

AMERICAN VALUES,  
MENTAL HEALTH,  
AND USING TECHNOLOGY  
IN THE AGE OF **TRUMP**



BAYLOR  
UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2017

[www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey](http://www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey)

# **AMERICAN VALUES, MENTAL HEALTH, AND USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE AGE OF TRUMP**

*Findings from the Baylor Religion Survey, Wave 5*

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*We would like to thank Baylor University for its generous support of the Baylor Religion Surveys and the  
Institute for Studies of Religion for help producing this packet.*

## OVERVIEW

In 2005 a research team at Baylor University's Sociology Department, along with the Institute for Studies of Religion, secured funding from the John Templeton Foundation to conduct two national surveys of American religious beliefs, values, and behaviors. In 2009 Baylor University began funding additional waves. The Baylor Religion Surveys currently have five waves, conducted in 2005, 2007, 2010, 2013, and 2017. Data and findings available at [www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey](http://www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey).

In this packet we provide some preliminary findings from Wave V, a random sample of 1,501 adults, which was administered by the Gallup Organization in the spring of 2017, during the first months of Trump's Presidency. There are multiple themes in this wave of the survey. This packet contains bivariate findings regarding four key areas of interest:

- i. the religious, political, and ideological values of Trump voters
- ii. mental health and religion in America today
- iii. the intersection of technology and religion
- iv. the geography of religion

Additional findings will follow in future releases and publications. The scholars who contributed to this packet are listed at the beginning of each section. To follow up with questions to individual researchers, please contact our media coordinator **Terry Goodrich at [Terry\\_Goodrich@baylor.edu](mailto:Terry_Goodrich@baylor.edu) or 254-710-3321**.

Research methods are described at the end of this packet and additional data can be accessed at [www.TheARDA.com/Baylor Religion Survey](http://www.TheARDA.com/BaylorReligionSurvey).

*It is our purpose to provide the public with unique data concerning religion, health, and community in America today. We are open to your questions and requests.*

Paul Froese, Director  
Baylor Religion Surveys

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# AMERICAN VALUES, MENTAL HEALTH, AND USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE AGE OF TRUMP

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## I. THE SACRED VALUES OF TRUMPISM

### A. Core Values

*By Paul Froese, Jeremy Uecker, and Kenneth Vaughan*

As national surveys and exit polls have already shown, Evangelical Protestants voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump. This was somewhat surprising given that evangelical voters tend to value expressions of religious piety from their chosen candidates; arguably, Donald Trump did not fit the normal Evangelical profile. That said, there were some indications that the Trump campaign could appeal to conservative religionists.

First, we found in Wave IV of the BRS that Republican voters are more likely to believe that their worldview reflects a single and immutable "Truth." In the book *On Purpose*, Paul Froese utilized this data to argue that the emotional resonance of candidates and pundits easily overwhelms specific facts that contradict them. Faith in a moral Truth allows voters to reject empirical truth.

Second, F. Carson Mencken and Froese published "Gun Culture in Action" (Social Problems) using data from the BRS Wave IV to show that white Americans who feel empowered by gun ownership are the citizens most likely to argue that violence against the federal government is justifiable. This anti-government sentiment reflects the alt-right belief that a "deep state" is undermining the United States from within. While these gun owners are not necessarily very religious, they tend to see America as a decidedly Christian nation.

Taken together, the favoring of emotional Truth over fact and the belief that patriotism is fundamentally anti-government were key components of Trump's rhetoric and popularity.

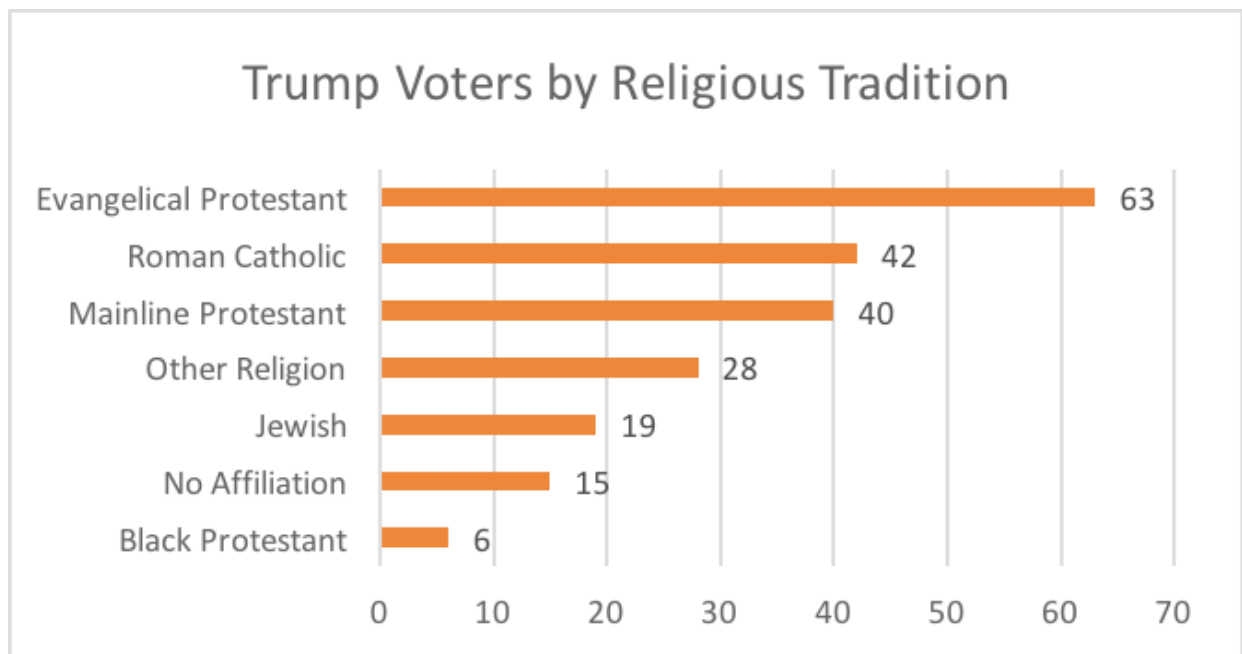
In our analysis of the BRS Wave 5, we look specifically at how religious values, behaviors, and beliefs predict political support for Donald Trump. We find that Trump voters tend to:

- say they are "very religious"
- see Muslims as threats to America
- view the United States as a Christian nation
- believe in an Authoritative God
- value gender traditionalism

This collection of values and attitudes form the core ethos of what we might call Trumpism. It is a new form of nationalism which merges pro-Christian rhetoric with anti-Islam, anti-feminist, anti-globalist, and anti-government attitudes.

More than six in ten white Evangelical Protestants voted for Donald Trump (Figure 1). This is below some other national survey estimates due to how evangelicalism is measured; our calculation is based on the church attended by a respondent. Estimates from self-reported "evangelicalism" can be higher. Also, most Americans who think of themselves as "very religious" voted for Trump (Figure 2 (next page)). In contrast, Clinton supporters are much more likely to say they are "not religious" and "not spiritual." That said, Americans who see themselves as "very spiritual" were equally likely to vote for Trump or Clinton.

**FIGURE 1**



The religiosity of Trump supporters is closely tied to feelings of animosity towards Muslims. Seventy four percent of Americans who feel threatened by Islam (as measured by agreeing that Muslims a) have inferior values to Americans, b) want to limit Americans' freedom, and c) endanger Americans' physical safety) and 81 percent of Americans who fear Middle Eastern refugees voted for Trump (Figures 3 and 4 (next page)).

American Christian identity and anti-Islam fears combine in Christian nationalism. Christian nationalism reflects a series of beliefs about the origins and purpose of the United States. In general, it is a faith that God has a uniquely Christian purpose for America.

FIGURE 2

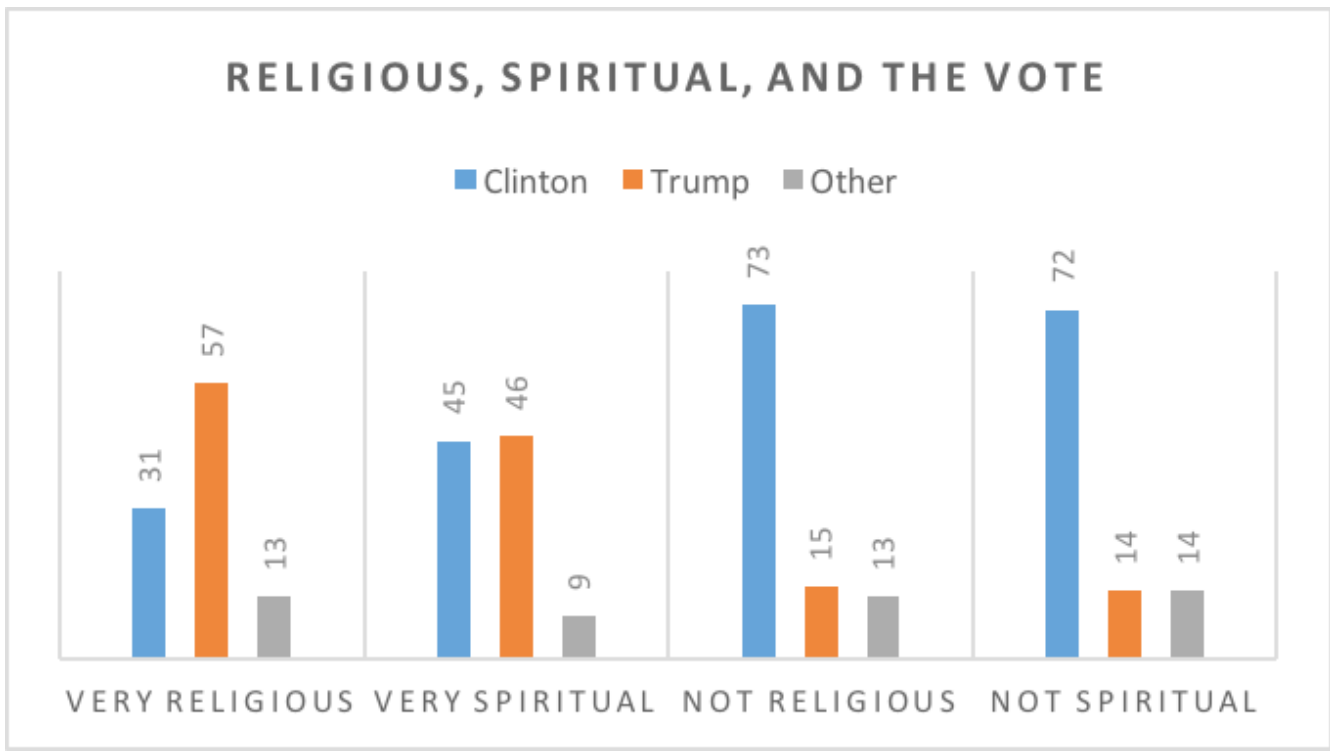


FIGURE 3

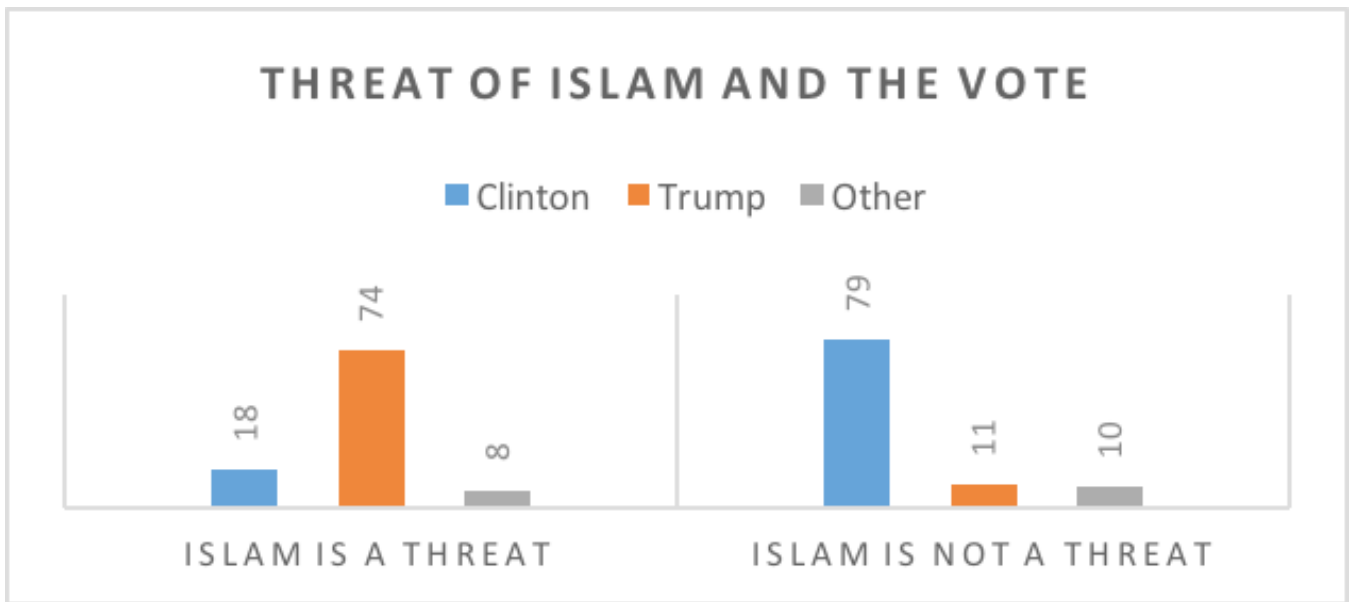
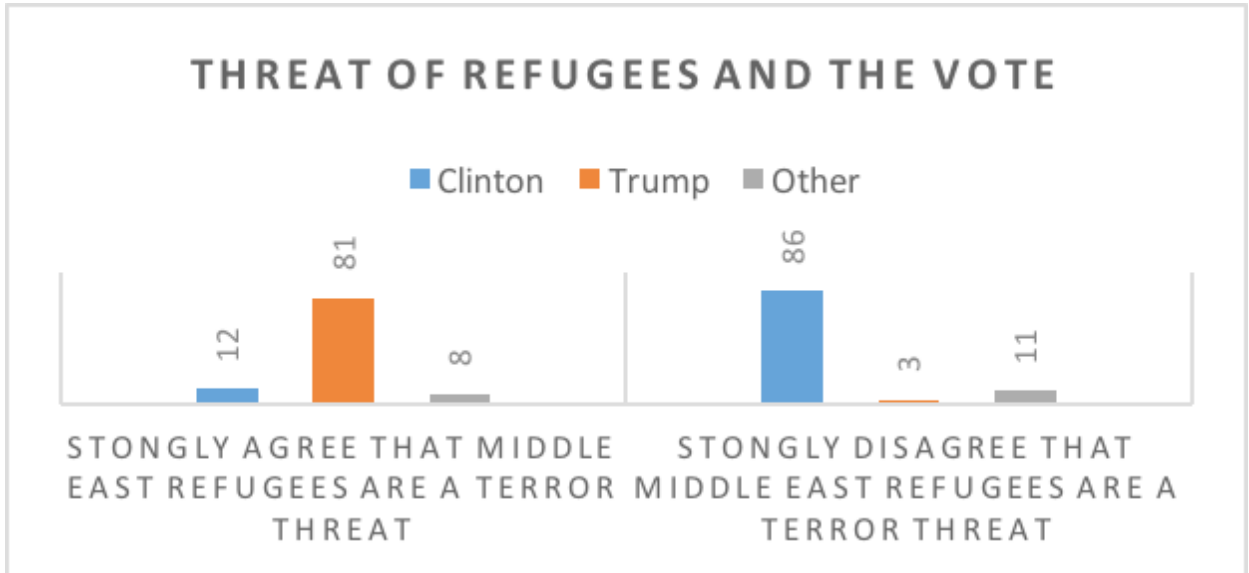


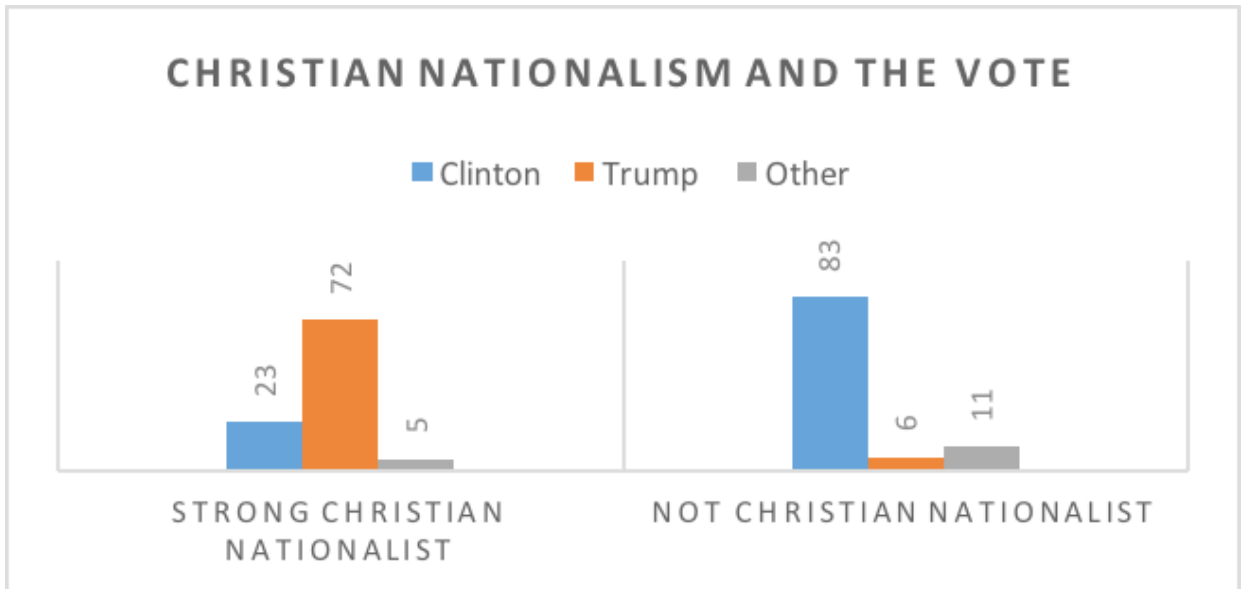


FIGURE 4



Americans who believe that the United States should be a Christian nation voted overwhelmingly for Trump, while those who feel that the United States was never intended to advocate Christian values above all others voted for Clinton (Figure 5).

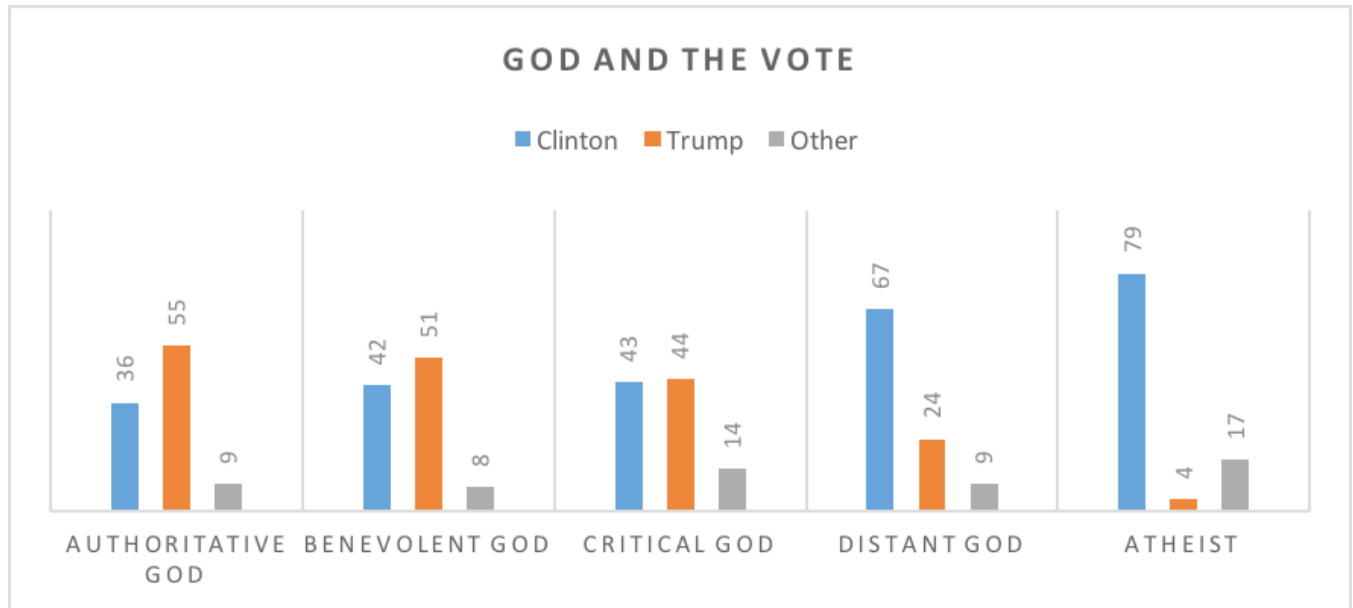
FIGURE 5



Over half of Americans who believe in an Authoritative or Benevolent God voted for Trump (Figure 6 (next page)). Both of these theologies reflect the idea that God is highly active in world affairs. In *America's Four Gods*, Paul Froese and Christopher Bader also found that these believers tend to think that climate change is controlled only by God. For this reason, they are much less likely to be concerned about global warming.

By contrast, a larger share of atheists and respondents with a Distant God supported Hillary Clinton. And only 4 percent of atheists voted for Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

**FIGURE 6**



A majority of Americans who feel that a) men are better suited for politics, b) men should earn more than women, c) women should provide the primary child care, and d) working mothers are deficient as mothers voted for Trump. We combined these items to create a "gender traditionalism" scale (Figure 7 (next page)).

At the same time, Americans who believe that a) transgender people should be allowed to use the restroom of their choice, b) gays and lesbians should be allowed to legally marry, and c) people do NOT choose to be gay or lesbian voted mainly for Clinton. We combined these attitudes into a LGBTQ attitudes scale (see Figure 8 (next page)).

In sum, of those who voted for Trump, the majority:

- are members of white Evangelical Protestant churches
- consider themselves "very religious"
- think of the United States as a Christian nation
- believe that God is actively engaged in world affairs
- fear Muslims and refugees from the Middle East
- believe that women are not suited for politics
- oppose LGBTQ rights

FIGURE 7

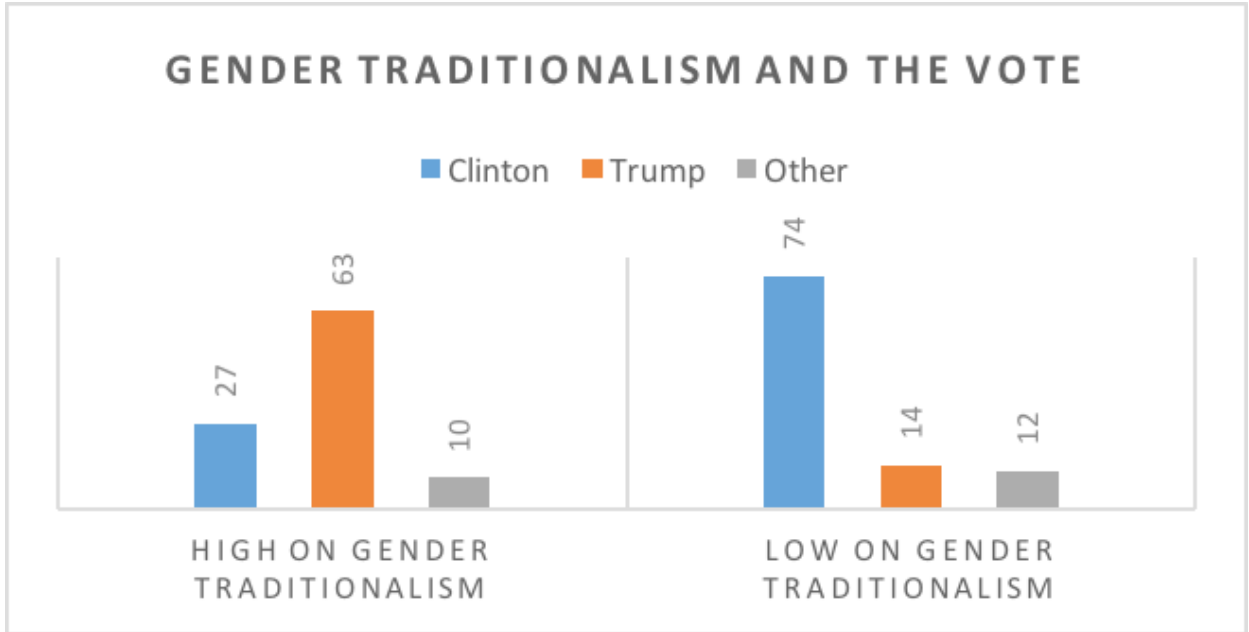
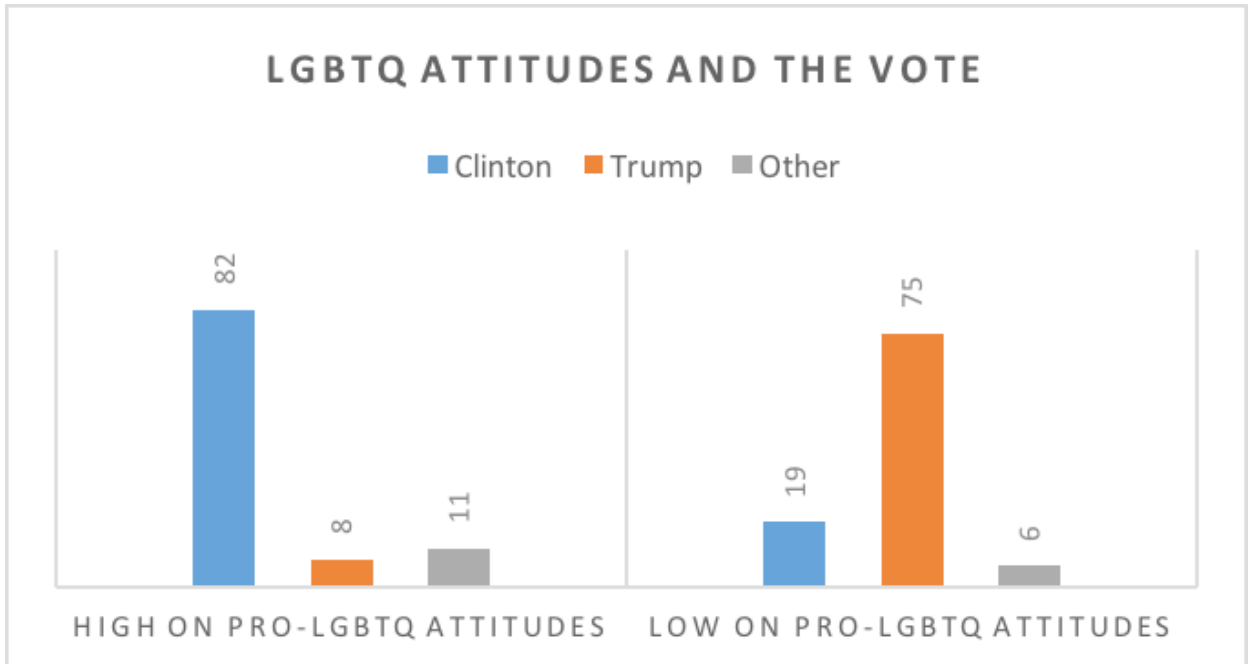


FIGURE 8



## B. Fear of the “Other”

*By Jerry Park and James Davidson*

Americans fear “others.” The “other” can be liberal as well as conservative, religious as well as non-religious. Specifically, we asked respondents about their feelings towards the following four groups:

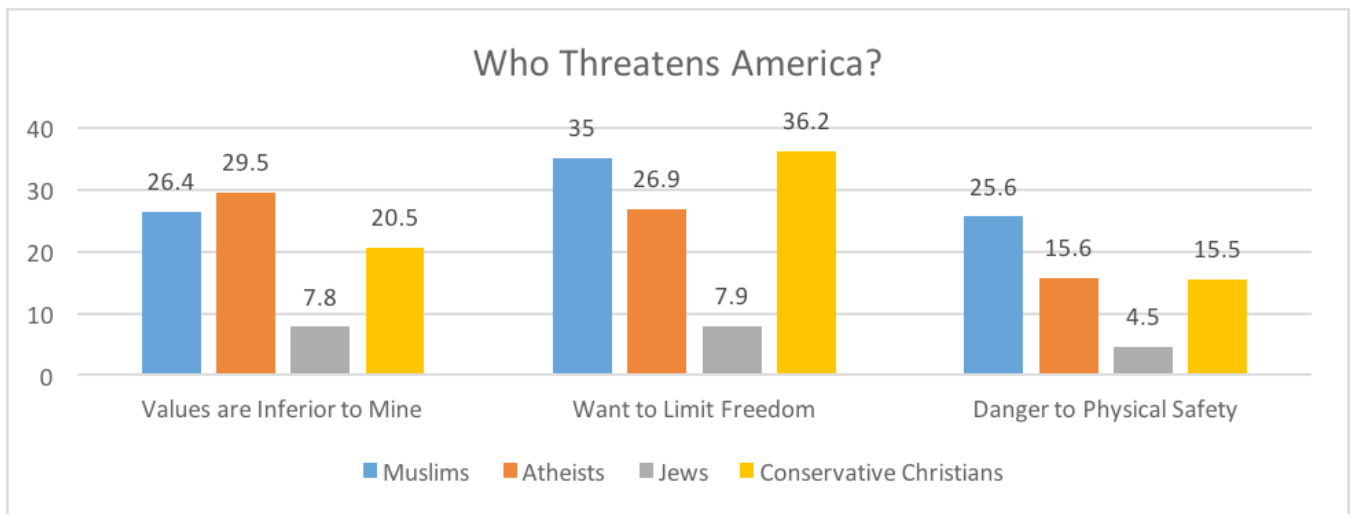
1. Atheists
2. Conservative Christians
3. Jews
4. Muslims

Specifically, we assess the extent to which respondents feel that these groups:

- a) “hold values that are morally inferior to the values of people like me”,
- b) “want to limit the personal freedoms of people like me,” and
- c) “endanger the physical safety of people like me.”

