



Membership Update



November 2008

Mission America Coalition Update

News and Trends

Christian Marketplace Influencers
Executive Marketplace Intelligence for Ministry Decision Makers!

Outreach 100 For the first time since *Outreach* magazine has compiled its annual report of the largest churches in America, all 100 churches (103 this year) had weekend attendance of 7,000 or higher. Topping the list again was Lakewood Church in Houston with 43,500 people, followed by Second Baptist Church in the same city with 23,659, and then North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, GA., with 22,557. Overall, the combined attendance of all 103 churches was 1,128,451, which is an increase of 111,527 people from '07. Some well-known churches showed a drop in attendance over the last year: Lakewood (Pastor Joel Osteen), Willow Creek Community Church (Pastor Bill Hybels) - #4 this year - and Saddleback Church (Pastor Rick Warren). (The Outreach 100, '08)

"Fireproof" Boosted by grass-roots support and bulk ticket purchases from churchgoers and some Christian retailers, "Fireproof" - a drama starring Kirk Cameron— has grossed more than \$25 million, making it the number #1 among films released on 1,000 screens or fewer (except Hannah Montana 3-D). The faith-based film was produced with an all-volunteer, 1,200-person cast and crew and a \$500,000 budget. (Various Sources 10/08)

Gideons International celebrated the 100th anniversary of their first Bible placement on October 4. In 1908 in Louisville, Ky., a Gideon trustee proposed the group furnish a Bible for each hotel bedroom in the U.S., and Gideons International is now in more than 180 countries worldwide and has given away 1.3 billion Bibles, enough Bibles to reach almost 1 in 5 people on the earth. (christianpost.com)

Church Drop Outs in College A UCLA Higher Education Research Institute study finds the percentage of college students who never attend religious services nearly doubles from the time they enter college until their junior year. The reason, according to researchers, isn't indoctrination by faculty but the influence of fellow students. And at most colleges, liberal peer groups are more common than

Dear MAC Partner,

Thanksgiving is a wonderful season of the year. It offers us so many opportunities to give thanks to God - and to others. Regardless of our state in life, we all have multiple reasons to be giving thanks to our Lord day by day. How gracious and generous He has been with us in providing His Son to be our Savior and Lord. Thanks be to God!



This Thanksgiving season gives us opportunity, also, to share our sincere thanks with those around us. When we share our thanks with others, it can be a wonderful point of contact or bridge to those for whom we have been praying and caring. Giving thanks can be a significant step in sharing the love of Jesus with others.

I pray that you will enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving along with your loved ones. *"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift."* (II Corinthians 9:15)

Prayerfully yours - in Christ,

Paul Cedar
Chairman

Mission America Coalition News

Mayor Works with Church in Tuscaloosa to Transform City

In Tuscaloosa, Ala., Mayor Walter Maddox has a vision to see seven of the worst crime and poverty areas in the city renovated, physically and spiritually. He has asked Restoring Our Community - a Loving Our Communities to Christ partner - to administrate the "Hope Initiative." This includes pastors doing late night "drive through" prayer with police officers, prayer walking broken neighborhoods, training in life



conservative ones. (The Church Report 10/14/08)

Consumers Stay Younger Longer The traditional demographic definition of "youth" is no longer applicable in today's society, and marketers should target consumers based upon their engagement and participation in youth culture rather than on their chronological age, according to the "Golden Age of Youth" study from Viacom Brand Solutions International (VBSI). "Contemporary youth should now be defined as 'the absence of functional and/or emotional maturity,' reflecting the fact that accepting traditional responsibilities such as mortgages, children and developing a strong sense of self-identity / perspective is occurring later and later in life," the study said.

Mini-Denominations "Megachurches are creating around them structures and especially functions that once were done by the denominations. They are creating alternative ways for churches and for religious people to get resources to do ministry, to do missions, to connect with other churches," says Scott Thumma, author of *Beyond Megachurch Myths* and Hartford Seminary professor. (Christian Post 9/13/08)

NPO Burnout More than 45% of young nonprofit professionals recently surveyed predicted their next job would not be with a charity. The respondents cited burnout and low pay as the main reasons. The survey also found charities are doing little to prepare younger staff to assume leadership roles. More than 70% of the more than 1,650 young workers surveyed don't ever expect to serve as chief executive at a charity. (*Nonprofit Times* 9/8/08)

