

Faith Digest

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Beliefs about human origins hold steady. Four in 10 Americans believe God created humans in something like their present form within the last 10,000 years, a recent [Gallup Poll](#) revealed. While that percentage represents a slight dip from 2008, when 44 percent said they do not believe divinely made humans evolved over time, it has remained remarkably stable since 1982, the earliest year for which Gallup provided data. Nearly as many Americans—38 percent in 2010—say they believe humans evolved over time, but God guided the process. That percentage, too, has remained consistent since 1982. Gallup's 2010 poll was based on telephone interviews of 1,018 adults conducted Dec. 10-12. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Happiness is sharing a pew with friends. Close friendships among congregants, rather than theology, seems to be the key to happiness among religious people, according to a recent study. One-third of Americans who attend religious services weekly and have three to five close friends in the congregation said they are "extremely satisfied" with their lives. In comparison, only one in five Americans who attend services weekly but have no close friends in the congregation say they are extremely satisfied. The findings are from the [Faith Matters Survey](#) of U.S. adults, which included 3,108 people in 2006 and 1,915 in 2007.

IHOP drops suit against IHOP. The International House of Pancakes has dropped its suit against the [International House of Prayer](#) after claiming the Missouri-based church had infringed on its trademarked IHOP acronym. Patrick Lenow, spokesman for IHOP Restaurants, said the suit was dismissed on Dec. 21 but negotiations were continuing between the chain and the church. The Kansas City church declined comment other than to confirm it was aware of the dismissal of the suit. In its suit filed

Sept. 9 in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, the pancake chain said the church “intended to misappropriate the fame and notoriety of the household name IHOP to help promote and make recognizable their religious organization.” The Glendale, Calif.-based breakfast chain uses the website IHOP.com and the church’s website remains IHOP.org.

Fewer ‘Middle Americans’ married, attending worship. Marriage among Americans who have graduated high school but not college is on the decline, and their religious attendance has dropped at the same time, a recent report shows. So-called “Middle Americans” ages 25 to 60 who were in their first marriages dropped from 73 percent in the 1970s to 45 percent in the 2000s, according to [The State of Our Unions](#), an annual report from the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. Middle Americans—who comprise 58 percent of the U.S. adult population—have a high school diploma and may have some post-secondary education but have not gained a four-year college degree. Members of this group have seen a similar drop in religious attendance, from 40 percent attending nearly every week or more in the 1970s to 28 percent in the 2000s.

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