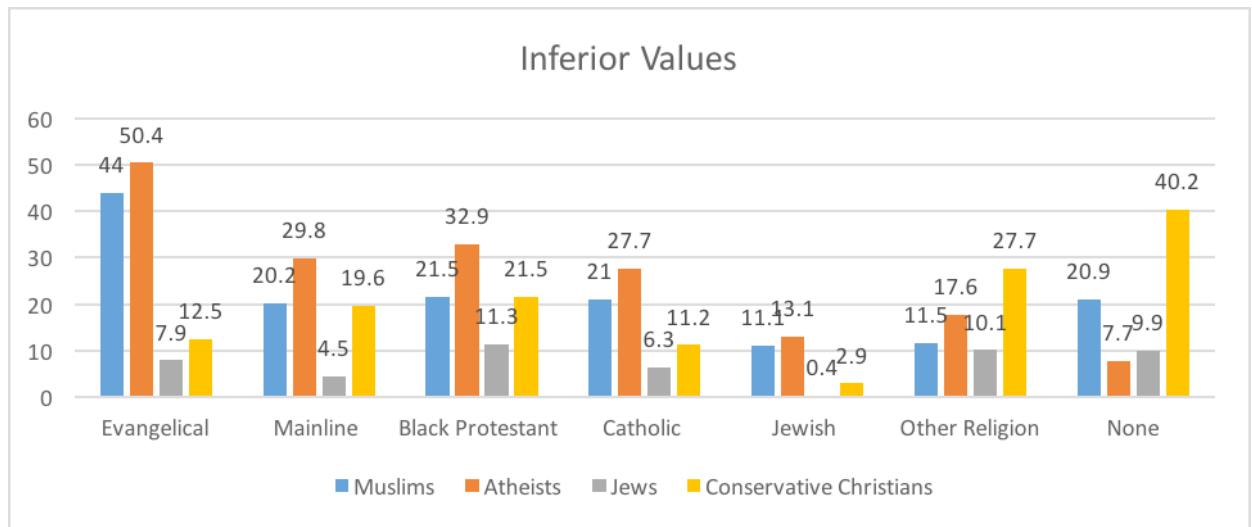
Overall, the most feared religious groups in the United States are Muslims, atheists, and conservative Christians, in that order (Figure 9). While Jews are publicly derided by anti-Semitic groups, most Americans do not feel threatened in any way by Jewish people. Instead, at least a quarter of Americans feel that Muslims a) have inferior values, b) want to limit Americans' freedom, and c) pose a physical threat. Interestingly, a third of Americans believe that conservative Christians want to limit their freedoms.

**FIGURE 9**



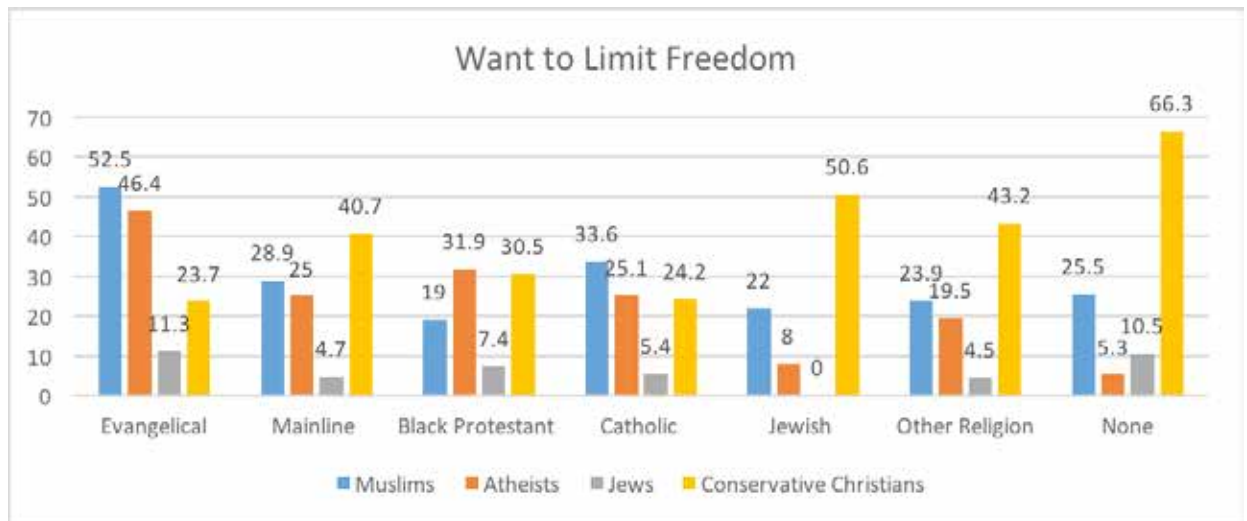
Over half of Evangelicals believe that atheists have inferior values (Figure 10). Around 3 in 10 Mainliners, Black Protestants, and Catholics say that atheists hold inferior values. Note that for all groups, except Americans with “other” or “no” religion, the values of atheists are the most disparaged. Americans with no religion express the greatest concern about the values of conservative Christians, and Jews are the least likely to express concern about the values of other groups.

**FIGURE 10**



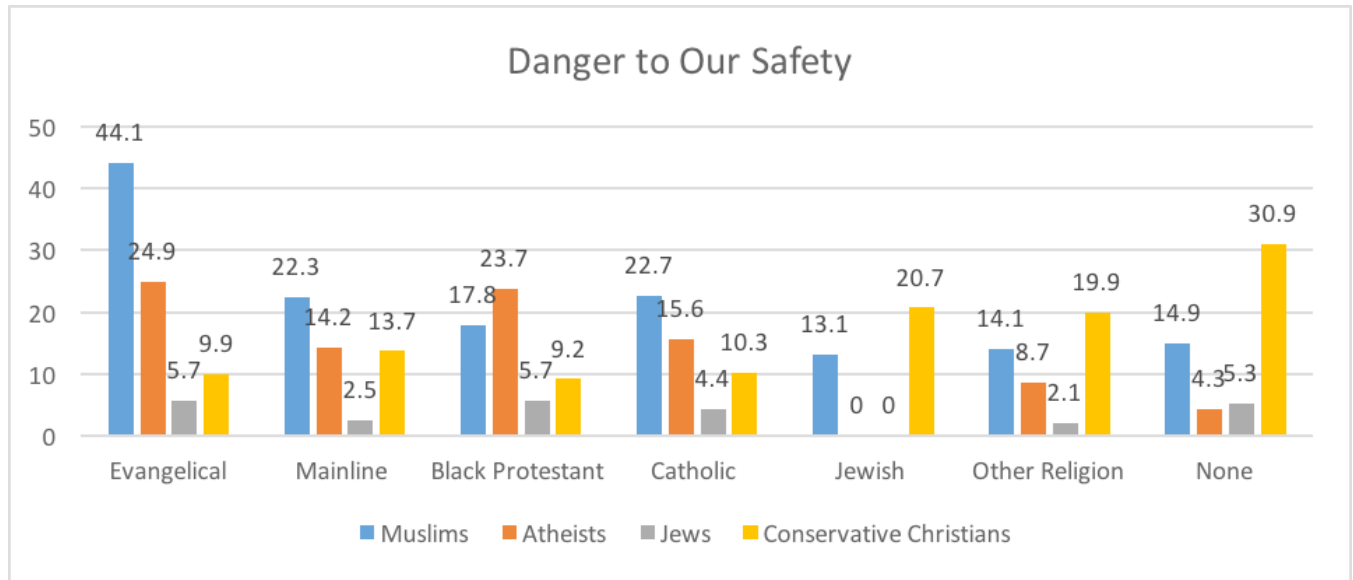
Around half of Evangelicals believe that Muslims and atheists want to limit their freedom (Figure 11). Four out of ten Mainline Protestants are concerned with the oppressiveness of conservative Christians. Also, half of Jews and two out of three of Americans with no religion fear that conservative Christians will limit their freedom.

**FIGURE 11**



Nearly half of Evangelicals believe that Muslims are a physical threat (see Figure 12). In contrast, three in ten of Americans with no religion think that conservative Christians want to do them harm. For Black Protestant respondents, atheists pose the most danger. American Jews feel most physically threatened not by Muslims but by Conservative Christians.

**FIGURE 12**



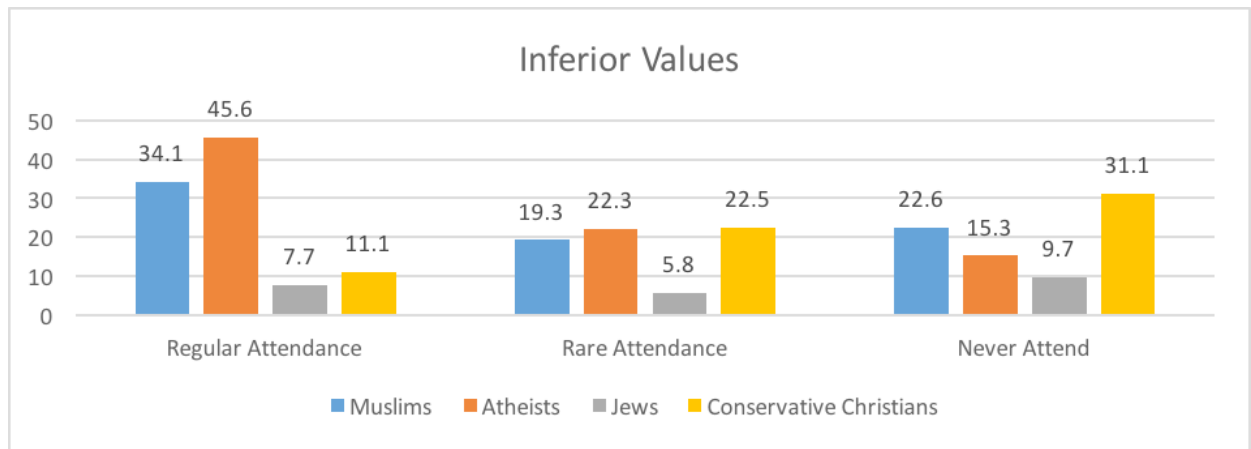
Americans who attend church at least once a month make up nearly half of our sample; we call their attendance "regular." We characterize attendance that is less than once a month as "rare."

Around one third of Americans who attend church regularly feel that Muslims have inferior values. Nearly half of these churchgoers believe atheists have poor values. In response, over one third of Americans who do not attend church say that conservative Christians have inferior values.

More than half of Americans that never attend church believe that conservative Christians want to limit their freedom (Figure 14 (next page)). Over 40 percent of those that regularly attend say that Muslims and atheists want to limit their freedom. Four in ten of Americans who go to church rarely say that conservative Christians want to limit their freedom.

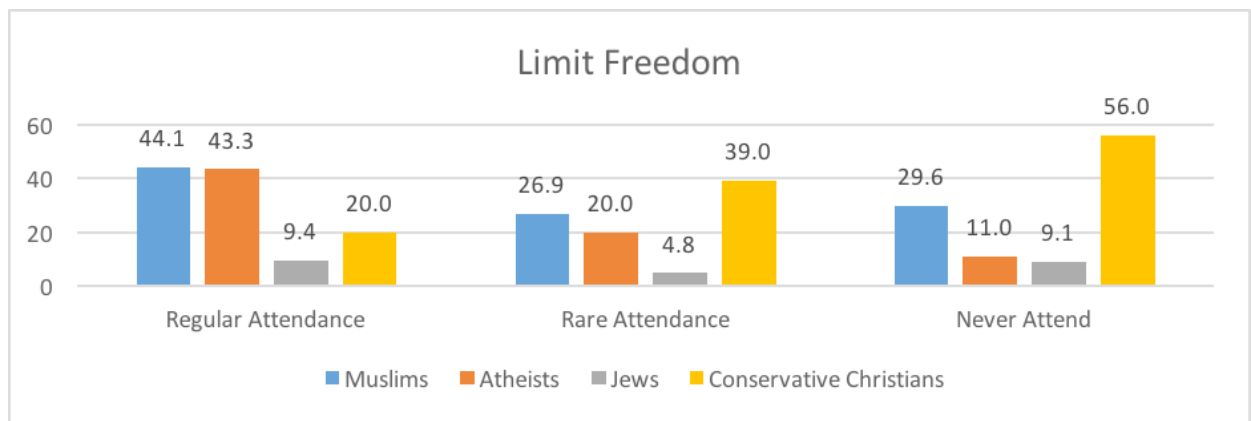
**FIGURE 13:**

**Results for those who say target group has inferior values to them, by church attendance. Weights applied.**



**FIGURE 14:**

**Results for those who say target group wants to limit their freedom, by religious attendance**



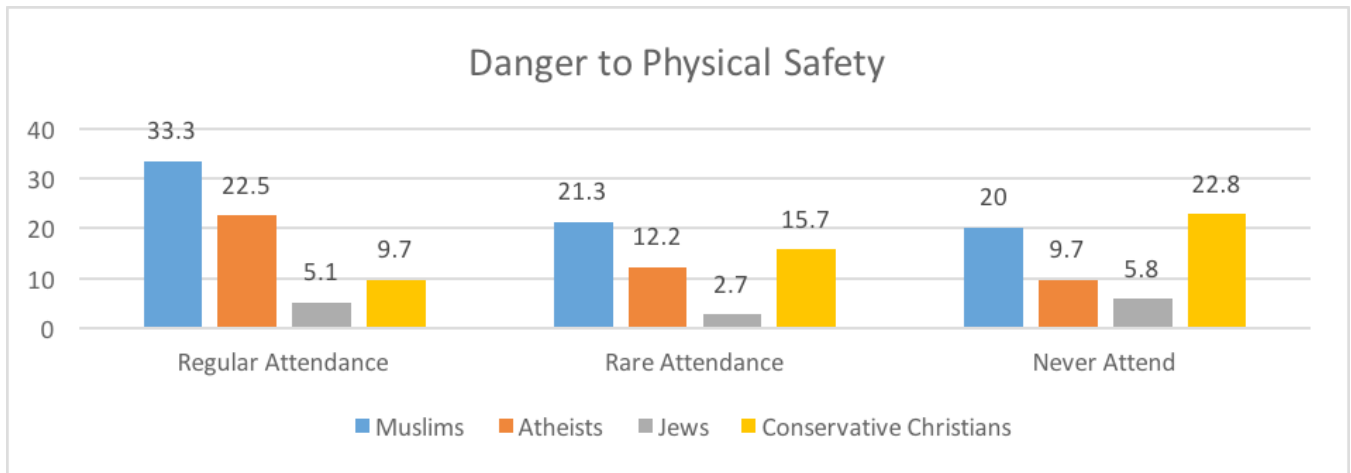
When it comes to physical threats, 1 in 3 Americans who go to church regularly say that Muslims present an imminent danger (Figure 15 (next page)). And about 1 in 4 say that atheists threaten their safety. Of those who never attend, about 20 percent are fearful of Muslims and 23 percent feel threatened physically by Conservative Christians.

Overall, Republicans are much more likely to say that Muslims and atheists have inferior values (Figure 16 (next page)). A clear majority of "strong Republicans" believe this. In direct contrast, one out of three "strong Democrats" say that conservative Christians hold inferior values. Independents show the lowest levels of perceived threat.

Seven in ten “strong Republicans” believe that Muslims want to limit their freedom (Figure 17 (next page)). About 60 percent of “strong Democrats” feel conservative Christians want to limit their freedom. Independents also feel the most threat from conservative Christians (39.7%).

**FIGURE 15.**

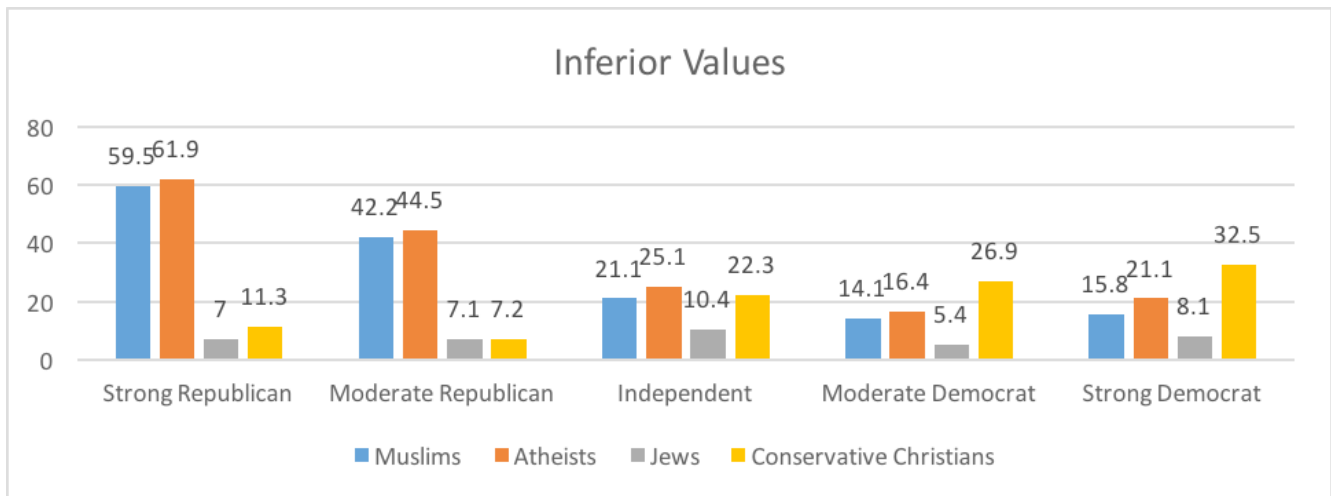
**Results for those who say target group presents a physical danger to them, by religious attendance.**



Two-thirds of “strong Republicans” say that Muslims threaten their personal physical safety (Figure 18 (next page)). That number drops to 42 percent for moderate Republicans. Strong Republicans are also about twice as likely to say atheists are a threat compared to moderate Republicans (45% vs 20%). About one-third of “strong Democrats” say that conservative Christians represent a danger to personal physical safety.

**FIGURE 16:**

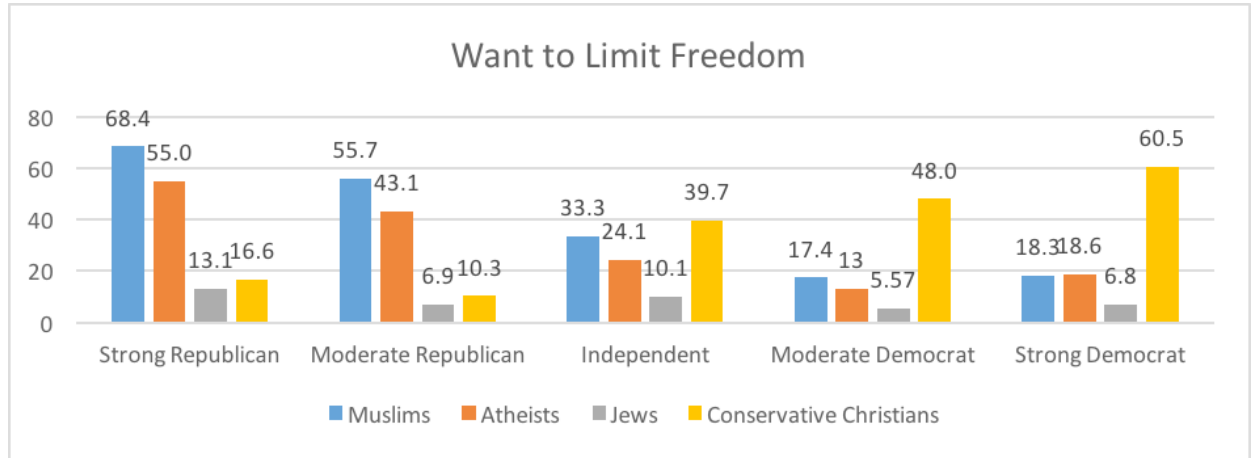
**Those who say target group has inferior values to them, by strength of party affiliation.**





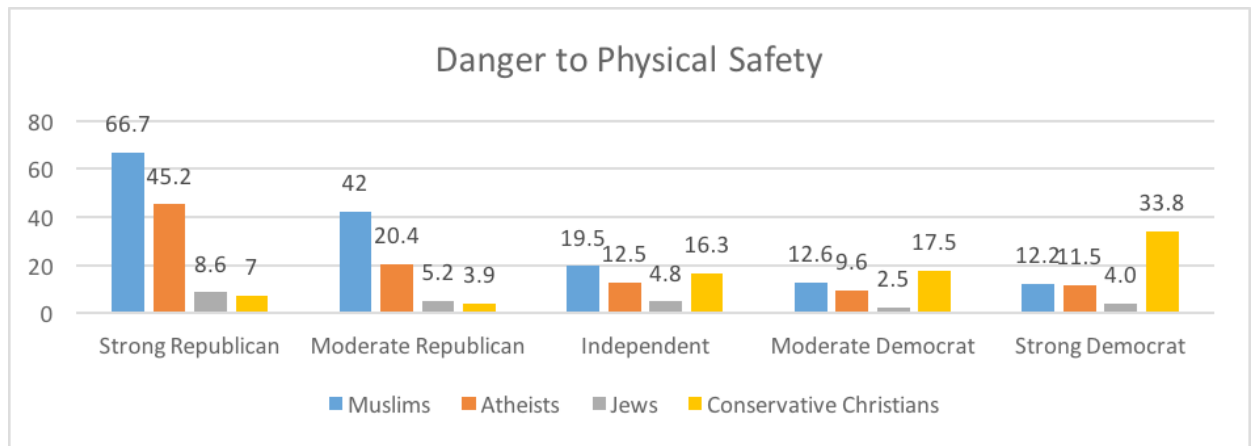
**FIGURE 17:**

**Those who say target group wants to limit their personal freedom, by strength of party affiliation.**



**FIGURE 18:**

**Those who say target group endangers personal physical safety by strength of party affiliation.**



### C. Christian Nationalism

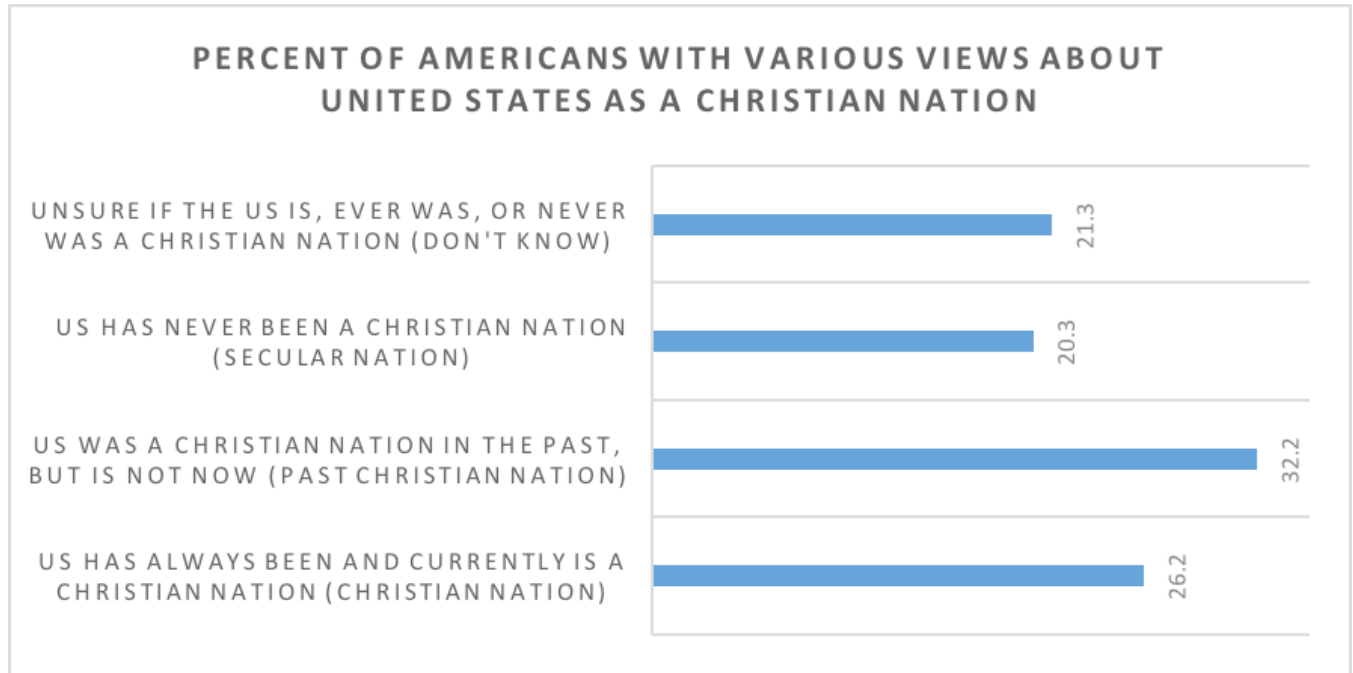
*By Andrew Whitehead*

It is no secret that religion played a pivotal role in the history of the United States. Soon after the Revolutionary period, the narrative that the United States is a “Christian nation” began to find its way into the public consciousness. This narrative has taken on multiple forms and has shifted over the past two centuries.

