

Impact of Evangelicals on Election Outcomes

Jim Piers

Holland Professional Club

May 5, 2022

#

Along with all the international, national and local news, we are being increasingly reminded of the mid-term elections occurring this year. National congressional elections include all house seats, 34 of 100 senate seats and 36 of 50 governorships.

So, it seems natural to examine factors associated with party affiliation and especially voting behavior. These factors or variables include family, gender, religion, race and ethnicity, education, and location. Of these factors, I have decided to examine religion's relationship with how we vote.

1. Let's begin by examining voting patterns of different religious groups in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections.



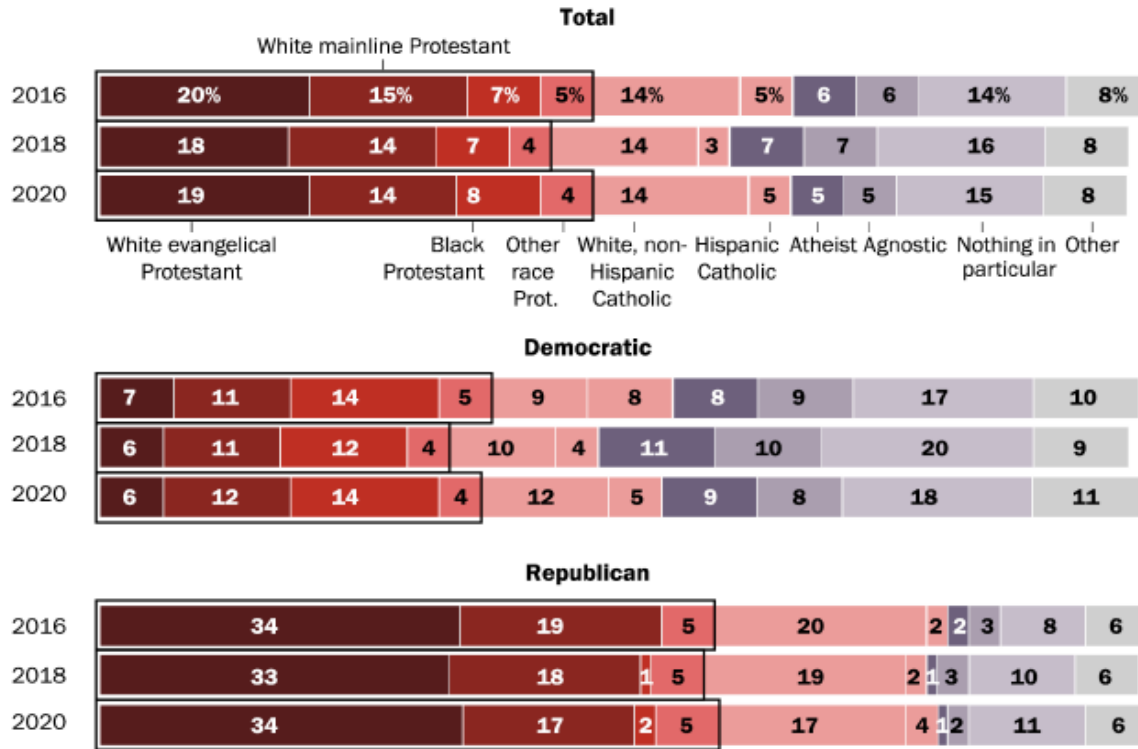
My thanks go out to the *Pew Research Center*, the source for my empirical data. It is a nonpartisan American think tank based in Washington, D.C. It provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends shaping the United States and the world.

	Biden	Trump
Popular	81,268,924	74,261,154
Percentage	51.3%	46.9

Religious Composition of Voter Groups

White evangelical Protestants constituted roughly a third of voters for Republican candidates in the past three elections

Composition of validated voters who voted for Democratic and Republican candidates (%)



Notes: Based on 3,014 (2016), 7,585 (2018) and 9,668 validated general election voters. Validated voters are those found to have voted in commercial voter files. Vote choice for all years is from a post-election survey. 2018 figures indicate vote for U.S. House candidate. See Methodology for details. White and Black adults include only those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016, Nov. 7-16, 2018, and Nov. 12-17, 2020. "Behind Biden's 2020 Victory"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

This first table identifies the composition of voters who voted Republican or Democrat in 2016, 2018 and 2020. Voters in 2020 sorted along religious lines in ways consistent with 2016, 2018 and 2020. We will mainly examine 2020 voters.

In 2020, white Evangelicals accounted for 19% of all voters.

White mainline Protestants 14%, Black Protestants 8%, other race Protestants 4%.

All Protestants constituted nearly half of all voters (45%), as they did in 2016.

White Catholic voters represented 14% and Hispanic Catholics 5%.

Christians, as a group, composed 64% of all voters. Unaffiliated voters made up 25% of all voters. Other religions represent 8% of voters.

As we compare the Democrat and Republican figures, we see that within the Protestant tradition:

White evangelicals accounted for a high share of Republican voters, 34%, and just 6% of Biden votes.

