**Religion in the United States**

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*This article is about the current status of religion in the United States. For information about the historical role of religion, see* [*History of religion in the United States*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_religion_in_the_United_States)*.*

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**Religion in the United States** is characterized by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. Various religious faiths have flourished, as well as perished, in the United States. Religions that span the country's [multicultural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism) immigrant heritage, as well as those founded within the country, have led the United States to become one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. A majority of Americans report that religion plays a "very important" role in their lives, a proportion unique among [developed nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developed_nation).

The majority of Americans (73-76%) identify themselves as Christians and about 15-20% have no religious affiliation. According to the [American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Religious_Identification_Survey_%28ARIS%29), which was cited by the [US Census Bureau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/US_Census_Bureau) in their 2012 Statistical Abstract, 76% of the American adult population identified themselves as Christians, with 25% identifying themselves as Catholics, and 51% identifying themselves as Christians spanning some 30 religious groupings. The same survey says that other religions (including, for example, [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism), [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism), [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), and [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism)) collectively make up about 4% of the adult population, another 15% of the adult population claim no religious affiliation, and 5.2% said they did not know, or they refused to reply. According to a 2012 survey by the Pew forum, 36 percent of Americans state that they attend services nearly every week or more.

Despite a high level of religious adherence, only 9% of Americans in a 2008 poll said religion was the most important thing in their life, compared with 45% who said family was paramount in their life and 17% who said money and career was paramount.

**Overview**

From early colonial days, when some English and German settlers came in search of religious freedom, America has been profoundly influenced by religion. That influence continues in American culture, social life, and politics. Several of the original [Thirteen Colonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) were established by settlers who wished to practice their own religion within a community of like-minded people: the Massachusetts Bay Colony was established by English [Puritans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritan) (Congregationalists), Pennsylvania by British [Quakers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Society_of_Friends), Maryland by English [Catholics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_United_Kingdom), and Virginia by English [Anglicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicans).

The text of the [First Amendment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution) to the country's [Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution) states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." It guarantees the [free exercise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Exercise_Clause_of_the_First_Amendment) of religion while also preventing the government from establishing a [state religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion). The [Supreme Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_the_United_States) has also interpreted this as preventing the government from having any authority in religion.

According to a 2002 survey by the Pew forum, nearly 6 in 10 Americans said that religion plays an important role in their lives, compared to 33% in Great Britain, 27% in Italy, and 21% in Germany. The survey report stated that the results showed America having a greater similarity to developing nations (where higher percentages say that religion plays an important role) than to other wealthy nations, where religion plays a minor role.

In 1963, 90% of Americans claimed to be Christians; 2% professed no religious identity. In 2012, the percentage of Christians was closer to 70%; 13% claimed no religious identity.

**Freedom of religion**

Although some New England States continued to use tax money to fund local Congregational churches into the 1830s, the United States claims to have been the first nation to have no official state-endorsed religion.

Modeling the provisions concerning religion within the [Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Statute_for_Religious_Freedom), the framers of the Constitution rejected any religious test for office, and the First Amendment specifically denied the federal government any power to enact any law respecting either an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise, thus protecting any religious organization, institution, or denomination from government interference. The decision was mainly influenced by European Rationalist and Protestant ideals, but was also a consequence of the pragmatic concerns of minority religious groups and small states that did not want to be under the power or influence of a national religion that did not represent them.

**Abrahamic religions**

**Baha'i Faith**

Main article: [Bahá'í Faith by country#United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith_by_country#United_States)

[Bahá'í House of Worship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_House_of_Worship_%28Wilmette%2C_Illinois%29), (built 1953) in [Wilmette, Illinois](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilmette%2C_Illinois) is the oldest still existing Bahá'í House of Worship in the world and the only one in the United States.

The United States has perhaps the second largest Bahá'í community in the world. First mention of the Faith in the U.S. was at the inaugural [Parliament of World Religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_World_Religions), which was held at the [Columbian Exposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbian_Exposition) in [Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago%2C_Illinois) in 1893. In 1894, Ibrahim Kheiralla, a [Syrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) Bahá'í immigrant established a community in the U.S. He later left the main group and founded a rival movement.

**Christianity**

Main article: [Christianity in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_United_States)

The largest religion in the US is [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), practiced by the majority of the population (76% in 2008). From those queried, roughly 51% of Americans are [Protestants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestants), 24% are [Catholics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholicism), 1.7% are [Mormons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints_membership_statistics_%28United_States%29) (the name commonly used to refer to members of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints)), and 1.7% have affiliations with various other [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) denominations. Christianity was introduced during the period of [European colonization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_colonization_of_the_Americas).

[Crystal Cathedral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crystal_Cathedral), a former Protestant [megachurch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megachurch) in [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California) that suffered severe financial problems. The property has been sold to the [Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Orange).

According to the 2011 [Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yearbook_of_American_and_Canadian_Churches), from which members in the United States are combined with Canadian members, and of the [National Council of Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Council_of_Churches), the five largest denominations are:

* The [Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church), 68,503,456 members
* The [Southern Baptist Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention), 16,160,088 members
* The [United Methodist Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Methodist_Church), 7,774,931 members
* [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints), 6,058,907 members
* The [Church of God in Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_God_in_Christ), 5,499,875 members

The Southern Baptist Convention, with over 16 million adherents, is the largest of more than 200 distinctly named Protestant denominations. As of 2007, members of [Evangelical Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism) comprise 26% of the American population, while another 18% belong to [mainline Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainline_Protestant) churches, and 7% belong to historically [black churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_church).

Due to its large population and history, the United States has numerically more Christians and Protestants than any other country in the world. Other countries, however, have [higher percentages of Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_by_country) and Protestants within their total populations.

Beginning in the 17th century, [Northern European](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_European) peoples introduced [Protestantism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism). Among Protestants, [Anglicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicanism), [Baptists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist), [Puritans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritans), [Presbyterians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterianism), [Lutherans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism), [Quakers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Society_of_Friends), and [Moravians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moravian_Church) were the first to settle in the US, spreading their faith in the new country.

The [Salt Lake Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_Lake_Temple) in Salt Lake City, Utah

Beginning in the 16th century, the Spanish (and later the French and English) introduced Catholicism. From the 19th century to the present, Catholics came to the US in large numbers due to immigration of [Hispanics/Latinos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans), [Irish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Americans), Highland Scots, [Italians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_American), Dutch, Flemish, [Polish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_American), [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_American), [Portuguese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_American), [Hungarians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_people), [Germans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Americans), [Lebanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_American), and other ethnic groups.

Greek, Ukrainian, Russian, Central and Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Ethiopian, and South Indian immigrants brought [Eastern Orthodoxy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy) and [Oriental Orthodoxy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodoxy) to the United States. These branches of Christianity have since spread beyond the boundaries of ethnic immigrant communities and now include multi-ethnic membership and parishes.

Since the foundational settlements, American Christians have developed in their own paths. During the [Great Awakenings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Awakening) interdenominational [evangelicalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism) and [Pentecostalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism) emerged, along with new Protestant denominations such as [Adventism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventism), and non-denominational movements such as the [Restoration Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration_Movement) (which over time separated into the [Churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ), the [Christian churches and churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_churches_and_churches_of_Christ), and the [Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Church_%28Disciples_of_Christ%29)), the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, commonly referred to as [Jehovah's Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses), and [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints), also commonly referred to as [Mormonism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism).