We Love TV Telecom analyst Chris King says if people are forced to trim spending, they will give up premium cable TV such as HBO, but they don't want to give TV up entirely, no matter how bad the economy is. Some Wall Street analysts say people may be less willing to sacrifice it in a recession. (Wired Blog Network 9/16/08)

Security Checks 60% of churches pastored by Baby Boomers (ages 43 to 61) more frequently conduct security checks for children's ministry workers, compared with 52% among pastors 42 or under and 55% among those 62 or older. (Barna Update 11/6/07)

Christian Book Buyers "Active" Christians spend 66% more on Christian books than do "Professing," "Private," "Liturgical," and "Cultural" Christians combined. They also buy 63% of their books on impulse, and more of them at Christian retail stores than any other retail outlet. (CBA Retailer's +Resources 9/08)

Game Kids According to a new Pew

skills, mentoring troubled young people, vocational training, and more - all with freedom to share Christ. LC2C Coach Tom White helped launch the Hope Initiative at an October event with many pastors and congregations present. The mayor also attended the annual pastors prayer summit to share his vision, and the church and ministry leaders prayed over him (pictured above.) He said, "We cannot just toss money and programs at these problems. Broken people need to be changed from the inside out by the love and power of Jesus Christ."

Collaborative Relief Efforts Offer "Eight Days of Hope"

Francis Frangipane, city leader, and Joe Airhart, prayer leader, with Serve the City - the Loving Our



Communities to Christ partner in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, sent MAC reports about flood relief efforts there.

For most people outside of Cedar Rapids, the terrible flooding Iowa experienced this summer seems like ancient history, but of course, it is not. Serve the City has received almost \$130,000 to meet immediate needs of individuals, churches, and ministries affected by the flood and help in rebuilding.

Teams of individuals from our churches, traveling in twos and threes, armed with the Holy Spirit and prayer, have gone to the hardest hit areas in search of residents trying to clean or rebuild their homes. As they visit, the teams ask the flood victims if they can pray for them. They tell the homeowner that the Lord wants them to know He hasn't forgotten them. They then give them a check for up to \$1,000. To date, everyone who received prayer wept as the Lord renewed their faith and touched their lives with His love.

In collaboration with 8 Days of Hope, more than 1,350 volunteers from 38 states, four Canadian Provinces, and many local churches in Cedar Rapids will go out into the city to provide hands-on rebuilding help to local citizens. Prayer volunteers are covering the city in prayer from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Christians will come to help with painting, electrical and mechanical work, construction, plumbing, laundry, delivering meals, and more. This outreach is truly the prayer-care-share lifestyle in action and will further reach the community with the love of Jesus.

6th Annual Pacific NW Regional City Impact Roundtable

Internet & American Life Project survey, 97% of U.S. teens (12-17) play video games; that's 99% of boys and 94% of girls. (USA Today 9/17/08)

Doctrinal Dilemma While evangelicals are 50% more likely to give "ideal" answers to the questions about what churchgoers believe on 12 historical doctrines, 1 out of 3 of their responses differ from what Protestants historically have believed. According to a LifeWay survey, only 54% of churchgoers have what B&H Publishing Group President Brad Waggoner considers a "high view" of Scripture. Another 18% somewhat agree the Bible "is the written Word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches." 58% strongly agree "eternal salvation is possible through God's grace alone; nothing we can do can earn salvation." The study also showed a majority of Protestant churchgoers believe a person can find eternal life in religions other than Christianity. 1 in 3 churchgoers disagree strongly with this, while another 8% somewhat disagree. Close to a third of churchgoers cannot strongly affirm the Trinity or the resurrection. (*The Shape of Faith to Come*, Brad J. Waggoner, B&H Publishing Group 2008)

People & Transitions:

- Dr. Doug Nuenke had been commissioned as the new International President of the Navigators.
- Rev. Wayne Pederson is HCJB Global's new president. Pederson, formerly vice president of Moody Broadcasting, will replace David Johnson, who stepped down in June after serving for a seven-year period.
- Lauren Libby, currently senior VP and CEO of the Navigators, has accepted the position of president for international Christian broadcaster Trans World Radio, effective December 1.