White mainline Protestants accounted for a higher share of Trump votes, 17% than 12% of Biden votes.

However Black Protestants favored Biden with 14% of the vote total to 2% of the Trump vote total.

As a group, Protestants alone composed 58% of Trump's total and 36% of Biden's total.

White Catholics provided 17% of Trump's vote totals, while 12% of Biden's vote totals. Hispanic Catholics gave Trump 4% of his votes and 5% of Biden's votes.

Christians, as a group, composed 79% of Trump voters and 53% of Biden voters.

Within the Protestant tradition, white Evangelicals accounted for 19% of all voters, but 34% of Trump's voters. Without such broad support for Trump among white Evangelicals, Biden would have beaten him by more than 20 points.

Biden, by contrast, drew strong support from religiously unaffiliated voters – atheists, agnostics, and those who say their religion is “nothing in particular.” Together, these voters made up 35% of Biden voters and only 14% of Trump votes. Without the religiously unaffiliated support for Biden, Trump would have had a 9-point popular vote margin over Biden.

Stable voting patterns among most religious groups

% of validated voters who reported voting for each candidate

	2016			2018			2020		
	Share voting for ... Clinton	Share voting for ... Trump	Margin (Dem.-Rep.)	Share voting ... Dem.	Share voting ... Rep.	Margin (Dem.-Rep.)	Share voting for ... Biden	Share voting for ... Trump	Margin (Dem.-Rep.)
Protestant	39%	56%	17	40%	58%	18	40%	59%	19
Catholic	44	52	8	46	52	6	49	50	1
Unaffiliated	65	24	41	75	22	53	71	26	45
Other	61	33	28	66	33	33	64	32	32
White evang. Prot.	16	77	61	17	81	64	15	84	69
White non-evang. Prot.	37	57	20	42	55	13	43	57	14
Black Protestant				94	5	89	91	9	82
Other race Protestant				47	50	3	42	56	14
White Catholic	31	64	33	39	59	20	42	57	15
Hispanic Catholic				71	27	44			
Other	61	33	28	66	33	33	64	32	32
NET Unaffiliated	65	24	41	75	22	53	71	26	45
Atheist				88	9	79	87	11	76
Agnostic				79	18	61	84	14	70
Nothing in particular	61	27	34	68	29	39	61	35	26
<i>Attend religious services</i>									
Monthly or more often	37	58	21	40	58	18	40	59	19
Yearly or less often	54	38	16	61	37	24	58	40	18

Notes: Based on 3,014 (2016), 7,585 (2018) and 9,668 validated general election voters. Validated voters are those found to have voted in commercial voter files. Vote choice for all years is from a post-election survey. 2018 figures indicate vote for U.S. House candidate. See Methodology for details. White and Black adults include only those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016, Nov. 7-16, 2018, and Nov. 12-17, 2020.

"Behind Biden's 2020 Victory"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In the last figure, we examined the percentage of **total votes** Trump and Biden received from each religious group. Now, we will examine the **share (or percentage) of votes** that each religious groups allotted to Trump and to Biden.

I will concentrate mainly on the third column, 2020. For each religious category, we see the percentage of votes each religious group allotted Biden and Trump and the margin of difference.

From 2016 to 2020, stable voting patterns were observed, as in the previous table.

In 2020, 84% of white Evangelical Protestants voted for Trump. This was up from 77% in 2016.

While still favoring Trump, 57% of white Catholics voted for Trump in 2020 which was lower than the 64% in 2016.

White non-Evangelical Protestants voted 57% for Trump in 2016 and 57% in 2020.

Black Protestants were an overwhelmingly Democratic group with 91% of them voted for Biden.

Biden garnered 71% of the unaffiliated. Not quite as lopsided, as the 84% of white Evangelicals voting for Trump, but still constituted a very important voter group. So, the white Evangelical Protestants and the religiously unaffiliated support did matter.

As Frank Newport, a Gallup Senior Scientist says, “Americans' religious identities were clearly related to their vote in this presidential election, and in that sense, religion did factor into the outcome.”



2. How American Christians, especially those variously described as Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, and the Christian Right, became Republican?

I am not a Political Scientist, an American Historian nor a Sociologist of Religion. I am unable to simply discuss this material without my notes. So, to assure accuracy, my eyes may be planted on these pages rather than looking at you.

American Evangelicalism

In the United States, Evangelicalism began as a response to the fear of secularism that had arisen in the American colonies.

These secularist fears resulted in a revival movement referred to as The First Great Awakening (1720–1745) and embraced a back to God and morality ideology. It can best be described as a revitalization of religious piety that swept through the colonies. The Second Great Awakening from about 1795 to 1835, again spread religion through revivals and emotional preaching. It also sparked several reform movements and led to the founding of several well-known colleges, seminaries, and mission societies.

These revival movements were initiated by Protestant Christians who believed in the necessity of being born again, who emphasized the importance of evangelism, and who affirmed traditional Protestant teachings on the authority and the historicity of the Bible.

