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CONTACT: 713.957.5890
steven.murray@HoustonsFirst.org

Find Out Why Houston Area Christians Don't Go to Church

Burnout? Boredom? Changing priorities? The number of self-described Christians who do not attend church is an *ironic reality* in a city that offers a Bible-drenched menu of Christian denominations, worship styles, service times and locations. To unpack this cultural mystery, the denominationally diverse *Houston Coalition of Church Communicators* (H3C) is hosting *Empty Pews: Why Houston Christians Don't go to Church* on **Thursday, November 12, from 2–4p.m., at Houston's First Baptist Church**, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas, 77024. Leading religion researcher George Barna will conduct the seminar, expounding on H3C's commissioned survey. Seminar participants will receive the survey prior to the event in preparation for the interactive Q&A following the presentation. The early-bird registration fee (prior to October 9) is \$65 per person and increases to \$80 per person through November 12. Additional survey questions and event information and registration are available at www.EmptyPews.com.

"The goal of this customized research was to uncover concrete facts and reliable answers by consulting with the ultimate source—the people who profess Christianity but do not attend church," says Steven Murray, who serves as president of the volunteer-run H3C organization. "Curiosity about inactive church members motivated our group to pool resources to obtain greater insight on how to facilitate greater member engagement with our community as a whole."

Barna's report findings will be based on Houstonians of all ages and experiences, many who identify themselves as Christians yet choose to forego local church involvement. Qualifying participants are answering questions such as:

- *"What are your top priorities in life right now?"*
- *"What are your biggest life challenges?"*
- *"When considering attending church, what venue do you find most appealing (Sunday services, small groups, Sunday school, etc.)?"*
- *"What media source would you most rely on to learn about a church before attending?"*

H3C, which began in 2006 as a grassroots network among individuals working in communications-related roles in Houston area churches, secured status as a non-profit organization in 2008. The primary research-sponsoring churches include Chapelwood United Methodist Church, Christ United Methodist Church of Sugar Land, Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston's First Baptist Church, The MET (Metropolitan Baptist Church), The Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), and St. Luke's United Methodist Church.