The [Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_the_National_Shrine_of_the_Immaculate_Conception) in Washington, D.C., is the largest Catholic church in the US

The strength of various sects varies greatly in different regions of the country, with rural parts of the South (except [Louisiana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana) and the [Gulf Coast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_Coast), and the [Hispanic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic) community, which both consist mainly of Catholics), having many evangelicals but very few Catholics, while urbanized areas of the north Atlantic states and [Great Lakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Lakes), as well as many industrial and mining towns, are heavily Catholic, though still quite mixed, especially due to the heavily Protestant African-American communities. As of 1990, nearly 72% of the population of Utah was Mormon, as well as 26% of neighboring Idaho. Lutheranism is most prominent in the [Upper Midwest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Midwest), with North Dakota having the highest percentage of Lutherans (35% according to a 2001 survey.)

Despite its status as the most widespread and influential religion in the US, Christianity has undergone a continuous relative decline in demographics. While the absolute number of Christians rose from 1990 to 2008 as the overall population increased, the actual percentage of Christians dropped from 86% to 76%. A nationwide telephone interview of 1,002 adults conducted by [The Barna Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Barna_Group) found that 70% of American adults believe that God is "the all-powerful, all-knowing creator of the universe who still rules it today", and that 9% of all American adults and 0.5% [young adults](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic_Generation) hold to what the survey defined as a "biblical worldview".

**Islam**

Main article: [Islam in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_States)

The [Islamic Center of Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Center_of_Washington) in the nation's capital is a leading American Islamic Center.

[Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) is the 3rd largest faith in America, after Christianity and Judaism, representing 0.8% of the population. American Islam effectively began with the arrival of African slaves. It is estimated that about 10% of African slaves transported to the United States were Muslim. Most, however, became Christians, and the United States did not have a significant Muslim population until the arrival of immigrants from Arabic and East Asian Muslim areas. Islam gained a higher profile through the [Nation of Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation_of_Islam), a religious group that appealed to black Americans after the 1940s; its prominent converts included [Malcolm X](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_X) and [Muhammad Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ali). The first Muslim elected in Congress was [Keith Ellison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Ellison_%28politician%29) in 2006, followed by [Andre Carson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andre_Carson) in 2008.

The [Islamic Center of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Center_of_America) in [Dearborn, Michigan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dearborn%2C_Michigan) is the largest mosque in the United States

Research indicates that Muslims in the US are generally more assimilated and prosperous than Muslims in Europe. Like other subcultural and religious communities, the Islamic community has generated its own political organizations and charity organizations.

**Judaism**

Main article: [American Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jews)

After Christianity, Judaism is the next largest religious affiliation in the US, though this identification is not necessarily indicative of religious beliefs or practices. There are between 5.3 and 6.6 million Jews. A significant number of people identify themselves as [American Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jews) on ethnic and cultural grounds, rather than religious ones. For example, 19% of self-identified American Jews believe God does not exist. The 2001 ARIS study projected from its sample that there are about 5.3 million adults in the American Jewish population: 2.83 million adults (1.4% of the U.S. adult population) are estimated to be adherents of Judaism; 1.08 million are estimated to be adherents of no religion; and 1.36 million are estimated to be adherents of a religion other than Judaism. ARIS 2008 estimated about 2.68 million adults (1.2%) in the country identify Judaism as their faith.

[Touro Synagogue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touro_Synagogue), (built 1759) in Newport, Rhode Island has the oldest still existing synagogue building in the United States.

Jews have been present in what is now the US since the 17th century, though large scale immigration did not take place until the 19th century, largely as a result of persecutions in parts of [Eastern Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe). The Jewish community in the United States is composed predominantly of [Ashkenazi Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) whose ancestors emigrated from [Central](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Europe) and [Eastern Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe). There are, however, small numbers of older (and some recently arrived) communities of [Sephardi Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sephardi_Jews) with roots tracing back to 15th century [Iberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) (Spain, Portugal, and North Africa). There are also [Mizrahi Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizrahi_Jews) (from the Middle East, [Caucasia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus) and [Central Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia)), as well as much smaller numbers of [Ethiopian Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Jews), [Indian Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Jews), [Kaifeng Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaifeng_Jews) and others from various smaller [Jewish ethnic divisions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_ethnic_divisions). Approximately 25% of the Jewish American population lives in New York City.

According to a 2007 survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public life, 1.7% of adults in the U.S. identify Judaism as their religion. Among those surveyed, 43% said they were Reform Jews, 31% said they were Conservative Jews, and 10% said they were Orthodox Jews. According to the 1990 [National Jewish Population Survey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Jewish_Population_Survey), 38% of Jews were affiliated with the Reform tradition, 35% were Conservative, 6% were Orthodox, 1% were Reconstructionists, 10% linked themselves to some other tradition, and 10% said they are "just Jewish."

A 2009 study estimated the Jewish population (including both those who define themselves as Jewish by religion and those who define themselves as Jewish in cultural or ethnic terms) to be between 6.0 and 6.4 million. According to a study done in 2000 there were an estimated 6.14 million Jewish people in the country, about 2% of the population.

[Congregation Shearith Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congregation_Shearith_Israel), (founded 1655) in New York is the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States.

According to the 2001 [National Jewish Population Survey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Jewish_Population_Survey), 4.3 million [American Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jewish) adults have some sort of strong connection to the Jewish community, whether religious or cultural. Jewishness is generally considered an [ethnic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic) identity as well as a [religious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious) one. Among the 4.3 million American Jews described as "strongly connected" to Judaism, over 80% have some sort of active engagement with Judaism, ranging from attendance at daily prayer services on one end of the spectrum to attending [Passover Seders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover_Seder) or lighting [Hanukkah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah) candles on the other. The survey also discovered that Jews in the [Northeast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeastern_United_States) and [Midwest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midwest) are generally more observant than Jews in the [South](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South) or [West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West). Reflecting a trend also observed among other religious groups, Jews in the Northwestern United States are typically the least observant.

Beginning in the 1960s, a worldwide movement among previously secular Jews, called [*baalei teshuva*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baal_teshuva_movement) ("returners", returning to a more religious, in most cases, Orthodox, style of observance) has had a noticeable presence in America. It is uncertain how widespread or demographically important this movement is at present.

**Dharmic religions**

**Buddhism**

Main article: [Buddhism in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_the_United_States)

[Hsi Lai Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hsi_Lai_Temple) (lit. Coming West Temple), a [Buddhist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist) [monastery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery) in Los Angeles, California

[Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) entered the US during the 19th century with the arrival of the first immigrants from [East Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia). The first Buddhist temple was established in San Francisco in 1853 by [Chinese Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Americans).

During the late 19th century Buddhist missionaries from Japan came to the US. During the same time period, US intellectuals started to take interest in Buddhism.

[Tibetan Buddhist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism) temple in [Seattle, Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle%2C_Washington)

The first prominent US citizen to publicly convert to [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) was [Henry Steel Olcott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Steel_Olcott). An event that contributed to the strengthening of Buddhism in the US was the [Parliament of the World's Religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_World%27s_Religions) in 1893, which was attended by many Buddhist delegates sent from India, China, Japan, Vietnam, [Thailand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand) and [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka).

The early 20th century was characterized by a continuation of tendencies that had their roots in the 19th century. The second half, by contrast, saw the emergence of new approaches, and the move of Buddhism into the mainstream and making itself a mass and social religious phenomenon.