By the mid 1800's, these evangelicals were not without conflicts and division within their group. Dr. Kip Richardson, a Harvard religious historian, describes a split between northern and southern evangelicals. Northern Evangelicals were strong reform advocates: abolitionists, prison reformers, promoters of public education, and equal rights for women. Southern evangelicals split over the slavery issue and formed their own denominations and institutions.

Fundamentalist vs Modernists

By the late 19th century, evangelical churches further divided over historical criticism of the Bible and the emergence of new scientific ideas, including Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Theological conservatives who called for Christians to focus on individual salvation, the fundamentals of the faith, and biblical inerrancy created the movement called Fundamentalism. It soon spread to conservatives among several denominations around 1910 to 1920.

The Modernists, on the other hand, embraced biblical criticism and scientific ideas including the theory of evolution. They would read the Bible, not as the inerrant word of God, but as a historical document, which has God's word in it and a lot of important truths but needs to be interpreted in every age by individuals of that time and place.

The 1925 Scopes Trial placed a spotlight on the Fundamentalist-Modernist conflict, highlighting growing tensions between different religious groups and their responses to scientific discoveries. After the conflict, the Fundamentalists, lost control of the Mainline Protestants or (Modernists), separated themselves and retreated from the public square.

National Association of Evangelicals

By the 1940's, a new generation of conservative Protestants leaders rejected the separatist stance of fundamentalism and began calling themselves evangelicals. They founded the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), a number of educational institutions, such as Fuller Theological Seminary (1947), and *Christianity Today* (1956), and developed plans for greater social engagement. The result was reclaiming the "Evangelical" label and stimulating Evangelical growth.

Christian Nationalism

In the U.S., Evangelical Christians have created what Philip Gorski, Yale professor of Sociology and Religion, calls white “Christian Nationalism.” This association of American political institutions with Christian doctrine supports evangelicals’ active involvement the political arena. This ideology suggests that America was built “by and for Christians, on Christian principles and that its religious identity is the reason for its God-ordained success as a country... American democracy is founded on biblical principles ... and cannot survive without American Christianity.”

This notion has been bolstered by the recent merging of political and religious relationships as we will see in the following discussion.

Dwight Eisenhower joined efforts with Evangelist Billy Graham.

This Evangelical growth continued into the 1950’s during the decades of contentious international politics, the Cold War, and communist threats. While somewhat cool on religion, but in need of an anticommunist civil spirituality, President Dwight Eisenhower joined efforts with evangelist Billy Graham. They amplified religious sentiment in the United States to shield against the “atheistic menace of communism.” With Eisenhower’s involvement, Graham facilitated the transformation by which American evangelicals—especially white evangelicals—would become known primarily for their political involvement.

The 1960s and 70’s ushered in Evangelical controversies over textbooks teaching evolution, sex education in public schools, the tax-exempt status of religious schools, and gay rights. Evangelical activists,

motivated by their religious beliefs, began grassroots efforts to promote their causes and eventually captured national attention.

Jimmy Carter and Evangelicals.

In the 1970s, high-profile Evangelical Christian leaders began to engage more publicly in politics. When Jimmy Carter, an evangelical himself, campaigned for president, progressive Evangelicals helped propel him to the White House. But a group of conservative evangelicals, including Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, and Christian Voice began agitating to deny Carter, their fellow evangelical, a second term. These conservative evangelical organizations eventually coalesced into a movement known as the Christian or Religious Right.

Reagan and Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority.

With the approach of the 1980 election and with a conservative evangelical political agenda, they offered their support to Ronald Reagan. Recognizing the importance of Evangelical voters, Reagan and the Republican party offered Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and other evangelical leaders a place on the national stage. Several Republican platform planks were developed including defining human life as beginning at conception, supporting organized prayer in public schools, and outlining a pro-family, law and order and anti-gender equity agenda. The Moral Majority and Evangelical voters' strong support was credited with Reagan's 1980 election victory, (though a faltering U.S. economy, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the taking of American hostages in Iran was also related to Carter's defeat.)

Steven P. Miller, a historian of U.S. political culture, recalls that Ronald Reagan's first term did not particularly satisfy the conservative Evangelicals. He did not produce decisive action on legislation or constitutional amendments concerning school prayer or abortion. His Supreme Court nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor also bothered

evangelicals because her judicial record suggested an unwillingness to overturn Roe v. Wade.

But the Christian Right had no other place to go in a two-party system, so, Falwell and other Christian Right leaders strongly endorsed Reagan in 1984. In fact, Pat Robertson called Reagan “probably the most evangelical president we have had since the founding fathers.”

By the end of the 1980s, evangelical voters were essential for Republican victories and Republican political agendas were crafted to win their support. With their help, George H. W. Bush won the presidential election in 1988.

Despite 3 successful elections of Republicans in the 1980’s, the very public scandals of some of the Evangelical leaders, including Marvin Gorman, Jim & Tammy Bakker, and Jimmy Swaggart diluted some of the Evangelicals political power.