Family A team of researchers from Child Trends, a nonpartisan research center, reported that "family structure clearly matters for children, and the family structure that helps children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage." (*LA Times* 9/19/08)

Men of Faith Men are significantly more likely to claim no religious affiliation than are women; nearly 1 in 5 men have no formal religious affiliation, almost 7 percentage points more than women. Men are also twice as likely to say they are atheist or agnostic as compared with women (5.5% vs. 2.6%). Women are more likely to be affiliated with nearly every major Christian group; nearly 54% of women are Protestant, for instance, vs. 49% of men. But men are slightly more likely than women to associate with other religious traditions, including

December 1 - 2, 2008

Cityreachers will come together in Portland, Ore., in December to share what they are learning about the process of discerning God's heart for cities, and implementing His will with a diverse mix of personalities, cultures, callings, and gifts. The gathering will include discussion of previous CIR speakers including:

- George Otis (2006) "Taking 2 Chronicles 7:14 Literally"
- Jim Herrington (2007) "Building Trust in Relationships"
- Reid Carpenter (2007 National CIR speaker, El Paso) Leadership team dynamics, funding, partnering with city and county governments
- Ray Bakke (2008 National CIR, Boston) "How to Exegete Your City"

[More info.](#)

Recruiting Volunteers Online with Andrew Sears

Thursday, November 20 at 8 a.m. Pacific Time

Join this month's cityreaching call with special guest Andrew Sears from TechMission and ChristianVolunteering.org on Thursday, November 20 at 8 a.m. Pacific Time, hosted by Jarvis Ward. Mission America has a new partnership with TechMission and ChristianVolunteering.org and a new volunteer-matching section on our website at www.missionamerica.org. Mission America affiliated organizations can post local volunteer opportunities in their ministries on the site, and volunteers can search opportunities by location, service area (children youth, food ministry, etc.) or skill (web design, etc.). Hear more about this great opportunity for your ministry on the call.

To take part in this call, email info@cityreaching.com. The phone number and participation code will be sent to you via email.

On the third Thursday of each month, Mission America Coalition's City and Communities Ministries hosts a conference call with a seasoned city-reacher. Information on upcoming calls and transcripts of previous calls are available online.

[More info.](#)

Evangelism News

Sustainable Youth Ministry

What would it take to build a ministry that withstands the revolving door of youth ministers?



Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 9/08)

Megachurches surprisingly are more intimate communities than congregations of less than 100. Mega-church growth is mostly due to the efforts of their current members, who tend to witness to friends and strangers much more often than members of small churches. (*What Americans Really Believe* by Rodney Stark, Baylor University Press, 2008)

Miracles Baylor religion researchers report nearly half of Americans have had at least 2 supernatural encounters. Among the most common religious and mystical experiences reported by Americans include protection from harm by a guardian angel (55%); calling by God to do something (44%); witnessing a miraculous, physical healing (23%); and hearing the voice of God (20%). (*What Americans Really Believe* by Rodney Stark, Baylor University Press, 2008)

"Wicca is the fastest-growing religion in America, set to be the third largest religion by 2012. The numbers of adherents are doubling every 30 months," claims Marla Alupoicei, co-author of *Generation Hex* with Dillon Burroughs. The Pacific Northwest, the mountain states (New Mexico and Colorado) and areas near Salem, MA, are the strongest in the U.S. (Christian Post 9/21/08)

Financially Burdened The U.S. Census Bureau finds 15% of American homeowners with a mortgage spent half or more of their income on housing in '07. Most lenders consider a homeowner spending 30% or more on housing costs to be financially burdened; this definition now covers almost 38% of U.S. homeowners. The slightest financial problem can put a family in a precarious financial position into the realm of foreclosure. (AP 9-23-08)

Growing in Lean Times A recent Leadership Network study reveals despite economic declines 30% of the responding churches are planning for a capital funds drive for new property or building during '09 vs. 44% in '06. 25% will conduct a fund drive for the poor or needy in their communities. 23% plan to plant multiple new congregations. 74% expect their income will increase next year, while 12% expect smaller income. (The total current budget of surveyed churches averages \$6.1 million.) 26% anticipate moderate and significant increases in spending on facilities, followed by missions giving (20%), information technology (16%), staff salaries (14%), communication (13%), programs (10%) and staff continuing education (4%). 52% anticipate adding 1 to 4 new staff members, 22% expect to add more, 15% plan no changes, and 11% expect staff reductions. (christianpost.com)

Based on his own experience as a youth minister and on his work with churches in crisis, Mark DeVries pinpoints problems that cause division and burnout. He then provides the practical tools and structures needed to lay a strong foundation for ministry - one that isn't built solely on a person. [More info.](#)