Today, we find that over a quarter (26.2 percent) of Americans believe the US always has been and currently is a Christian nation (Figure 19 (next page)). Even more (32.2 percent), however, believe the US is not a Christian nation today, but was one in the past. Around 20 percent of Americans disagree

with both of these first two groups and believe the US has never been a Christian nation. Finally, a full one-fifth of Americans (21.3 percent) are unsure if the US ever was or currently is a Christian nation.

**FIGURE 19**



Beliefs about whether the US is a Christian nation (or not) are strongly correlated with Americans' voting behavior. However, this is not solely due to their political party or religiosity. As Figure 20 (next page) shows, Republicans overwhelmingly identify with the first two narratives: the US was a Christian nation in the past and either still is or has moved away from it in the present day. However, almost one in five Republicans is either unsure or does not believe the US is a Christian nation. Even more diversity across the narratives is apparent for Democrats and Independents. Over 20 percent of Democrats as well as Independents can be found across each of the four Christian nation narratives. The largest proportion for each of these groups believes the US was a Christian nation in its past but is not today.

Figures 21 and 22 (next page) tell a similar story. While fewer very spiritual and very religious Americans believe the US was never a Christian nation, a small number still do or state they are unsure. Most very spiritual or very religious Americans believe the US was a Christian nation or still is today.

FIGURE 20

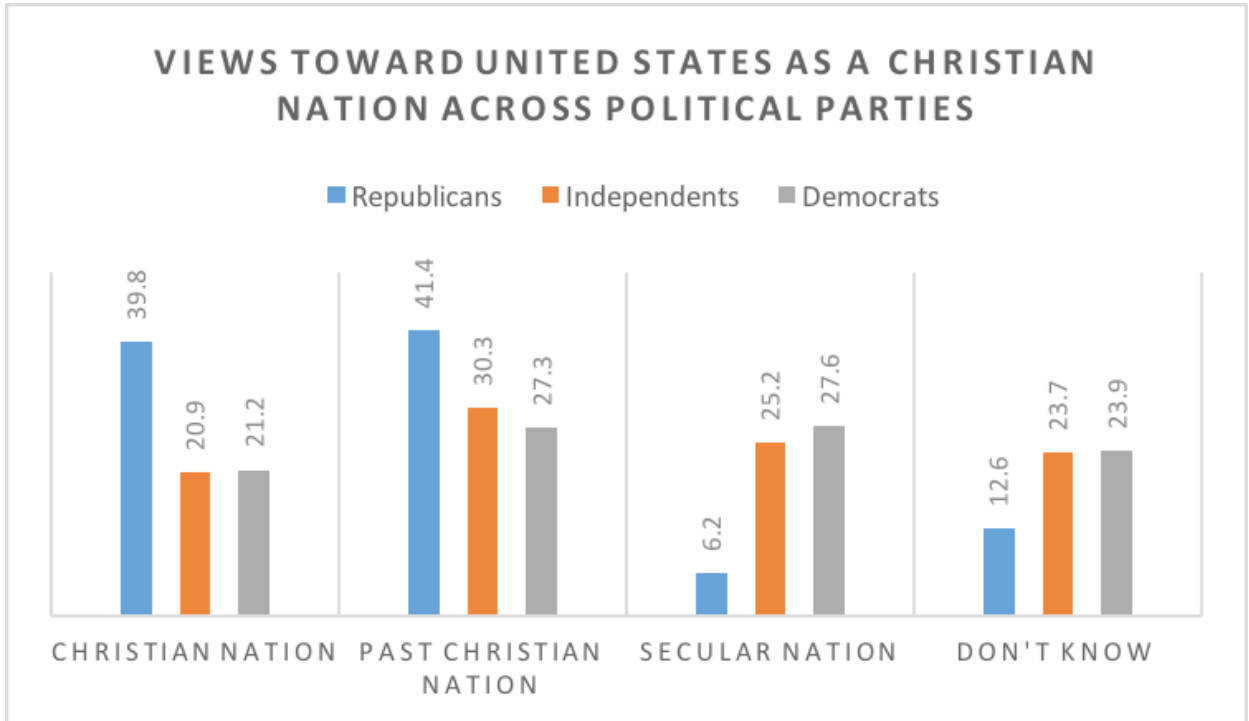
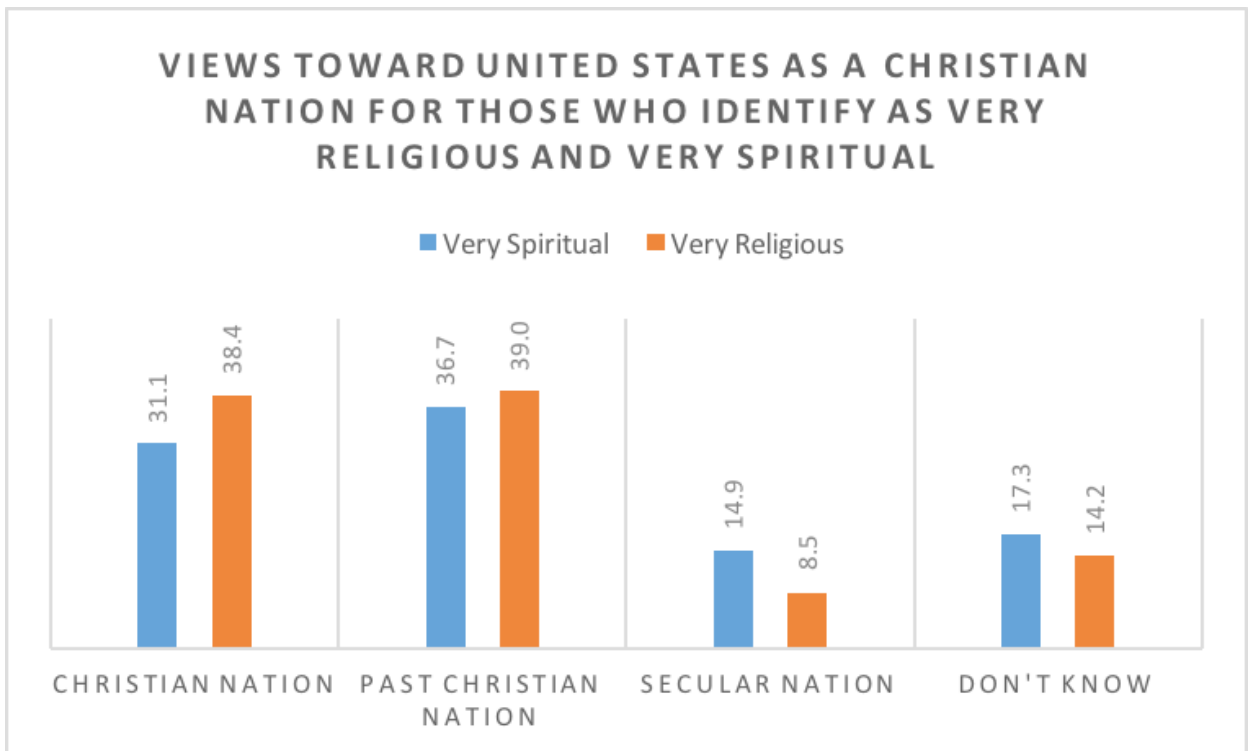
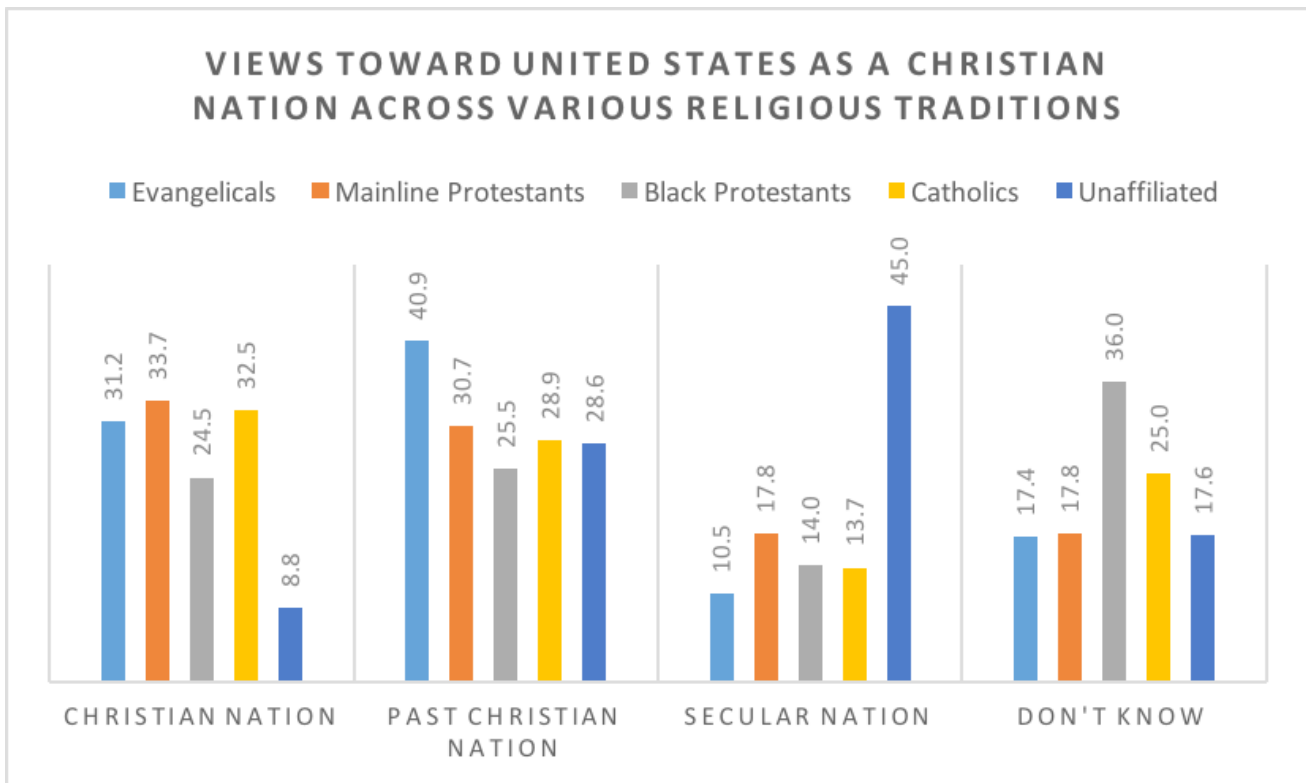


FIGURE 21



Each of the Christian nation narratives is represented across various religious traditions (Figure 22). Evangelicals tend to believe the US was or still is a Christian nation, but also identify with believing the US never was a Christian nation or are unsure. Mainline Protestants are similar to Evangelicals, with more placing themselves in the secular nation camp. Black Protestants and Catholics are well-represented in each narrative, with a substantial number of adherents to each religious tradition reporting being unsure about America's status as a Christian nation. Finally, while the Unaffiliated overwhelmingly believe the US was never a Christian nation, over a third believe the US either was a Christian nation in the past or still is today.

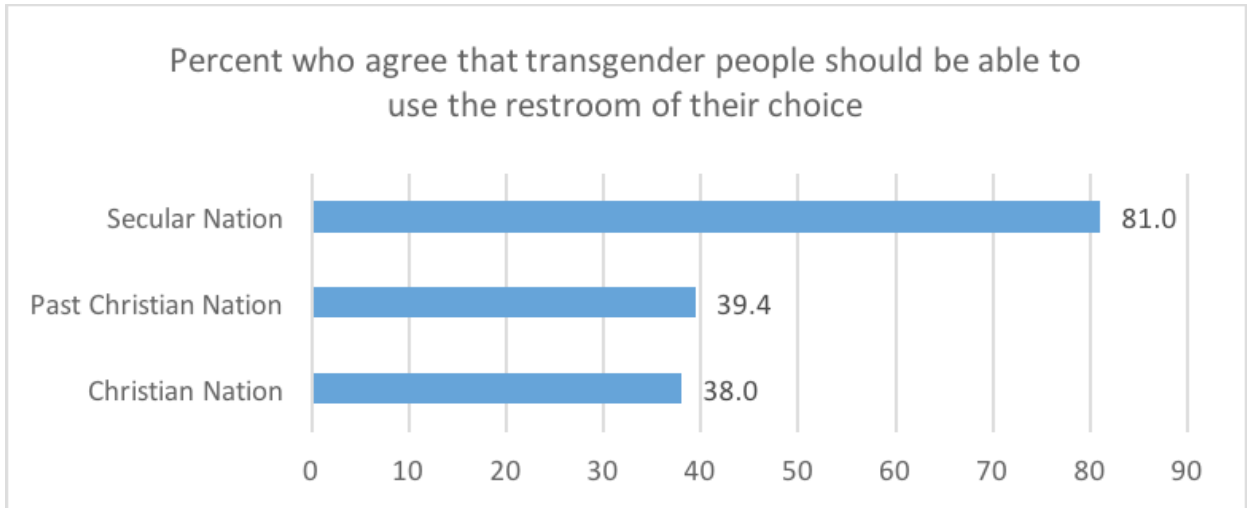
**FIGURE 22**



Besides voting preference in the 2016 Presidential election, does knowing someone's view of whether the US was a Christian nation tell us something about how they view other social issues? Figures 23, 24, and 25 (next page) strongly suggest that they do. Over eight in ten Americans who believe the US was never a Christian nation believe that transgender people should be able to use the restroom of their choice (Figure 23). Less than four in ten Americans who believe the US either was or still is a Christian nation respond similarly.

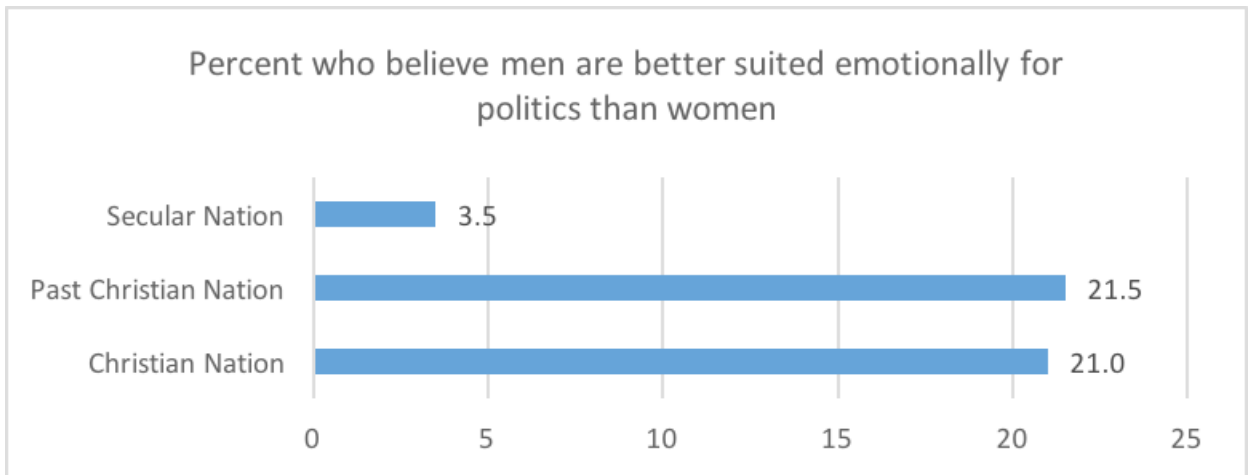
Over 20 percent of Americans who believe the US still is a Christian nation and Americans who say the US was a Christian nation in the past believe men are better suited emotionally for politics than women (Figure 24). Less than four percent of Americans who believe the US was never a Christian nation say likewise.

**FIGURE 23**



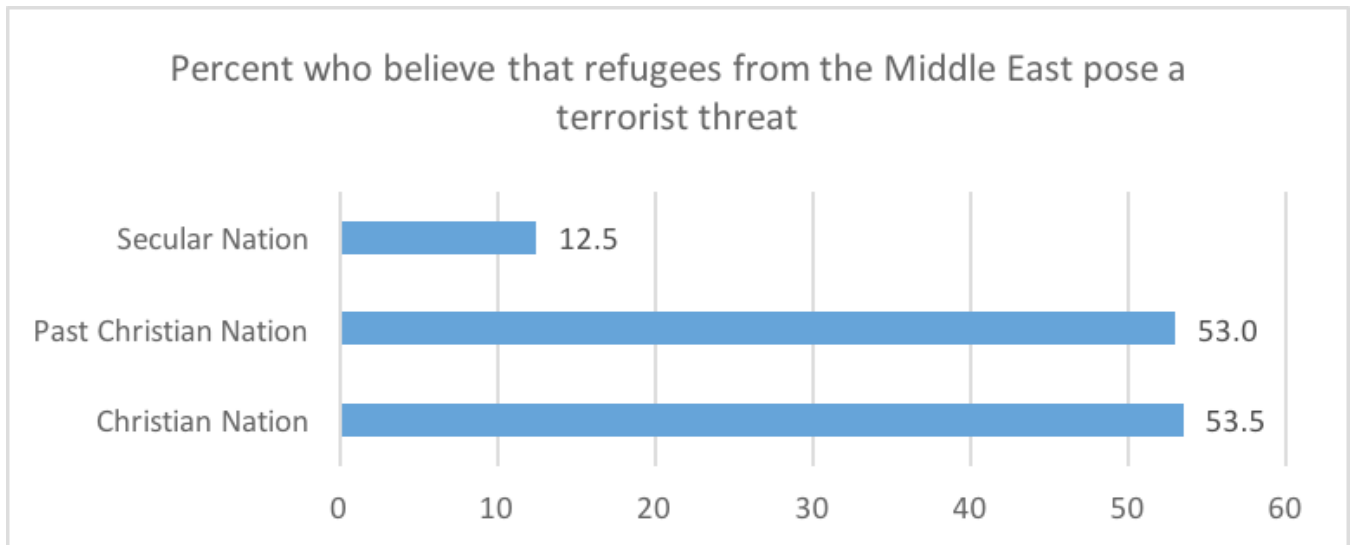
Finally, over half of Americans who either believe the US was a Christian nation in the past or still is a Christian nation believe that refugees from the Middle East pose a terrorist threat (Figure 25 (next page)). Only 12.5 percent of Americans who believe the US was never a Christian nation see Middle East refugees as a threat.

**FIGURE 24**



These findings suggest that 1) Americans hold a variety of beliefs about the Christian nation narrative, 2) Americans of all religious and political persuasions hold various beliefs about the Christian nation narrative, and 3) these beliefs are associated with their views toward a variety of social issues including vote choice in the 2016 Presidential election. In the upcoming sections we also examine how the Christian nation narratives relate to Americans' God images and living in an urban or rural setting.

**FIGURE 25**



## D. Update on America's Four Gods

*By Bob Thomson and Paul Froese*

In *America's Four Gods*, Paul Froese and Christopher Bader argue that Americans' beliefs about God predict a number of things about their political attitudes, moral behaviors, and overall understanding of the world. They describe five distinct types of God images; they are:

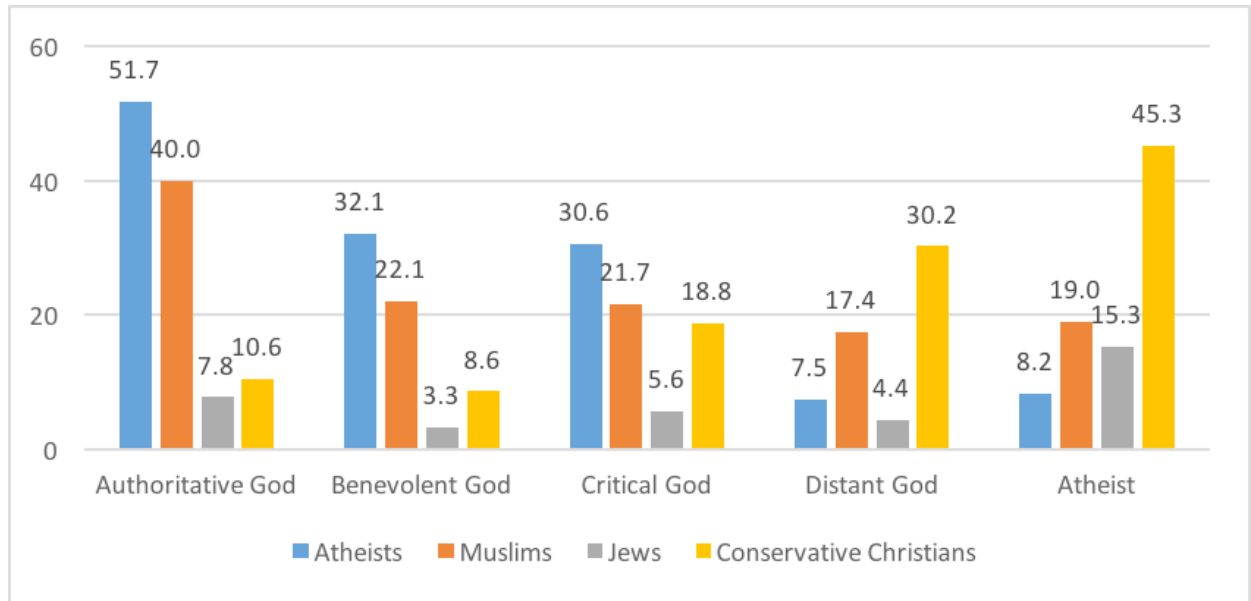
- Authoritative God – a deity who is highly engaged and highly judgmental
- Benevolent God – a deity who is highly engaged but NOT judgmental
- Critical God – a deity who is NOT engaged but highly judgmental
- Distant God – a deity who is NOT engaged and NOT judgmental
- Atheism

We update their analyses with new data; specifically, we look at the relationship between God images and the core values of Trumpism.

Half of respondents with an Authoritative God-image agree or strongly agree that their values are superior to those of atheists, and 2 in 5 assert superiority over atheists (Figure 26). In contrast, more than 40 percent of atheists believe their values are superior to those of Conservative Christians, while less than 20 percent believe Muslim values are inferior.

**FIGURE 26:**

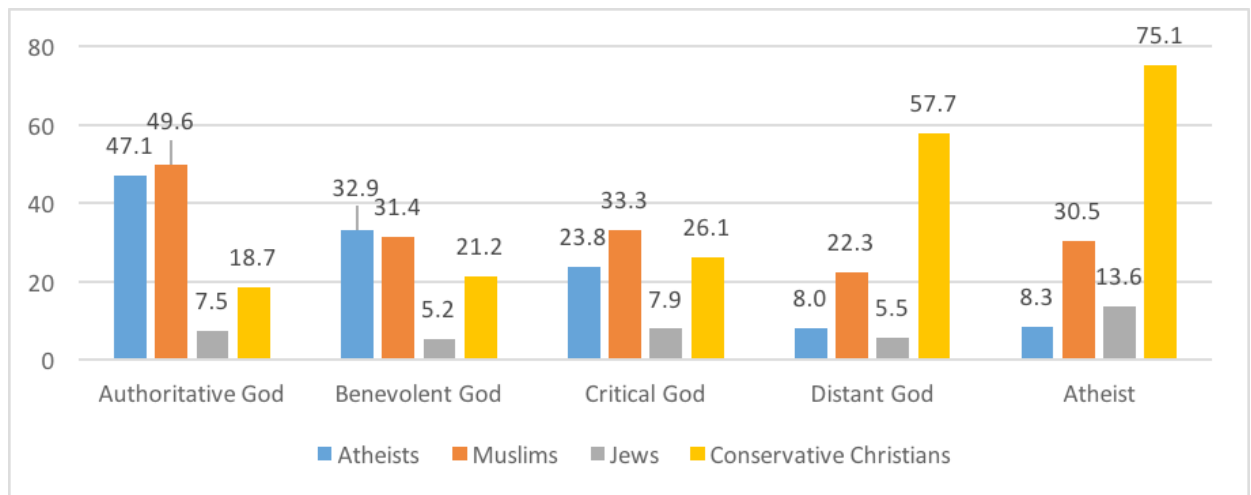
**Percent who agree or strongly agree that members of certain groups hold values that are morally inferior to the values of their own groups.**



In a similar pattern, nearly half of respondents with an Authoritative God-image believe atheists limit the personal freedoms of their group, and a slightly larger share of them believe Muslims limit their personal freedoms (Figure 27). In contrast, nearly 60 percent of respondents with a Distant God-image and 3 in 4 atheists agree or strongly agree that Conservative Christians limit the personal freedom of people like them.

