

# AEI STUDIES IN PUBLIC OPINION

## **IMPORTANT TRENDS ON RELIGION** **(updated December 16, 2005)**

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### **Religious Faith and Practice**

Question: Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?

		Member of church or synagogue	Not a member
1937	Gallup	73	27
2005 Sept	Gallup	63	35

Question: Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days, or not?

		Attend church of synagogue in the last seven days	Did not
1939	Gallup	41	59
2004 Jun	Gallup	43	57

Question: How often do you attend church or synagogue -- at least once a week, almost every week, about once a month, seldom, or never?

		Once a week	Almost every week	About once a month	Seldom	Never
1992 Jan	Gallup	31	9	15	29	16
2004 Jun	Gallup	34	10	15	28	13

Question: How important would you say religion is in your own life -- very important, fairly important, or not very important?

		Very	Fairly	Not very
1952	Gallup	75	20	5
2004 Jun	Gallup	59	26	15

Question: What is your religious preference -- Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox religion such as Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?

		Pro- testant	Christia n (non- specific)	Catholic	Jewish	Orthodox	Mormon	Other Specific	None	Un- designated
1948	Gallup	69	N/A	22	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	3
2004 Jun	Gallup	48	11	25	3	1	1	3	7	1

Question: Would you describe yourself as a “born-again” or evangelical?

		Yes	No
1991 Nov	Gallup	41	54
2005 Nov	Gallup	40	54

Question: Which one of the following best describes you?

2004 Nov	Zogby				
		National	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Religious conservative		25	54	2	15
Religious moderate		28	30	23	33
Religious liberal		20	2	42	16
Not religious		20	9	26	26
Other		6	3	7	9

Question: Which of the following best describes you?

2004 Nov	Zogby				
		National	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Religious traditionalist		29	58	9	21
Religious centrist		16	15	12	21
Religious progressive		20	6	36	17
Not religious		19	8	28	20
Other		12	10	12	14

Question: How often do you read the Bible?

		Daily	Weekly	Two-three times a month	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never
1998	Gallup	14	24	14	8	20	27

Question: Do you happen to have a Bible at home?

1954	Gallup	92
2000	Gallup	93

Question: Do you happen to be in a Bible study group?

1978	Gallup	19
2000	Gallup	14

## Acceptability of Candidates of Different Religions

Question: Between now and the 2000 political conventions, there will be discussion about the qualifications of presidential candidates – their education, age, religion, race, and so on. If your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for president who happened to be [INSERT] would you vote for that person?

Would vote for a Jew for president

		Yes	No
1937 Feb	Gallup	46	47
1999 Feb	Gallup	92	6

Would vote for an Atheist for president		Yes	No
1958 Jul-Aug	Gallup	18	75
1999 Feb	Gallup	49	48
Would vote for a Catholic for president		Yes	No
1937 Feb	Gallup	60	30
1999 Feb	Gallup	94	4
Would vote for a Baptist for president		Yes	No
1967 April	Gallup	92	2
1958 Jul-Aug	Gallup	94	4
Would vote for a Mormon for president		Yes	No
1967 April	Gallup	75	17
1999 Feb	Gallup	79	17

NOTE: First and most recent responses only. Not all groups shown.

## George Bush's Faith

Question: Some people like the way George W. Bush talks in public about his strong religious beliefs. What about you?

		I like it	Bothers me somewhat
2003 Feb	CBS News	63	24
2004 May	CBS News	51	36

Question: Do you think George W. Bush mentions his religious faith and prayer about the right amount, too much, or too little?

		Right amount	Too much	Too little
2003 June-July	Pew Research Center	62	14	11
2004 August	Pew Research Center	53	24	11

Question: How much do you think George W. Bush relies on his own religious beliefs in making policy decisions?

		A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much
2003 June-July	Pew Research Center	20	40	31
2004 August	Pew Research Center	26	38	28

Question: In making policy decisions Bush relies on his religious beliefs too much, about the right amount, or too little?