Many foreign associations and teachers—such as [Soka Gakkai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soka_Gakkai) and [Tenzin Gyatso](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenzin_Gyatso) (the 14th [Dalai Lama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalai_Lama) for [Tibetan Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism))—started to organize missionary activities, while US converts established the first Western-based Buddhist institutions, temples and worship groups.

Estimates of the number of Buddhists in the United States vary between 0.5% and 0.9%, with 0.7% reported by both the CIA and PEW.

**Hinduism**

Main article: [Hinduism in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_in_the_United_States)

Detail of [Malibu Hindu Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malibu_Hindu_Temple) in [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California)

The first time [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism) entered the US is not clearly identifiable. However, large groups of Hindus have immigrated from India and other Asian countries since the enactment of the [Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_and_Nationality_Act_of_1965). During the 1960s and 1970s Hinduism exercised fascination contributing to the development of [New Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age) thought. During the same decades the [International Society for Krishna Consciousness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Society_for_Krishna_Consciousness) (a [Vaishnavite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnavite) [Hindu reform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_reform) organization) was founded in the US.

According to recent surveys, estimates for Hindus in the US suggest they number nearly 400 thousand people or about 0.2% of the total population.

In 2004 the [Hindu American Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_American_Foundation)—a national institution protecting rights the Hindu community of US—was founded.

**Jainism**

Main article: [Jainism in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism_in_the_United_States)

[Jain Center of Greater Phoenix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jain_Center_of_Greater_Phoenix) (JCGP)

Adherents of [Jainism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism) first arrived in the United States in the 20th century. The most significant time of Jain immigration was in the early 1970s. The United States has since become a center of the Jain Diaspora. The [Federation of Jain Associations in North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation_of_Jain_Associations_in_North_America) is an umbrella organization of local American and Canadian Jain congregations to preserve, practice, and promote [Jainism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism) and the Jain Way of Life.

**Sikhism**

Main article: [Sikhism in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_the_United_States)

[Sikh Center of San Francisco Bay Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikh_Center_of_San_Francisco_Bay_Area), a Sikh gurdwara in El Sobrante, California.

Around 1900, the state of [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_%28British_India%29) of British India was hit hard by British practices of [mercantilism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercantilism). Some Sikhs emigrated to the United States to work on farms in California.

The first Sikh [Gurdwara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurdwara) in America was built in [Stockton, California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockton%2C_California) in 1912.

**No religion**

Main article: [Irreligion in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreligion_in_the_United_States)

This group includes atheists, agnostics and people who describe their religion as “nothing in particular".

“Unaffiliated” does not necessarily mean “non-religious.” Some people who are unaffiliated with any particular religion express religious beliefs (such as belief in God or reincarnation) and engage in religious practices (such as prayer or meditation).

**Agnosticism, atheism, deism and humanism**

A 2001 survey directed by Dr. Ariela Keysar for the City University of New York indicated that, amongst the more than 100 categories of response, "no religious identification" had the greatest increase in population in both absolute and percentage terms. This category included [atheists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist), [agnostics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnostic), [humanists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanism), and others with no theistic religious beliefs or practices. Figures are up from 14.3 million in 1990 to 34.2 million in 2008, representing an increase from 8% of the total population in 1990 to 15% in 2008. Another nation-wide study puts the figure of unaffiliated persons at 16.1%.

In the [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), Enlightenment philosophy (which itself was heavily inspired by deist ideals) played a major role in creating the principle of religious freedom, expressed in Thomas Jefferson's letters and included in the [First Amendment to the United States Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution). [American Founding Fathers, or Framers of the Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Founding_Fathers_of_the_United_States), who were especially noted for being influenced by such philosophy of deism include Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, [Cornelius Harnett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius_Harnett), [Gouverneur Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouverneur_Morris), and [Hugh Williamson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Williamson). Their political speeches show distinct deistic influence. Other notable Founding Fathers may have been more directly deist. These include [Thomas Paine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Paine), [James Madison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison), possibly [Alexander Hamilton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hamilton), and [Ethan Allen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethan_Allen),

In a 2006 nationwide poll, [University of Minnesota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Minnesota) researchers found that despite an increasing acceptance of religious diversity, [atheists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheists) were generally distrusted by other Americans, who trusted them less than Muslims, recent immigrants and other minority groups in "sharing their vision of American society". They also associated atheists with undesirable attributes such as criminal behavior, rampant materialism, and cultural elitism. However, the same study also reported that "The researchers also found acceptance or rejection of atheists is related not only to personal religiosity, but also to one's exposure to diversity, education and political orientation--with more educated, East and West Coast Americans more accepting of atheists than their Midwestern counterparts." Some surveys have indicated that doubts about the existence of a god were growing quickly among Americans under 30.

On 24 March 2012, American Atheists sponsored the Reason Rally in Washington D.C. This was followed by the American Atheist Convention at the Bethesda North Marriott and Convention Center in Bethesda, MD. Organizers called the estimated crowd of 8,000-10,000 the largest-ever gathering of nonbelievers in one place.

**Belief in the existence of a god**

Various polls have been conducted to determine Americans' actual beliefs regarding a god:

* A 2006 CBS News Poll of 899 U.S. adults found that 76% of those surveyed believed in a god, while 9% believed in "some other universal spirit or higher power", 8% believed in neither, and 1% were unsure.
* A 2007 [Gallup Poll](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallup_Poll) found that 86% of Americans believe in a god, with 8% saying they are not sure, and 6% saying they don't believe in a god.
* According to a 2008 ARIS survey, belief in god varies considerably by region. The lowest rate is in the West with 59% reporting a belief in God, and the highest rate in the South at 86%.
* Mark Chaves, a Duke University professor of sociology, religion and divinity, found that 92% of Americans believed in God in 2008, but that significantly fewer Americans have great confidence in their religious leaders than a generation ago.
* A 2008 survey of 1,000 people concluded that, based on their stated beliefs rather than their religious identification, 69.5% of Americans believe in a personal God, roughly 12.3% of Americans are [atheist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist) or [agnostic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnostic), and another 12.1% are deistic (believing in a higher power/non-personal God, but no personal God).
* A late 2009 online Harris poll of 2,303 U.S. adults (18 and older) found that "82% of adult Americans believe in God", the same number as in two earlier polls in 2005 and 2007. Another 9% said they did not believe in God, and 9% said that they were not sure. It further concluded, "Large majorities also believe in miracles (76%), heaven (75%), that Jesus is God or the Son of God (73%), in angels (72%), the survival of the soul after death (71%), and in the resurrection of Jesus (70%). Less than half (45%) of adults believe in Darwin’s theory of evolution but this is more than the 40% who believe in creationism..... Many people consider themselves Christians without necessarily believing in some of the key beliefs of Christianity. However, this is not true of born-again Christians. In addition to their religious beliefs, large minorities of adults, including many Christians, have "pagan" or pre-Christian beliefs such as a belief in ghosts, astrology, witches and reincarnation.... Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated."
* A 2010 Gallup poll found 80% of Americans believe in a god, 12% believe in a universal spirit, 6% don't believe in either, 1% chose "other", and 1% had no opinion. This is down only slightly from the 1940s, when Gallup first asked this question.
* A 2011 Gallup poll found 92% of Americans said yes to the question "Do you believe in God?", while 7% said no and 1% had no opinion.
* A 2012 Pew Research Center survey found that doubts about the existence of a god have grown rapidly among younger Americans, with 68% telling Pew they never doubt God’s existence, a 15-point drop in just five years. In 2007, 83% of American millennials said they never doubted God’s existence.
* A 2012 WIN-Gallup International poll showed that 5% of Americans considered themselves "convinced" atheists, which was a fivefold increase from the last time the survey was taken in 2005, and 5% said they did not know or else did not respond.

