a Bible in the last week; have not volunteered at a church in the last week; have not attended Sunday school in the last week; have not attended a religious small group in the last week; rank low on the Bible engagement scale; are not born again. Highly post-Christian individuals meet 13 or more of these 16 factors.

An **orthodox view of God** is the belief that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today.

A **biblical worldview** is defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today (used in worldview research).

Interested Christians are self-identified Christians, excluding those who have never been to a worship service and those who disagree that their faith is very important for their lives (used in generosity research).

Active Christians are those actively engaged in churchgoing, Bible reading, and prayer at least monthly (used in United Kingdom research).

Engaged Christians are self-identified Christians who are churching and agree strongly with the following statements: that the Bible is the inspired word of God and contains truth about the world; that they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today; that Jesus Christ was crucified and raised from the dead to conquer sin and death; that their religious faith is very important in their life today; that they have a responsibility to tell other people their religious beliefs (used in Generation Z research).

Relationship to Scripture

Bible engagement definitions are based on data collected for American Bible Society's annual State of the Bible study. Barna created a typology based on people's view of and level of engagement with the scriptures:

Bible engaged means that people have a "high" view of the scriptures and read the Bible four or more times per week. They view the Bible as a) the actual or b) the inspired Word of God with no errors, or as c) the inspired Word of God with some errors. They must also read, use, or listen to the Bible four times a week or more to be considered Bible engaged.

Bible friendly people also have a "high" view of the scriptures but read it fewer than four times in a week.

Bible neutral people have a lower, but not negative, view of the Bible. Those in this group choose neither of the top two definitions of the Bible (i.e., the "highest" views) nor the most skeptical statement. They tend to pick "middle options" and rarely or never read the Bible.

Bible skeptics believe the Bible is just another book of teachings written by men. The Bible skeptic selects the statement in the survey that reflects the "lowest" view of the Bible and rarely or never reads the Bible.

Bible hostile is a subset of Bible skeptics. They view the Bible as a book of teachings written by men that's intended to manipulate and control other people.

Bible-minded people believe the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches and have read the scriptures within the past week.

Bible readers read the Bible at least three to four times a year outside of a worship service, Mass, or church event.

Generosity Groups

Givers are motivated by “others-focused” goals: to provide for their family, to give charitably, to serve God with their money, or to leave a legacy for others (used in generosity research).

Keepers are motivated by “self-focused” goals: to support the lifestyle they want, to be content, to be

debt-free, or to earn enough to show how hard they work (used in generosity research).

Please see page 217 for a summary of Barna’s **risk metric** for pastors (used in *The State of Pastors* research).

Glossary—Demographics

Generations

Generation/Gen Z were between ages 13 and 19 at the time of the study.

Millennials were born between 1984 and 2002.

Generation/Gen X were born between 1965 and 1983.

Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964.

Elders were born prior to 1946.

Young adults refers to ages 19–25 and **teenagers** refers to ages 14–18 (used in Ireland research).

Ethnicity is based on respondents’ self-descriptions of their ethnicity. Those who describe themselves as Hispanic plus another ethnicity are coded as Hispanic only. To ensure adequate sample sizes, Barna usually segments the population only by the three largest ethnic groups:

White/Caucasian

Black/African American

Hispanic/Latino

Data about **Jews** include American adults who consider themselves to be “Jewish,” have at least one parent who is 100 percent Jewish, or both of their parents are no less than half Jewish (used in Jewish Millennials research).

Region

Northeast are residents of CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV, and Washington, DC.

Midwest are residents of IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, and WI.

South are residents of AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, and TX.

West are residents of AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, and WY.

Political Affiliation and Ideology

Democrats are registered as a Democrat at their current address.

Independents are registered as non-partisan at their current address.

Republicans are registered as a Republican at their current address.

Conservatives identify as “mostly conservative” when it comes to political issues.

Liberals identify as “mostly liberal” when it comes to political issues.



Trending in ... Culture

While hot topics and hashtags change every day (or sometimes multiple times a day), it can be tough to keep up—let alone to feel informed about the issues, movements, and mindsets that make up our communities.