		Too much	The right amount	Too little
2003 June-July	Pew Research Center	10	58	21

Question: Do you think the Religious Right has too much, the right amount, or too little influence in the Bush administration?

		Too much	The right amount	Too little
2001 Mar	CBS News/New York Times	22	31	19
2002 Nov	CBS News/New York Times	22	39	20
2003 Jan	CBS News/New York Times	21	44	21
2003 May	CBS News/New York Times	21	40	22
2005 Apr	Gallup/CNN/USA Today	39	39	18

Question: Do you think big business has too much, the right amount, or too little influence in the Bush administration?

		Too much	The right amount	Too little
2002 Jul	CBS News/New York Times	66	18	6
2003 Jan	CBS News/New York Times	64	24	4
2003 May	CBS News/New York Times	57	22	7
2004 Jan	CBS News/New York Times	64	23	5

For more information on the 2004 election and religious voters, see <http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/postelection.pdf>

## Religion in Public Life

Question: Which of the following is closer to your own view: religion is under attack in American today, religion has too much influence in American today, or the current standing of religion in America is just about right?

Nov. 2005 Fox News/Opinion Dynamics

	Religion in America today		
	Under Attack	Too Much Influence	Just About Right
National	49	17	22
Attends services weekly	61	10	18
Less than weekly	41	23	14

Question: Do you agree or disagree that all religion should be excluded from public life?

Nov. 2005 Fox News/Opinion Dynamics

	Yes	No
National	15	81
Attends services weekly	10	88
Less than weekly	20	75

Question: Do you agree or disagree that courts have gone too far in taking religion out of public life?

Nov. 2005 Fox News/Opinion Dynamics

	Yes	No
National	77	17
Attends services weekly	87	8
Less than weekly	70	23

Question: Do you think religion plays too large or too small a role in most people's lives today?

Nov. 2005 Fox News/Opinion Dynamics

	Too Large	Too Small
National	15	68
Attends services weekly	8	78
Less than weekly	20	61

## Vote by Denomination

	1976		Reagan	1980		% Electorate	1984	
	Carter	Ford		Carter	Anderson		Reagan	Mondale
White								
Protestant	41	58	63	31	6	51	72	27
Catholic	54	44	50	42	7	26	54	45
Jewish	64	34	39	45	15	3	31	67

	% Electorate	1988		% Electorate	1992		
		Bush	Dukakis		Clinton	Bush	Perot
White							
Protestant	48	66	33	49	33	47	21
Catholic	28	52	47	27	44	35	20
Jewish	4	35	64	4	80	11	9

	% Electorate	1996			% Electorate	2000		
		Clinton	Dole	Perot		Gore	Bush	Nader
White								
Protestant	46	36	53	10	47	34	63	2
Catholic	29	53	37	9	26	49	47	2
Jewish	3	78	16	3	4	79	19	1

	% Electorate	2004	
		Kerry	Bush
White			
Protestant	41	32	67
Catholic	27	47	52
Jewish	3	74	25

Source: National exit polls.

## Journalists and the American Public

Question: Which comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?

1. It is not necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values.
2. It is necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values.

		Belief in God	
		Is Necessary	Is Not Necessary
2004 Journalists	Pew Research Center	6	91
2002 The American Public	Pew Research Center	58	40

Question: Which comes closer to you own views even if neither is exactly right?

Homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted by society OR Homosexuality is a way of life that should be discouraged by society.