**Others**

Many other religions are represented in the United States, including [Shinto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinto), [Caodaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caodaism), [Thelema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelema), [Santería](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santer%C3%ADa), [Kemetism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemetism), [Religio Romana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_polytheistic_reconstructionism), [Kaldanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamian_religion), [Zoroastrianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism), [Vodou](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Vodou), and many forms of [New Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age) spirituality.

**Native American religions**

Main article: [Native American religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_religion)

Native American religions historically exhibited much diversity, and are often characterized by [animism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism) or [panentheism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panentheism). The membership of Native American religions in the 21st century comprises about 9000 people.

**Neopaganism**

Main article: [Contemporary Paganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_Paganism)

Neopaganism in the United States is represented by widely different [movements and organizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Neopagan_movements). The largest Neopagan religion is [Wicca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicca), followed by [Neo-Druidism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Druidism). Other neopagan movements include [Germanic Neopaganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germanic_Neopaganism), [Celtic Reconstructionist Paganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_Reconstructionist_Paganism), [Hellenic Polytheistic Reconstructionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenic_Polytheistic_Reconstructionism), and [Semitic Neopaganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semitic_Neopaganism).

**Druidry**

According to the [American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Religious_Identification_Survey_%28ARIS%29), there are approximately 30,000 druids in the United States. Modern Druidism came to North America first in the form of fraternal Druidic organizations in the nineteenth century and orders such as the Ancient Order of Druids in America were founded as distinct American groups as early as 1912. In 1963, the [Reformed Druids of North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Druids_of_North_America) (RDNA) was founded by students at [Carleton College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carleton_College), [Northfield, Minnesota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northfield%2C_Minnesota). They adopted elements of Neopaganism into their practices, for instance celebrating the festivals of the [Wheel of the Year](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheel_of_the_Year).

**Wicca**

Wicca advanced in North America in the 1960s by [Raymond Buckland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_Buckland), an expatriate Briton who visited Gardner's Isle of Man coven to gain initiation. [Universal Eclectic Wicca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Eclectic_Wicca) was popularized in 1969 a diverse membership drawing from both [Dianic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dianic_Wicca) and [British Traditional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Traditional_Wicca) Wiccan backgrounds.

**New Thought Movement**

Main article: [New Thought](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Thought)

A group of churches which started in the 1830s in the United States is known under the banner of "[New Thought](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Thought)". These churches share a [spiritual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality), [metaphysical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics) and [mystical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism) predisposition and understanding of the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) and were strongly influenced by the [Transcendentalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendentalist) movement particularly the work of [Emerson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson). Another antecedent of this movement was [Swedenborgianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedenborgianism), founded on the writings of [Emanuel Swedenborg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Swedenborg) in 1787. The New Thought concept was named by [Emma Curtis Hopkins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Curtis_Hopkins) ("teacher of teachers") after Hopkins broke off from [Mary Baker Eddy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Baker_Eddy)'s [Church of Christ, Scientist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ%2C_Scientist). The movement had been previously known as the Mental Sciences or The Christian Sciences. The three major branches are [Religious Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Science), [Unity Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unity_Church) and [Divine Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Science).

**Unitarian Universalism**

Main article: [Unitarian Universalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarian_Universalism)

Unitarian Universalists do not share a [creed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creed); rather, they are unified by their shared search for [spiritual growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_growth) and by the understanding that an individual's theology is a result of that search and not obedience to an authoritarian requirement.

**Taoism**

In 2004 there were an estimated 56,000 [Taoists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism) in the US. Taoism was popularized throughout the world through the practice of [Tai Chi Chuan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tai_Chi_Chuan) and other [martial arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts).

**Major denominations founded in the United States**

* [Anglican Church in North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Church_in_North_America) - broke from the [Episcopal Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_%28United_States%29) in 2009 to protest against the latter denomination's liberalizing tendencies.
* [Polish National Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_National_Catholic_Church) – broke from Rome in 1897.
* [Churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ)/[Disciples of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disciples_of_Christ) – a restoration movement with no governing body. The [Restoration Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration_Movement) solidified as a historical phenomenon in 1832 when [restorationists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restorationism_%28Christian_primitivism%29) from two major movements championed by [Barton W. Stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barton_W._Stone) and [Alexander Campbell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Campbell_%28clergyman%29) merged.
* [Pentecostalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism) – movement which emphasizes the role of the [Holy Spirit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit), finds its historic roots in the [Azusa Street Revival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azusa_Street_Revival) in Los Angeles, California, from 1904 to 1906, sparked by [Charles Parham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Fox_Parham).
* [Adventism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventism) – began as an inter-denominational movement. Its most vocal leader was [William Miller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Miller_%28preacher%29), who in the 1830s in [New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York) became convinced of an imminent [Second Coming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Coming) of Jesus. The most prominent modern group to emerge from this is the [Seventh-day Adventists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventists).
* [Nation of Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation_of_Islam) – A sect of Islam, created and followed solely by [African-Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-Americans); redefined "Allah" as someone "who came in the person of W. D. Fard."
* [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (LDS Church) – founded by [Joseph Smith, Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith%2C_Jr.) in 1830 in the [Burned Over District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burned_Over_District) of upstate New York. Now headquartered in [Salt Lake City, Utah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_Lake_City%2C_Utah).
* [New Thought Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Thought) - two of the early proponents of New Thought beliefs during the mid to late 19th century were [Phineas Parkhurst Quimby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phineas_Parkhurst_Quimby) and the Mother of New Thought [Emma Curtis Hopkins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Curtis_Hopkins). The three major branches are [Religious Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Science), [Unity Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unity_Church) and [Divine Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Science).
* [Jehovah's Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses) – originated with the religious movement known as [Bible Students](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_Student_movement), which was founded in Pennsylvania in the late 1870s by [Charles Taze Russell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Taze_Russell). Loosely connected in its early years with Adventism, with which it shares some similarities.
* [Scientology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientology_in_the_United_States) – founded by [L. Ron Hubbard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L._Ron_Hubbard).
* [Christian Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Science) – founded by [Mary Baker Eddy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Baker_Eddy).
* [Reconstructionist Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconstructionist_Judaism) – founded by [Mordecai Kaplan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordecai_Kaplan).
* [Native American Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_Church) – founded by [Quanah Parker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quanah_Parker) beginning in the 1890s and incorporating in 1918.
* [Church Of Satan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Of_Satan) - founded by [Anton LaVey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_LaVey) in San Francisco, California, 1966.
* [Metropolitan Community Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_Community_Church) – founded by [Troy Perry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy_Perry) in Los Angeles, California, 1968.

**Government positions**

The First Amendment guarantees both the free practice of religion and the non-establishment of religion by the federal government (later court decisions have extended that prohibition to the states). The U.S. [Pledge of Allegiance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance) was modified in 1954 to add the phrase "under God", in order to distinguish itself from the [state atheism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_atheism) espoused by the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union).

Various [American presidents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) have often stated the importance of religion. On February 20, 1955, President [Dwight D. Eisenhower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_D._Eisenhower) stated that "Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first, the most basic, expression of Americanism." President [Gerald Ford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Ford) agreed with and repeated this statement in 1974.

**Statistics**

The U.S. Census does not ask about religion. Various groups have conducted surveys to determine approximate percentages of those affiliated with each religious group. Some surveys ask people to self-identify, while others calculate church memberships. The first table below represents the ranges that have been found.