The Moral Majority also took a hit. Falwell’s Moral Majority had focused largely on presidential election success and each of 3 1980’s elections were won by Republican candidates. Moral Majority donors became glib, believing they had vanquished their Democratic foes. Donations for the Moral Majority dropped precipitously, it became seen as less relevant, its financial war chest dried up and in 1989 it disbanded.

Pat Robertson and the Christian Coalition to 1.9 million members by the early 1990’s.

After his unsuccessful bid for Republican presidential nominee in 1988, Pat Robertson, evangelist, and former host of the 700 Club, founded and built the Christian Coalition to 1.9 million members by the early 1990’s. Key political interests included opposition to gay rights, abortion, and pornography, vouchers to enable children to attend private religious schools, and the defense of Christian’s legal rights.

In spite of the distribution of 40 million Christian Coalition voter guides favorable to Bush, the Coalition was unable to defend George H. W. Bush's 1992 second term (spoiler: Ross Perot may have also had something to do with that). In 1996, though Bob Dole lost the presidency, the Christian Coalition declared victory because they saved and supplemented the pro-life, pro-family congress

Clinton Presidency 1992 and 1996.

As you recall, Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 and 1996. Clinton's pro-choice stance, his support for LGBTQ issues, his NAFTA legislation, his two Supreme Court choices, and his personal dalliances enraged the Evangelicals who strongly supported his Impeachment in October of 1998. He was acquitted by the Senate on both counts in February of 1999 and remained in office.

George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004.

So, with strong Evangelical support, after narrowly losing the popular vote to Al Gore, George W. Bush defeated Gore in the electoral college in 2000. Christian Right Evangelicals held high expectations for Bush supporting their conservative agenda support and many legislative victories. But the terrorist attacks on 9-11 shifted the policy agenda in Washington. The Christian Right's domestic issues were overshadowed by national security and foreign policy.

In 2004, Christian Right leaders worked aggressively for Bush's re-election, expecting that Bush would prioritize their agenda in a second term. But by the middle of Bush's second term, some evangelical supporters were openly criticizing him for neglecting battles against abortion and gay marriage. Evangelical leaders openly questioned whether the Republican party was taking the evangelical voting bloc for granted.

Obama 2008 and 2012.

White Evangelicals, according to Pew Research data, continued their strong support of Republican presidential candidates with John McCain gleaning 74% of their vote in 2008 and Mitt Romney received 78% of their 2012. Republican critics of Barak Obama's victories suggested that the 2008 and 2012 Republican candidates were not conservative enough and did not have the courage to stick to their conservative Republican agendas.

2016 The Republicans and Evangelical leaders and base were greatly excited and mobilized.

So, by 2016, after two presidential defeats and Hillary Clinton promising 4 more years of Obama policies, the Republicans greatly needed Evangelicals strong support.

Again, the Republicans supported many Evangelical Christian platform planks including challenging abortion, the civil rights and gay rights movements, gender equality, secularization of school curriculum, teaching of evolutionary biology, economic reforms, and other progressive policies.

The Evangelical leaders and base were greatly excited and mobilized. A prominent company of evangelical leaders—including James Dobson, Jerry Falwell Jr, Franklin Graham, Tony Perkins, and Ralph Reed—embraced Trump even after the Hollywood Access scandal. In fact, Jerry Falwell Jr said that Evangelicals had “found their dream president.”

Critics of this Evangelical/Trump marriage found relationship bluntly utilitarian. In a 2018 *Atlantic* article, Michael Gerson, a nationally syndicated Washington Post columnist found it remarkable that despite Trump's profanity, sexual exploitation, racism, cynicism, and cruelty, Evangelicals provided character references and votes in exchange for

access to power, conservative judicial appointments, and more-favorable treatment of Christians by the government. Even when Evangelical leaders did condemn Trump's behavior, the condemnations were always followed by a but... we're all sinners and need forgiveness and his behavior is a low priority when compared to our access to power, conservative agenda and the Supreme Court selections.

But did these evangelicals (especially the leaders) sell their souls for Donald Trump? Did they compromise their convictions to gain a seat at the table? Did they prove themselves to be shameless hypocrites? Or did these Bible-quoting, church-leading Christians sense that God had a purpose in raising up Trump?"

Dr. Michael Brown, a controversial, conservative, evangelical apologist and radio show host offered some "insider" insights into the steps that led to evangelicals' loyalty to Donald Trump.

- 1) Given Trump's past and character, initially, there was skepticism and even outright opposition to Trump
- 2) Then they warmed to the "up close and personal" Trump and found his humility, genuine concern, his spiritual receptivity and even fear of God.
- 3). They recognized that God might have a surprising plan."

At least two evangelical leaders said that God was raising up Trump as King Cyrus, a biblical idol-worshiping king who released the Jewish people from exile in Babylon and sent them back to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

- 4). This thought continued As Trump defeated a stellar group of Republican candidates in the primaries and solidified his conservative stands, they said, Could it be that Trump is the man for the job, however unlikely that may seem?"