For this reason, *Barna Trends* begins with a cultural primer, in hopes that readers might engage intelligently and compassionately with the world around them (yes, maybe even with the online

trolls). This opening section offers an in-depth overview of Americans' foundational beliefs about people and policy.

In *CULTURE*, Barna looks at trends such as:

- the presence of faith in the military
- America's current attitude toward refugees
- the factors (and scandals) that shaped the 2016 election
- pastors' cultural credibility crisis
- what people really think about "fake news"



Media



Politics



Perspectives

Featuring:

**Sarah Pulliam Bailey,
Mark Batterson, Joyce
Chiu, Jeremy Courtney,
Susan Mettes**



At a Glance: Culture

Married with Children? You Might Like Trump

n=1,109 | May 15–19, 2017

The GOP calls themselves the “family values” party, and whether or not you feel their policies back up this claim, the current GOP president certainly appeals to families. Mid-2017 Barna data revealed that stage of life and family seems to have a significant impact on whether an individual approves of President Donald Trump. For example, married U.S. adults are three times more likely than single adults to say he is doing a great job (23% vs. 7%), while those who have never been married are more inclined to think he is doing a poor job (37% vs. 24%) or worse than expected (35% vs. 26%). Married Americans are also more trusting of Trump (30% vs. 8% of never married Americans say “definitely”), yet a majority of single people says they don’t trust him at all (80% vs. 42% of married adults). To a lesser though still significant degree, being a parent of young children is connected to greater approval of and trust in Trump; more than a quarter of parents of minors say Trump’s performance has been great (26% vs. 10% of those with no kids under 18), and one in three definitely trusts him (31% vs. 15%).



**One in four
married U.S.
adults says
Trump is doing
a great job**



Goodnight, TV

What is the last thing the American parent does before bedtime? In a Barna survey for *The Tech-Wise Family*, the top response was “watch TV or a movie” (31%). Next up, more than one in five (22%) spend time with their spouse or significant other. Though 70 percent of parents admit to sleeping with their phone next to them, just 10 percent say checking social media is the last thing they do before going to sleep.

*n=1,201 U.S. parents of children age 4–17 |
January 25–February 4, 2016*



Undocumented Questions

More than half of American adults (52%) disagree that amnesty and/or citizenship should be granted to undocumented immigrants under 18 (32% strongly, 20% somewhat). Thirty-nine percent agree with offering amnesty to minors (14% strongly, 25% somewhat), while 9 percent are unsure where they stand on this issue. A majority of Hispanic (55%) and black (50%) Americans supports this amnesty provision at least somewhat, compared to 32 percent of white Americans.

n=1,097 | April 7–14, 2016



Christian Values and Criminal Justice

n=1,015 | June 5–9, 2017

The vast majority of Americans (87%) feels that the primary goal of the justice system should be restoration for all involved. Christian beliefs seem to encourage this hope for holistic justice. For example, according to a Barna study in partnership with Prison Fellowship, practicing Christians (35%) are more likely than the national average (23%) to strongly agree that, because of their values, it is important to care for prisoners. Evangelicals are most convinced (44% strongly agree). Yet more than half of practicing Christians (53%) still agree at least somewhat that “it’s important to make an example out of someone for certain crimes, even if it means giving them a more severe punishment than their crime deserves.” When asked if their values make them willing to advocate for criminal justice reform, all Americans (24% strongly agree) and practicing Christians (29% strongly agree) are more in sync.



One in five prayerful Americans prays most often for global injustices

Nation, World Rank Low on Prayer Lists

Among American adults who report praying at least once in the past three months, one in four (24%) says the content of their prayers most often pertains to the nation or government. One-fifth (20%) most often prays for global problems and injustices. These broader petitions, however, rank much lower than other more personal issues. Before global and national interests, prayerful Americans cover: giving thanks (62%), family and community needs (61%), guidance in crisis (49%), health and wellness (47%), confession (43%), safety (41%), peace (37%), and blessings for meals (37%).

n=794 U.S. adults who've prayed in the last three months | June 5–9, 2017



I think that the time and era we are in is ripe for engagement with intercultural ministry. I use the term *intercultural* because it is more about the interweaving of cultures into a particular ethos rather than simply having multiple cultures. In other words, it is too simple to have ‘many cultures’ present, without ever interweaving them into the church or ministry. Moreover, interculturalism is about removing hegemonic authority and disrupting dominance from one group. Thus, the term is much more appropriate and applicable.”

