

Evangelicals have higher divorce rates, Baylor report says

February 11, 2014

WACO—Despite their strong pro-family values, evangelical Christians have higher than average divorce rates, according to findings by Baylor University researchers.

In fact, evangelicals are more likely to be divorced than Americans who claim no religion, the report from the [Council on Contemporary Families](#) revealed.



(Image: Council on Contemporary Families)The [council report](#) coincides with the 50-year anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which made it illegal to discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, national origin, religion or gender. The council's report, which included findings by a dozen researchers, dealt with changes in the past half century for each of the populations affected by the law—religious groups, racial and ethnic minorities and women.

Baylor's portion of the report dealt with 50 years of religious change, from

1964 to 2014. Other findings by Baylor researchers included:

- The proportion of Americans who do not identify with any religious tradition has grown dramatically—from 3 percent in the 1960s to 20 percent today—even though 90 percent of Americans professed a belief in God or a higher power.
- Protestants have declined in their share of the American adult population, from 70 percent in the 1950s to a little less than 50 percent today.
- The protracted decline in Protestant shares of the American population is largely due to the decline of Mainline Protestant denominations such as Methodists, Lutherans and Episcopalians, whose numbers have halved over the same time period.
- Evangelicals rapidly increased their share of the population until the early 1990s, but that segment has experienced some decline since then.
- The percentage of Catholics has remained steady, but their ethnic makeup has changed dramatically due to steady Latino immigration.
- The proportion of people who affiliate with non-Judeo-Christian religions has doubled since the 1950s.

Baylor researchers included Jerry Z. Park, associate professor of sociology, and Joshua Tom and Brita Andercheck, doctoral candidates in the department of sociology. For the analysis, Tom used the General Social Survey, conducted at regular intervals from 1972 to 2012. The 29 national samples taken through the history of the project have results in surveys of nearly 60,000 American adults