Understanding Youth Culture to Impact Youth Culture

The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding is a nonprofit organization committed to building strong families by serving to bridge the cultural-generational gap between parents and teenagers. It believes it is important to "understand culture to impact culture." It offers a free weekly e-mail resource that provides subscribers with the latest youth culture news, research, and trends. It also publishes *Engage* a quarterly journal of youth culture, available for a fee, as well as other resources on its website. [More info.](#)

Youth and Children Praying in Every Nation

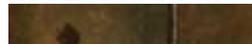
With the birth of IHOP in the USA and the 24-7 prayer movement in the UK (both in 1999), a new focus and momentum on youth in prayer was developed. Etienne Piek of the Global Day of Prayer team in South Africa reports that today, children and young people are gathering in 24-7 prayer rooms in almost every nation on the face of the earth. Typical to this generation, there is no formal network linking these different movements. "This is a generation that doesn't like to be bound by structures, formal meetings, and big conferences," says Piek. "Rather it is known for its informal networking: tribes gather and share their stories, and a global family is forming in a way that is unprecedented through pilgrimage and the Internet." [More info.](#)

Christian Reality TV Shows Target Youth

Several Christian reality TV programs have hit the Web and the airwaves in recent weeks, including "THEDRIVEtv," which debuted in July, and "The Uprising" and "Revolve: Rockin' the Road" entering the picture in October. All three programs target Christian youth and look to impact them with a positive message through exciting adventures and live, unrehearsed ministry. [More info.](#)



The 29:59 Plan - Re-released



"Praying Pastor" interviewed

10/08)

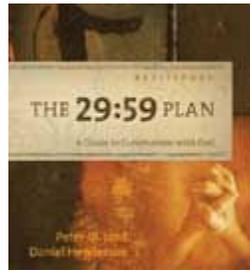
Moral Compass The Knights of Columbus Marist Poll finds more than 70% of Americans believe the nation's moral compass is pointed in the wrong direction. 70% oppose marriages between men or marriages between women. (CR Online 7/15/08)

Spiritual Disciplines Just 17% of Protestant churchgoers in America demonstrate a "decent" level of discipleship or spiritual maturity, claims Brad Waggoner, author of *Shape of Faith to Come: Spiritual Formation and the Future of Discipleship* (B&H 2008). This minority scored 80% or higher on a Spiritual Formation Inventory, developed to measure key areas of Christian discipleship. Waggoner writes, "At present I believe that too many of us are settling for easy goals. It is one thing to grow a church numerically. It is quite another to seek the transformation of heart, mind, and character." Other findings show only 16% of Protestant churchgoers read their Bible daily, while another 20% read it "a few times a week." 23% "agreed strongly" with the statement, "When I come to realize that some aspect of my life is not right in God's eyes, I make the necessary changes." 47% admitted to just "going through the motions," often during the singing and prayer portions of worship services, while 25% strongly disagreed. In the past 6 months, 29% said they shared with someone how to become a Christian twice or more, 14% did so once and 57% not at all. 55% of churchgoers believe they grew spiritually over the past year, yet only 3.5% showed a statistically significant level of growth. (Christian Post 10/14/08)

Shoppers 62.3 million adult consumers will begin holiday shopping before Thanksgiving, while 36% say they begin shopping between Thanksgiving and December 15th, and 26% start between December 16th and 23rd. Approximately 2% wait until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. (Center for Media Research Brief 10/17/08)

Take a Break According to a recent survey, executives polled said their average lunch break is 35 minutes (7 minutes less than 5 years ago). The OfficeTeam survey finds managers work through their lunch period an average of 3 days a week. Chances are if a manager or supervisor isn't taking a lunch, their employees feel they shouldn't either. Professionals need time away from their desks to recharge and remain productive. (OfficeTeam.com 9/17/08)

Green Christians 78% of self-identified Christians agree they would like to see their fellow Christians take a more active role in caring for God's creation in a way that is both informed and biblical. Among evangelicals, 90% would like Christians



Daniel Henderson about the re-release of a classic guidebook to praying for today's generation – *The 29:59 Plan*, which Henderson co-authored with Peter Lord. The book has sold more than 600,000 copies since 1976. Now it's been "revised,"

according to Henderson, to reach a new generation. The book is a three-ring binder prayer guide to help believers spend 30 minutes a day in balanced, biblical prayer. [More info.](#)