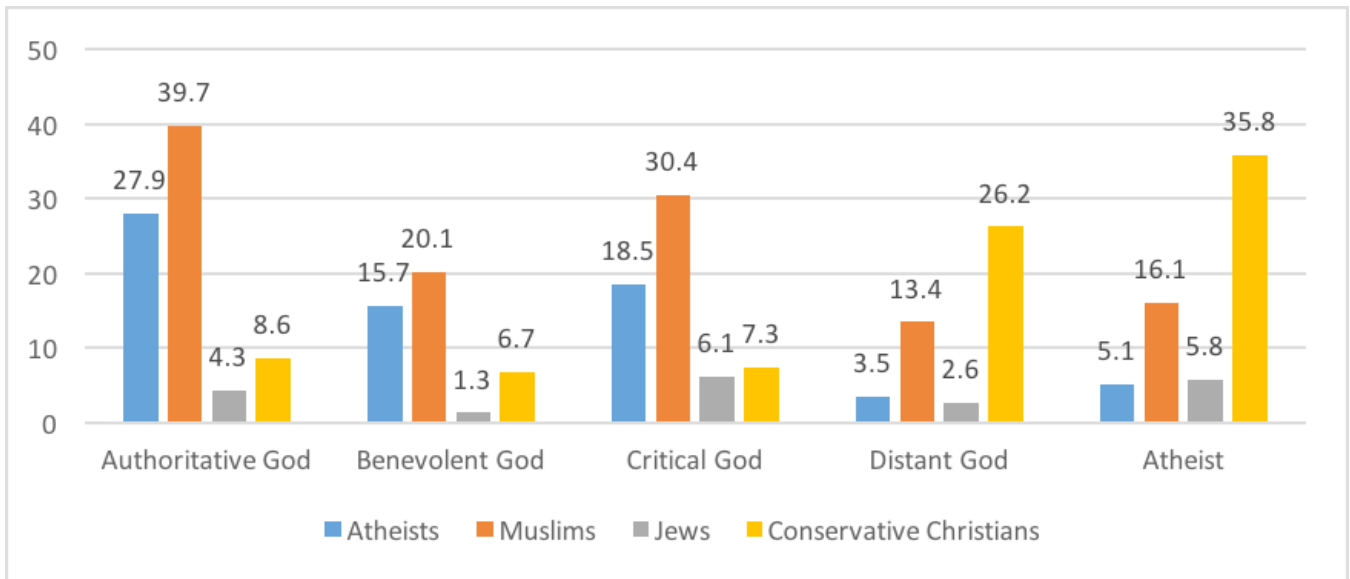
**FIGURE 27:**

**Percent who agree or strongly agree that members of certain groups limit the personal freedoms of people in their own groups.**



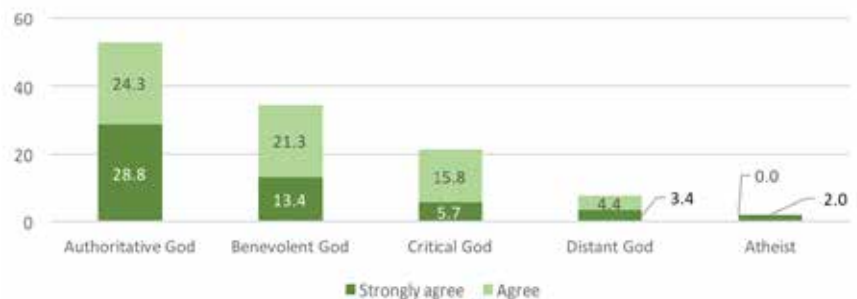
Twenty, thirty and forty percent of respondents having Benevolent, Critical, and Authoritative God-images, respectively, agree or strongly agree that Muslims pose a physical threat (Figure 28). Nearly a third of respondents with an Authoritative God-image also perceive atheists to be a physical threat. Among atheists and respondents with a Distant God-image, though, conservative Christians are reported as physical threats by the largest share (36% and 26%, respectively).

**FIGURE 28:**  
**Percent who agree or strongly agree that members of certain groups endanger the physical safety of people in their own groups.**



A clear and consistent pattern emerges between images of God and attitudes about Christian nationalism. Among respondents with an Authoritative God-image, over half believe the US should be declared a Christian nation (Figure 29).

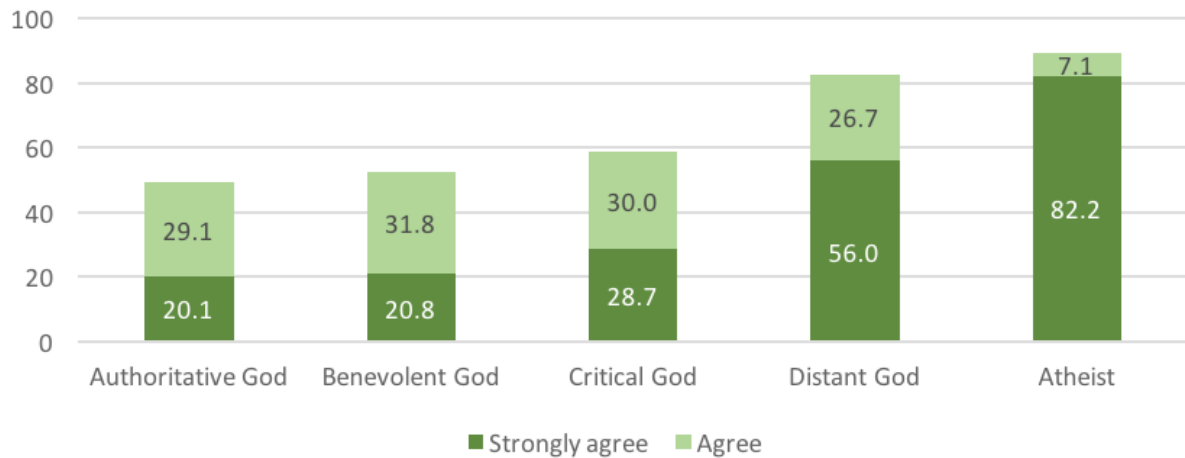
**FIGURE 29:**  
**Percent who agree or strongly agree that the federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.**





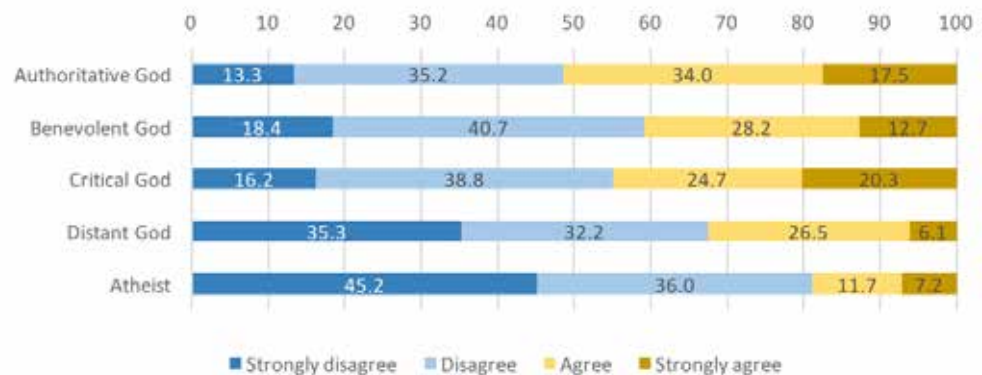
On the other hand, more than 4 in 5 of atheists and respondents with a Distant God-image believe the federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state, including 82 and 56 percent, respectively, who strongly agree (Figure 30). More than 40 percent of respondents with both Authoritative and Benevolent God-images also agree, but only about 1 in 5 do so strongly.

**FIGURE 30:**  
**Percent who agree or strongly agree that the federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state.**



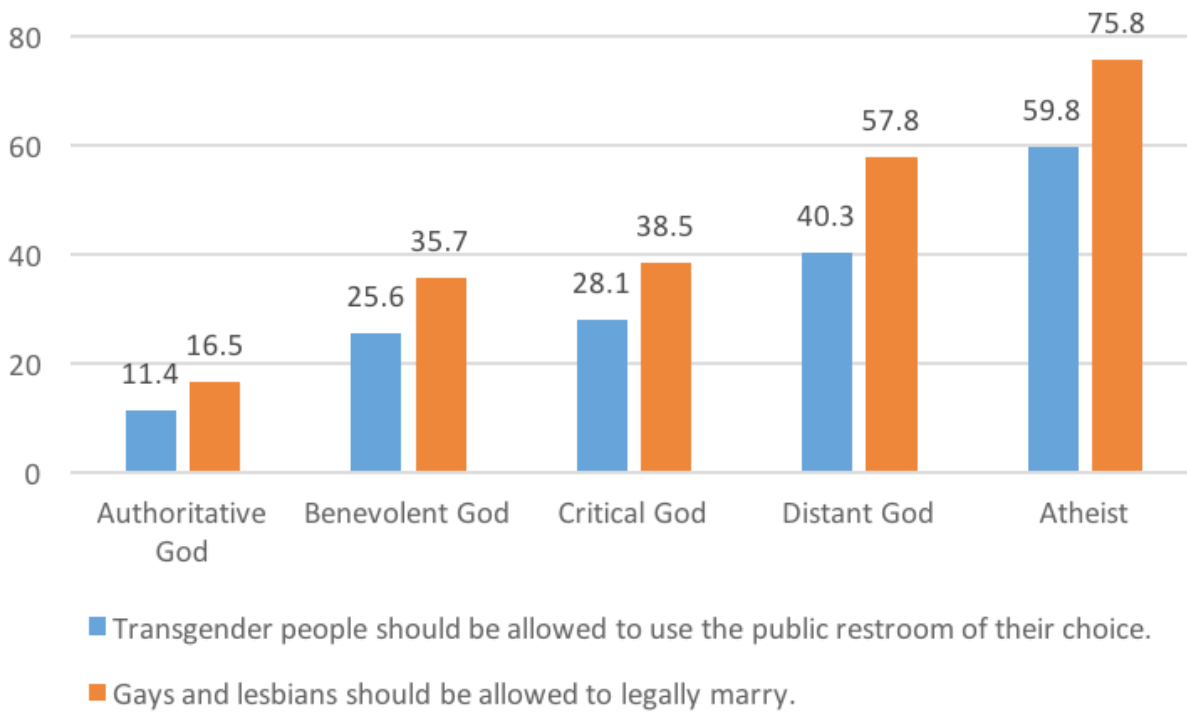
Over half of survey respondents with an Authoritative God-image agree or strongly agree that refugees from the Middle East pose a terrorist threat to the United States (Figure 31). In contrast, more than 4 in 5 atheists do not agree, including 45 percent who disagree strongly. While 35 percent of respondents with a Distant God-image strongly disagreed, 18 percent of those with a Benevolent God-image strongly disagreed.

**FIGURE 31:**  
**God-image and perception that refugees from the Middle East pose a terrorist threat to the United States.**



Finally, the strongest resistance to legal rights of the LGBTQ community can be found among those with an Authoritative God-image (Figure 32). In contrast, 2 in 5 respondents with a Distant God-image strongly support restroom rights among transgender people, and nearly 3 in 5 strongly support marriage equality. Among atheists, both issues have strong support among 60 percent of respondents or more.

**FIGURE 32:**  
**God-image and attitudes about LGBTQ rights (percent of respondents who strongly agree)**





## II. FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH IN AMERICA

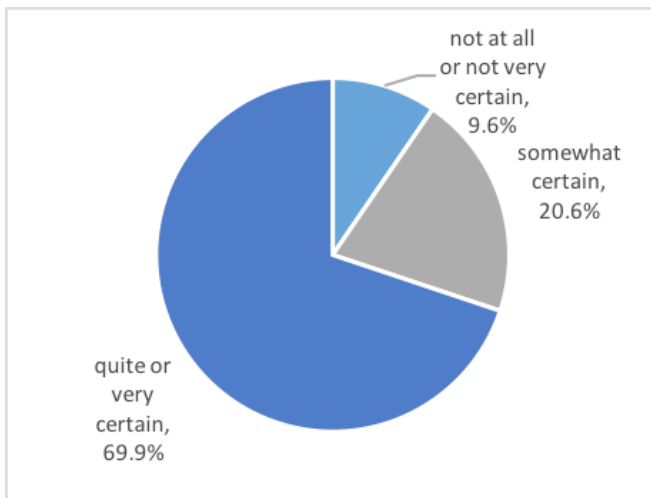
### A. The Benefits of Heaven and the Pitfalls of Hell

*By Lindsay Wilkinson and Paul Froese*

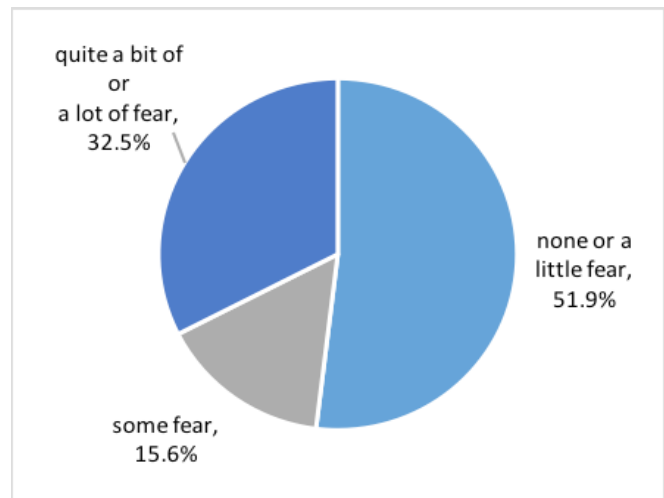
A person's mental health is the result of a myriad of factors, not the least of which are one's physical health and one's life circumstances. In addition, mental health is related to one's religious beliefs because one's outlook on the world is intimately linked to whether one feels routinely depressed and anxious, or conversely, happy and in control.

In the book *On Purpose*, Paul Froese shows that abstract and conjectural beliefs, like faith in heaven and hell and feeling that life is purposeful, reflect something essential about how a person understands and ultimately moves through the world. Overall, Americans tend to have fairly positive existential beliefs. Nearly 70 percent are certain that they will go to heaven and over half of Americans have little to no fear of hell (Figures 33 and 34). In addition, only around 10 % of Americans feel that life has "no clear purpose" (Figure 35).

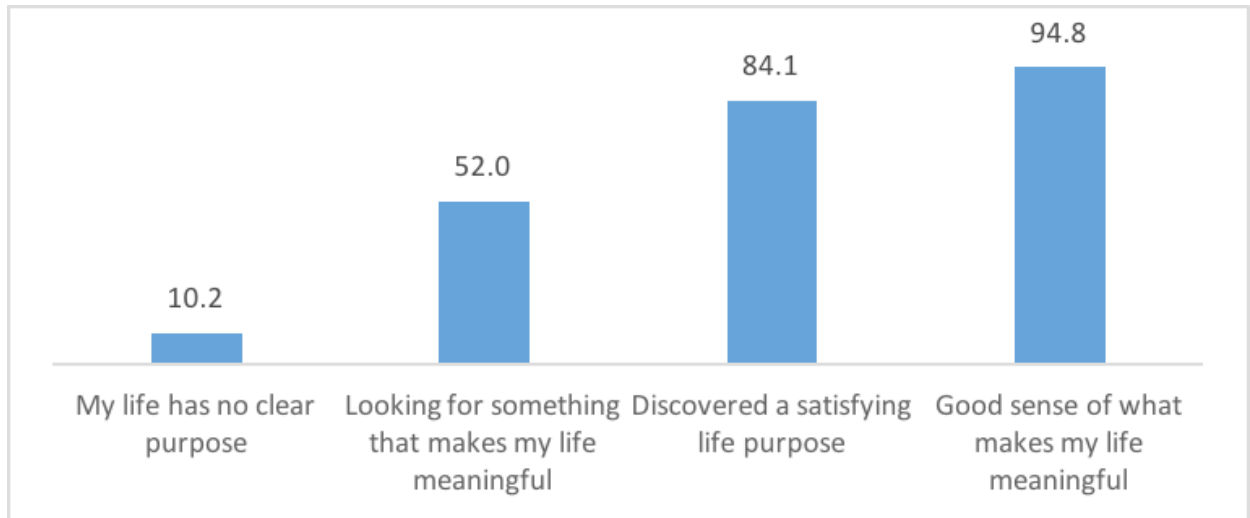
**FIGURE 33:**  
**Are you going to Heaven?**



**FIGURE 34:**  
**Are you afraid of Hell?**



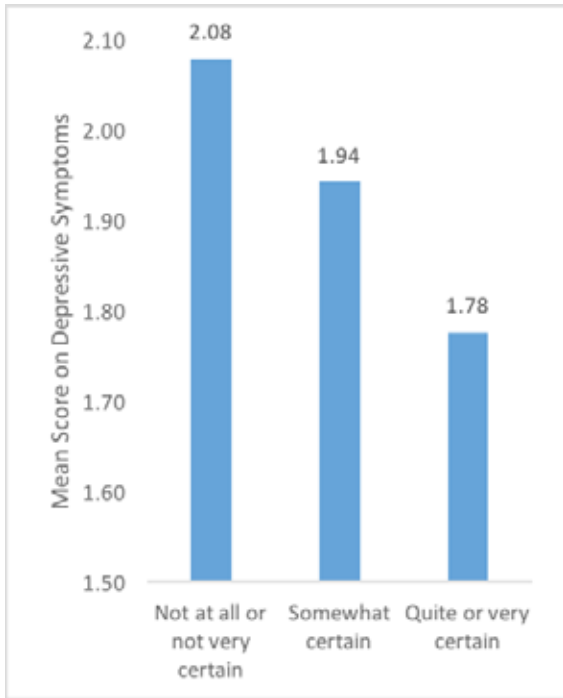
**FIGURE 35:**  
**Do you have a Purpose in Life? Percent in Agreement.**



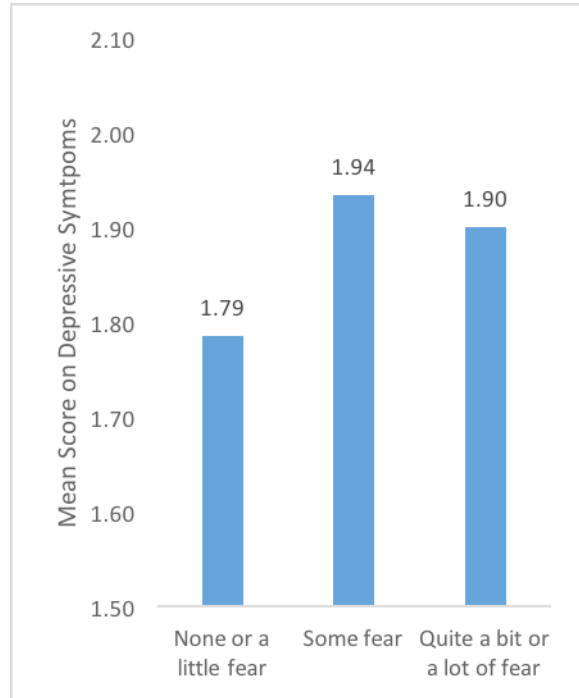
Expectations about heaven and hell are directly and powerfully related to depression. We created a depression score based on the frequency of 10 depressive symptoms and find that certainty of going to heaven is strongly correlated with a lack of depressive episodes (Figure 36). Similarly, people who have fewer depressive symptoms feel that life is purposeful (Figure 38 (next page)). But surprisingly, those who fear hell the most are not the most depressed – the most depressed Americans are those that feel “life has no purpose” (Figure 38 (next page)). This suggests that a meaningful world, even one guided by a judgmental God, is better than no meaning at all.

We created an anxiety score based on the frequency of 5 anxiety symptoms and find that certainty of going to heaven is strongly correlated with being anxiety free – what’s to worry about when you have eternity covered (Figure 39 (next page))? Unlike depression, people who fear hell are some of the most anxious Americans (Figure 40 (next page)). And feeling that life is purposeful is related to feeling less anxious (Figure 41). While the causality is unclear, mental health consistently predicts positive existential beliefs. Philosophical nihilists need not be fighting extreme anxiety, but they probably are.

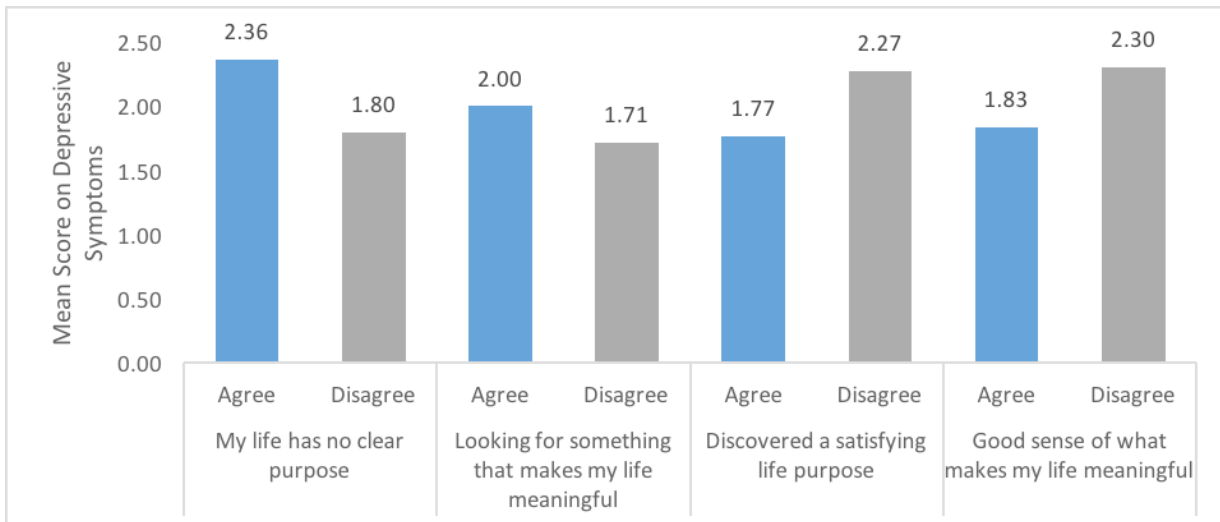
**FIGURE 36:**  
**Certainty of Heaven and Depression**



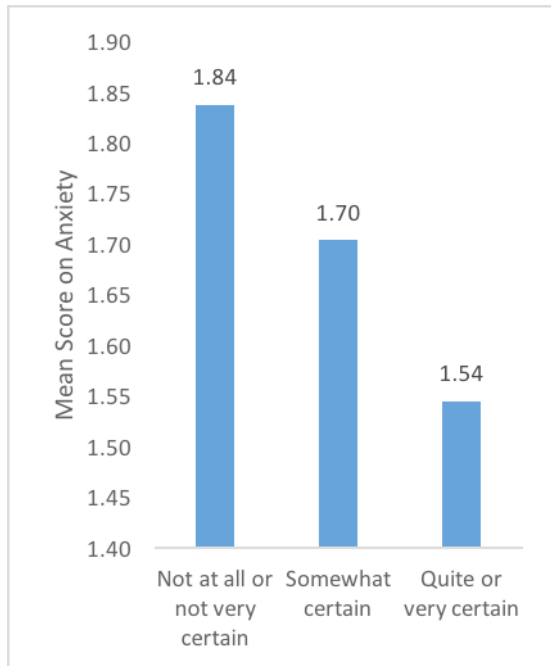
**FIGURE 37:**  
**Fear of Hell and Depression**



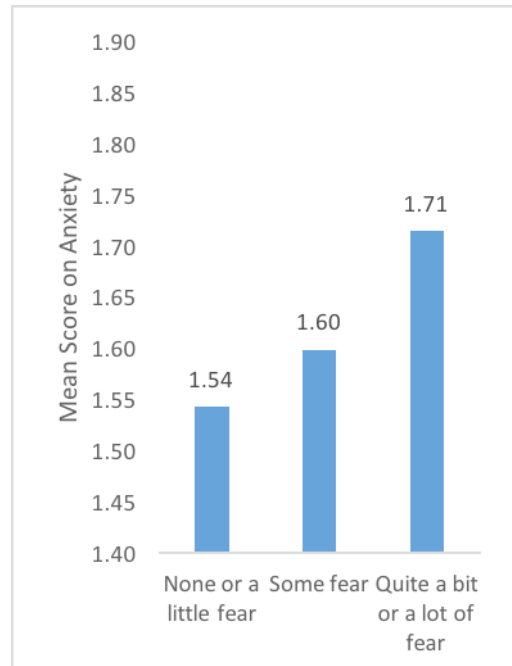
**FIGURE 38:**  
**Purpose in Life and Depression**



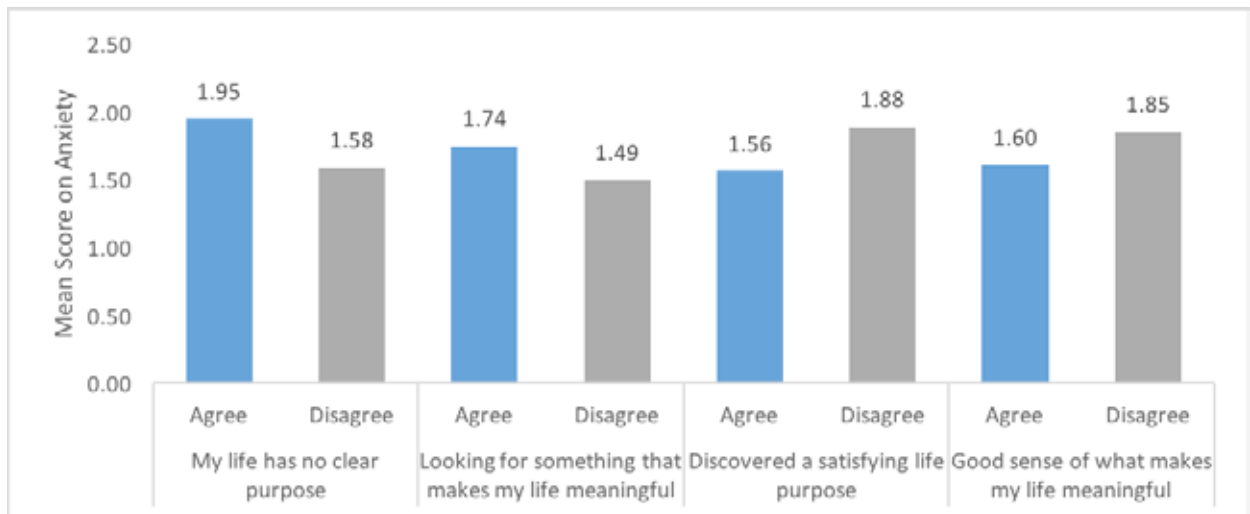
**FIGURE 39:**  
**Certainty of Heaven and Anxiety**



**FIGURE 40:**  
**Fear of Hell and Anxiety**

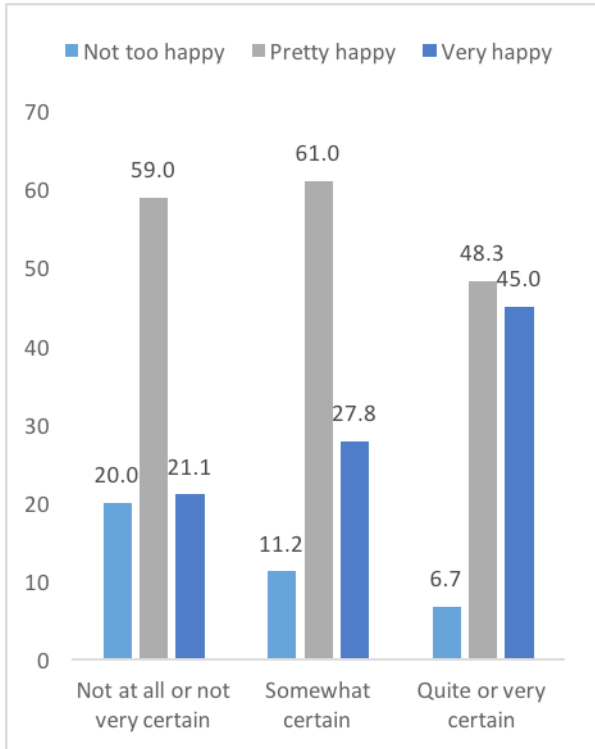


**FIGURE 41:**  
**Purpose in Life and Anxiety**

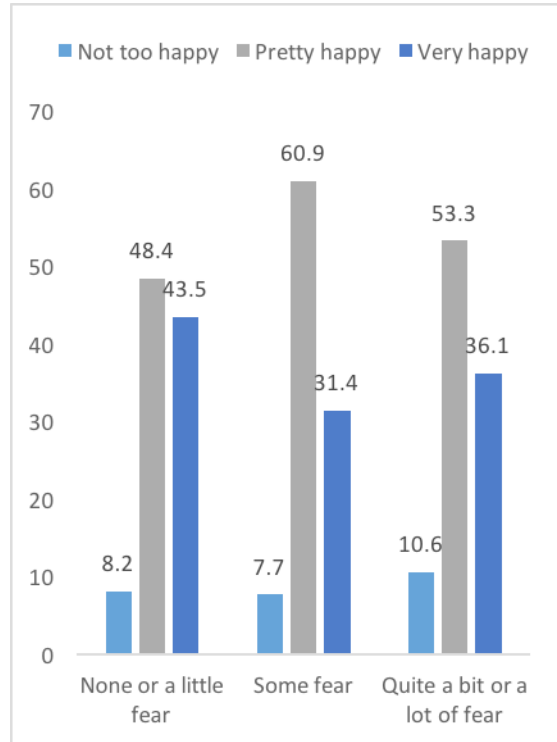


Americans who believe they will go to heaven are overwhelmingly “very” or “pretty” happy (Figure 42). Similarly, people who do NOT fear hell are also consistently happy (Figure 43). And feeling that life is purposeful is related to overall happiness (Figure 44). Americans who say they have “discovered a satisfying life purpose” are among the most likely to be very happy. Existential beliefs appear to be markers or makers of our ultimate contentment.