* [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity): (59.9% to 78.4%)
* [Unaffiliated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreligion_in_the_United_States), including [atheist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist) or [agnostic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnostic) (15.0% to 37.3%)
* [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) (1.2% to 2.2%)
* [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) (0.6%)
* [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) (0.5% to 0.9%)
* [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism) (0.4%)
* [Unitarian Universalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarian_Universalism) (0.3%)|-
* [Wicca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicca)/[Paganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paganism)/[Druidry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Druidry) (0.1%)
* Other (~1%)

| Religious affiliation in the U.S. (2012)  |
| --- |
| **Affiliation** | **% of U.S. population** |
| [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) | **73** | 73 |
| Protestant | **48** | 48 |
| [Evangelical Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Protestant) | **19** | 19 |
| [Mainline Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainline_Protestant) | **15** | 15 |
| [Black church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_church) | **8** | 8 |
| [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic) | **22** | 22 |
| [Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon) | **2** | 2 |
| [Eastern Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox) | **1** | 1 |
| Other Faith | **6** | 6 |
| [Unaffiliated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreligion) | **19.6** | 19.6 |
| Nothing in particular | **13.9** | 13.9 |
| [Agnostic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnosticism) | **3.3** | 3.3 |
| [Atheist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism) | **2.4** | 2.4 |
| Don't know/refused answer | **2** | 2 |
| **Total** | **100** | 100 |

**Attendance**

Church or synagogue attendance by state. Data is unavailable for Alaska and Hawaii.

[Gallup International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallup_poll) indicates that 41.6% of American citizens report they regularly attend [religious services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Place_of_worship), compared to 15% of [French citizens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_France#Religion), 10% of [UK citizens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_Kingdom), and 7.5% of [Australian citizens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Australia).

In 2006, an online Harris Poll (they stated that the magnitude of errors cannot be estimated due to [sampling errors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sampling_error), [non-response](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-response_bias), etc.; 2,010 U.S. adults were surveyed) found that 26% of those surveyed attended religious services "every week or more often", 9% went "once or twice a month", 21% went "a few times a year", 3% went "once a year", 22% went "less than once a year", and 18% never attend religious services.

[Church attendance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_attendance) varies considerably by state and region. In a 2009 Gallup survey, 41.6% of Americans said that they attended church or synagogue once a week or almost every week. The figures ranged from 63% in [Mississippi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi) to 23% in [Vermont](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont).

| Weekly Church Attendance by State |
| --- |
| **Rank** | **State** | **Percent** |
| — | **National average** | 41.6% |
| 1 | [Mississippi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi) | 63% |
| 2 | [Alabama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama) | 58% |
| 3 | [Louisiana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana) | 56% |
| 3 | [South Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Carolina) | 56% |
| 3 | [Utah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah) | 56% |
| 6 | [Tennessee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee) | 54% |
| 7 | [Arkansas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkansas) | 53% |
| 7 | [North Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Carolina) | 53% |
| 9 | [Georgia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_%28U.S._state%29) | 51% |
| 10 | [Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas) | 50% |
| 11 | [North Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Dakota) | 49% |
| 11 | [Oklahoma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oklahoma) | 49% |
| 13 | [Kentucky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kentucky) | 48% |
| 14 | [South Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Dakota) | 47% |
| 15 | [Kansas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas) | 46% |
| 16 | [Iowa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iowa) | 45% |
| 16 | [Nebraska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebraska) | 45% |
| 18 | [Indiana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indiana) | 44% |
| 18 | [Minnesota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minnesota) | 44% |
| 18 | [Missouri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri) | 44% |
| 18 | [Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia) | 44% |
| 22 | [New Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Mexico) | 43% |
| 23 | [Illinois](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illinois) | 42% |
| 23 | [Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania) | 42% |
| 23 | [West Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Virginia) | 42% |
| 26 | [Idaho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho) | 41% |
| 26 | [Ohio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio) | 41% |
| 28 | [Florida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida) | 40% |
| 28 | [Maryland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryland) | 40% |
| 28 | [Michigan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan) | 40% |
| 28 | [Wisconsin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin) | 40% |
| 32 | [Arizona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arizona) | 39% |
| 33 | [Delaware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delaware) | 38% |
| 33 | [New Jersey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jersey) | 38% |
| 35 | [District of Columbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.) | 36% |
| 35 | [Montana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montana) | 36% |
| 37 | [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California) | 35% |
| 37 | [Colorado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado) | 35% |
| 37 | [New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York) | 35% |
| 40 | [Wyoming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyoming) | 34% |
| 41 | [Connecticut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut) | 32% |
| 41 | [Rhode Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhode_Island) | 32% |
| 41 | [Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_%28state%29) | 32% |
| 44 | [Alaska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska) | 31% |
| 44 | [Hawaii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii) | 31% |
| 44 | [Oregon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon) | 31% |
| 47 | [Nevada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevada) | 30% |
| 48 | [Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts) | 29% |
| 49 | [Maine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine) | 27% |
| 50 | [New Hampshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Hampshire) | 26% |
| 51 | [Vermont](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont) | 23% |

**Religion and politics**

Main article: [Religion and politics in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_and_politics_in_the_United_States)

See also: [Religious affiliations of Presidents of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_affiliations_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States) and [Religious affiliation in the United States Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_affiliation_in_the_United_States_Senate)

The U.S. guarantees [freedom of religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion) and some churches in the U.S. take strong stances on political subjects.

In August 2010 67% of Americans said religion is losing influence, compared with 59% who said this in 2006. Majorities of white evangelical Protestants (79%), while mainline Protestants (67%), Black Protestants (56%), Catholics (71%), and the religiously unaffiliated (62%) all agree that religion is losing influence on American life; 53% of the total public says this is a bad thing while just 10% see it as a good thing.

Politicians frequently discuss their religion when campaigning, and [Fundamentalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist_Christianity) and Black Protestants are highly politically active. However, to keep their status as tax-exempt organizations they must not officially endorse a candidate. Historically Catholics were heavily [Democrats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Democratic_Party_%28United_States%29) before the 1970s, while mainline Protestants comprised the core of the [Republican Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Republican_Party_%28United_States%29). Those patterns have faded away—Catholics, for example, now split about 50–50. However, white evangelicals since 1980 have made up a solidly Republican group that favors conservative candidates. Secular voters are increasingly Democratic.

Only three presidential candidates for major parties have been Catholics, all for the Democratic party:

* [Alfred E. Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_E._Smith) in [presidential election of 1928](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_1928) was subjected to anti-Catholic rhetoric, which seriously hurt him in the Baptist areas of the South and Lutheran areas of the Midwest, but he did well in the Catholic urban strongholds of the Northeast.
* [John F. Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) secured the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960. In the [1960 election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_1960), Kennedy faced accusations that as a Roman Catholic President he would do as the Pope would tell him to do, a charge that Kennedy refuted in a famous address to Protestant ministers.
* [John Kerry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Kerry) won the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004. In the [2004 election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_2004) religion was hardly an issue, and most Catholics voted for his Protestant opponent.

[Joe Biden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Biden) is the first Catholic vice president.

The only Jewish major party candidate was [Joe Lieberman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Lieberman) in the [Gore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Gore)-Lieberman [campaign of 2000](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_2000) (although [John Kerry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Kerry) and [Barry Goldwater](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barry_Goldwater) both had Jewish ancestry).