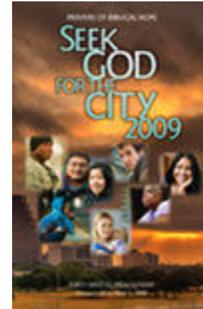
Praying Pastors Project

The National Prayer Committee recently launched The Praying Pastors Project - a fundraising and distribution strategy that will create a network of community coordinators to solicit funds from sponsors in order to provide the book *Giving Ourselves to Prayer* and other prayer resources to all the pastors in the US. [More info.](#)



New Seek God for the City Available for 2009

Seek God for the City offers a great way to pray toward Easter by uniting focused prayer for 40 days ending on Palm Sunday. The booklet opens up a 40-day experience of praying the desires of God with vivid, relevant prayers from the promises of Scripture. Many say *Seek God for the City* brings them to a greater maturity in their praying. These prayers are designed to help lift your prayers beyond your own concerns. We will be asking God to do things on a "city-size" scale, bringing His kingdom and transforming our culture. [More info.](#)



Pumpkin Partnership

"It's said God works in mysterious ways, and who would have thought pumpkins could mean so much to alleviate world hunger?" So says Ian Ferguson, chairman of Iona Presbyterian Church's pumpkin committee. This year Iona Presbyterian Church and 14 partnering Annapolis Valley churches and the New Minas Rotary Club in Nova Scotia, Canada, have harvested 4,000 pumpkins to sell at parking lots, churches, and malls, at no set price. Nearly 3,500 have already been sold, with the funds (\$20,000) donated to Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a Christian Response to Hunger program, via the Valley Foodgrains Project. [More info.](#)

to take a more active role in caring for creation, with 67% agreeing strongly. 52% of Catholic churchgoers, 62% of mainline Protestants and 67% of non-mainline Protestants agree. (Barna Update 9/22/08)

Retire? According to Boomer Project research, about one-third of Boomers have no idea when they'll retire, and another one-third plan to continue working when they retire - whenever that is. For a majority of Boomers, "retirement" is not the major life event it was for the previous generations. (Boomer Project 10/06)

Empty Tomb Inc.'s annual U.S. giving report finds a general downward trend in church member giving through '06. For example, Empty Tomb estimates it would cost about \$11 per U.S. Southern Baptist to fund the additional 2,800 missionaries needed to get the Gospel to all unreached groups by 2010. Instead, the denomination's '08 goal of \$170 million to support existing missionaries is the equivalent of asking each Southern Baptist to donate 31¢ more than last year. By contrast, Americans spent \$310 million in first-day sales for the Grand Theft Auto IV video game. The report estimates that at \$26 a year per U.S. evangelical, evangelization of unreached groups by 2010 could be funded through evangelical-affiliated denominations and other mission agencies. Also, it would cost each U.S. church member 8¢ a day to reach the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal to cut infant mortality by 66% by 2015. (CR Daily 10/18/08)

Faith Matters A Brigham Young University study finds religious involvement (regardless of the denomination) makes teens half as likely to use marijuana as their peers without religious participation. "After we accounted for family and peer characteristics," said Stephen Bahr, one of the study's authors, "there was an independent effect that those who were religious were less likely to do drugs, even when their friends were users." (Pastor's Weekly Briefing 10/17/08)

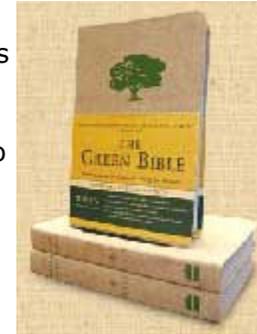
Christian Music Sales Decline While the Christian music industry anticipates a strong quarter with a string of big releases from top names like multi-award-winning Michael W. Smith, it continues to face major challenges. The three large Christian music companies and distributors have been wrestling with layoffs and changes in direction that have seen album sales decline 10% from '07. '07 sales of Christian albums (physical and digital) were down 14% from '06, but have declined only 7% so far in '08. (Christian E-tailing 10/9/08)

Fast Facts:

- The number of Americans who

Green Bible Highlights Creation Care

The Green Bible, which highlights verses and passages that speak of God's care for creation in green ink, is the latest eco-friendly Scripture to hit the market. The New Revised Standard Version Bible by HarperOne is clothed with a cotton linen cover and carries text printed on recycled paper using



soy-based ink. "The Green Bible is the first-ever specialty Bible that takes the issues of sustainability, stewardship of the earth, what many in the religious community call creation care," said publisher Mark Tauber. "I think it will surprise a lot of people of faith." [More info.](#)

