

# Bible reading on rise, survey reveals

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—A survey shows the percentage of Americans who say they regularly read the Bible continues to increase.

The survey, conducted by the Barna Group, found 47 percent of respondents said they open the Bible on a weekly basis, up from just 31 percent in 1995 and 40 percent six years ago.

The survey also polled respondents on six other religious behaviors, including church attendance and attending small groups like Bible studies.

Forty-seven percent said they attend church on a weekly basis, up from 37 percent a decade ago, while 23 percent said they attend small- group functions affiliated with church.

Twenty-seven percent of those asked said they volunteer through church, while 24 percent said they attend Sunday school, up from 17 percent in 1996.

Increased participation in all of these religious behaviors at the same time marks the findings as unusual, said survey director George Barna.

"The intriguing possibility is that with most of our key behavioral measures showing increases at the same time, there is the possibility that this may herald a holistic, lasting commitment to engagement with God and the Christian faith," he said.

The Barna report was based on data taken from 1,003 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone. The Barna Group is a private, for-profit corporation in Ventura, Calif., that conducts research on spiritual development.

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