5) Since Evangelicals also feared eight more years of Obama policies (through Hillary) regarding abortion, gay marriage, LGBTQ activism in the schools, feminist marches, leftist extremists, violent protests, more liberal congresspersons and presidential candidates.

6) And finally, as president, Trump became a genuine champion of many evangelical causes and offered great political access to evangelical leaders.

3. So, how are Evangelicals and Republicans merging religion and politics now after Trump's defeat and January 6, 2021? They are tightening the political and Evangelical bond with worship as a piece of political rallies.



In a recent *New York Times* editorial, Elizabeth Dias and Ruth Graham alerted us to the increasing fervor of conservative political rallies since the 2020 Republican loss. While always a part of some rallies, Christian worship rituals are increasingly included in Republican political rallies. Movement, praise music and prayer blend with political anger and passion over issues including vaccines, pandemic restrictions, the 2020 “election steal,” border policy, gun restrictions, election policy, critical race theory, LGBTQ issues and the January 6 “political prisoners.”

Now, showing devotion to God in worship with all its intensity and emotion has been imported into Republican political rallies. At these events, participants describe encountering the divine while installing God’s kingdom on earth. As one rally participant noted, “What is refreshing for me is, this isn’t at all related to church, but we are talking about God,” “Now God is relevant,” “God is here.”



If, as Dick Clark said, “Music is the soundtrack of our lives,” imagine the power of worship music at a political rally.

As Dias and Graham observed, listening to worship music and “singing unites people in body and mind and creates a sense of being part of a story ... greater than yourself.” And this experience is “blending with rising political anger, becoming the soundtrack to a new fight.”



Conservative Christians believe the U.S. is on the cusp of a spiritual awakening, one where spiritual change and political change are bound together. Another participant who “had come to see politics as an inherently spiritual struggle” said, “This is a Jesus movement,” and “I believe God removed Donald for a time, so the church would wake up and have confidence again to take our country back.”

And a political rally organizer said, “Our motivation with the worship was to entertain people that need to be entertained,” then “we are going to hit them heavy with truth.”



The conflict between Evangelicals

As the Harvard Political Review article states, “If faith itself were the sole initiator of right-leaning partisanship, every Christian would vote red, but that is overwhelmingly not the case. There remains a sizable, albeit smaller, religious left, which despite lacking the same organizing power as its conservative counterpart, does contribute to the political narrative from time to time. It’s clear, then, that Christianity at large, even within the United States, institutionally and ideologically spans a wide array of concerns.”

Tim Dalrymple, president of *Christianity Today*, describes it this way, “As an evangelical, I’ve found the last five years to be shocking, disorienting and deeply disheartening,” he says. “One of the most surprising elements is that I’ve realized that the people who I used to

stand shoulder to shoulder with on almost every issue, I now realize that we are separated by a yawning chasm of mutual incomprehension. I would never have thought that could have happened so quickly.”

Russell Moore who resigned from the Southern Baptist Convention because of resistance to addressing racism and sexual abuse scandals states that, “We now see young Evangelicals walking away from evangelicalism not because they do not believe what the church teaches,” he said, “but because they believe that *the church itself* does not believe what the church teaches.”

Many of the reasons for division have long existed in the white evangelical world: misogyny, racism, racial obliviousness, celebrity worship, resentment, and the willingness to sacrifice principle for power.

That concentration of power in the hands of highly charismatic leaders is also a great concern. Calvin University historian and the author of *Jesus and John Wayne*, Kristen Kobes Du Mez says, “Obedience to God was defined by obedience to the leader.” “It’s been incredibly hard for people within that system to confront abuses of power.”

David Brooks, in a Feb. 4, 2022 opinion piece in the *New York Times*, believes the big issues that have divided Christians include the white evangelical embrace of Donald Trump, sex abuse scandals in evangelical churches and parachurch organizations, and attitudes about race relations, especially after the killing of George Floyd.

Over the past decade or so, some of the country’s most celebrated Christian institutions have been rocked by scandals. Examples include including Willow Creek Community Church, Liberty University, Hillsdale College all have been tarnished in recent years by sexual abuse allegations.

Maybe Evangelical is becoming only a political label. A 2020 study by political scientist Ryan Burge found that roughly [40 percent](#) of the

people who called themselves Evangelical attended church once a year or less.

As the division widens, the atmosphere within many Christian organizations has grown more tense and bitter and people are sorting themselves into like-minded political tribes.

Yet some feel that hope for Christian renewal is being rekindled. They say

As human religious institutions are fracturing, the rethinking and reorienting process may lead to renewal.

New coalitions are gradually forming, across many kinds of Christians which may lead to the social reorganization of American Christianity.

Many of these dissenters have put racial justice and reconciliation activities at the center of what needs to be done.

Calling out the abuse of power may be another method and the need to divorce itself from the lust for partisan political power.

