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## Are Latter-day Saint Marriages More Stable?

by [Stephen C.](#) • October 19, 2021 • [5 Comments](#)

Various researchers have addressed this question with older (pre-2010 data), and have shown that in general Latter-day Saints have lower divorce rates, but what about more recent years?

The largest (relatively) recent survey of Latter-day Saints is the [2014 Pew Religous Landscape Survey](#) which included 661 Latter-day Saints, allowing for a simple comparison of marital status.

Calculating divorce rates is notoriously difficult and complex, because you don't really know whether the marriage ended in divorce until it ends in either divorce or death. So, for example, we're just getting the \*real\* divorce rate of my grandparent's generation, but there are shortcuts to getting a number that is close to the real rate without having to wait for the entire generation to die off, and there's a whole methodological debate about how to do that that takes into account age and complete marital history, including remarriages.

However, the PRLS allows us to simply identify how many members of the Church identify as divorced. Specifically, they report how many members fit into the categories of married, cohabiting, divorced or separated, widowed, and never married. While this is not going to be as precise as a study using full-fledged divorce rate methods, it's the best current picture we have about Latter-day Saint divorce.

I removed the “never married” individuals from the [summary statistics](#) that the PRLS reported so that we're left with those who had been married at some point. When we do this, Latter-day Saints have a lower percentage divorced (9%) than all of the other religious groups (Catholics [15%], Buddhists [16%], Evangelical Protestants [17%], Historically Black Protestants [30%], Jehovah's Witnesses [15%], Jews [12%], Mainline Protestants [15%], Muslims [15%], Orthodox Christians [13%], and Unaffiliated [17%]), except for Hindus (7%). Performing a simple proportions comparison test shows that all of the differences between Latter-day Saints and these other groups are significant except for Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and Orthodox Christians. (Those are probably statistical ties with Latter-day Saints because both groups—us and them—are small, so it is harder to identify the signal in the noise).

Consequently, it does look like Latter-day Saints are much less likely to identify as divorced than other major faiths or no faith at all.

It is plausible that age is playing a factor here; if Latter-day Saints in the sample are younger than others then maybe they just haven't had enough time to get divorced yet. However, I dipped into the microdata and controlled for age: it barely moves the “Latter-day Saint” divorce effect (for wonks, it reduced the odds ratios from .56 to .55), so the very low Latter-day Saint divorce rate doesn't appear to be due to us being younger.

Finally, the data do not allow us to differentiate between first-married and remarried people, so in theory the lower Latter-day Saint divorce numbers may be because Latter-day Saints remarry at a higher rate. Although we may have a higher rate of remarriage, on the face of it I find it unlikely that it would explain all of the difference.

So yes, given the most current (2014) data available, it does look like members of the Church in the United States are much less likely to be divorced than their non-Latter-day Saint counterparts.

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← “Adam shall come to visit”

“All these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good” →

### 5 comments for “Are Latter-day Saint Marriages More Stable?”

**Geoff - Aus says:**  
[October 19, 2021 at 8:18 pm](#)

Is it accepted that half the adult members are single? <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/local/2021/04/30/jana-riess-finally-single/> how can 66% be married?  
 Does this call into question the other figures?  
 Also of interest to me is that the non religious are pretty much the same as the religious.

**Pop says:**  
[October 20, 2021 at 1:11 am](#)

Do the data include information about the age at which each person was married?

**Stephen C says:**  
[October 20, 2021 at 3:38 am](#)

@Geoff: I discussed this discrepancy in depth earlier: <https://www.timesandseasons.org/index.php/2021/05/are-half-of-all-church-members-in-the-us-single/>.

@Pop: No

**lastlemming says:**  
[October 20, 2021 at 8:52 am](#)

Stephen,

I reread your earlier article and noticed that neither apostle claimed that 50% of adults in the U.S. were single—it was churchwide. And one commenter stated that outside the U.S., a majority had been single since 1992. If that trend has continued, it seems to me that the U.S. could still be comfortably below 50% single and the apostles statements still be true.

**Stephen C says:**  
[October 20, 2021 at 9:57 am](#)

Elder Gong stated:

Also, the majority of adult church members are now unmarried, widowed, or divorced. This is a significant change. It includes more than half our Relief Society sisters, and more than half our adult priesthood brothers. This demographic pattern has been the case in the worldwide church since 1992, and in the church in the United States and Canada since 2019.

<https://www.deseret.com/faith/2021/4/6/22364033/latter-day-saint-young-single-adults-can-hold-new-callings-in-the-church-lds-mormon-ysa>

So, it's a relatively new development, but that statement does suggest that, according to their numbers, half of all church members \*in the US\* are single.

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