

gray divorce CRISIS

FACT SHEET

Taken from *Gray Divorce Crisis: Ten Ways Your Church Can Respond to the Baby Boomer Divorce Epidemic*
by Steve Grissom

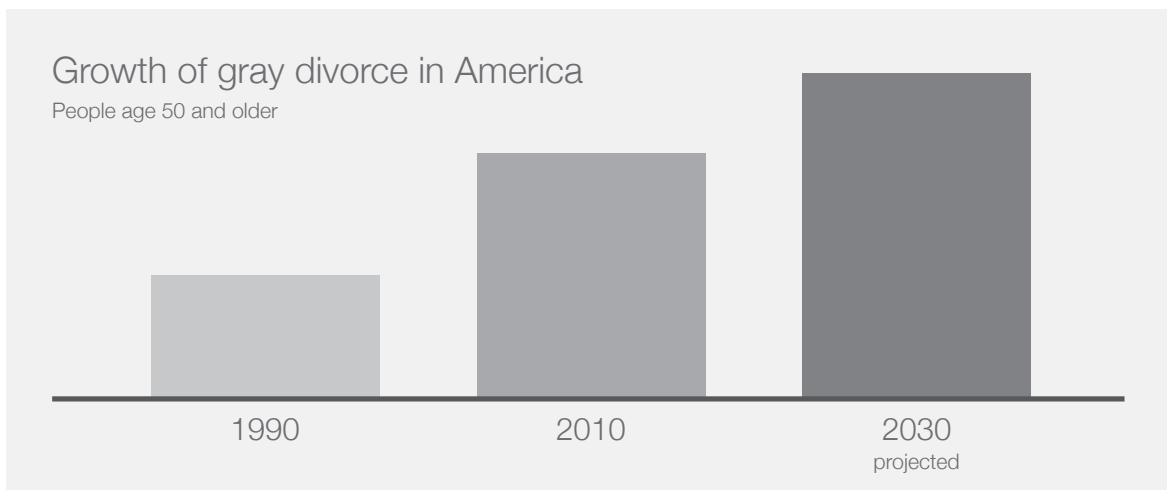


What is gray divorce?

- A recent cultural trend of Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) who are getting divorced, frequently after long-term marriages of 25 years or more.
- Al and Tipper Gore are one recent example. Shortly after celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary in 2010, the couple publicly announced their divorce, taking their friends (and the nation as a whole) by surprise.
- Gray divorce has upended the notion that seemingly committed, long-term marriages are safe from divorce.

Who is getting gray divorces?

- Gray divorce applies to those who are over the age of 50.
- Since 1990 the divorce rate has doubled for people age 50 and older (while declining for the population as a whole). By 2030 it is projected to rise by one-third to 828,380.



- Boomers in their 50s and 60s comprise the vast majority of these divorces. In 2010, just over a half-million people between the ages of 50 and 64 got divorced, versus around 113,310 persons over the age of 65.

Who is impacted by gray divorce?

- **THE COUPLE:** After a divorce, former spouses often deal with the loss of financial security, retirement income, health insurance, family and church support, friends, a home, and possibly even a beloved pet. There are also health implications, chance of depression, heightened stress, and increased chance of harmful behaviors.
- **GROWN CHILDREN:** Couples must deal with shifting relationships with grown children (and grandchildren). Grown children must come to terms with the end of their parents' relationship; it can impact views of their own marriage.
- **CHURCHES:** Often when there is a divorce, one or both individuals leave their church. This means loss of seasoned leaders and crucial financial support.

What factors contribute to gray divorce?

- Empty nest syndrome
- Pressures of retirement
- Increased life expectancy
- Unresolved conflict left to fester for decades
- A tragic (or major) life event
- Continued cultural acceptance of divorce
- More economic independence and opportunity for women
- A transient and mobile society

What can churches do about it?

Educate your church about the gray divorce crisis

- Use the tragedy of gray divorce as an evangelism tool
- Encourage mediation and reconciliation
- Offer healthy solutions for loneliness, depression, and anger
- Provide financial resources and knowledge
- [Launch](#) a DivorceCare ministry

For more information or to download your free copy of *Gray Divorce Crisis*, please visit www.graydivorcecrisis.org