

The Great

Dechurching

Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?



Jim Davis and Michael Graham

with Ryan P. Burge

Foreword by Collin Hansen

RELIGION

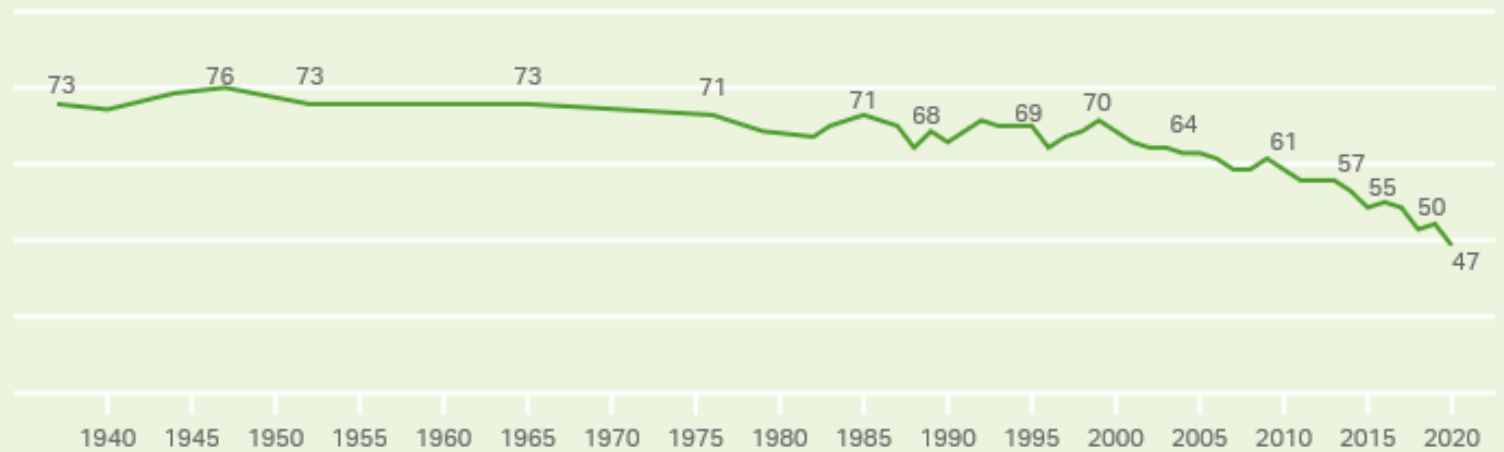
Religious 'Nones' are now the largest single group in the U.S.

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Church Membership Among U.S. Adults Now Below 50%

Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue or mosque?

— % Yes, member



Based on annual aggregated data, usually based on two surveys

GALLUP

1 THESSALONIANS
Faith for Today & Hope for Tomorrow

1 THESSALONIANS

*Faith for
Today*

&

*Hope for
Tomorrow*



Background (Acts 17:1-9)

- During his 2nd missionary journey, Paul and companions visit Thessalonica
- It is the capital of the Roman-controlled Macedonia
- After preaching at the Synagogue for three weeks, and likely more time ministering outside the synagogue, many Jews and Gentiles come to faith
- Fierce opposition arises leading Paul and his companions to flee



- ## Background (1 Thessalonians)
- Out of concern for the young Thessalonian church, Paul sends Timothy to check on their welfare
 - Timothy visits and then reunites with Paul in Corinth—delivering good news about the Thessalonians perseverance in the faith
 - Paul writes 1 Thessalonians (to a church that is possibly still just 6 months old!)

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy...

1 Thessalonians 1 (ESV)

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...Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1 (ESV)

How Does The Gospel Spread in a Post-Christian Society?

1 Thessalonians 1

The Gospel must be...
Proclaimed
Embraced
& Amplified

The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed

...because our gospel came to you ***not only in word, but also in power*** and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1 Thessalonians 5

To Proclaim the Gospel, You Must Use Words

And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”

Acts 17:2-3

The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed

...because our gospel came to you ***not only in word, but also in power*** and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1 Thessalonians 5

Our Words Must Be Accompanied by Changed Lives

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you ***not only the gospel of God but also our own selves***, because you had become very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed



**Don & Carol Richardson,
Missionaries to the Sawi**

The Redemptive Analogy of the Peace Child



The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed



**The Sawi worshiping
today from *Never The
Same* documentary**

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The Gospel Must Be Embraced

People Embrace the Gospel Because...

They Have Been Chosen

For we know, brothers loved by God, that *he has chosen you...*

1 Thessalonians 1:4

The Gospel Must Be Embraced

People Embrace the Gospel Because...

God the Holy Spirit is at Work

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for *you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit...*

1 Thessalonians 1:6

The Gospel Must Be Embraced

People Embrace the Gospel Because...

It Brings Freedom From Slavery

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how *you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...*

1 Thessalonians 1:9

...mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father *your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

The Gospel Must Be Amplified

For not only has ***the word of the Lord sounded forth from you*** in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Sounded forth = *exécheó* (Greek): to make a loud sound



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The Gospel must be...
Proclaimed
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23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

1 Corinthians 11:23-26



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