—*Daniel White Hodge, director of the Center for Youth Ministry Studies and associate professor of youth ministry at North Park University in Chicago, in Barna’s The State of Youth Ministry*



Examining Abortion Funding

n=1,097 | April 7–14, 2016

One of President Trump's first acts was to sign an executive order barring United States aid from any nongovernmental organization that also provides abortion counseling or services internationally. Since then, his administration has taken other bold measures to restrict abortions, such as aiming to cut federal funding for Planned Parenthood. These moves have had a predictably polarizing affect on both pro-life and pro-choice camps within the country, and Barna observed this divide when asking American adults whether they feel government funding should go to organizations that promote abortion. Roughly half (49%) say it shouldn't, 10 percentage points more than those who say such funding should be permitted (39%). The groups are split by 12 percent of adults who are unsure if this is an appropriate use of government aid. Democrats are less certain that the government should support these organizations (25% absolutely, 30% possibly) than Republicans are certain that it shouldn't (58% definitely not, 15% probably not). Evangelicals are the group most opposed (78% definitely not), while liberals are the group most in favor (39% absolutely).



“

I believe that God is the God of all life, and that his Word reveals the most inspiring model for thriving economies. To separate biblical principles such as creativity, just wages, human dignity, and stewardship from the workplace is to set our societies up for failure. Only holistic Christianity that incorporates faith into the whole life—uniting work, ministry, worship, and family—will succeed in bringing the reality of God's presence to the professional realm. When believers engage vocation as an act of worship to God (see Colossians 3:23–24), they introduce the strongest work ethics into the marketplace. They become modern, Spirit-filled Bezalels (see Exodus 31:1–5) who are noted for their skill and knowledge in all kinds of work, modeling righteous living in their local cultures and pointing their neighbors to hope-filled community in Christ.”

—Svetlana Papazov, founder of Real Life Church and Real Life Center for Entrepreneurial and Leadership Excellence in Richmond, Virginia, in Barna's The State of Pastors

A Political Snapshot of Faith Segments

Barna's research reveals much about the politics of America's five dominant faith segments (see Glossary on page 13 for full definitions). Here's how they differ in meaningful ways when it comes to their views on some of the most contentious issues of the day.

- Almost half of religious skeptics (48%) see themselves as environmentalists. Several groups—adherents of other faiths (43%), notional Christians (39%), and non-evangelical, born again Christians (36%)—are clustered pretty closely in claiming this label. Nearly one in five evangelicals (18%) identifies as an environmentalist.
- A majority of skeptics supports the Black Lives Matter movement (53%), the most of any segment, followed by adherents of other faiths (51%), notionals (38%), and non-evangelical born agains (36%). Evangelicals are the holdout here; just 18 percent identify with Black Lives Matter.
- Skeptics are also the group with the highest percentage of LGBT advocates (66%), with a notable drop before those of other faiths (47%). Four in 10 notionals (39%) and more than a quarter of non-evangelical born agains (27%) support LGBT rights. A small minority of evangelicals takes this commonly liberal stance (4%).
- Evangelicals are actually as likely as notional Christians to own a gun (30% each), and non-evangelical born agains top them with 37 percent. About one in five skeptics (22%) is a gun owner, and adherents of other faiths have the smallest percentage in this category (10%).

n=1,097 | April 7–14, 2016



Few Trust Hollywood for Headlines

When celebrities lend their voice to discussing a particular cause, policy, or current event, it can occasionally provide a helpful push for awareness. But often—and all over the internet—it simply prompts pleas for entertainers to “stick to their day jobs.” The bottom line? Americans don’t trust big Hollywood names on the issues. Just 6 percent say celebrities are a credible source of news. (Politicians don’t fare much better, with trust from just 7 percent.) Millennials (14%) are the group most likely to give celebrities the benefit of the doubt. Those with full-time jobs (11%), higher salaries (11% of those making \$50K+ annually), or college degrees (9%) are also fairly willing to trust celebrities for news.

n=1,021 | February 8–14, 2017