Other suggestions include to better equipping followers to separate truth from propaganda, provide more refined criteria for what a responsible leader looks like, and better training for how to be involved in their communities.

Current relationship between religion and politics reflect United States citizens preferences?



In March and April of 2019, The Pew Research Center asked adults about the preferred relationship of religious organizations and politics.

Most U.S. adults want religious groups to stay out of politics

% of U.S. adults who say churches and other houses of worship should ...



During political elections, should churches/other houses of worship come out in favor of one candidate over another?



Churches and religious organizations have ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted March 18-April 1, 2019, among U.S. adults.

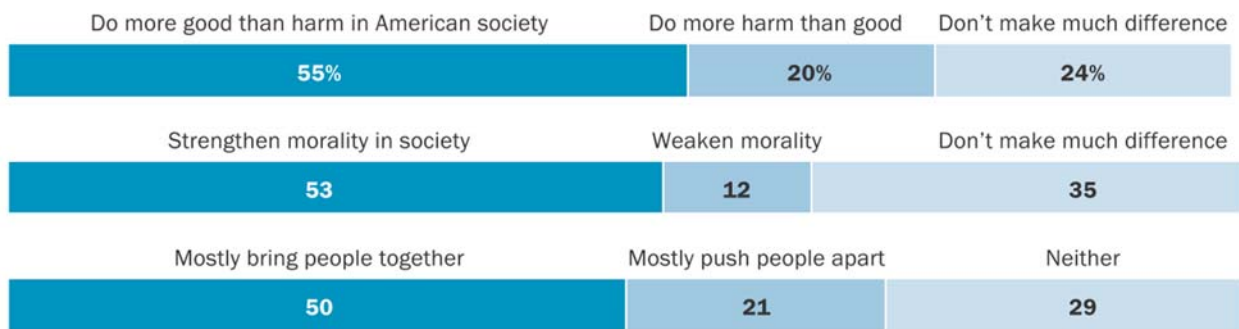
"Americans Have Positive Views About Religion's Role in Society, but Want It Out of Politics"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

1. U.S. adults are resoundingly clear in their belief that religious institutions should stay out of politics. Nearly two-thirds of Americans say churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters, while 36% say they should express their views.
2. And three-quarters of the public expresses the view that churches should *not* come out in favor of one candidate over another during elections
3. In addition, Americans are more likely to say that churches and other houses of worship currently have too much influence in politics (37%) rather than too little (28%), while the remaining one-third (34%) say religious groups' current level of influence on politics is about right.

Many in U.S. see religion as force for good in society

% of U.S. adults who say churches and religious organizations ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 18-April 1, 2019, among U.S. adults.

"Americans Have Positive Views About Religion's Role in Society, but Want It Out of Politics"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When asked about the role religious institutions play in American life more broadly – beyond politics, on balance, the U.S. adults have a favorable view

1. More than half of the public believes that churches and religious organizations do more good than harm in American society, while just one-in-five Americans say religious organizations do more harm than good.
2. Likewise, there are far more U.S. adults who say that religious organizations strengthen morality in society.
3. More of the respondents believe that Church organizations mostly bring people together, than there are who say that religious organizations weaken morality and mostly push people apart.

Most U.S. adults think religious leaders have high ethical standards

% of U.S. adults who say religious leaders in general have ...

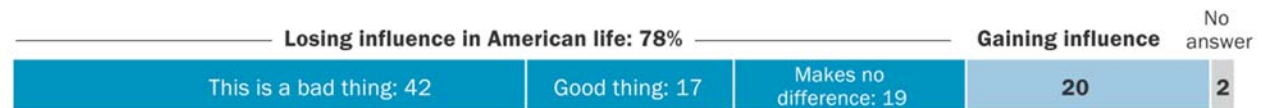
High/very high ethical standards  65%

*Among those who attend religious services at least a few times a year,
% who say _____ have high/very high ethical standards*

The clergy at their congregation  88

Religious leaders in general  78

% of U.S. adults who say religion is ...



Note: Results for the share of U.S. adults who attend religious services a few times a year or more often and say the clergy at their congregation have high or very high ethical standards combine the results of two questions: Respondents who identify as Catholic and attend Mass at least a few times a year were asked to rate the ethical standards of the priests at their parish, and U.S. adults who attend religious services at least yearly but are not Catholic were asked to rate the ethical standards of the clergy at their congregation or place of worship. In the question about religion's influence in American life, the "makes no difference" response option includes those who said religion is losing influence but did not answer a follow-up question about whether this was a good thing or a bad thing. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotal indicated due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted March 18-April 1, 2019, among U.S. adults.

"Americans Have Positive Views About Religion's Role in Society, but Want It Out of Politics"

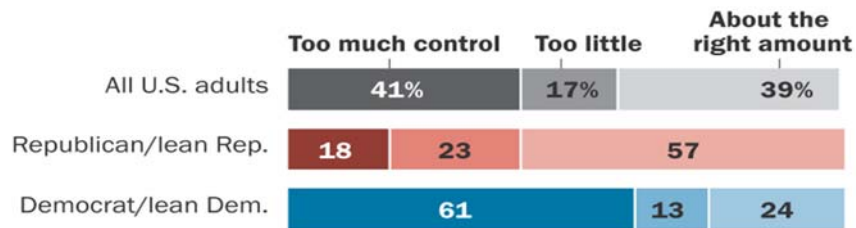
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What do U.S. adults think about religious leaders?

