AMERICAN DENOMINATIONS’ POPULATIONS, 2007-2021

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In May-August 2021, the Pew Research Center conducted a poll, online and by mail, of 3937 Americans. The margin of error was 2.1%. It discovered this:

Christians

2011: 75%

2021: 63%

Protestants (evangelical and mainline)

2007: 52%

2011: 50%

2016: 44%

2021: 40%

The decline is pretty severe. David E. Campbell, professor of American democracy at the University of Notre Dame, has suggested: “Many people turning away from religion do so because they think of religion as an expression of political conservatism, or as a wing of the Republican Party. That’s especially true of white Americans. The more religion is wrapped up in a political view, the more people who don’t share that political view say, ‘That’s not for me.’”” (*Secular Surge*: *A New Fault Line in American Politics*. 2021)

Catholics

2011: 21% of Americans

2021: 21% of Americans

non-Christians (15%)

2021: 1% Jewish

2021: 1% Muslim

2021: 1% Buddhist

2021: 1% Hindu

2021: 2% other faiths

2011: 2% atheist

2021: 4% atheist

2011: 3% agnostic

2021: 5% agnostic

daily prayer

2007: 58%

2021: 45%

importance of religion

2007: 56% say religion is very important in their lives.

2021: 41% say religion is very important in their lives.

religiously unaffiliated (atheists and agnostics are given above, but here nones [no religious affiliation] are added)

2007: 16%

2011: 19%

2016: 24%

2021: 29%

Ryan P Burge, professor of political science at Eastern Illinois University, has said: “There’s less stigma attached to being an atheist. It’s revealing of what’s been there for a long time, rather than a big shift. People may not have answered honestly 20, 30 years ago.” (*The Nones*: *Where They Came From*, *Who They Are*, *and Where They Are Going*. 2021)

In July of 2021, the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) published its “2020 [Census](https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion/#page-section-1) of American Religion.” It concluded that, “Since 2006, white evangelical Protestants have experienced the most precipitous drop in affiliation, shrinking from 23% of Americans in 2006 to 14% in 2020.”

Anglican and historian Martyn Whittock also notes that “the PRRI research reveals that these white evangelicals constitute the oldest age-profile of any identifiable group of religious Americans. They have an average age of 56. In short, white US evangelicalism is both shrinking in size and failing to attract younger members. Or, as importantly, it is shedding its younger members who no longer wish to be classified as part of this group. If the current rate of decline continues, we could expect the number of US white evangelicals, as a percentage of the US adult population, to be in single figures by 2030. And they will also be old.” (“The Strange Decline of US Evangelicalism.” *ChristianityToday*.*com*. 28 July 2021. 21 Aug. 2021. Web.)

(Unlike the Pew poll, the PRRI found that “the religiously unaffiliated had lost ground, making up just 23% of the country. [Whittock] But unlike the Pew poll, the PRRI poll was conducted by interviewers, was over the phone, and was in English and Spanish.)

Hemant Mehta, an atheist blogger, comments: “All these numbers [of the religiously unaffiliated, up from 16% in 2007 to 29% in 2021] are meaningless unless we convert them into political power. Conservative Christians do that really well. They still have all the power. We’re growing in numbers but we have no political power.”