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Many evangelicals live in a subculture world. Everywhere we look, we see believers – at home, in our social circles, possibly even at work. Our bookshelves and calendars are filled with evangelical material.

Our most strategic leaders are further insulated, spending their days in evangelical institutions.

The problem is that insiders are often the ones least capable of seeing things from an outside perspective.

It's difficult to get outside of our own paradigms.

Groupthink and over-exposure to our own movement can blind us to the reality of how we fit into the larger, rapidly changing culture.

So, with such an awareness of our own limitations, let's pull off the wrappings and answer the question, **Just how big is the evangelical church in the United States?**

As detailed in [Briefing 9](#), at the present time approximately 15% of the Twin Cities population is **evangelical and affiliated with a church**, but the percentage is steadily falling. Many observers and researchers at the national level believe that evangelicals are now only 7-9% of the U.S. population, as explained and documented in *The Great Evangelical Recession*. Here are some excerpts from the book.

EVANGELICALS (becoming a shrinking subculture)

RESEARCH. Now let's look at four nationally recognized specialists, each with differing credentials, differing motivations, and differing research methodologies.

Separately, all four researchers have found that evangelicals account for 7% to 9% of the United States population. That is, not even one in ten Americans.

- Dr. Chjristian Smith, Professor of Sociology at Notre Dame: 7%
- David T. Olson, American Church Research Project: 9%
- Barna Group, most experienced evangelical pollsters: 7%
- Christine Wicker, award-winning religion reporter: 7%

TRUTH. We evangelicals build our entire system on a belief in *absolute truth*. And yet, we often help God out by rounding up our weekly church attendance and, it seems, our national headcount, too.

Our smaller size is slowly shrinking even more – because we're losing our own kids and we're failing to generate significant converts in the midst of rapid population boom.

The United States is undergoing a culture shift, in the same trajectory as post-Christian Europe

Our host culture is changing much faster than most churches can understand, causing a massive decrease in evangelical influence politically, economically, culturally and financially.

INFLUENCE. The culture is not just apathetically drifting from Christianity, as it did in the last 20th century. Now its leading edges are violently reacting to the grip that conservative Christianity and the religious right held for so many decades.

Americans under 35 are four times more likely to be atheistic, agnostic or nonreligious. **This reaction against conservative Christians continues to accelerate.**

FUNDING. American evangelical donations are on course to drop by almost half in the next 14 years and by two-thirds in the next 30 years. The numbers on generational giving are stark. Each younger generation gives significantly less of its income to ministry.

LOSING OUR OWN. This may be the most disturbing of all the trends we must face – **our failure to retain our own children as disciples.**

Simply holding our own kids would hold us steady with population growth. But we are not keeping our kids or holding our percentage in the population.

Studies by Josh McDowell, LifeWay Research, Barna Group, UCLA and other researchers show that of the 3.7 million U.S. evangelicals who are 18-25 years old, 2.6 million (70%) will leave the faith at some point between their 18th and 29th birthdays.

Based on current trends, only about 900,000 (35% of those who leave) will return later in life. And they rarely jump back into a life of devotion, freedom, service or giving.

– There are approximately 520,000 Evangelicals in the Twin Cities metro –

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