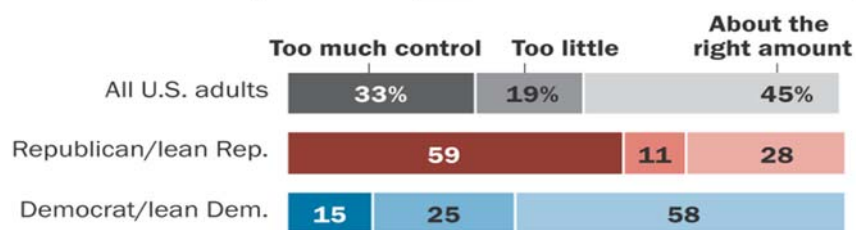
1. Roughly two-thirds of the public believes that religious leaders in general have high or very high ethical standards,
2. A larger share of Americans who attend religious services at least a few times a year say this about the clergy in their own congregations.
3. The survey also shows that roughly four-in-ten U.S. adults – including the majority of Christians – lament what they perceive as religion's declining influence on American society, while fewer than two-in-ten say they think religion is losing influence in American life and that this is a good thing.

Most Democrats say religious conservatives have too much control over GOP

Religious conservatives have ____ over the Republican Party



Liberals who are not religious have ____ over the Democratic Party



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 18-April 1, 2019, among U.S. adults.

"Americans Have Positive Views About Religion's Role in Society, but Want It Out of Politics"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

How much power do religious conservatives have over Republicans?

How much power do liberals with little religion have over Democrats?

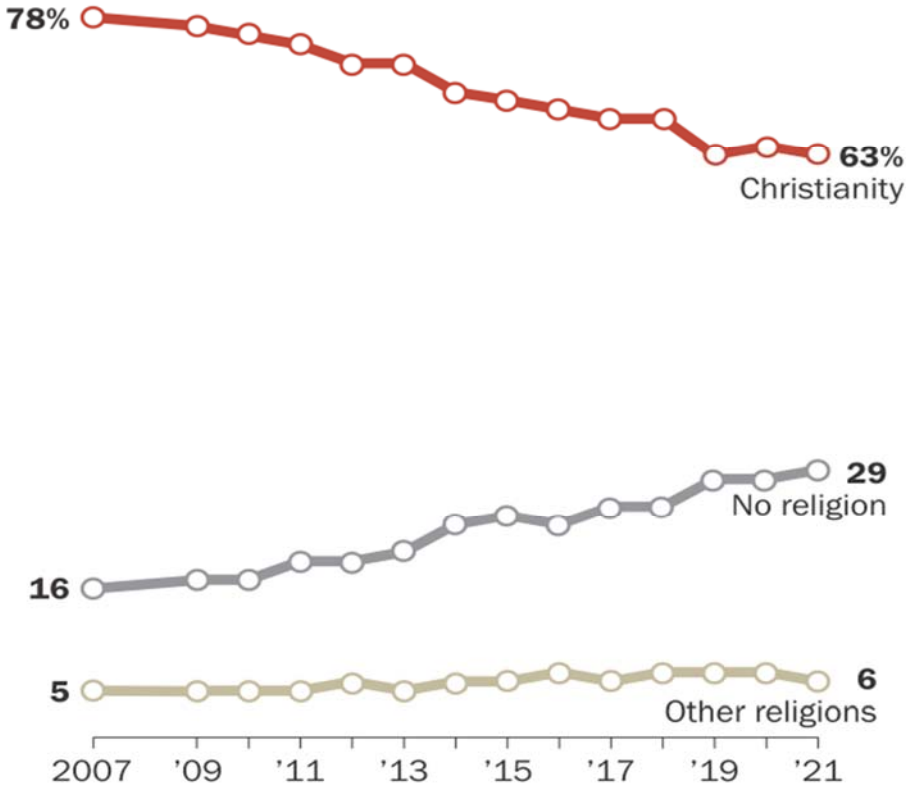
1. The survey also finds that four-in-ten U.S. adults (including six-in-ten among those who identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party) think religious conservatives have too much control over the Republican Party.
2. At the same time, one-third of Americans (including six-in-ten among those who identify with or lean toward the GOP) say liberals who are not religious have too much control over the Democratic Party.

4. What does the future hold? In the U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at a Rapid Pace



In U.S., roughly three-in-ten adults now religiously unaffiliated

% of U.S. adults who identify with ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
Source: Data from 2020-21 based on Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Surveys (NPORS), conducted online and by mail among a nationally representative group of respondents recruited using address-based sampling. All data from 2019 and earlier from the Center's random-digit-dial telephone surveys, including the 2007 and 2014 Religious Landscape Studies. See Methodology for details.
"About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While not necessarily voters, Self-identified Christians make up 63% of U.S. population in 2021, down from 78% in 2007.