In 2006 [Keith Ellison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Ellison_%28politician%29) of Minnesota became the first Muslim elected to Congress; when [re-enacting his swearing-in for photos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an_oath_controversy_of_the_110th_United_States_Congress), he used the copy of the [Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) once owned by Thomas Jefferson.

A Gallup Poll released in 2007 indicated that 53% of Americans would refuse to vote for an [atheist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist) as president, up from 48% in 1987 and 1999.

The 2012 Republican presidential nominee [Mitt Romney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitt_Romney) is [Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon) and a member of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints). He is the former governor of the state of [Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts) and his father [George Romney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Romney) was the governor of the state of [Michigan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan). The Romneys were involved in Mormonism in their states and in the state of [Utah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah).

**Membership reported by congregations**

**Christian bodies**

The table below is based mainly on data reported by individual denominations to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches,* and published in 2011 by the National Council of Churches of Christ in USA. It only includes religious bodies reporting 60,000 or more members. The definition of a member is determined by each religious body.

| **Religious body** | **Year reported** | **Places of worship reported** | **Membership (thousands)** | **Number of ministers** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [African Methodist Episcopal Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Methodist_Episcopal_Church) | 1999 | 0-sm=n | 2,500 | 7,741 |
| [African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Methodist_Episcopal_Zion_Church) | 2002 | 3,226 | 1,431 | 3,252 |
| [American Baptist Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Baptist_Association) | 1998 | 1,760 | 275 | 1,740 |
| [American Baptist Churches USA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Baptist_Churches_USA) | 1998 | 3,800 | 1,507 | 4,145 |
| [Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochian_Orthodox_Christian_Archdiocese_of_North_America) | 1998 | 220 | 65 | 263 |
| [Armenian Apostolic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Apostolic_Church) | 1998 | 28 | 200 | 25 |
| [Assemblies of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblies_of_God) | 2009 | 12,371 | 2,914 | 34,504 |
| [Baptist Bible Fellowship International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist_Bible_Fellowship_International) | 1997 | 4,500 | 1,200 | - |
| [Baptist General Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist_General_Conference) | 1998 | 876 | 141 | - |
| [Baptist Missionary Association of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist_Missionary_Association_of_America) | 1999 | 1,334 | 235 | 1,525 |
| [Christian and Missionary Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_and_Missionary_Alliance), The | 1998 | 1,964 | 346 | 1,629 |
| Christian Brethren ([Plymouth Brethren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Brethren)) | 1997 | 1,150 | 100 | - |
| [Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Church_%28Disciples_of_Christ%29) | 1997 | 3,818 | 879 | 3,419 |
| [Christian churches and churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_churches_and_churches_of_Christ) | 1998 | 5,579 | 1,072 | 5,525 |
| Christian Congregation, Inc., The | 1998 | 1,438 | 117 | 1,436 |
| [Christian Methodist Episcopal Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Methodist_Episcopal_Church) | 1983 | 2,340 | 719 | - |
| [Christian Reformed Church in North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Reformed_Church_in_North_America) | 1998 | 733 | 199 | 655 |
| [Church of God in Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_God_in_Christ) | 1991 | 15,300 | 5,500 | 28,988 |
| [Church of God of Prophecy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_God_of_Prophecy) | 1997 | 1,908 | 77 | 2,000 |
| [Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_God_%28Anderson%29) | 1998 | 2,353 | 234 | 3034 |
| [Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_God_%28Cleveland%2C_Tennessee%29) | 1995 | 6,060 | 753 | 3,121 |
| [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (Mormons) | 2006 | 13,010 | 5,779 | 39,030 |
| [Church of the Brethren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Brethren) | 1997 | 1,095 | 141 | 827 |
| [Church of the Nazarene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Nazarene) | 1998 | 5,101 | 627 | 4,598 |
| [Churches of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ) | 1999 | 15,000 | 1,500 | 14,500 |
| [Conservative Baptist Association of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Baptist_Association_of_America) | 1998 | 1,200 | 200 | - |
| [Community of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_Christ) | 1998 | 1,236 | 140 | 19,319 |
| [Coptic Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_Orthodox_Church_of_Alexandria) | 2003 | 200 | 1,000 | 200 |
| [Cumberland Presbyterian Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumberland_Presbyterian_Church) | 1998 | 774 | 87 | 634 |
| [Episcopal Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America) | 1996 | 7,390 | 2,365 | 8,131 |
| [Evangelical Covenant Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Covenant_Church), The | 1998 | 628 | 97 | 607 |
| [Evangelical Free Church of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Free_Church_of_America), The | 1995 | 1,224 | 243 | 1,936 |
| [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_in_America) | 1998 | 10,862 | 5,178 | 9,646 |
| [Evangelical Presbyterian Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Presbyterian_Church_%28United_States%29) | 1998 | 187 | 61 | 262 |
| [Free Methodist Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Methodist_Church) of North America | 1998 | 990 | 73 | - |
| Full Gospel Fellowship | 1999 | 896 | 275 | 2,070 |
| [General Association of General Baptists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Association_of_General_Baptists) | 1997 | 790 | 72 | 1,085 |
| [General Association of Regular Baptist Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Association_of_Regular_Baptist_Churches) | 1998 | 1,415 | 102 | - |
| [U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Conference_of_Mennonite_Brethren_Churches) | 1996 | 368 | 82 | 590 |
| Grace Gospel Fellowship | 1992 | 128 | 60 | 160 |
| [Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Orthodox_Archdiocese_of_America) | 1998 | 523 | 1,955 | 596 |
| [Independent Fundamental Churches of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Fundamental_Churches_of_America) | 1999 | 659 | 62 | - |
| [International Church of the Foursquare Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Church_of_the_Foursquare_Gospel) | 1998 | 1,851 | 238 | 4,900 |
| [International Council of Community Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Council_of_Community_Churches) | 1998 | 150 | 250 | 182 |
| [International Pentecostal Holiness Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Pentecostal_Holiness_Church) | 1998 | 1,716 | 177 | 1,507 |
| [Jehovah's Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses) | 2011 | 13,309 | 1,200 | - |
| [Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran_Church_-_Missouri_Synod), The | 1998 | 6,218 | 2,594 | 5,227 |
| [Mennonite Church USA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mennonite_Church_USA) | 2005 | 943 | 114 | - |
| [National Association of Congregational Christian Churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Congregational_Christian_Churches) | 1998 | 416 | 67 | 534 |
| [National Association of Free Will Baptists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Free_Will_Baptists) | 1998 | 2,297 | 210 | 2,800 |
| [National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Baptist_Convention_of_America%2C_Inc.) | 1987 | 2,500 | 3,500 | 8,000 |
| [National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Baptist_Convention%2C_USA%2C_Inc.) | 1992 | 33,000 | 8,200 | 32,832 |
| [National Missionary Baptist Convention of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Missionary_Baptist_Convention_of_America) | 1992 | - | 2,500 | - |
| [Old Order Amish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Order_Amish) Church | 1993 | 898 | 81 | 3,592 |
| [Orthodox Church in America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church_in_America) | 1998 | 625 | 28 | 700 |
| [Pentecostal Assemblies of the World](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal_Assemblies_of_the_World), Inc. | 1998 | 1,750 | 1,500 | 4,500 |
| [Pentecostal Church of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal_Church_of_God) | 1998 | 1,237 | 104 | - |
| [Presbyterian Church in America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_in_America) | 1997 | 1,340 | 280 | 1,642 |
| [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_%28U.S.A.%29) | 1998 | 11,260 | 3,575 | 9,390 |
| [Progressive National Baptist Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_National_Baptist_Convention), Inc. | 1995 | 2,000 | 2,500 | - |
| [Reformed Church in America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Church_in_America) | 1998 | 902 | 296 | 915 |
| [Religious Society of Friends](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Society_of_Friends) (Conservative) | 1994 | 1,200 | 104 | - |
| [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) | 2002 | 19,484 | 66,404 | - |
| [Romanian Orthodox Episcopate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church_in_America_Romanian_Episcopate) | 1996 | 37 | 65 | 37 |
| [Salvation Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Salvation_Army), The | 1998 | 1,388 | 471 | 2,920 |
| [Serbian Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Orthodox_Church) | 1986 | 68 | 67 | 60 |
| [Seventh-day Adventist Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_Church) | 1998 | 4,405 | 840 | 2,454 |
| [Southern Baptist Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention) | 1998 | 40,870 | 16,500 | 71,520 |
| [United Church of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Church_of_Christ) | 1998 | 6,017 | 1,421 | 4,317 |
| [United Methodist Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Methodist_Church), The | 1998 | 36,170 | 8,400 | - |
| [Wesleyan Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesleyan_Church), The | 1998 | 1,590 | 120 | 1,806 |
| [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin_Evangelical_Lutheran_Synod) | 1997 | 1,240 | 411 | 1,222 |