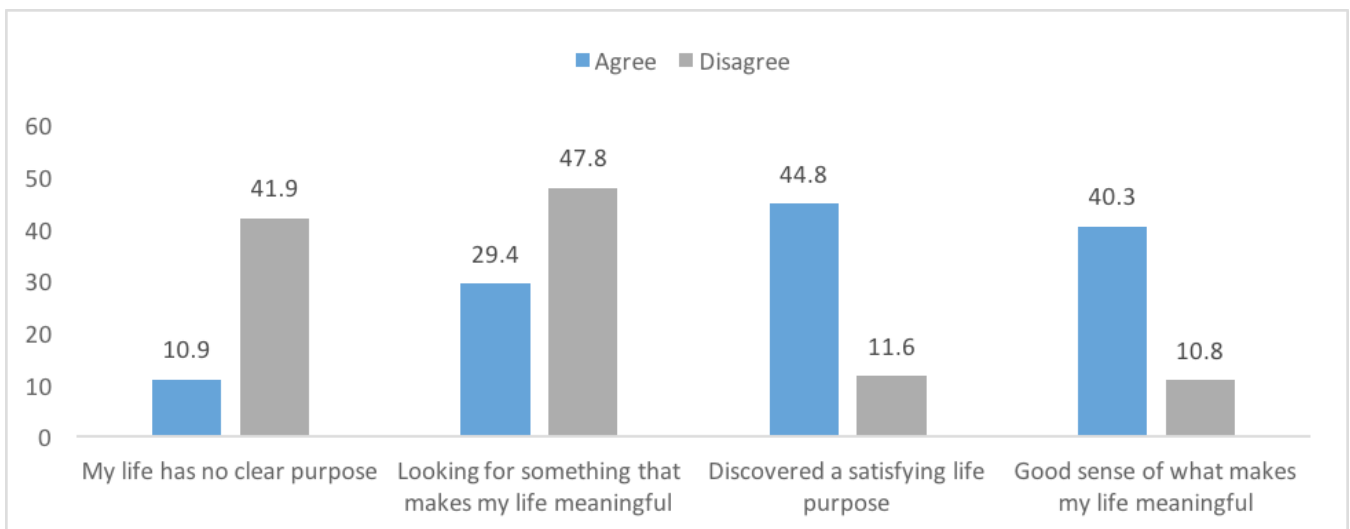
**FIGURE 42:**  
**Certainty of Heaven and Happiness**



**FIGURE 43:**  
**Fear of Hell and Happiness**



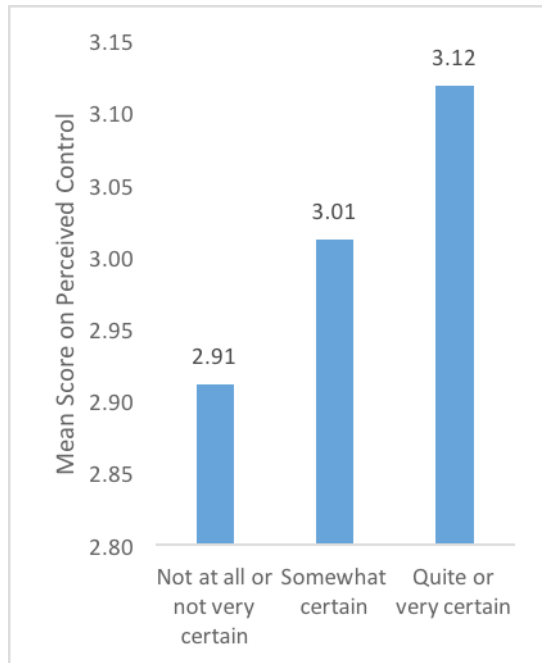
**FIGURE 44:**  
**Purpose in Life and Feeling "Very Happy"**



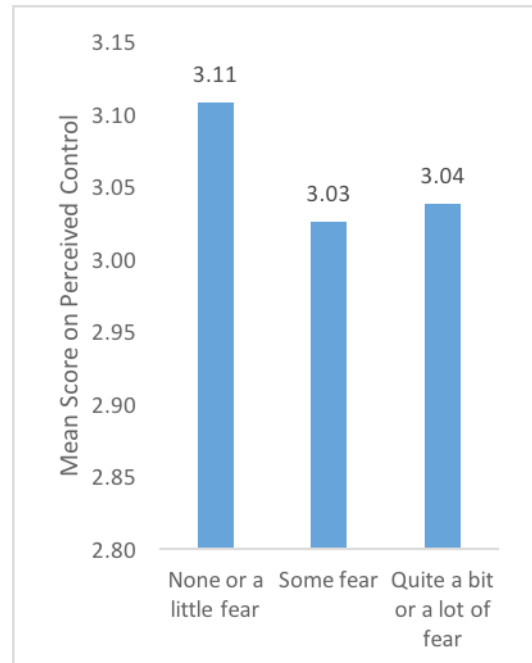


Finally, we created a 4-item scale which measures a person's perceived control over their life situation. Beliefs about the afterlife are related to one's feelings of control in this life. Americans who are certain to be heaven-bound feel most in control of their situation (Figure 45). Not fearing eternal damnation has the same outcome (Figure 46). These findings indicate how religious and existential beliefs consistently map onto real life situations and feelings.

**FIGURE 45:**  
**Certainty of Heaven and Sense of Control**



**FIGURE 46:**  
**Fear of Hell and Sense of Control**



So when you learn something about a person's existential beliefs concerning heaven, hell, and life, you can gain some insight into their daily world struggles and their overall mental health even when they're not talking about themselves.

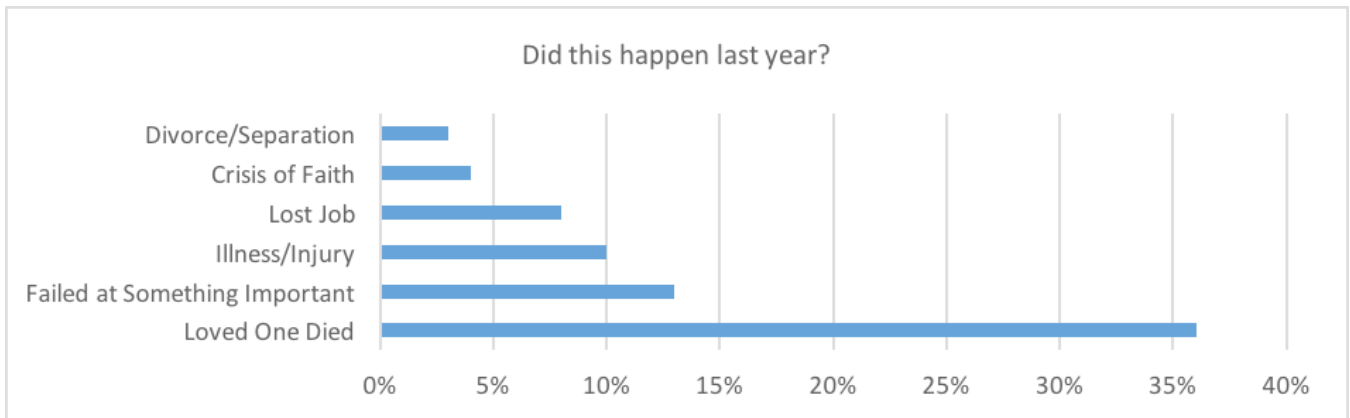
In this way, our cosmic worldview tends to reflect our mental disposition.

## B. Faith in Times of Stress

*By Renae Wilkinson*

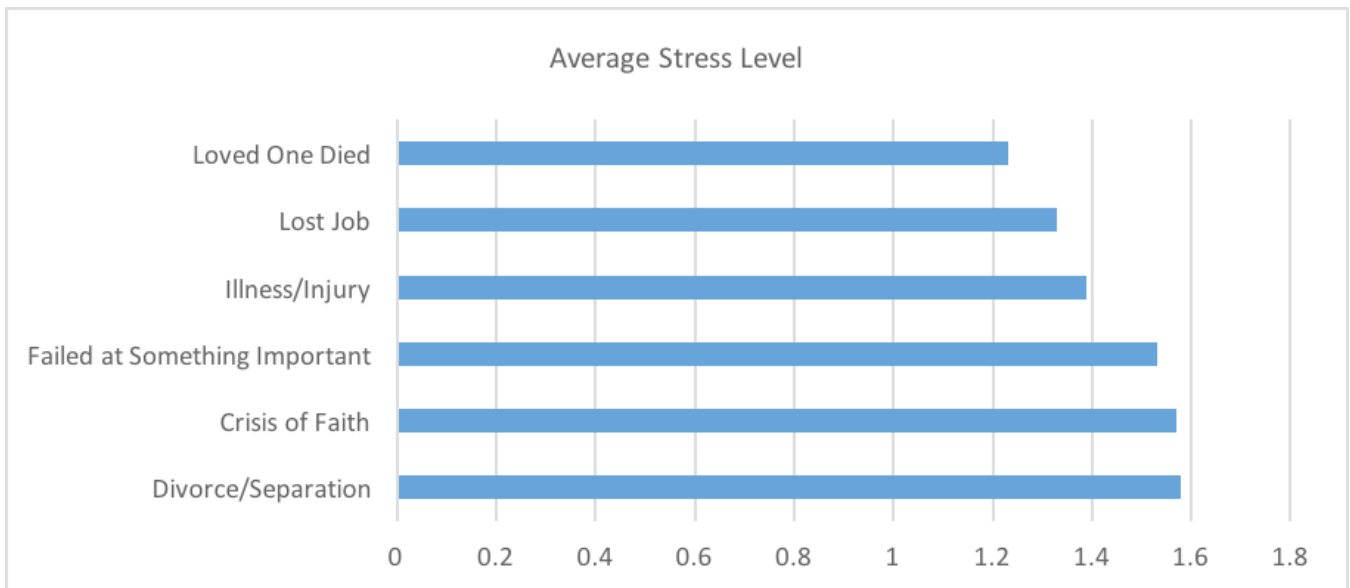
We asked survey respondents about events in their lives in order to gain some insight into how troubled times affect the stress and resilience of Americans. Over a third of our respondents experienced the death of a loved one in the past 12 months (Figure 47 (next page)). The next most prevalent stressful event (13%) was the experience that one "failed at something important" last year. Few people had a crisis of faith and even fewer respondents got a divorce last year.

**FIGURE 47**



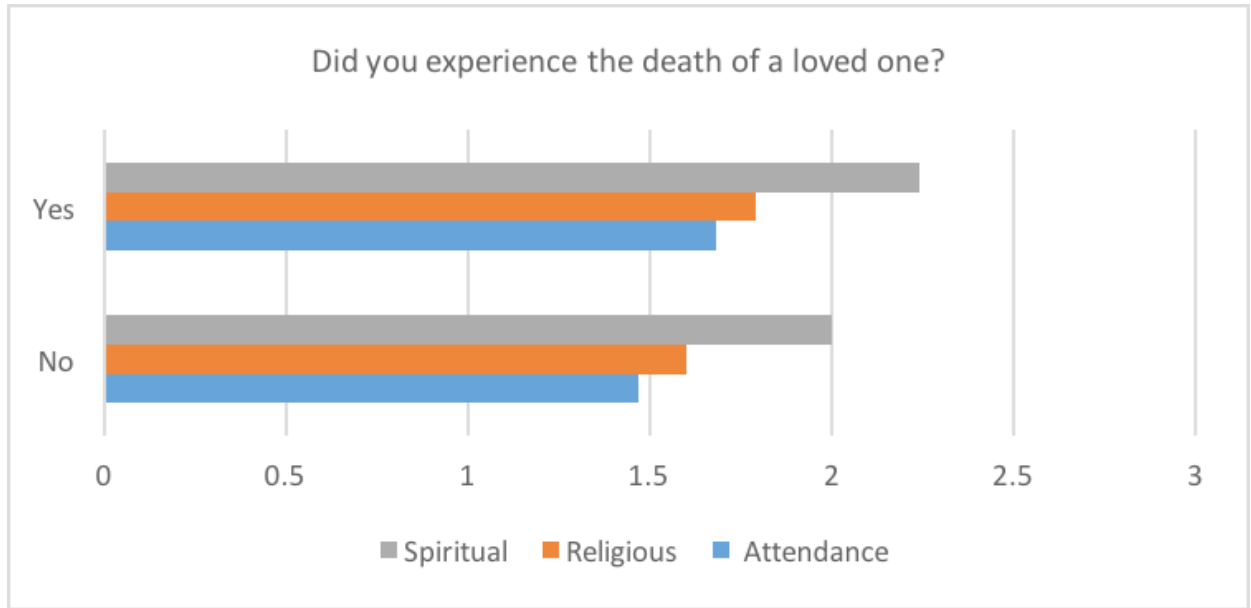
Interestingly, while many Americans experienced the death of a loved one last year, many did not find this is extremely stressful (Figure 48). Perhaps the death was expected or even welcome depending on the health and age of the loved one. While divorce was rarer, it ranked as the most stressful of events for Americans who experienced it.

**FIGURE 48**



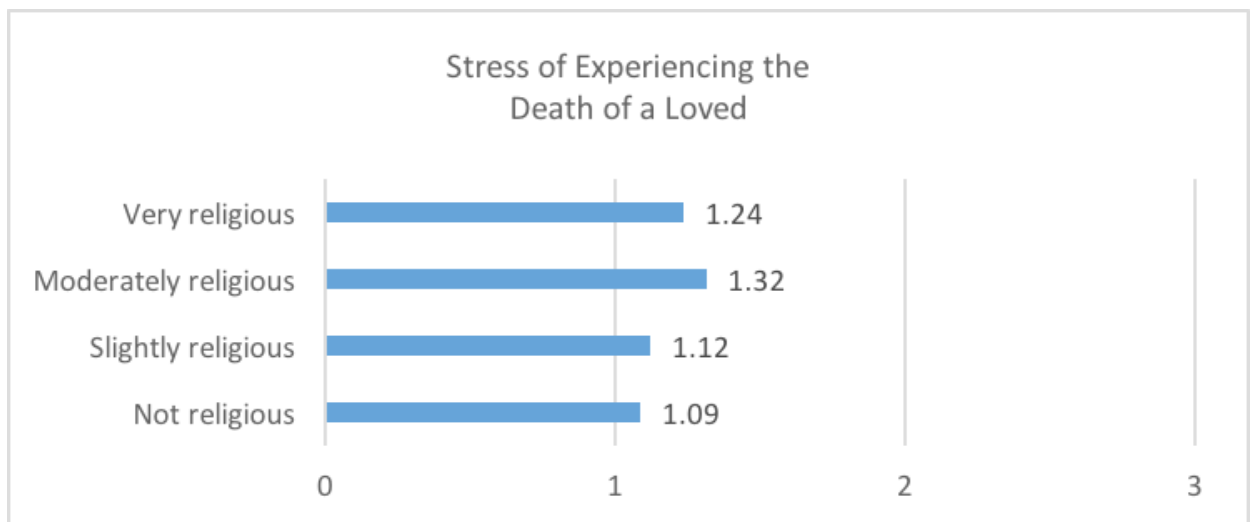
Experiencing the death of a loved one is associated with higher levels of religiousness across three indicators: respondents who lost a loved one last year tend to attend religious services more frequently than those who did not, and also they tend to describe themselves as more religious or spiritual, on average (Figure 49 (next page)).

**FIGURE 49**



Interestingly, while the death of a loved one is related to having higher religiosity, higher religiosity does not reduce the stress felt from the loss. In fact, religious Americans are statistically more likely to feel stressed by the death of a loved one than non-religious Americans (Figure 50).

**FIGURE 50**



While self-reported religiosity overall is positively related to feeling stress from the loss of a loved one, having different kinds of beliefs appear to create different outcomes. Those who are "not certain at all" of getting into heaven were the most distressed by their loss (Figure 51 (next page)). Similarly, Americans who have "a lot of fear of hell" were also the most stressed (Figure 52 (next page)). The least stressed people are those who don't believe in heaven and those who "don't know" whether they fear hell.

**FIGURE 51**

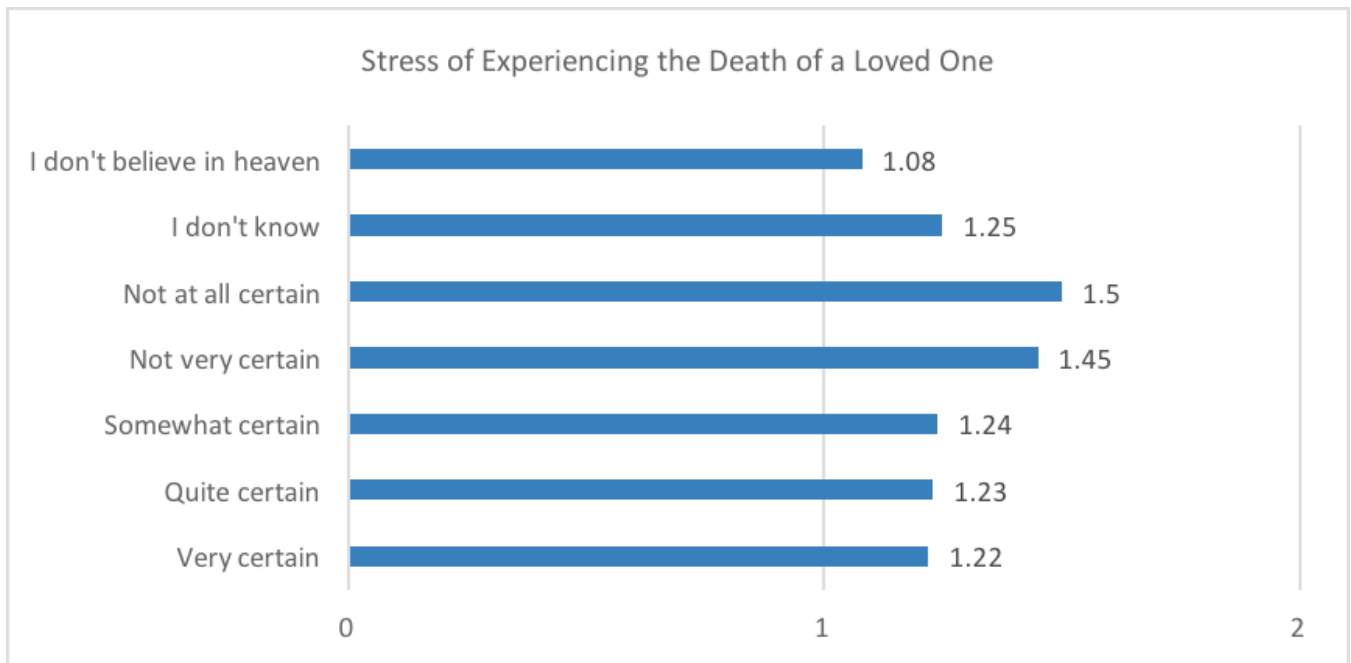
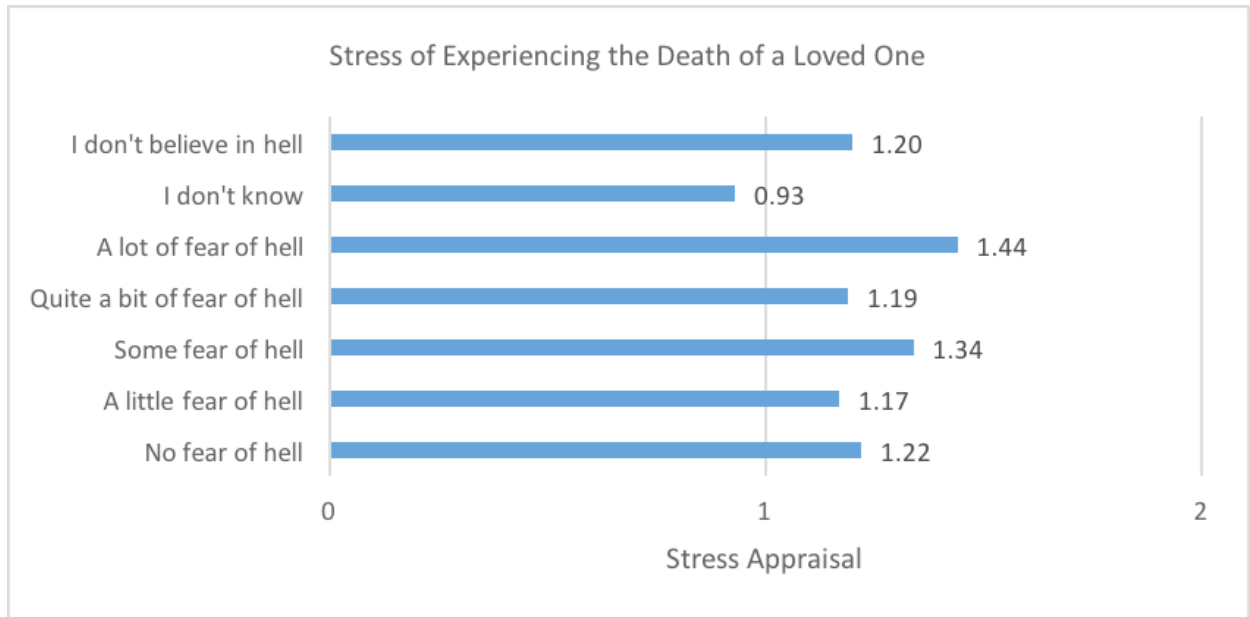


FIGURE 52



### C. American Dignity

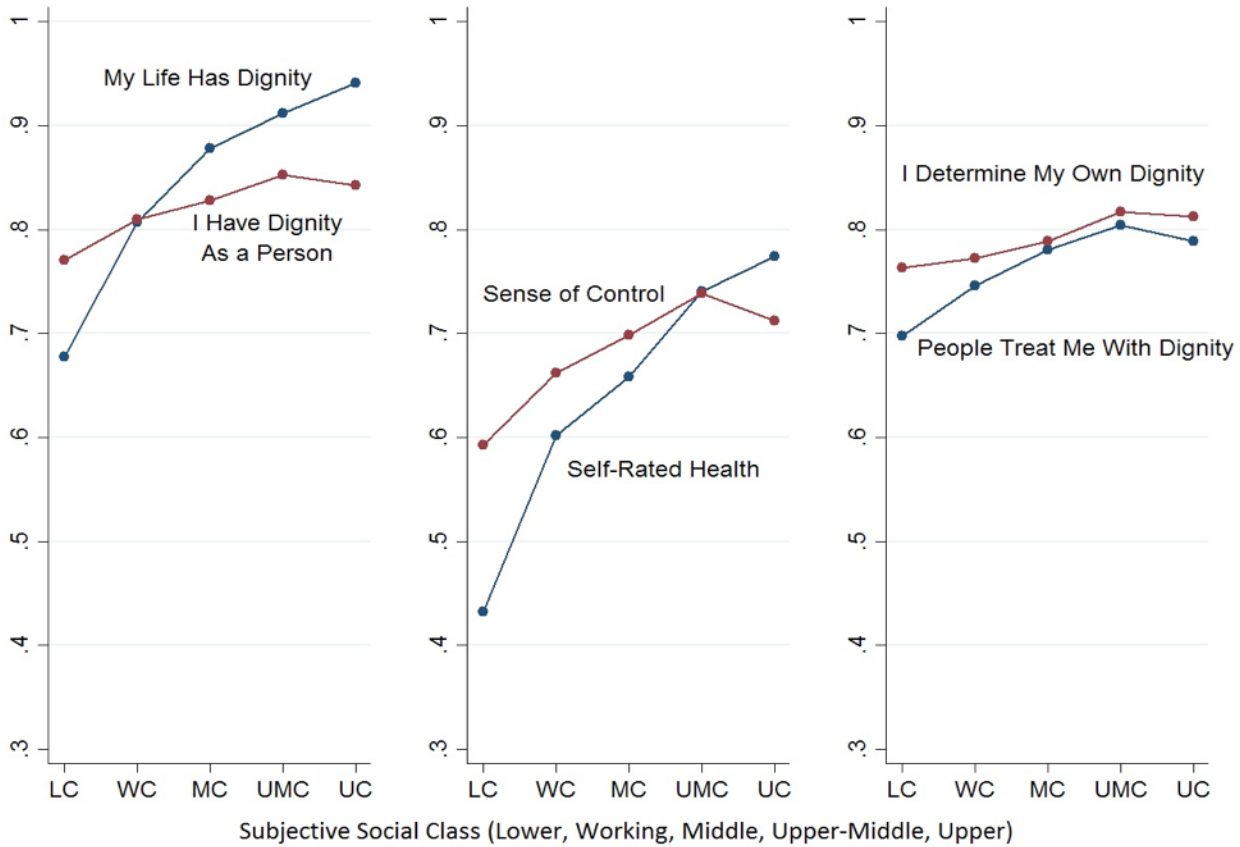
*By Matthew A. Andersson and Steven Hitlin*

Dignity is deeply personal yet deeply social. Though difficult to define, for many individuals dignity involves a certain achieved humanity, one marked by autonomy, lack of humiliation, and the realization of some social or higher purpose. Measuring who has dignity – and how much they have – is quite a challenge, given that individuals evaluating the same set of life circumstances often might disagree on how dignified they are.