The secularizing shifts evident in American society so far in the 21st century show no signs of slowing.

About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated. People who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular” when asked about their religious identity.

And the religiously unaffiliated share of the public is 6 percentage points higher than it was five years ago and 13 percent higher than in 2007.

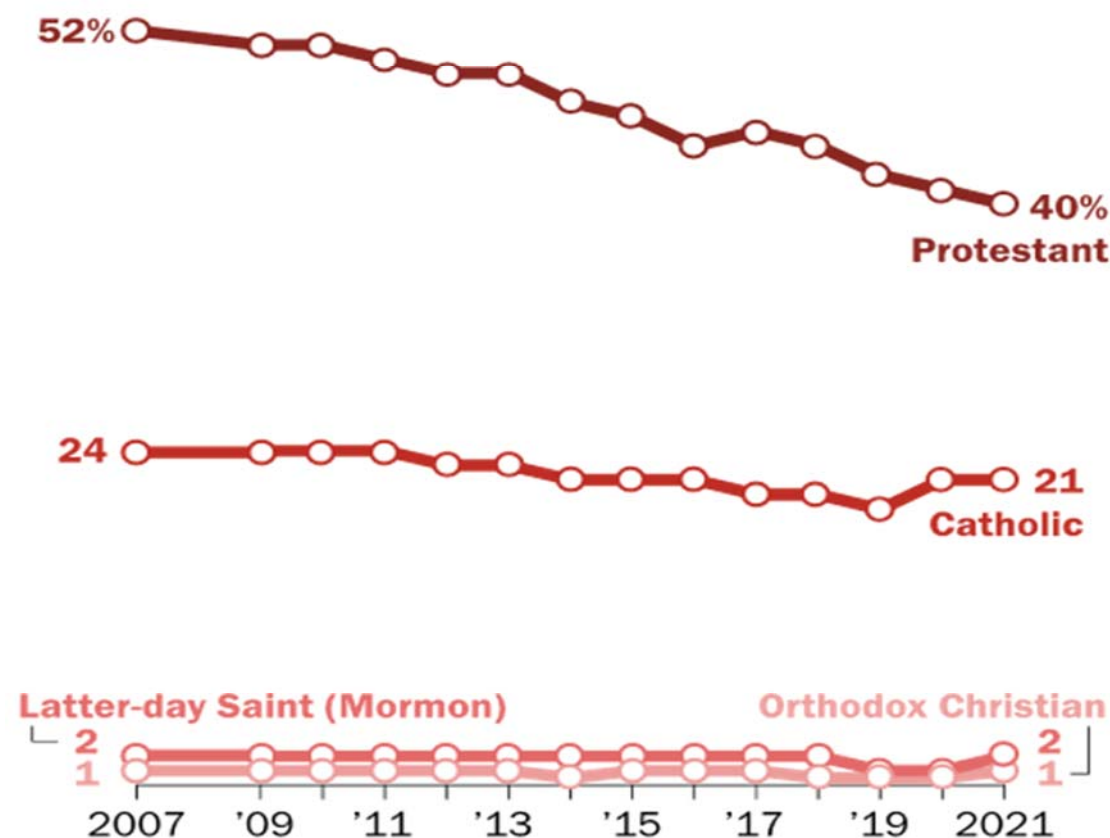
Self-identified Christians of all varieties (including Protestants, Catholics, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Orthodox Christians) make up 63% of the adult population.

Christians continue to make up a majority of the U.S. populace, but their share of the adult population is 15 percent lower in 2021 than it was in 2007.

Christians now outnumber religious “nones” by a ratio of a little more than two-to-one. In 2007, Christians outnumbered “nones” by almost five-to-one (78% vs. 16%).

Within Christianity, recent declines concentrated in Protestantism

% of U.S. adults who identify as ...



Source: Data from 2020-21 based on Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Surveys (NPORS), conducted online and by mail among a nationally representative group of respondents recruited using address-based sampling. All data from 2019 and earlier from the Center's random-digit-dial telephone surveys, including the 2007 and 2014 Religious Landscape Studies. See Methodology for details.

"About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The recent declines within Christianity are concentrated among Protestants. Today, 40% of U.S. adults are Protestants, a group that is broadly defined to include nondenominational Christians and people who describe themselves as “just Christian” along with Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and members of many other denominational families. The Protestant share of the population is down 4 percentage points over the last five years and has dropped 10 points in 10 years.

By comparison, the Catholic share of the population, which had ticked downward between 2007 and 2014, has held relatively steady in recent years. As of 2021, 21% of U.S. adults describe themselves as Catholic, identical to the Catholic share of the population in 2014.

Limitations of this presentation.

1. Religion is just one variable related to how people vote.
2. Since there were very close swing state results, individual state analysis might uncover other variables much higher importance.