		Homosexuality Should Be	
		Accepted	Discouraged
2004 Journalists	Pew Research Center	88	5
2002 The American Public	Pew Research Center	51	42

## International Comparisons

Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)  
Values Study (1982)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Believe In God	Believe in Afterlife	Believe in Heaven	Believe in Hell	Attend Church Regularly	Prays	Everyone is...	
								Good and Evil	Basically Good
United States	1982	95	71	84	67	NA	NA	NA	NA
Great Britain	1982	76	45	57	27	14	50	78	18
Ireland	1982	95	76	83	54	82	81	64	34
Northern Ireland	1982	91	72	81	65	52	73	80	17
West Germany	1982	72	39	31	14	21	59	69	20
Holland	1982	65	42	39	15	27	56	64	28
Belgium	1982	77	37	33	18	30	56	67	22
France	1982	62	35	27	15	12	44	94	5
Italy	1982	84	47	41	31	36	72	85	13
Spain	1982	87	55	50	34	41	69	68	26
Denmark	1982	58	26	17	8	3	48	77	17
Sweden	1982	52	28	26	10	5	33	62	34
Finland	1982	3	49	46	22	4	49	61	37
Norway	1982	72	44	48	22	7	61	73	24
Japan	1982	39	31	20	15	NA	NA	NA	NA

### Question Wording:

1. Which, if any, of the following do you believe in...God?
2. Which, if any, of the following do you believe in...life after death?
3. Which, if any, of the following do you believe in...heaven?
4. Which, if any, of the following do you believe in...hell?
5. Apart from weddings, funerals, and baptisms, about how often do you attend religious services these days?  
Note: In our table, "Attend Church Regularly" are those who attend religious services once a week or more than once a week.
6. Do you take moments of prayer, meditation, or contemplation or something like that?
7. Some say that there is good and evil in everyone. Others say that everyone is basically good. Which point of view do you agree with?

Source: Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 1982.  
International Study Survey Program (ISSP, 1991 and 1998)

		1		2	3	4	5	6		7	
		Believe in God Atheist	Believer	Believe in Afterlife	Believe in Heaven	Believe in Hell	Attend Church Regularly	Weekly	Pray Daily	Believe Good	World is Evil
G. Britain	1991	31	69	54	55	29	17	29	18	NA	NA
	1998	31	69	59	53	32	NA	27	15	NA	NA
USA	1991	6	94	78	85	71	44	59	42	32	10
	1998	8	92	80	87	74	42	65	47	30	10
W. Germany	1991	33	67	54	43	25	15	33	22	NA	NA
	1998	38	62	55	46	35	NA	29	16	NA	NA
E. Germany	1991	75	25	14	20	7	4	10	7	NA	NA
	1998	74	26	15	22	11	NA	9	5	NA	NA
N. Ireland	1991	5	95	78	90	73	57	65	43	NA	NA
	1998	11	89	75	83	71	NA	54	34	NA	NA
Hungary	1991	36	64	27	28	16	19	36	27	NA	NA
	1998	34	66	39	36	28	NA	39	32	19	13
Netherlands	1991	45	55	53	40	18	21	34	27	NA	NA
	1998	41	59	60	48	26	NA	33	24	NA	NA
Italy	1991	14	86	66	58	48	49	46	37	NA	NA
	1998	12	88	73	68	59	NA	53	32	NA	NA
Ireland	1991	5	95	80	87	53	76	78	58	40	8
	1998	6	94	77	84	53	NA	NA	NA	34	7
Norway	1991	41	59	60	47	22	11	25	18	NA	NA
	1998	42	58	53	40	19	NA	22	14	NA	NA
Slovenia	1991	39	61	33	32	28	NA	22	10	NA	NA
	1998	37	63	42	35	31	NA	26	11	NA	NA
Poland	1991	5	95	74	76	53	67	70	52	NA	NA
	1998	5	95	78	78	67	NA	65	45	NA	NA
Israel	1991	29	71	42	43	39	NA	15	10	NA	NA
	1998	19	81	63	61	67	NA	33	25	NA	NA
New Zealand	1991	30	70	61	59	34	20	NA	NA	NA	NA
	1998	31	69	62	58	37	NA	31	21	25	5
Russia	1991	53	47	39	33	30	3	11	9	NA	NA
	1998	40	60	40	31	31	NA	19	12	2	33
Philippines	1991	3	97	79	92	77	67	86	72	NA	NA
	1998	5	95	87	96	88	NA	89	68	NA	NA
Austria	1991	22	78	59	46	28	26	38	22	NA	NA
	1998	21	79	60	45	31	NA	38	23	NA	NA
Australia	1991	32	68	45	55	34	21	32	21	NA	NA
	1998	35	65	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sweden	1998	54	46	51	28	14	NA	15	10	NA	NA