#### *DIGNITY AND SOCIAL CLASS*

In this survey, we took an open-ended approach by asking a number of questions related to “dignity.” Respondents reported how strongly they either agreed (scored 1) or disagreed (scored 0) with each dignity item. First, we examined how these dignity measures relate to basic levels of resources in society, as indexed by self-reported social class. In order to have some basis of comparison, we also looked at patterns in two somewhat related aspects of personal well-being: health (excellent, 1, to poor, 0) and sense of control (index of several items – 1, agree, to 0, disagree) (middle pane).

**FIGURE 53**



We noted a few important patterns:

- In general, dignity shows higher levels overall than either self-rated health or sense of control;
- "My Life Has Dignity" changes the most across social classes, relative to the other dignity items;
- Increasing social class is linked to gains in dignity, but not evenly across social classes;
- The largest gains in dignity, and in health and sense of control, appear from lower to working class;
- Senses of having dignity as a person, being treated with dignity, and determining one's dignity are essentially similar across the upper strata of society.

## DIGNITY, SEX, AND RACE

FIGURE 54



Examining the same items by sex and race yielded a few additional observations:

- Women exceed men in all measured aspects of dignity, and yet women score lower than men on both health and sense of control;
- Black respondents exceed white respondents on all dignity measures except MLD (My Life Has Dignity).

## CONCLUSION

Dignity is more common in society than health or sense of control. It shows strong differences across social class categories, and certain social class transitions are more relevant to changes in dignity than others. How dignity is measured matters to observed differences by class, gender, and race. Gender differences represent an interesting contrast to well-established sex differences in mental and physical well-being, while race differences fall in line with the well-established racial paradox in mental health.







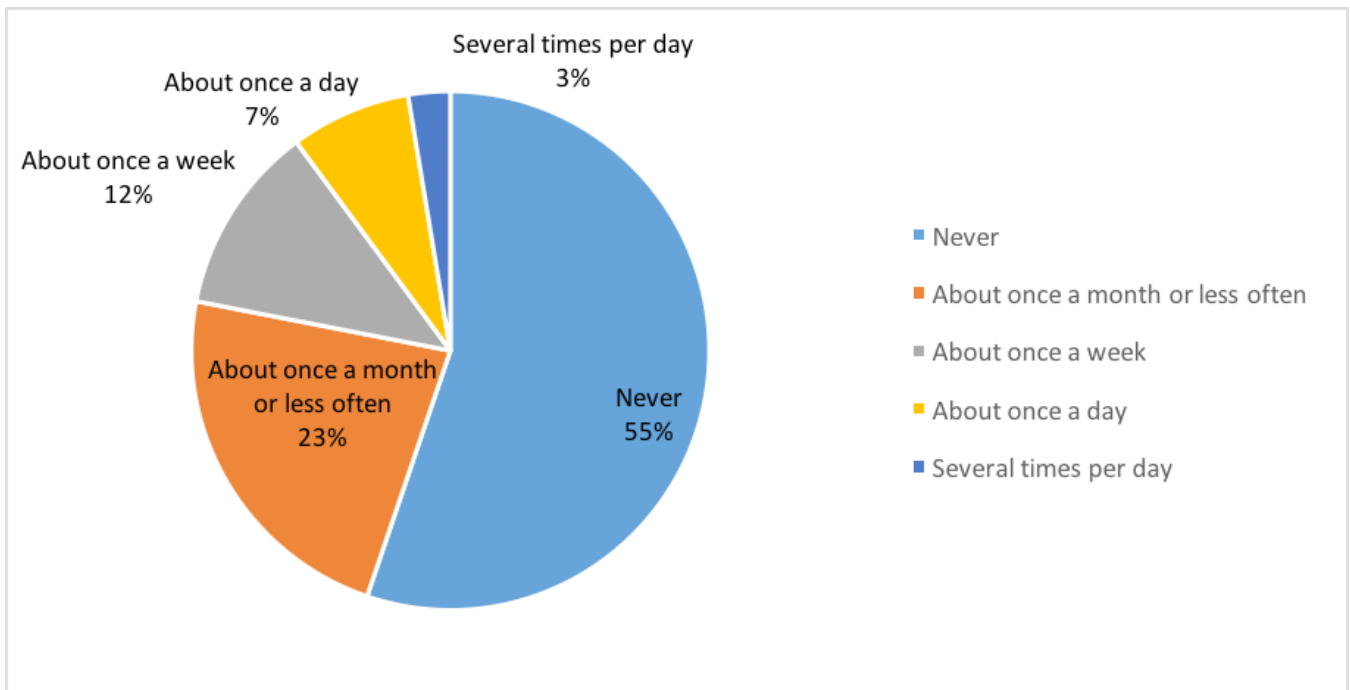
### III. OLD AND NEW: RELIGION AND TECHNOLOGY 1.0

#### A. Faith in the Internet

*By Paul McClure*

Regardless of religious tradition, most Americans report they never use the Internet to access religious or spiritual content (see Figure 55).

**FIGURE 55:**  
**Percent of Americans who use the Internet to access religious or spiritual content.**

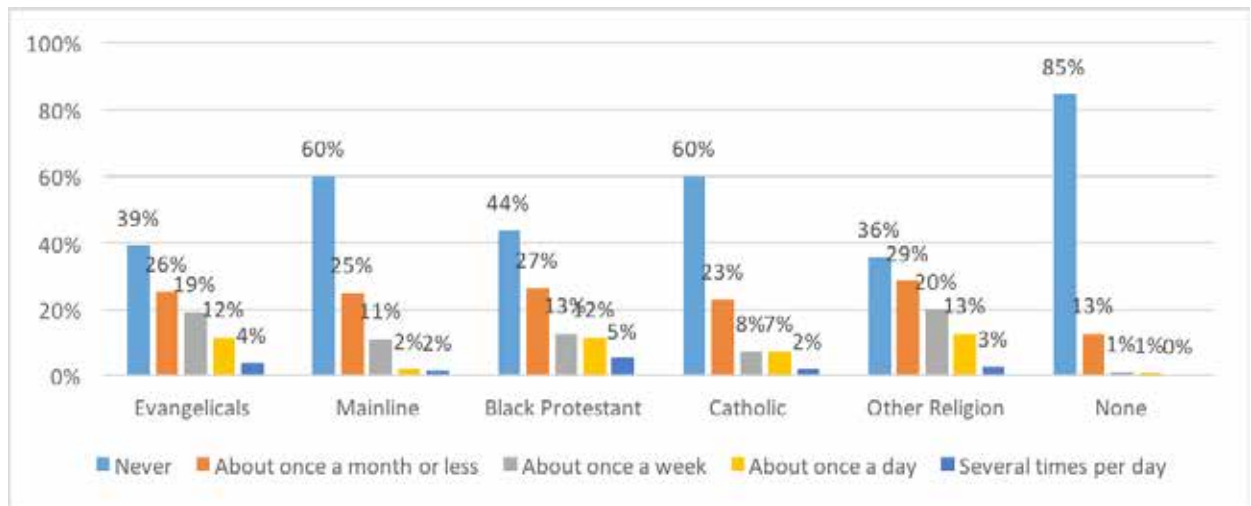


Still, around a quarter of Americans affiliated with a religious group – any religious group - use the Internet to seek out religious or spiritual information around once a month (see Figure 56 (next page)).

Though some scholars have speculated that the Internet isolates like-minded individuals into self-segregating "echo chambers" and filters information based on prior search history, most respondents feel that technology exposes them to new perspectives (see Figure 57 (next page)). Regardless of religious affiliation, nearly 9 in 10 Americans agree or strongly agree that technology exposes them to new perspectives.

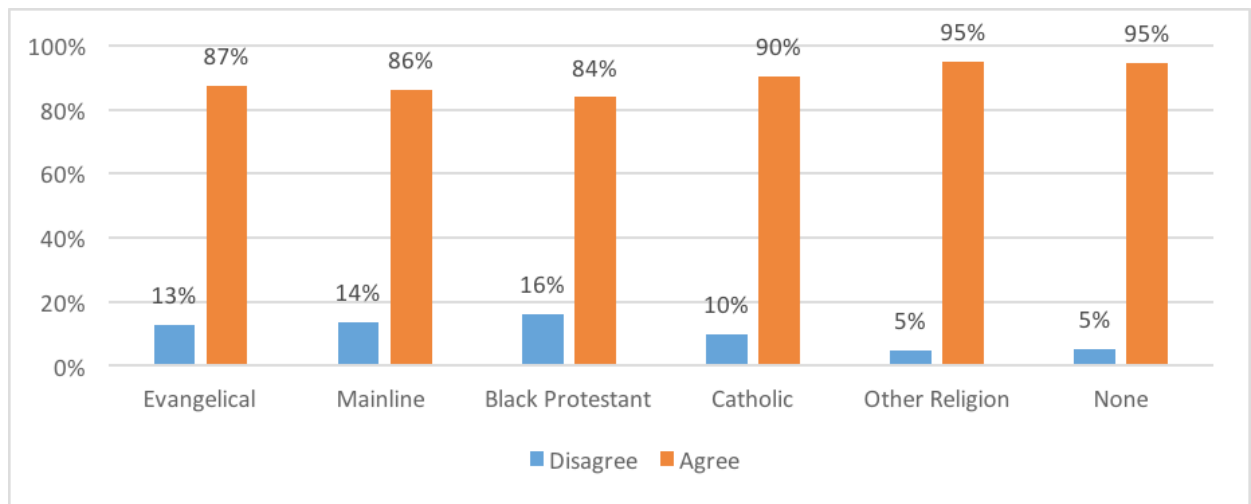
**FIGURE 56:**

**Percent of Americans who use the Internet to access religious or spiritual content (by religious group).**



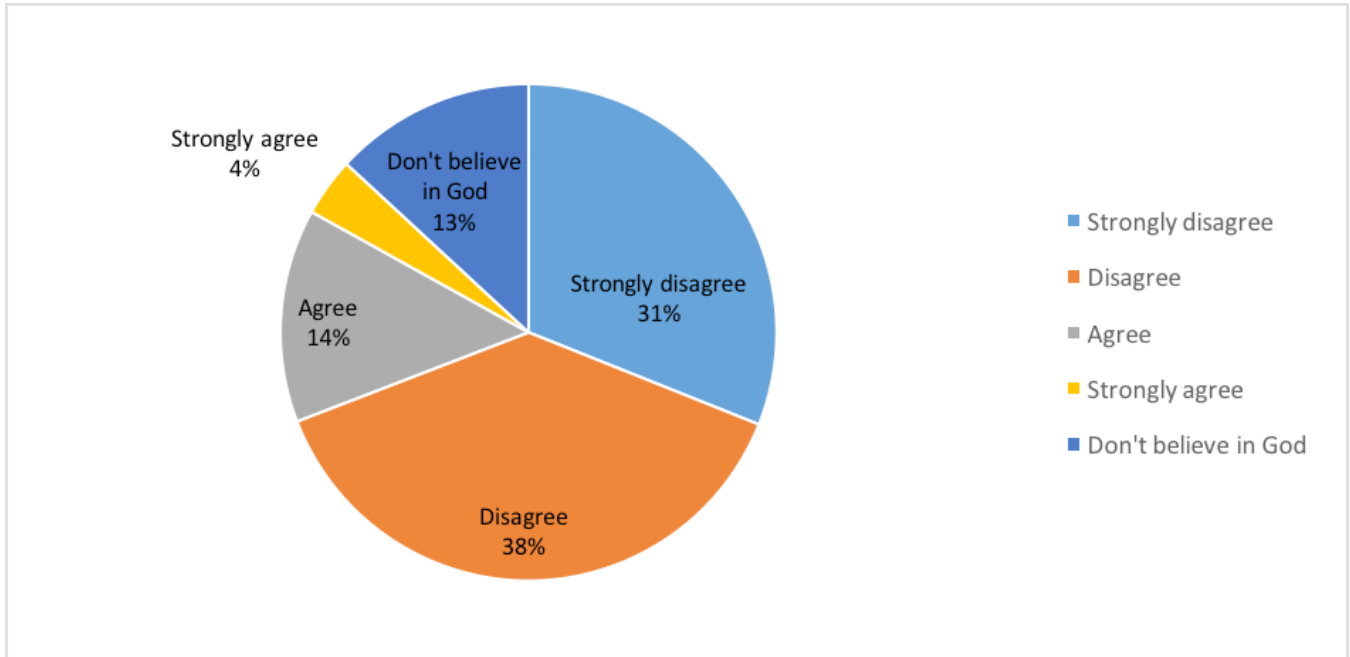
**FIGURE 57:**

**Percent of respondents by each religious tradition who agree/disagree that technology exposes them to new perspectives.**



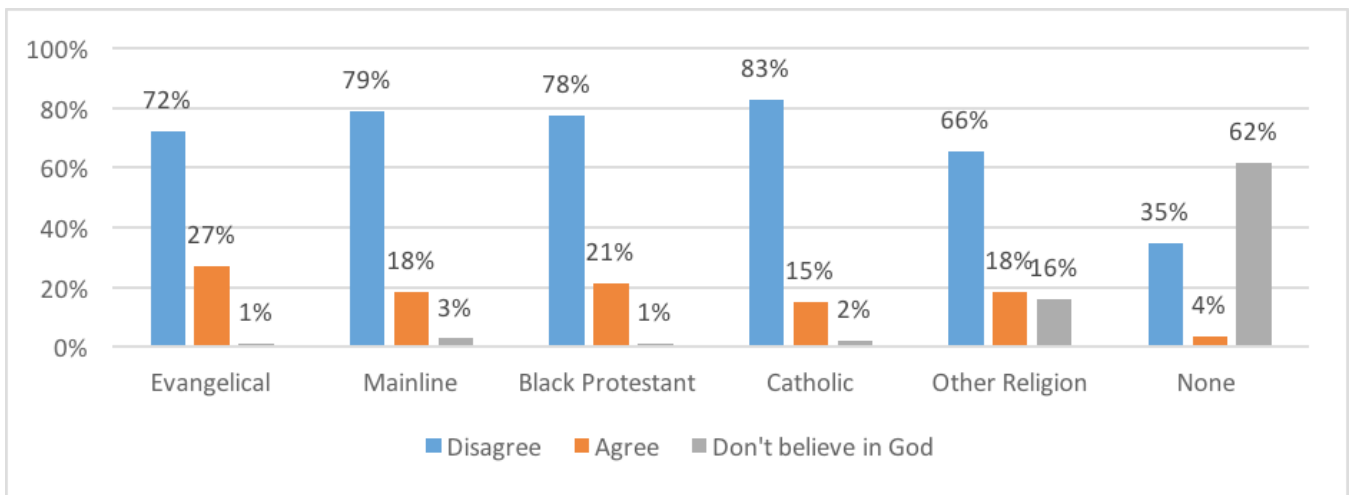
For the most part, Americans do not think that technology improves their relationship with God (see Figure 58 (next page)). Notably, disagreeing does not necessarily mean that individuals believe that technology harms one's relationship with God.

**FIGURE 58:**  
**Percent of Americans who agree/disagree that technology has improved their relationship with God**



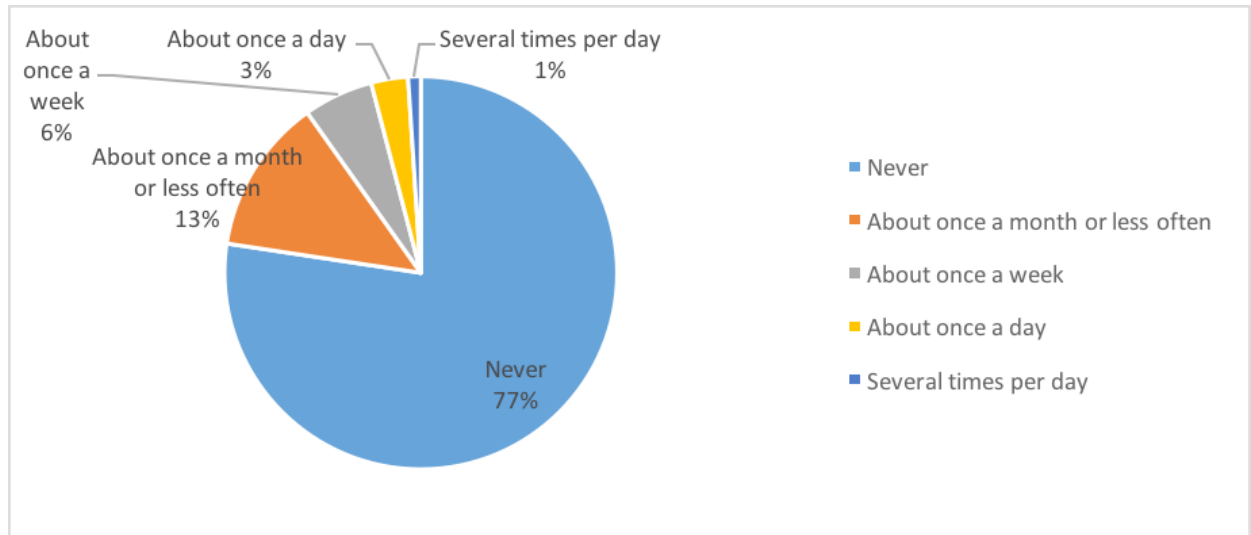
Evangelical Protestants are most likely to feel that technology improves their relationship with God (see Figure 59). The second group most likely to connect to God through technology are Black Protestants.

**FIGURE 59:**  
**Percent of respondents by each religious tradition who believe technology has improved their relationship with God.**



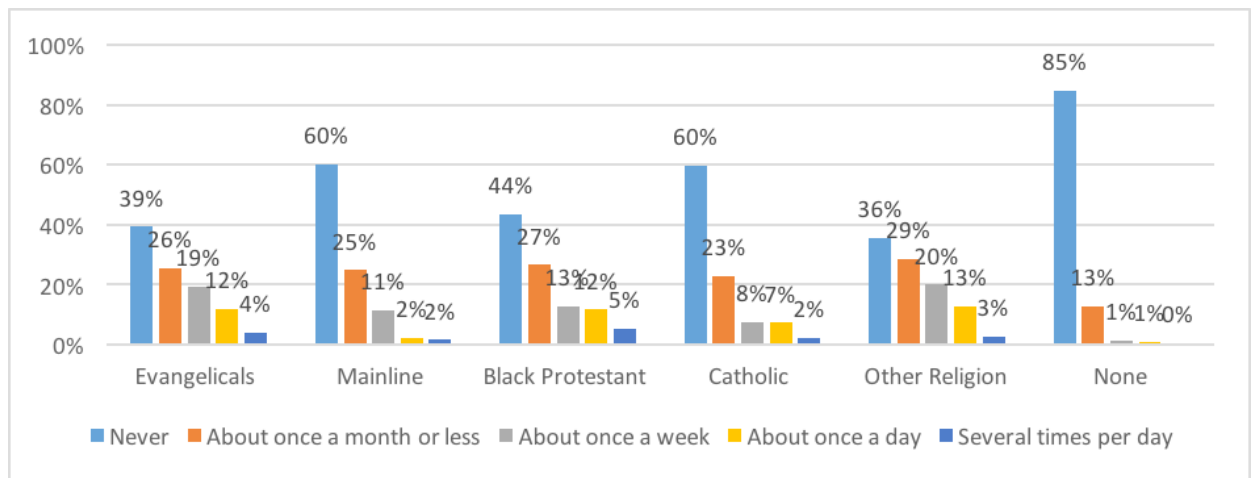
Regardless of religious tradition, a vast majority of respondents have never used the Internet to share their religious views (see Figure 60). Only 23% of all respondents say that they impart their beliefs online.

**FIGURE 60:**  
**Percent of Americans who use the Internet to share their religious views.**



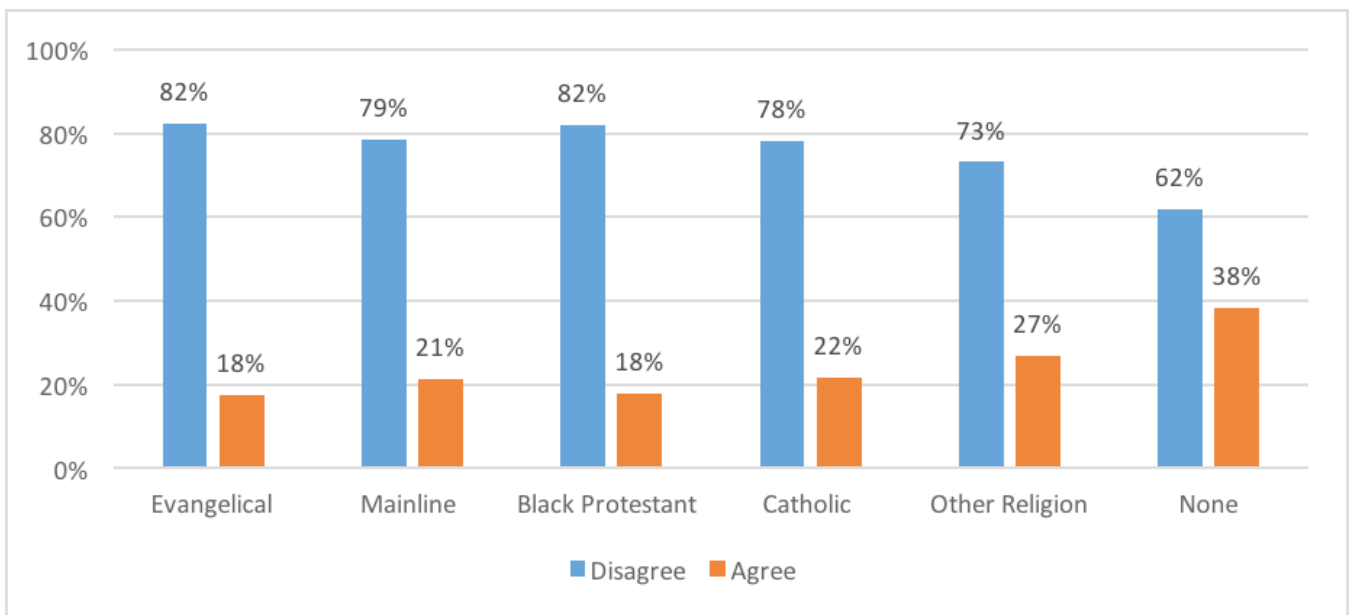
These results show that most religious Americans refrain from using the Internet as a means to proselytize or evangelize others. Evangelical Protestants are most likely to expound on their faith on line (see Figure 61).

**FIGURE 61:**  
**Percent of respondents by each religious tradition who use the Internet to share their religious views.**



Overall, Americans tend to say that they are not addicted to technology. But addiction appears to be related to religiosity, or lack thereof (see Figure 62). Interestingly, Americans with no religious affiliation are most likely to feel addicted to their devices. In contrast, 82 percent of Evangelical Protestants say they feel no obsession with technology. These results suggest that while technology may play an increasingly important role in the social lives of Americans, most religious respondents resist using the label of “addiction” when describing their own use of technology.

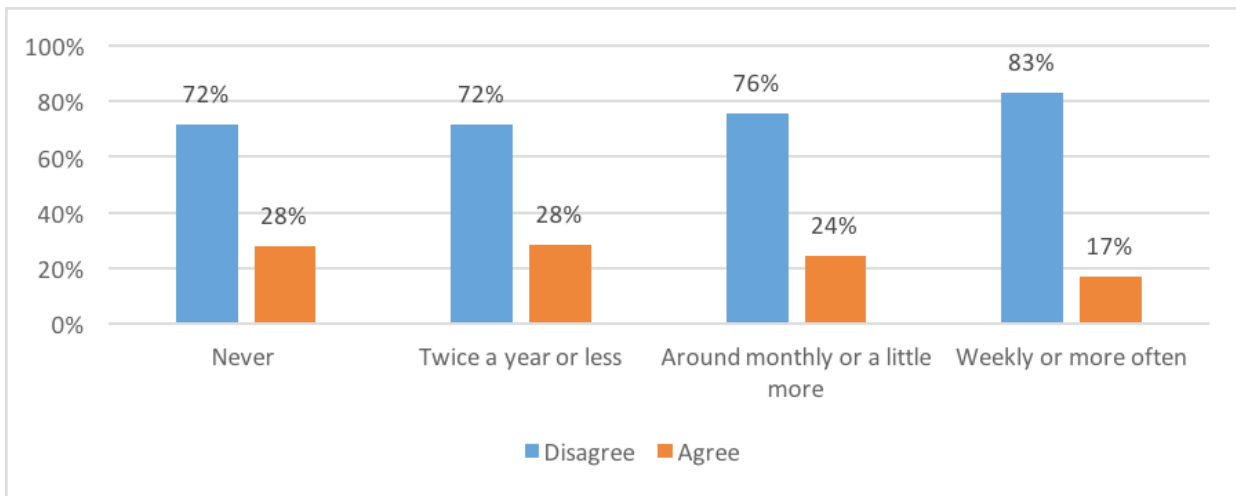
**FIGURE 62:**  
**Percent of respondents by each religious tradition who agree/disagree that they feel addicted to the technological devices they have.**



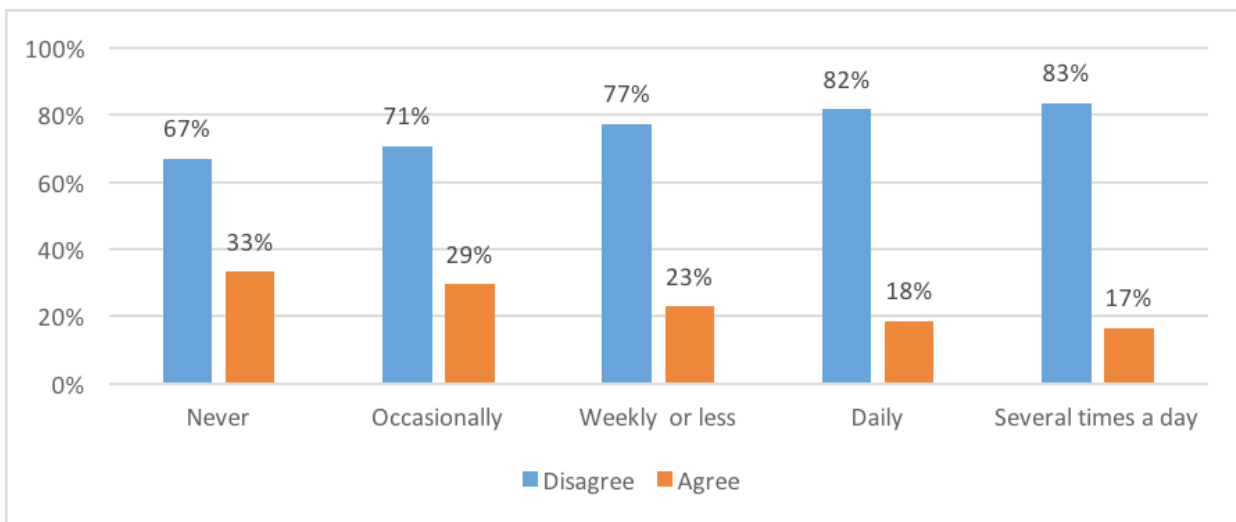
Though most Americans say they do not feel addicted to technology, those who attend church weekly are the least likely to feel addicted (see Figure 63 (next page)). For Americans who never attend religious services, 28 percent feel obsessively tied to their devices. These results suggest that attending religious services has the benefit of pulling Americans away from their devices, at least for a few hours each week.