**ARDA survey**

The [Association of Religion Data Archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Religion_Data_Archives) (ARDA) surveyed congregations for their memberships. Churches were asked for their membership numbers. Adjustments were made for those congregations that did not respond and for religious groups that reported only adult membership. ARDA estimates that most of the churches not responding were black Protestant congregations. Significant difference in results from other databases include the lower representation of adherents of 1> all kinds (62.7%), 2>Christians (59.9%) 3>Protestants (less than 36%); and the greater number of unaffiliated (37.3%).

Plurality of religious preference by state, 2001. Data is unavailable for [Alaska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska) and [Hawaii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii).

Percentage of religion against average, 2001.

Percentage of state populations that identify with a religion rather than "no religion", 2001.

| Religious groups |
| --- |
| **Religious group** | **numberin year2010** | **% inyear2010** |
| Total US pop year 2000 | 308,745,538 | 100.0% |
| Evangelical Protestant | 50,013,107 | 16.2% |
| Mainline Protestant | 22,568,258 | 7.3% |
| Black Protestant | 4,877,067 | 1.6% |
| Protestant total | 66,086,173 | 21.4% |
| Catholic | 58,934,906 | 19.1% |
| Orthodox | 1,056,535 | 0.3% |
| adherents (unadjusted) | 150,596,792 | 48.8% |
| unclaimed | 158,148,746 | 51.2% |
| other - including Mormon & Christ Scientist | 13,146,919 | 4.3% |
| The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon, LDS) | 6,144,582 | 2.0% |
| other - excluding Mormon | 7,002,337 | 2.3% |
| Jewish estimate | 6,141,325 | 2.0% |
| Buddhist estimate | 2,000,000 | 0.7% |
| Muslim estimate | 2,600,082 | 0.8% |
| Hindu estimate | 400,000 | 0.4% |
| Source: [ARDA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Religion_Data_Archives)  |

**ARIS findings regarding self-identification**

The United States government does not collect religious data in its census. The survey below, the [American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Religious_Identification_Survey_%28ARIS%29) 2008, was a random digit-dialed telephone [survey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistical_survey) of 54,461 American residential households in the [contiguous United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contiguous_United_States). The 1990 sample size was 113,723; 2001 sample size was 50,281.

Adult respondents were asked the [open-ended question](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-ended_question), "What is your religion, if any?" Interviewers did not prompt or offer a suggested list of potential answers. The religion of the spouse or partner was also asked. If the initial answer was "Protestant" or "Christian" further questions were asked to probe which particular denomination. About one third of the sample was asked more detailed demographic questions.

**Religious Self-Identification of the U.S. Adult Population: 1990, 2001, 2008**
Figures are not adjusted for refusals to reply; investigators suspect refusals are possibly more representative of "no religion" than any other group.

| **Group** | **1990adultsx 1,000** | **2001adultsx 1,000** | **2008adultsx 1,000** | **NumericalChange1990–2008as %of 1990** | **1990% ofadults** | **2001% ofadults** | **2008% ofadults** | **changein % oftotaladults1990–2008** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Adult population, total | 175,440 | 207,983 | 228,182 | 30.1% |  |  |  |  |
| Adult population, Responded | 171,409 | 196,683 | 216,367 | 26.2% | 97.7% | 94.6% | 94.8% | −2.9% |
| **Total Christian** | **151,225** | **159,514** | **173,402** | **14.7%** | **86.2%** | **76.7%** | **76.0%** | **−10.2%** |
| **Catholic** | 46,004 | 50,873 | 57,199 | 24.3% | 26.2% | 24.5% | 25.1% | −1.2% |
| **non-Catholic Christian** | 105,221 | 108,641 | 116,203 | 10.4% | 60.0% | 52.2% | 50.9% | −9.0% |
| **Baptist** | 33,964 | 33,820 | 36,148 | 6.4% | 19.4% | 16.3% | 15.8% | −3.5% |
| **Mainline Christian** | 32,784 | 35,788 | 29,375 | −10.4% | 18.7% | 17.2% | 12.9% | −5.8% |
| *Methodist* | 14,174 | 14,039 | 11,366 | −19.8% | 8.1% | 6.8% | 5.0% | −3.1% |
| *Lutheran* | 9,110 | 9,580 | 8,674 | −4.8% | 5.2% | 4.6% | 3.8% | −1.4% |
| *Presbyterian* | 4,985 | 5,596 | 4,723 | −5.3% | 2.8% | 2.7% | 2.1% | −0.8% |
| *Episcopal/Anglican* | 3,043 | 3,451 | 2,405 | −21.0% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 1.1% | −0.7% |
| *United Church of Christ* | 438 | 1,378 | 736 | 68.0% | 0.2% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| **Christian Generic** | 25,980 | 22,546 | 32,441 | 24.9% | 14.8% | 10.8% | 14.2% | −0.6% |
| *Christian Unspecified* | 8,073 | 14,190 | 16,384 | 102.9% | 4.6% | 6.8% | 7.2% | 2.6% |
| *Non-denominational Christian* | 194 | 2,489 | 8,032 | 4040.2% | 0.1% | 1.2% | 3.5% | 3.4% |
| *Protestant – Unspecified* | 17,214 | 4,647 | 5,187 | −69.9% | 9.8% | 2.2% | 2.3% | −7.5% |
| *Evangelical/Born Again* | 546 | 1,088 | 2,154 | 294.5% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.9% | 0.6% |
| **Pentecostal/Charismatic** | 5,647 | 7,831 | 7,948 | 40.7% | 3.2% | 3.8% | 3.5% | 0.3% |
| *Pentecostal – Unspecified* | 3,116 | 4,407 | 5,416 | 73.8% | 1.8% | 2.1% | 2.4% | 0.6% |
| *Assemblies of God* | 617 | 1,105 | 810 | 31.3% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.0% |
| *Church of God* | 590 | 943 | 663 | 12.4% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.0% |
| **Other Protestant Denominations** | 4,630 | 5,949 | 7,131 | 54.0% | 2.6% | 2.9% | 3.1% | 0.5% |
| *Churches of Christ* | 1,769 | 2,593 | 1,921 | 8.6% | 1.0% | 1.2% | 0.8% | −0.2% |
| *Jehovah's Witness* | 1,381 | 1,331 | 1,914 | 38.6% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.1% |
| *Seventh-Day Adventist* | 668 | 724 | 938 | 40.4% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.0% |
| **Mormon/Latter Day Saints** | 2,487 | 2,697 | 3,158 | 27.0% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| **Total non-Christian religions** | **5,853** | **7,740** | **8,796** | **50.3%** | **3.3%** | **3.7%** | **3.9%** | **0.5%** |
| **Jewish** | 3,137 | 2,837 | 2,680 | −14.6% | 1.8% | 1.4% | 1.2% | −0.6% |
| **Eastern Religions** | 687 | 2,020 | 1,961 | 185.4% | 0.4% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.5% |
| *Buddhist* | 404 | 1,082 | 1,189 | 194.3% | 0.2% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.3% |
| **Muslim** | 527 | 1,104 | 1,349 | 156.0% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.3% |
| **New Religious Movements & Others** | 1,296 | 1,770 | 2,804 | 116.4% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 0.5% |
| **None/ No religion, total** | **14,331** | **29,481** | **34,169** | **138.4%** | **8.2%** | **14.2%** | **15.0%** | **6.8%** |
| *Agnostic+Atheist* | 1,186 | 1,893 | 3,606 | 204.0% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 1.6% | 0.9% |
| **Did Not Know/ Refused to reply** | **4,031** | **11,300** | **11,815** | **193.1%** | **2.3%** | **5.4%** | **5.2%** | **2.9%** |
| **Source: ARIS 2008** |