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Czech Rep. 1998	54	46	44	29	22	NA	21	14	15	10
Bulgaria 1998	40	60	34	26	25	NA	19	11	12	15
Canada 1998	24	76	68	63	46	NA	34	19	19	7
Japan 1998	58	42	51	44	37	NA	28	23	NA	NA
Spain 1998	18	82	56	51	37	NA	37	23	NA	NA
Latvia 1998	28	72	52	33	31	NA	24	17	21	15
Slovakia 1998	28	72	65	57	49	NA	NA	NA	15	18
France 1998	48	52	51	33	20	NA	23	15	NA	NA
Cyprus 1998	3	97	80	77	75	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Portugal 1998	8	92	72	76	64	NA	53	39	6	40
Chile 1998	4	96	77	82	59	NA	60	45	NA	NA
Denmark 1998	43	57	41	32	15	NA	18	14	NA	NA
Switzerland 1998	27	73	71	53	30	NA	40	24	NA	NA

Question Wordings/Methodology:

- Which best describes you beliefs about God? I don't believe in God now and I never have, I don't believe in God now but I used to, I believe in God now but I didn't used to, or I believe in God now and I always have.?  
Note: In our table, "Atheists" are those who answered, "I don't believe in God now and I never have" or "I don't believe in God now but I used to" whereas "Believers" are those who answered, "I believe in God now but I didn't used to" or "I believe in God now and I always have."
- Do you believe in life after death? Yes definitely, yes probably, no probably not, or no definitely not?  
Note: In our table, "Believe in Afterlife" are those who answered, "Yes definitely" or "Yes probably."
- Do you believe in Heaven? Yes definitely, yes probably, no probably not, or no definitely not?  
Note: In our table, "Believe in Heaven" are those who answered, "Yes definitely" or "Yes probably."
- Do you believe in Hell? Yes definitely, yes probably, no probably not, or no definitely not?  
Note: In our table, "Believe in Hell" are those who answered, "Yes definitely" or "Yes probably."
- Now thinking about the present. How often do you attend religious services: Never, less than once a year, about once or twice a year, several times a year, about once a month, 2-3 times a month, nearly every week, every week, several times a week, once a day, or several times a day?  
Note: In our table, "Attends Church Regularly" are those who attend services 2-3 times a month, nearly every week, every week, several times a week, once a day, or several times a day.
- Now thinking about the present, about how often do you pray: Never, less than once a year, about once or twice a year, several times a year, about once a month, 2-3 times a month, nearly every week, every week, several times a week, once a day, or several times a day?  
Note: In our table, "Prays Weekly" are those who answered every week, several times a week, once a day or several times a day whereas "Prays Daily" are those who answered once a day or several times a day.
- People have different images of the world and human nature. We'd like to know the kinds of images you have. Below are sets of contrasting images. On a scale of 1 to 7, where would you place your image of the world and human nature between the two contrasting images? Look at the first set of contrasting images. If you think that "The World is basically filled with evil and sin," you would place yourself at 1. If you think "There is much goodness in the world which hints at God's goodness," you would place yourself at 7. If you think things are somewhere in between these two, you would place yourself at 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would your image of the world on each of the scales below?  
Note: In our table, "Believes World is Good" are those who listed themselves as either a 6 or a 7 whereas "Believes World is Evil" are those who listed themselves as either a 1 or 2.

Sources: International Study Survey Programme, ZA No. 2150 *Religion I* can be found at <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s2150cdb.pdf> and *Religion II* at <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s3190cdb.pdf>. NORC GSS Survey can be found at <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS/>.