Prayer seems to have a similar effect. Americans who pray regularly feel less addicted to technology (see Figure 64 (next page)). For those who never pray, on the other hand, 33 percent say they feel a certain level of addiction.

**FIGURE 63:**  
**Percent of religious attendants (by frequency of church attendance) who feel addicted to the technological devices they have.**



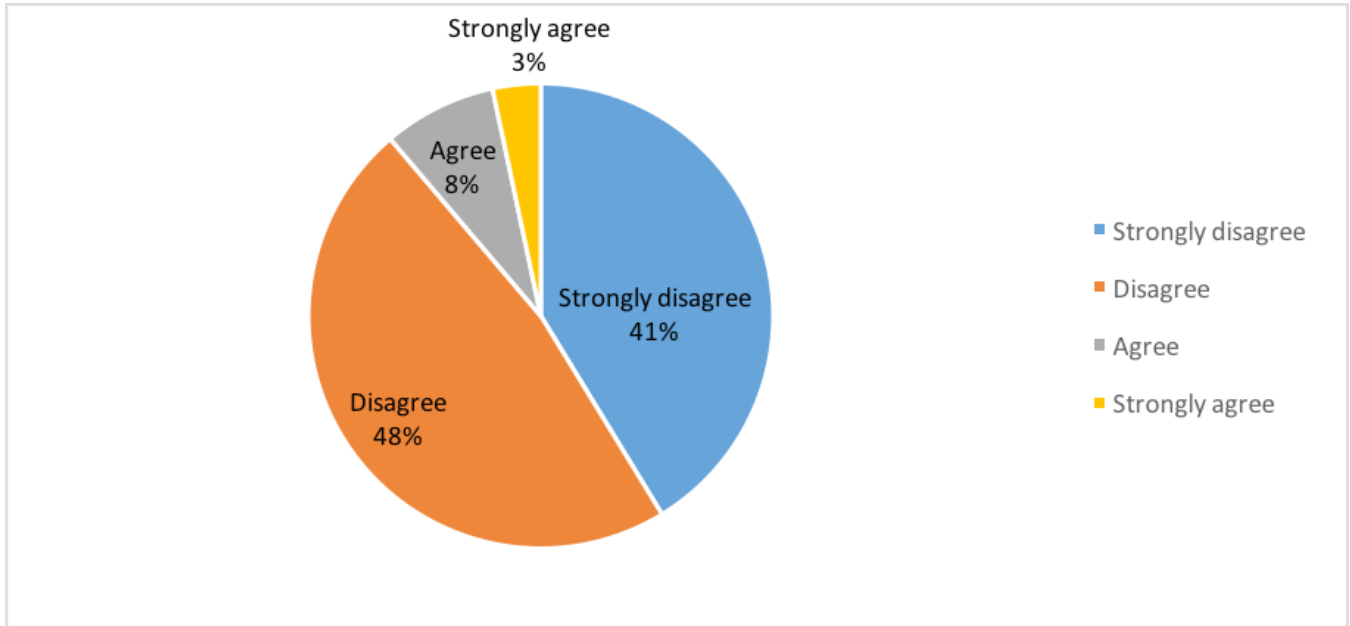
**FIGURE 64:**  
**Percent of praying Americans (by frequency of prayer) and their feelings of technological addiction.**



When asked about the relationship between religion and science, most Americans do not feel that science threatens religious faith (see Figure 65 (next page)). Only 1 in 10 Americans claim that science and technology will make religion obsolete.

**FIGURE 65:**

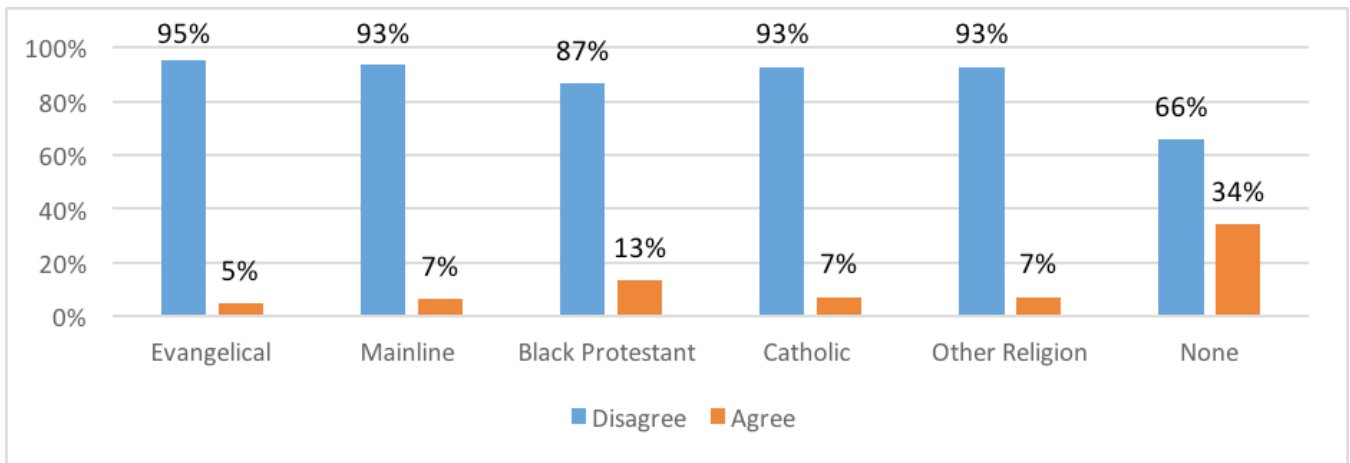
**Percent of Americans who agree/disagree that science and technology will make religion obsolete.**



Most religious groups do not fear that technology will undermine their religion (see Figure 66). Black Protestants appear the most leery of the secular effects of technology. Just over one third of Americans with no religious affiliation think religion is destined to the dustbin of history.

**FIGURE 66:**

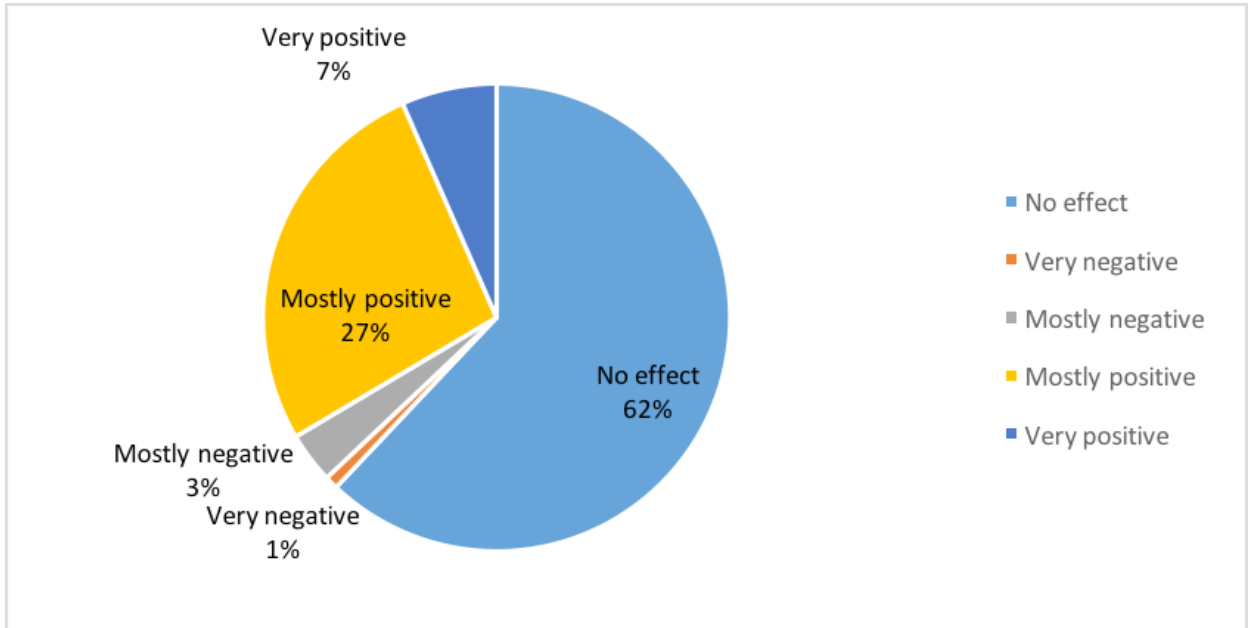
**Percent of respondents by each religious tradition who agree/disagree that science and technology will make religion obsolete.**





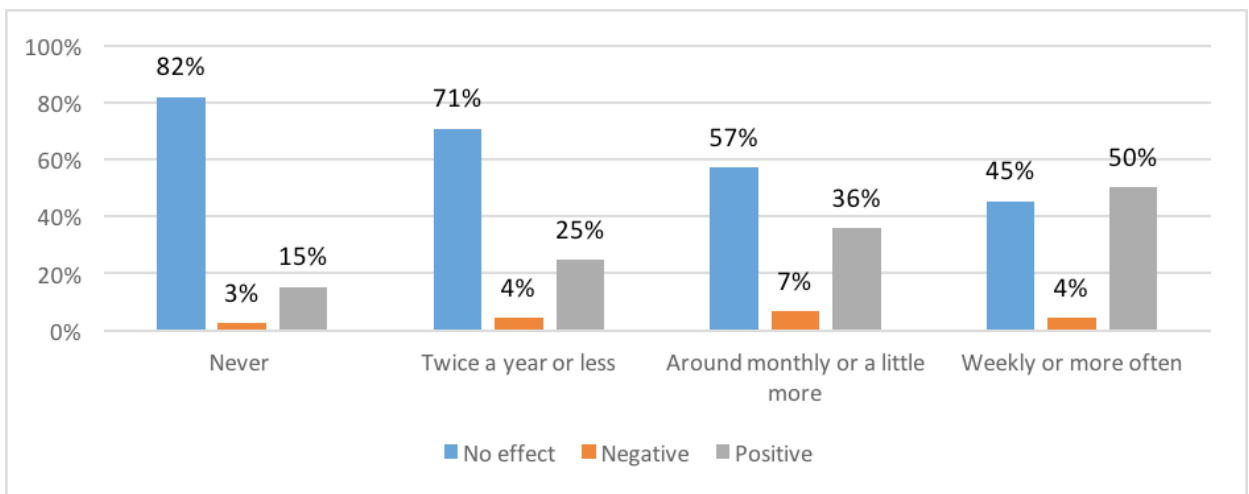
In general, most Americans feel that the Internet has no effect on their spiritual lives (see Figure 67). And 34 percent Americans believe the Internet actually has a positive effect on their spirituality.

**FIGURE 67:**  
**Percent of Americans who think the Internet has an effect on their spiritual life.**



Unsurprisingly, those who never or rarely attend religious services are more likely to say that the Internet has no effect, positive or negative, on them spiritually (see Figure 68). But half of Americans who attend church weekly believe that the Internet helps them connect to their spirituality.

**FIGURE 68:**  
**Percent of religious attendants (by frequency of church attendance) and their views on how the Internet affects their spiritual life.**

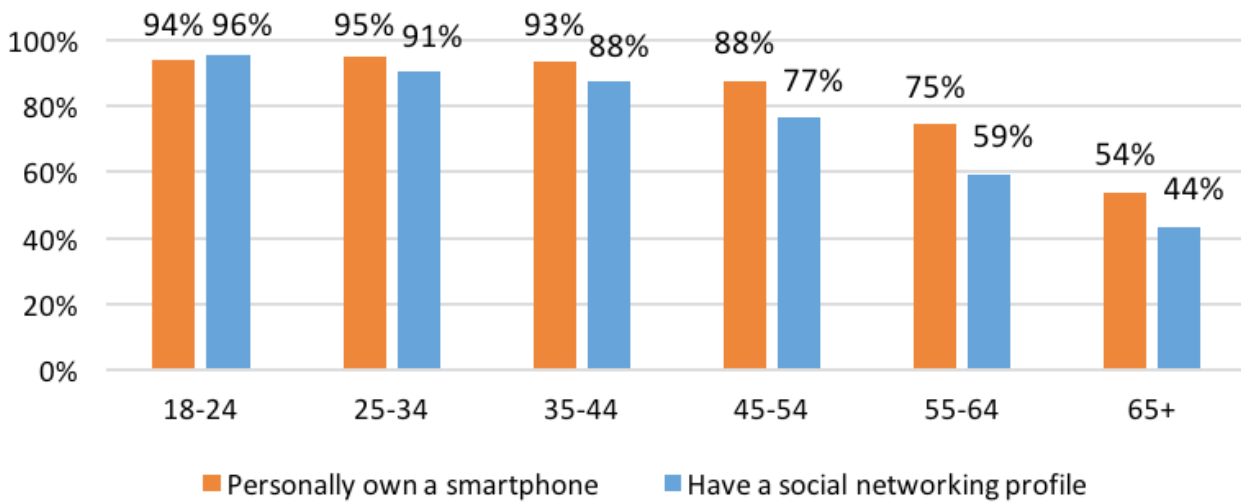


## B. Technology Cohorts

*By Justin Nelson*

Overall, about 4 out of every 5 Americans own a smartphone. For those that are under 45 years old, however, smartphone ownership is ubiquitous—roughly 94% of 18 to 44-year-olds own smartphones (see Figure 6g). For Americans 65 and older, over half own a smartphone. Meanwhile, most Americans also stay connected through social media on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Seven out of 10 Americans have a social networking profile, with 96% of 18-24 year-olds reporting to have one.

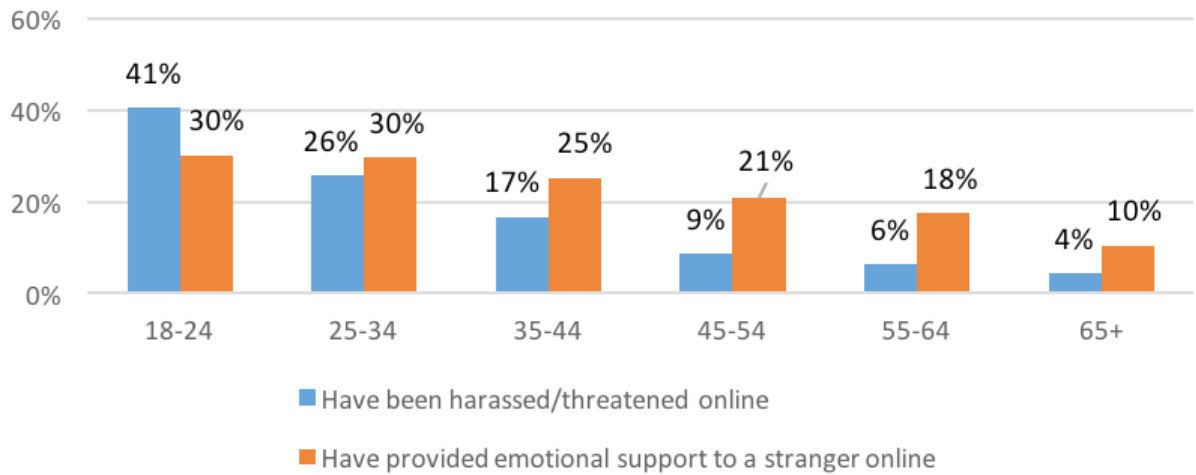
**FIGURE 6g:**  
**Access and use of smartphones and social media by age group**



Fourteen percent of Americans report having been the victim of harassment or threats by someone on the Internet (see Figure 70 (next page)). The highest prevalence of reported harassment comes from younger users—over 40% of those age 18-24—and these reports steadily decrease across older age groups. Across all cohorts, women account for 62% of those that have been harassed or threatened online.

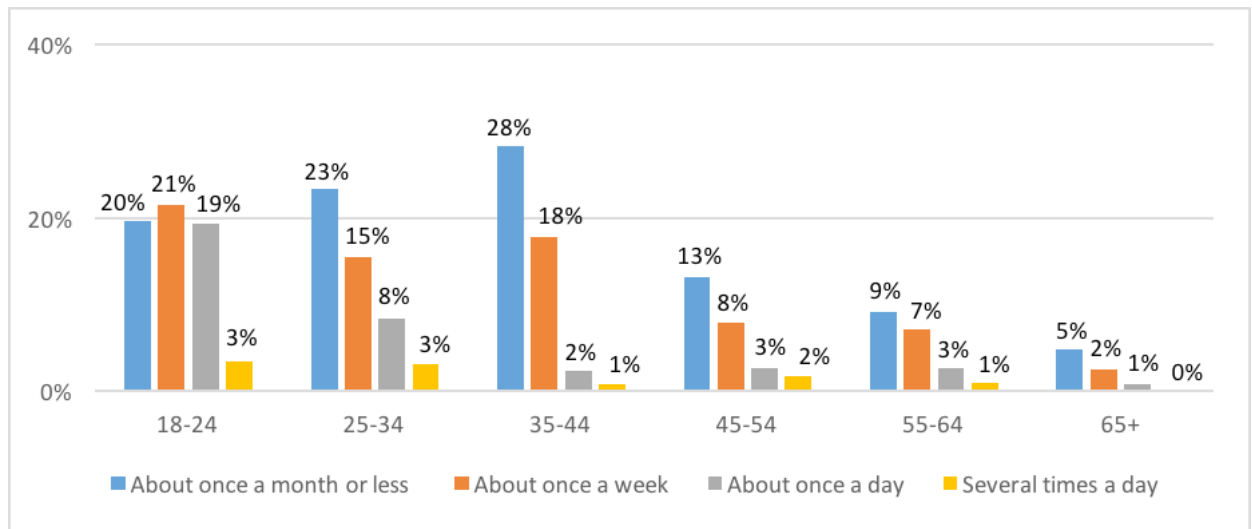
In contrast, 21% of Americans provide emotional support online to people they have never met. Roughly 30% of both 18 to 24-year-olds and 25 to 34-year-olds have provided some emotional support to a stranger online. Of those who report such prosocial behavior online, 60% are women.

**FIGURE 70:**  
**Harassment and emotional support on the Internet by age group**



Overall, roughly 31% of Americans report visiting adult websites to some extent (at least “about once a month or less”). Younger Americans are more likely to view Internet porn (see Figure 71). While 48.5% of men report visiting adult websites to some extent, only 15% of women do.

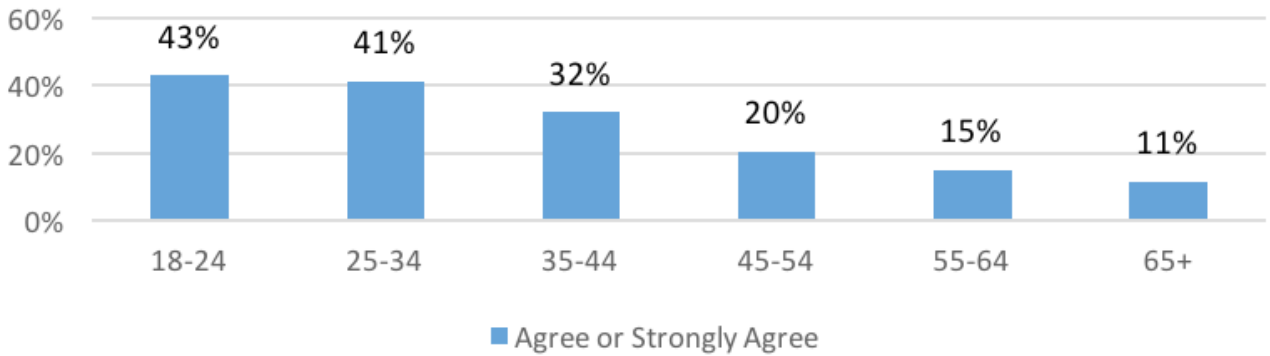
**FIGURE 71:**  
**Frequency of visiting adult websites on the Internet by age group**



About 1 out of 4 Americans report feeling addicted to their devices (see Figure 72 (next page)). Over 40% of 18 to 24-year-olds and 25 to 34-year-olds report addiction.

**FIGURE 72:**

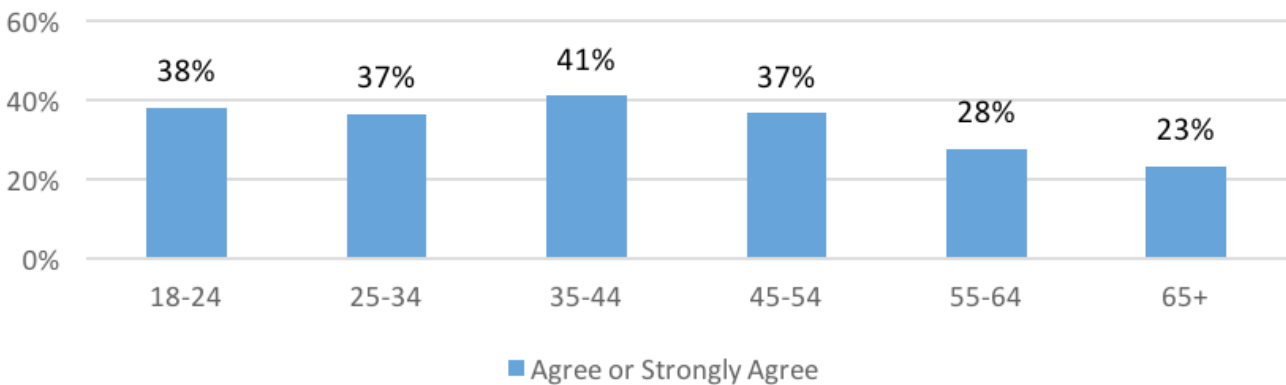
**Percent who agree with feeling addicted to technological devices by age group**



Around one third of Americans would “panic” if their phone stopped working (see Figure 73). Interestingly, unlike the addiction question, agreement across age groups is relatively stable.

**FIGURE 73:**

**Percent who agree with the statement “I would panic if my phone suddenly stopped working” by age group**





## IV. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

### A. Church Commuting

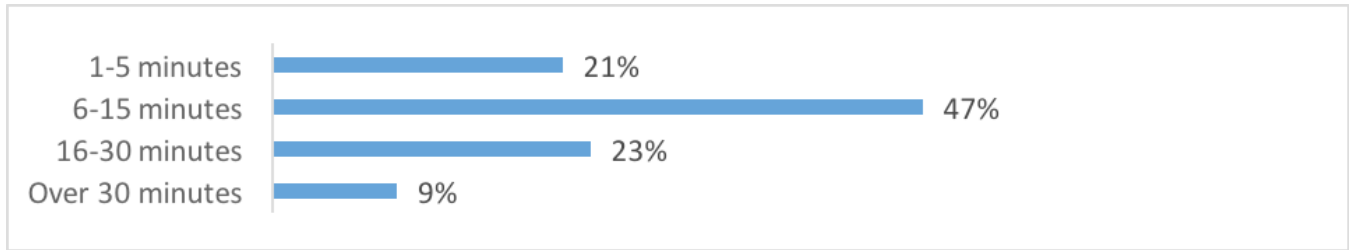
*By Kevin D. Dougherty*

Americans have choices when it comes to religious congregations. How many choose to worship in their neighborhood? What are the characteristics and consequences of commuting to a congregation?

The average church-going American lives 6- 15 minutes from their place of worship (see Figure 74). One in five lives in close proximity (5 minutes or less) to their place of worship. One in ten commutes more than 30 minutes to attend religious services.