**Highlights:**

1. The ARIS 2008 survey was carried out during February–November 2008 and collected answers from 54,461 respondents who were questioned in English or Spanish.
2. The American population self-identifies as predominantly Christian but Americans are slowly becoming less Christian.
	* 86% of American adults identified as Christians in 1990 and 76% in 2008.
	* The historic Mainline churches and denominations have experienced the steepest declines while the non-denominational Christian identity has been trending upward particularly since 2001.
	* The challenge to Christianity in the U.S. does not come from other religions but rather from a rejection of all forms of organized religion.
3. 34% of American adults considered themselves "Born Again or Evangelical Christians" in 2008.
4. The U. S. population continues to show signs of becoming less religious, with one out of every seven Americans failing to indicate a religious identity in 2008.
	* The "Nones" (no stated religious preference, atheist, or agnostic) continue to grow, though at a much slower pace than in the 1990s, from 8.2% in 1990, to 14.1% in 2001, to 15.0% in 2008.
	* Asian Americans are substantially more likely to indicate no religious identity than other racial or ethnic groups.
5. One sign of the lack of attachment of Americans to religion is that 27% do not expect a religious funeral at their death.
6. Based on their stated beliefs rather than their religious identification in 2008, 70% of Americans believe in a personal God, roughly 12% of Americans are atheist (no God) or agnostic (unknowable or unsure), and another 12% are deistic (a higher power but no personal God).
7. America's religious geography has been transformed since 1990. Religious switching along with Hispanic immigration has significantly changed the religious profile of some states and regions. Between 1990 and 2008, the Catholic population proportion of the New England states fell from 50% to 36% and in New York it fell from 44% to 37%, while it rose in California from 29% to 37% and in Texas from 23% to 32%.
8. Overall the 1990–2008 ARIS time series shows that changes in religious self-identification in the first decade of the 21st century have been moderate in comparison to the 1990s, which was a period of significant shifts in the religious composition of the United States.

**Ethnicity**

The table below shows the religious affiliations among the [ethnicities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic) in the United States, according to the [Pew Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pew_Forum) 2007 survey. People of [Black](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American) ethnicity were most likely to be part of a formal religion, with 85% percent being Christians. Protestant denominations make up the majority of the Christians in the ethnicities.

| **Religion** | **White** | **Black** | **Asian** | **Other/mixed** | **Latino** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Christian** | **78%** | **85%** | **45%** | **69%** | **84%** |
| Protestant | 53% | 78% | 27% | 51% | 23% |
| Catholic | 22% | 5% | 17% | 14% | 58% |
| Mormon | 2% | <0.5% | 1% | 2% | 1% |
| Jehovah's Witness | <0.5% | 1% | <0.5% | 1% | 1% |
| Orthodox | 1% | <0.5% | <0.5% | 1% | <0.5% |
| Other | <0.5% | <0.5% | <0.5% | 1% | <0.5% |
| **Other religions** | 5% | 2% | 30% | 9% | 2% |
| Jewish | 2% | <0.5% | <0.5% | 1% | <0.5% |
| Muslim | <0.5% | 1% | 4% | 1% | <0.5% |
| Buddhist | 1% | <0.5% | 9% | 1% | <0.5% |
| Hindu | <0.5% | <0.5% | 14% | 1% | <0.5% |
| Other world religions | <0.5% | <0.5% | 2% | <0.5% | <0.5% |
| Other faiths | 1% | <0.5% | 1% | 5% | <0.5% |
| **Unaffiliated** (including atheist and agnostic) | 16% | 12% | 23% | 20% | 14% |

**See also**

* [Freedom of religion in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_the_United_States)
* [Historical religious demographics of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_religious_demographics_of_the_United_States)
* [List of religious movements that began in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_movements_that_began_in_the_United_States)
* [Religion in United States prisons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_United_States_prisons)
* [Separation of church and state in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state_in_the_United_States)

**External links**

* [Association of Religion Data Archives](http://www.thearda.com)
* [2008 ARIS Survey](http://www.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org/)
* [CNN Article on 2008 Pew Results](http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/wayoflife/02/25/religion.survey.ap/index.html?iref=mpstoryview), 2/25/2008
* [Religious Affiliation Underestimated in U.S., Study Shows](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/11/AR2006091100459.html)
* [Map Gallery of Religion in the United States](http://www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/religion.html)
* <http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html#religions>
* U.S. Census [links](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/religion.htm) and [Statistical Abstract - ARIS Data - PDF & XLS (Excel)](http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population/religion.html)
* [USA - Population statistics by religion](http://lermanet.com/cisar/usa/040101.htm)
* [Is America Too \*\*\* Religious?](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7422542)—from [NPR](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPR).
* [None of the above: the growth of the "non-religious"](http://ibcsr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=120:none-of-the-above-the-non-religious-in-america&catid=25:research-news&Itemid=59) - from IBCSR.
* [Religious, not spiritual](http://ibcsr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123:religious-not-spiritual&catid=25:research-news&Itemid=59) article on religiosity vs. spirituality in America.
* Charles Reagan Wilson, ["Overview: Religion and the U.S. South"](http://southernspaces.org/2004/overview-religion-and-us-south), *Southern Spaces*, March 16, 2004.
* [USA Today Interactive Tables - Shifting Religious Identities](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2009-03-09-ARIS-faith-survey_N.htm) and [Topography of faith](http://www.usatoday.com/news/graphics/pew-religion-08/flash.htm)
* [How many people go regularly to weekly religious services?](http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_rate.htm) - From Religious Tolerance website.
* [The American Religious Landscape and Political Attitudes: A Baseline for 2004.](http://connectakron.uakron.edu/bliss/research/archives/2004/Religious_Landscape_2004.pdf)
* [Material History of American Religion](http://www.materialreligion.org/)

This page was last modified on 19 February 2013 at 23:48.