Christian Students Hold First Creation Care Conference

Environmentally conscious students from more than a dozen campuses across the country recently met for the first national conference organized by a student-led, Christ-centered environmental network - Renewal. Student from 16 schools - including Moody Bible Institute in Chicago; Point Loma Nazarene in San Diego; Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.; and Duke University in Durham, NC - gathered on the campus of Eastern University in Pennsylvania from Oct. 16 to 19 with the hope of being inspired and equipped to lead their communities in becoming good stewards of God's creation. [More info.](#)

Three Churches Share Faith, One Location

Three churches in Coon Rapids, Minn., who are sharing meeting space are finding new collaborations as well. Olive Branch Lutheran Church, with a smaller, aging congregation, opened its doors to Waters of Life Outreach Ministry, a mostly African America church, to use its chapel. Then it began sharing its sanctuary with the Filipino American Christian Church. As a result of shared space, a council, including pastors and parishioners of the three churches, meets monthly to set goals, activities and projects for the trio. Outreach projects include the monthly Family Table meal and combined children's Bible study classes on Sundays. As they collaborate together, the churches also educate one another on their different cultures. [More info.](#)

Online Missionaries Reach the World

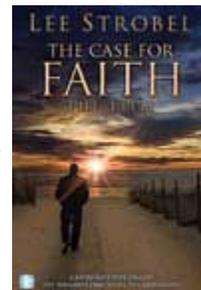
With the power of Internet technology, Christians are sharing the gospel with people in 191

- say they do not believe in God has remained at 4% for the past 63 years.
- 67% of Americans say they are "absolutely sure" heaven exists, and 17% think it "probably" does.
 - 73% of Americans believe hell absolutely or probably exists.
 - In '00, 48% of megachurches chose the label "evangelical" compared with 65% in '08.
 - Only 7% of megachurches labeled themselves charismatic in '08 vs. 14% in '00, while just 4% identify as Pentecostal compared to 11% in '00.
 - Church budgets often designate less than 10% of their income to missions, reports Eternal Perspectives.
 - More than 90% of the local church budget never leaves the U.S.
 - The U.S. Center for World Missions finds only 5.7% of giving to Christian causes goes to foreign missions.
 - 87% of foreign missions funds go for work among those who are already Christians, 12% among evangelized non-believers and 1% among unevangelized people groups.
 - 90% of Christian workers live in countries having 10% of the world's population.
 - The average American family spends 7% of its household income on food.
 - 10% of Americans age 65+ have recently turned to their families or charities for financial help.
 - The poverty threshold for a U.S. family of 4 in '07 was \$21,203. (U.S. Census Bureau 9/08)
 - 18% of U.S. children under 18 were in poverty in '07, up from 17.4% in '06. (U.S. Census Bureau 9/08)
 - U.S. teens spend \$170 billion per year of their disposable income on entertainment; this includes books.
 - Harris Poll reports 68% of Americans currently own a library card.
 - More than 2 million students are homeschooled in the U.S.
 - 52% of U.S. adults say they follow professional football.
 - 42% of American adults are single.
 - 54% of American unmarried adults are women; 46% are men.
 - 60% of those who are unmarried have never been married. 25% are divorced while 15% are widowed.
 - 16% of U.S. unmarried adults are age 65 or older.
 - In '06, 9% of U.S. households were headed by a single parent vs. 5% in '70.
 - 3 out of 5 Baby Boomers have nest eggs smaller than \$100,000.
 - The UN estimates there are 12.3 million people worldwide

countries around the world without leaving home. Global Media Outreach (GMO), has more than 71 Web sites divided by popular issues and topics that have helped more than 1.3 million people indicate a decision for Jesus Christ in 2007 alone. GMO boasts a volunteer force of some 2,000 online missionaries who reply via email to questions posted by seekers, skeptics, and Christians needing support. The ministry purposely creates Web sites that are easy to use and find as well as safe for individuals who are searching for God online to learn about the Gospel and connect to a Christian mentor. [More info.](#)