**FIGURE 74:**

**Approximately how many minutes does it usually take to get from your home to your place of worship?**



**TABLE 1:**

**Who Commutes to Religious Services?**

	1-5 minutes	6-15 minutes	16-30 minutes	Over 30 minutes
<u>Religious Tradition</u>				
Evangelical Protestant	14%	45%	33%	8%
Mainline Protestant	19%	48%	23%	9%
Black Protestant	16%	26%	40%	19%
Catholic	21%	56%	17%	5%
<u>Location</u>				
Rural Area	15%	50%	24%	11%
Small Town	27%	46%	18%	9%
Suburb	13%	48%	30%	9%
Large City	18%	42%	31%	8%

Church-going Catholics are more likely to identify with a local parish church than are most Protestant worshippers. One in five Catholics can make it to mass at their church within five minutes (see Table 1). Nearly eight out of ten Catholics live within 15 minutes of their church. In contrast, over half of Black Protestants live

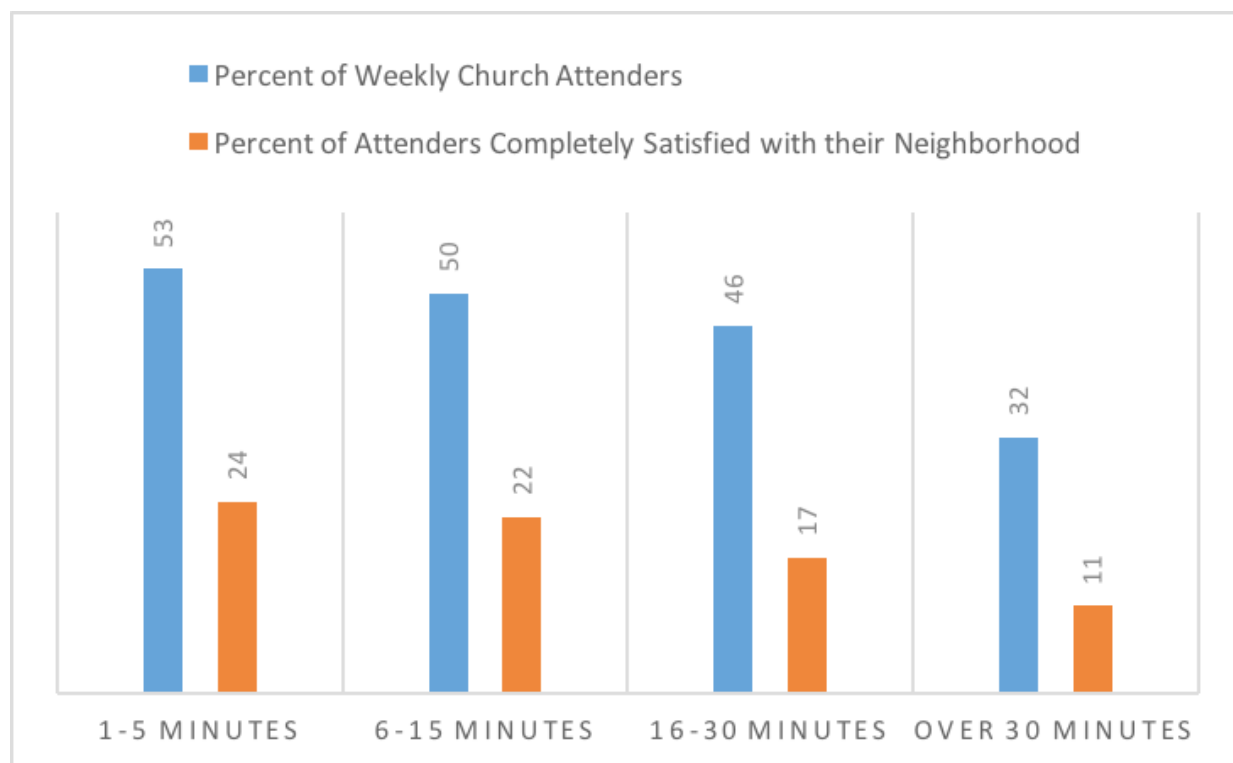
further than 15 minutes from their church. Reflecting the strong draw of ethnic churches, one in five Black Protestants spends over 30 minutes to get to church.

Commute times to religious services are shortest in small towns. More than a quarter of church-going Americans who live in small cities or towns attend a congregation within five minutes of their home. Residents of rural areas, suburbs, and large cities do not significantly differ in their commute times to religious services.

The gap between a person's place of residence and their place of worship has implications. Half of Americans who live within 15 minutes of the place of worship report attending religious services weekly or more (see Figure 75). As the distance from a congregation increases, the likelihood of weekly attendance decreases.

Where someone worships is also related to their satisfaction with a neighborhood. The 2017 Baylor Religion Survey asks, "Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with where you live?" Response options ranged from "not at all satisfied" to "completely satisfied." The people most satisfied with their neighborhood are those who attend congregations in the neighborhood. This is true even when religious tradition and location size are taken into consideration.

**FIGURE 75:**  
**Who travels less? Those who attend more and like their neighborhood**

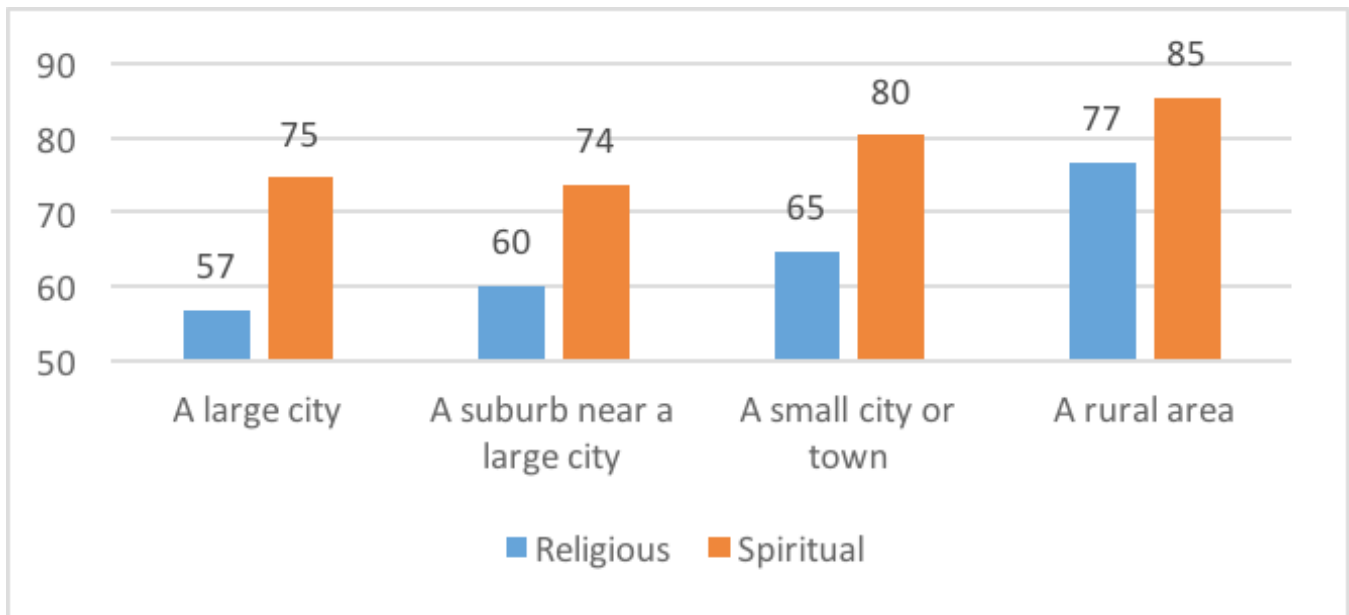


## B. Rural Religiosity

*By Michael Lotspeich*

Regardless of geography, more Americans describe themselves as spiritual than religious. Those living in rural areas or a small city or town are more likely to identify as spiritual or religious, compared to those living in or near a large city (see Figure 76).

**FIGURE 76:**  
**Percent of respondents who are at least moderately religious/spiritual**



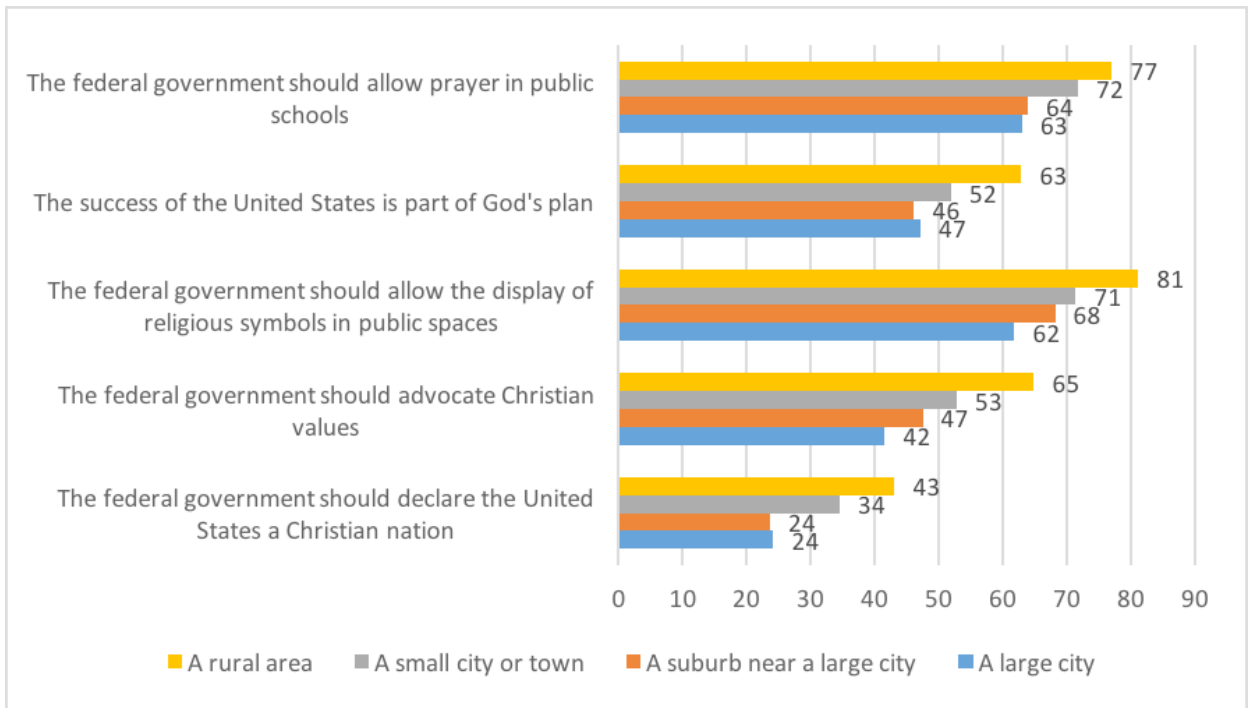
Rural Americans are more likely to believe that there should be a stronger relationship between religion and the federal government (see Figure 77 (next page)). Four out of five rural residents believe that the federal government should allow religious symbols in public spaces. Three out of five rural Americans believe that the success of the United States is part of God's plan, and four out of five think that the federal government should allow prayer in public schools.

Rural Americans are also much more likely to believe a) that it is God's will that women care for children, b) that a preschool child will suffer if his or her mother works, and c) that men are better suited emotionally for politics than women (see Figure 78 (next page)).



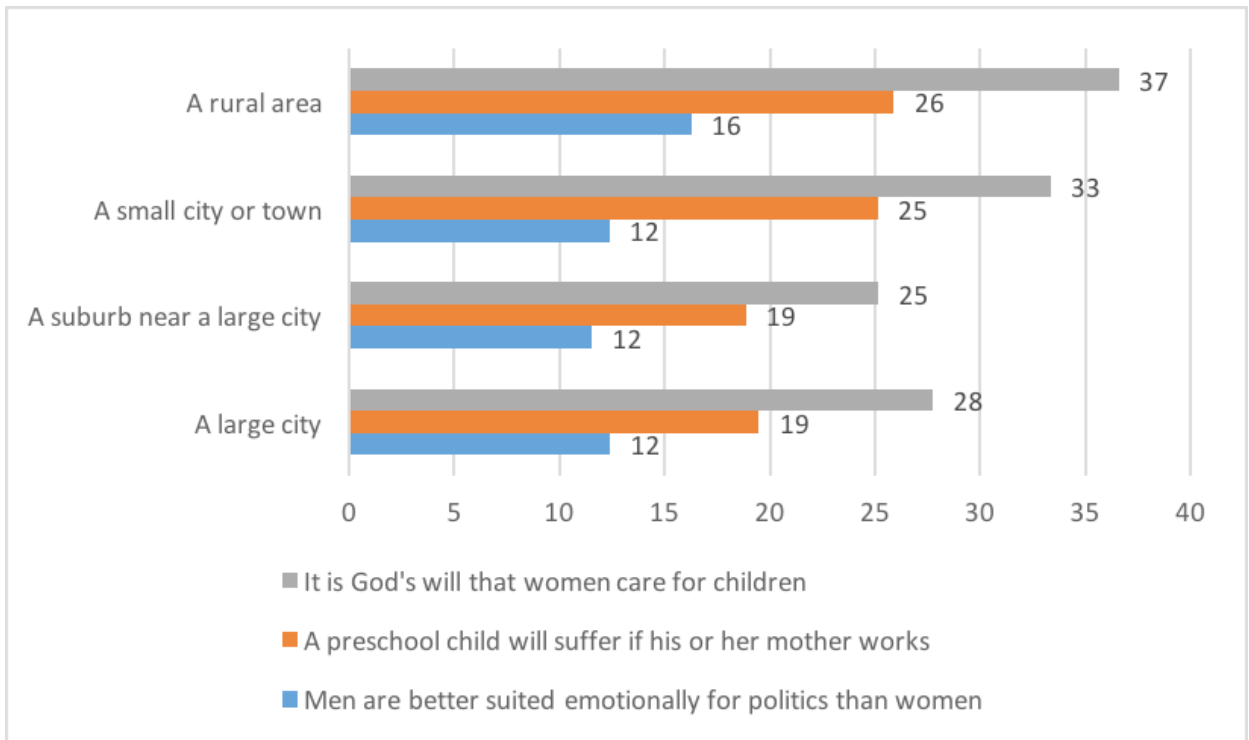
**FIGURE 77:**

**Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree with statements on the relationship between religion and the federal government**



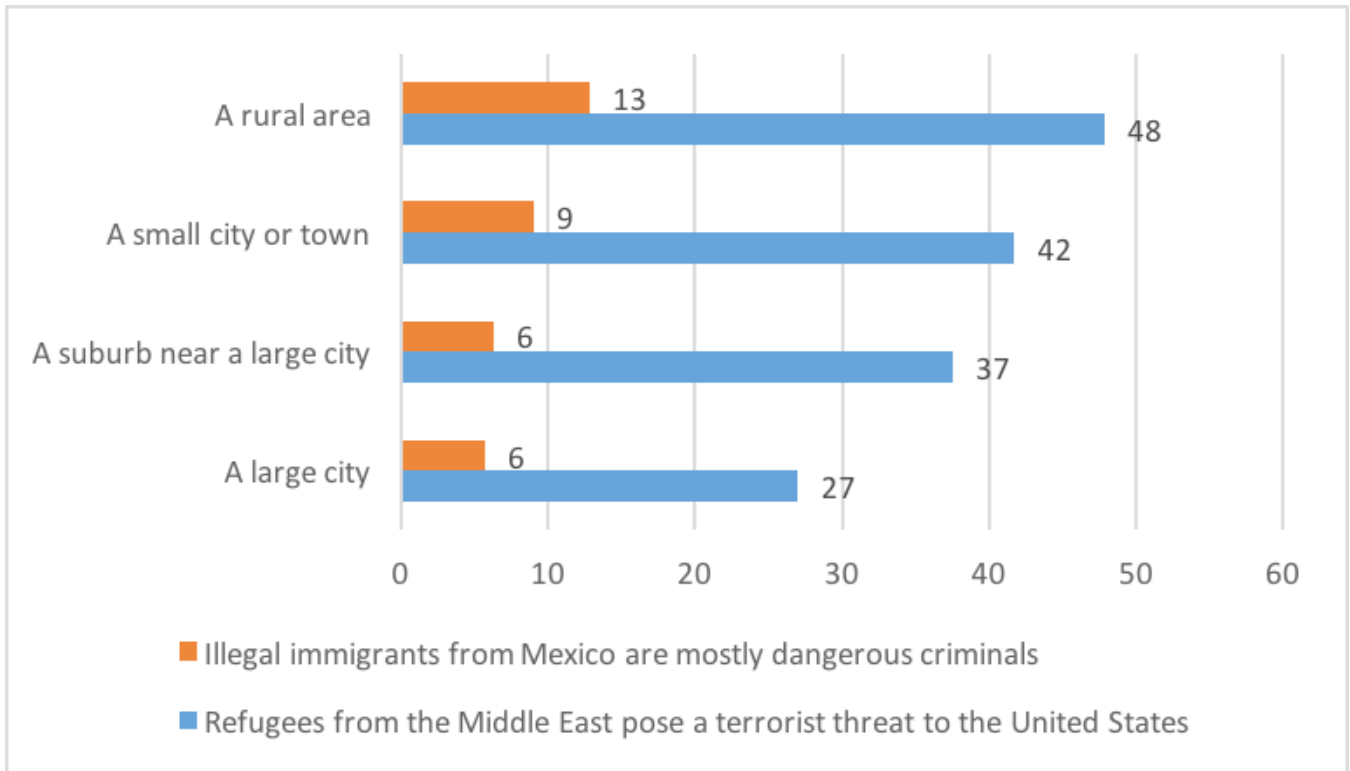
**FIGURE 78:**

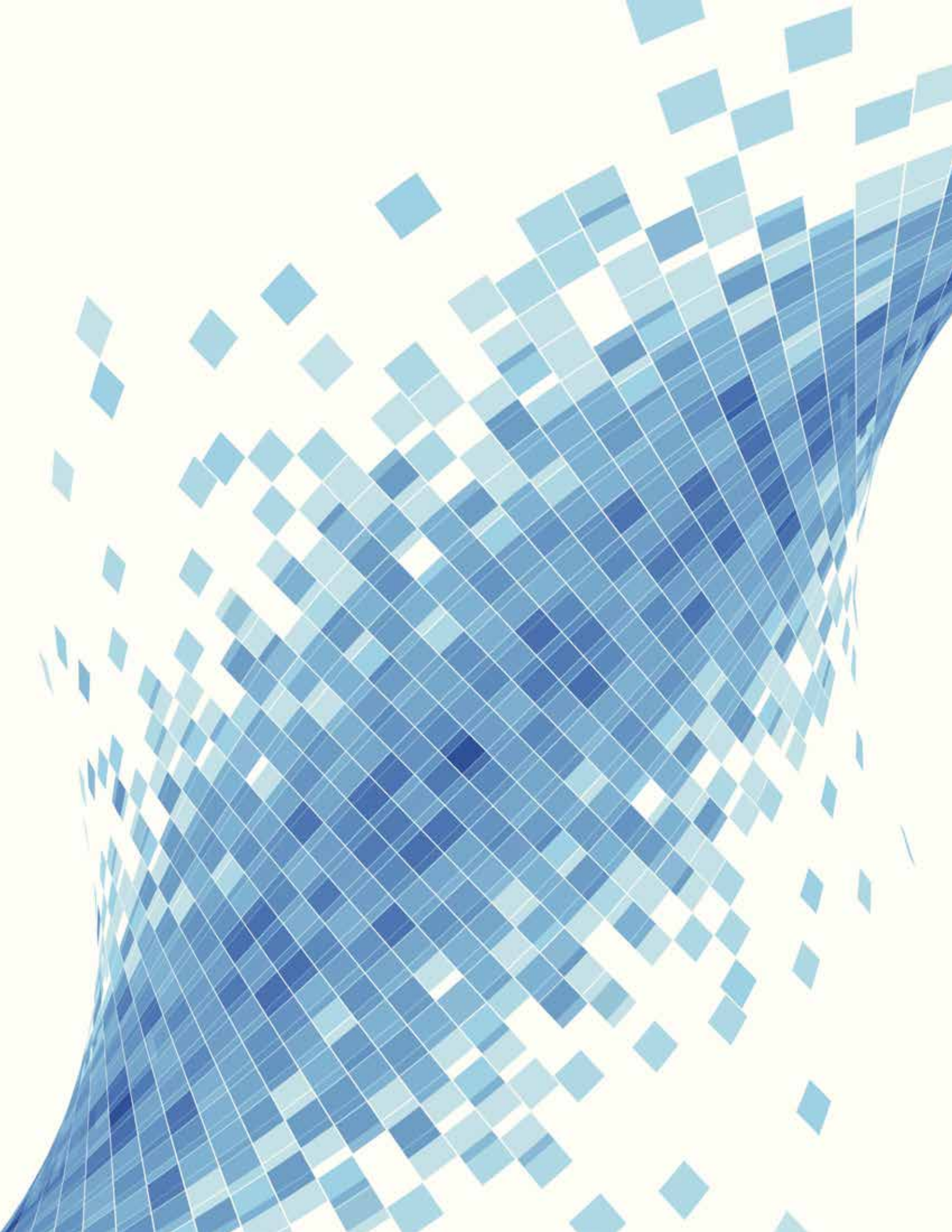
**Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree with statements on women**



Nearly half of rural respondents believe that refugees from the Middle East pose a terrorist threat to the United States (see Figure 79). This is compared to 1 in 5 Americans living in large cities. But there is little variation in the opinion that “illegal immigrants from Mexico are mostly dangerous criminals,” and less than 1 in 10 of all Americans agree with this statement.

**FIGURE 79:**  
**Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree with statements on immigration in America**





## V. WAVE 5 METHODS

The 2017 administration of the Values and Beliefs of the American Public survey was fielded using a self-administered pen and paper methodology with mail based collection only. Gallup mailed out an initial 11,000 surveys with an invitation letter, return envelope, and \$1 USD cash incentive on February 2nd. Reminder postcards were mailed to all on February 13th, and a full cover letter, survey, and return envelope package was sent to those addresses remaining open on February 28th. Collection of completed interviews finished on March 21st.

### Sample Design and Selection

The sample for this study was selected using ABS (Address Based Sample) methodology based on a simple stratified sample design. The mode of data collection was mail. Gallup obtained the ABS sample from the Marketing Systems Group (MSG), a database and survey sample vendor, who has access to the latest DSF (Delivery Sequence File) frame and generated the Sample for Gallup. The DSF of USPS (United States Postal Service) is a computerized database that contains all delivery point addresses, with the exception of general delivery where carrier route or P.O. Box delivery is not available and mail is held at a main post office for claim by recipients. The choice ABS sampling method was made to address the evolving coverage problems associated with telephone-based samples. Gallup obtained a total sample of 11,000 addresses nationwide from MSG and a total of 1,501 surveys were completed with an overall response rate of 13.6%.

The target population (of all adults nationwide) was stratified into 12 strata described Table 2 (next page). Strata were formed based on density of specific subgroups (like Hispanic, African, Younger population (18-34)) to ensure minimum coverage of these sub-populations in the sample. The determination of high density Hispanic, African American or younger population was based on information available at the census block group level. Sampling was done independently within each stratum and Table 1 below includes the sample size and the number of completed surveys for each of the 12 strata.

### Weighting of Sample data

Sample data were weighted to minimize bias in the survey based estimates. The base weight assigned to each respondent in each stratum was equal to the inverse of the probability of selection (or the sampling fraction) for that stratum. The base weights were then adjusted for non-response by a non-response weight adjustment factor equal to the ratio of the sample size and the number of completed surveys in each stratum. The final step involved post-stratification weighting to restore proportionality among groups of the

population that may have been overrepresented or underrepresented in the survey due to differential non-response or representation on the sample frame. In the process of post-stratification weighting, Gallup weighted the actual respondent database to match the known demographic characteristics of the U.S. adult population by geographic region (census region), age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education. Trimming of extreme weights were carried out to minimize the effect of large weights on sampling error. The target data for post-stratification weighting were obtained from the latest Current Population Survey (CPS) 2015 population projections.

**TABLE 2:**  
**Sample Size and Number of Completed Surveys by strata**

Stratum Description	Sample Size	Number of Completed Surveys
HD Hispanic - surname match - young - (known + predicted)	660	38
HD Hispanic - surname match - not young - (known + predicted)	550	47
HD Hispanic - surname match - unknown	880	44
HD Hispanic - no surname match - young - (known + predicted)	440	52
HD Hispanic - no surname match - not young - (known + predicted)	220	27
HD Hispanic - no surname match - unknown	880	56
HD black - young - (known + predicted)	550	61
HD black - not young - (known + predicted)	330	49
HD black - unknown	990	85
Other - young - (known + predicted)	990	194
Other - not young - (known + predicted)	1,980	449
Other - unknown	2,530	399
Total	11,000	1,501

## Sample Comparisons

Wave 5 of the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS5, 2017) has a final sample of 1,501 respondents, a sample that compares favorably with the 2016 sample of the General Social Survey on a number of key demographic (Table 3), religious and political (Table 4), characteristics.

**Table 3:**  
**Comparing Demographic Characteristics of Samples for the Baylor Religion Survey 2017 and the General Social Survey 2016**

Variable	BRS 5 (Mean or %)	GSS 2016 (Mean or %)
Age	48.8	47.6
Gender		
Male	47.9	45.2
Female	52.0	54.8
Education		
8th grade or less <sup>a</sup>	1.4	4.1
At least a college degree <sup>b</sup>	32.7	31.2
Marital status		
Single/never married	21.1	27.4
Married	50.2	49.9

*Notes:* All data are weighted, using the variable *weight* for the BRS 5 and the variable *wtssall* for the GSS 2016.

<sup>a</sup>Calculated as the total percent with 8 years or less education on the GSS 2016.

<sup>b</sup>Calculated as the total percent with 16 years or more education on the GSS 2016.

The mean age of the BRS sample was 48.8, compared to 47.6 on the GSS. A slight majority of both samples were female, comprising 52.0 and 54.8 percent of the BRS and GSS, respectively. In terms of education, the BRS had slightly fewer respondents with less than 8 years of schooling than the GSS (1.4 and 4.1 percent, respectively), though shares of the samples with at least a college degree were more similar (32.7 and 31.2

percent, respectively). Slightly fewer respondents in the BRS were single and never married than in the GSS (21.1 and 27.4 percent, respectively), but about half of both samples were currently married.

In terms of religious participation, a slightly higher share of BRS respondents never attend religious services compared to GSS respondents (28.0 and 25.0 percent, respectively) while similar proportions attend about once a week or more often (29.9 and 29.1 percent, respectively). Both the BRS and GSS samples included about 37 percent of respondents who reported to be political moderates. The BRS had a somewhat larger share of both conservatives (21.7% vs. 15.8%) and liberals (15.8 vs. 12.4%) than the GSS while having slightly lower shares of respondents at both ends of the political spectrum.

**Table 4:**  
**Comparison of Key Religious and Political Variables on the Baylor Religion Survey 2017 and General Social Survey 2016**

Attendance	BRS 5 (%)	GSS 2016 (%)	Political Views	BRS 5 (%)	GSS 2016 (%)
Never	28.0	25.0	Extremely conservative	3.5	4.2
Less than once a year	6.8	5.9	Conservative	21.7	15.8
Once or twice a year	12.5	13.3	Leaning conservative	10.2	14.3
Several times a year	11.3	11.1	Moderate	37.0	37.2
Once a month	3.6	7.0	Leaning liberal	8.5	11.3
2-3 times a month	8.0	8.7	Liberal	15.8	12.4
About once a week <sup>a</sup>	21.7	21.9	Extremely liberal	3.4	4.8
Several times a week <sup>b</sup>	8.2	7.2			

*Notes:* All data are weighted, using the variable *weight* for the BRS 5 and the variable *wtssall* for the GSS 2016.

<sup>a</sup>Calculated as the total percent reporting "Nearly every week" and "Every week" on the GSS 2016.

<sup>b</sup>Calculated as the total percent reporting "More than once a week" on the GSS 2016.





FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey](http://www.baylor.edu/BaylorReligionSurvey)



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