Journalist Investigates Toughest Objections to Christianity

In the movie "The Case for Faith," journalist Lee Strobel investigates the most emotional objections to Christianity confronted by believers and skeptics alike: "Why is Jesus the only way to God?" and "How could a loving God exist if there is evil and suffering in the world?" This Movie Event is a great outreach tool for churches and ministries. The movie event kit includes a site license, an exhibition DVD of the film, downloadable movie clips, trailer, discussion guide, posters, bulletin inserts, and tickets. [More info.](#)



Short-Term Mission Trip Goers

Despite the buzz in recent years about the popularity of short-term mission trips, a new survey found that few Americans, even among churchgoers, have gone on a short-term service trip. Only nine percent of Americans have ever been on a brief service trip, with churchgoers having only a slightly higher percentage (11 percent), according to the latest Barna Group survey. [More info.](#)

Fields of Faith Collaboration

As a collaboration among local churches, youth groups, and student athletes, Northwest Missouri State University and area high school



athletes celebrated the fourth annual "Fields of Faith" on October 8 at the university's Bearcat Stadium. "It's a student-to-student event. We just give area athletes the opportunity to share their own personal testimonies and stories with their peers," said Wes Simmons, representative from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) of

who work as slaves or in other forms of forced labor.

Information compiled and edited by Gary Foster, President of Gary D Foster Consulting, a firm that assists Christian ministries and product companies in solving management, marketing, donor/customer service and product development problems. Contact Gary at: 419.238.4082, GFosterCns@rmi.net or go to www.GaryDFoster.com.

northwest Missouri. "We're not relying on a big professional speaker. It's not entertainment; it's just the athletes and their stories." [More info.](#)

World Evangelical Alliance Meets



"One Lord, One Body, One Voice" was the theme that unified hundreds of evangelicals who gathered in Thailand in October for the World Evangelical Alliance's (WEA) General

Assembly. The five-day gathering brings together representatives from the WEA's 128 national alliances as they seek to strengthen connections and discern the global body's common vision. The General Assembly was followed by a major WEA initiative on November 9 in collaboration with Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors, and Gospel for Asia - The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. [More info.](#)

United Methodists Begin Effort to Plant 400 Churches

The United Methodist Church recently launched its initiative to plant 400 new churches in the next four years with an initial gift from a Christian businesswoman. Mary Watson, the wife of a former pastor, pledged \$400,000 to the 400 Fund campaign. Global Ministries, in addition to its goal of 400 new overseas congregations, also aims to start 650 new congregations in the United States. [More info.](#)

American Believe God Has Blessed America

Most Americans strongly believe that God has uniquely blessed America, and a similar majority believes that the United States should set the example as a Christian nation to the rest of the world, a survey released in November found. Sixty-one percent agree that America is a nation specially blessed by God, and 59 percent believe the United States should be a model Christian nation to the world, according to a poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc. for the PBS news program Religion & Ethics Newsweekly and the United Nations Foundation. [More info.](#)

Americans Praying for Finances, New Job

As the stock markets continue riding rollercoaster after rollercoaster and reports show the economy spiraling downward, Americans are looking toward heaven for signs of hope. When asked "What are you praying for these days?" nearly half of Americans who responded listed either financial relief or a new job, according to a new online poll by Guideposts.com. "Financial relief," the top

response, was cited by 32 percent of respondents. Meanwhile, 20 percent of those polled said they were praying for the "United States and our leaders." For 15 percent of respondents, a "new job" was the most pressing prayer topic. [More info.](#)

Collaborative Evangelism Calendar

New England Pastors and Ministry Leaders Prayer Summit

Nov. 17-20, New England. [More info.](#)

NW Women in Ministry Prayer Summit,

Nov. 17-20, Cannon Beach, Ore. [More info.](#)

Children's Pastors' Conference

Jan. 5-8, 2009, San Diego, Calif. [More info.](#)

Conservative Baptist Pastors Prayer Summit

Jan. 11-14, 2009, Arizona. [More info.](#)

Live Above Webcast

Feb. 7, 2009 [More info.](#)

Children's Pastors' Conference

Feb. 4-7, 2009, Nashville, Tenn. [More info.](#)

Grays Harbor Pastors Prayer Summit

Feb. 9-11, 2009, Grays Harbor, Wash. [More info.](#)

Lewis County Pastors Prayer Summit

Feb. 9-12, 2009, Lewis County, Wash. [More info.](#)

Wisconsin Women in Ministry Prayer Summit

Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2009. [More info.](#)

Transform World

April 21-24, 2009, Houston, Texas. [More info.](#)

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