Comparing Religious Practices of Worldwide Muslims and American Christians

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

In a prior blog post, we looked at how Muslims in the Eastern Hemisphere reported their adherence to the five pillars of Islamic religious practice. We saw that the percentage who reported faithfully applying four of the five pillars was low, especially given the importance of these pillars in enhancing one's chance of entering paradise.

In this post, let us consider some basic practices that someone who is concerned about following the teaching of any religion should follow.

Once again, for Muslims we are using a 2012 Pew Research Center survey of Muslims involving more than 30,000 face-to-face interviews in 26 countries across North Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In looking at the data, we will consider age and geographic regions of North Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe, the 'Stans (e.g. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), and South Asia.

For this comparison of faiths and regions, we selected the following questions used in the Pew survey:

1. *How important is religion in your life? Very important*
2. *On average, how often do you attend the mosque for Salah and Jum'ah Prayer? Once a month or more*
3. *Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray? Once a day or more*
4. *How often do you read or listen to the Qur'an? At least once a week*
5. *Do you give zakat, that is, give a set percentage of your*

wealth to charity or the mosque? Yes
6. How much does the way you live your life reflect the Hadith and Sunna, that is, the sayings and actions of the Prophet? A lot {1}

For someone serious about practicing their faith, this list should be critical to understanding and applying one's faith and also fairly easy to apply. The results from the survey are as follows:

Serious About Basic Religious Practice					
Age	North Africa	Middle East	Eastern Europe	The 'Stans	South Asia
18 – 29	9%	14%	3%	1%	19%
30 plus	15%	20%	6%	2%	27%

The most obvious result is that the percentages are very low. Across all the respondents, only 12% of them practice these six activities. So, the vast majority of Muslims are at best nominal practitioners of a religious life. We also see a significant difference between geographic regions. In Eastern Europe and the 'Stans, we see that virtually no one is committed to these six practices. Those surveyed in South Asia, i.e. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, are most likely to be serious about these basic religious practices, where one in four report following all six of the practices above.

We also see a difference based on age in all geographic regions. Across all five geographic regions, those who are 30 years old and beyond report levels of religious practice from 40% to over 100% greater than for those 18 to 29 years old.

For a similar look at Christians in the United States, we are using the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) from 2012. From that study, we utilize a similar set of questions to define a basic religious practice:

1. How important is religion or religious faith to you personally? Extremely important
2. How often do you attend worship services, not including weddings or funerals? At least twice a month
3. How often have you typically prayed, not including before meals and at religious services? At least once a day
4. How often have you typically read the Bible in the past 12 months? At least once a week
5. During the year 2011, what was the total dollar value of all donation made to your local congregation? Age 30+ value > $999, Age 20 – 29 value > $399
6. I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs.

As you can see, these questions are very similar to those asked in the Pew survey of Muslims. The results from this survey are as follows:

Serious About Basic Religious Practice			
Age	Evangelical	All Christian	
20 – 29	7.3%	4.8%	
30 plus	16.7%	10.1%	

These results are very close to the results for Muslims—somewhat less than North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, and somewhat more than the 'Stans. Similar to the results for the Muslims, emerging adults are significantly less likely than those over 30 to be serious about their religious practice. Nine out of ten Christians in America are not serious enough about their walk with God to practice the basics needed for an active Christian life.

It is safe to say that most American Christians and Muslims in the Eastern hemisphere are identified with a religion which they don't really understand and don't spend the time and effort necessary to gain understanding and live according to

its principles.

Note

1. The next possible answer was “a little” which seems way too weak to reflect a serious practice of Islam.

Acknowledgement: The World’s Muslims Data Set, 2012, Pew Research Center – Religion & Public Life. The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by James Bell, Director of International Survey Research, Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Acknowledgement: Emerson, Michael O., and David Sikkink. Portraits of American Life Study, 2nd Wave, 2012. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com.

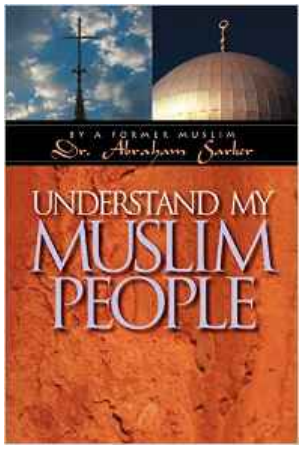
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Basic Religious Practices of Worldwide Muslims

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

Between October 2011 and November 2012, Pew Research Center conducted a major survey of Muslims involving more than 30,000 face-to-face interviews in 26 countries across North Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Since Probe has been evaluating similar surveys about the beliefs and practices of Christians and other faiths in America, we wanted to analyze

the data in this large survey to see how the beliefs and practices of Muslims in the eastern hemisphere relate to Christians in America. We also wanted to see how Muslim beliefs and practices varied across different regions. To do this, we divided the data into five geographic regions: North Africa, Middle East, Europe, the 'Stans (e.g. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), and South Asia.



To evaluate the religious practices of Muslims, a reasonable place to start would be the Five Pillars of Islam. "Muslims hope that by completing these duties of Islam, Allah will favor them and grant them entrance into heaven."{1} In other words, performing these duties are necessary but not sufficient to gain the reward of eternal life in heaven. These five pillars are:

1. *Declaring "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet."*
2. *Praying five times each day in Arabic quoting from the Qur'an*
3. *Fasting during daylight hours of the month of Ramadan*
4. *Giving 2.5% of their income for the poor and for the cause of Islam*
5. *Completing the hajj, a ritual pilgrimage to Mecca*

Because the hajj is a once in a lifetime event and according to the survey data is most likely to occur after the age of 60 (if at all), only the first four pillars are considered in our analysis. The results divided into age groups and regions of the world are as follows:

% Practicing Four of the Pillars of Islam					
Age	North Africa	Middle East	Eastern Europe	The 'Stans	South Asia

18 – 29	49%	41%	10%	11%	49%
30 plus	58%	57%	16%	17%	60%

As shown, the geographical groups vary significantly. The composite of all those surveyed is 40% of the respondents claim to practice these four pillars. While not miniscule, this does indicate that the vast majority of those who claim to be Muslim are not seriously attempting to gain favor with Allah by adhering to these four key pillars of the faith.

One startling thing we note from this table is that the Eastern European (e.g. Russia, Bosnia, Turkey) Muslims and those from the ‘Stans do not practice the four pillars to the same degree as other areas surveyed. In those areas, less than 1 in 7 practice the four pillars, while in the other areas it is more than half of the people. In general, Eastern European Muslims and those in the ‘Stans do not practice the four pillars, much less the five pillars, of Islam. Given this, one may argue that the Islam practiced in these parts of the world is not Islam at all, but rather another religion with a historical name, Islam, which may at some point in the past been the dominant religion.

The second fact that stands out in the table is the difference in practice versus age. From our earlier blog post on religious beliefs, the results showed very little difference between those ages 18 – 29 and the rest of the respondents, but this is not the case for religious practice. In Eastern Europe and the ‘Stans those over the age of 30 are more than 50% more likely to practice the four pillars than are those aged 18 to 29. In the other areas of North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, the older adults are 18% to 37% more likely to practice the key pillars of Islam. In fact, if we compare those ages 18 to 29 with those 60 and older these ratios grow to more than 150% and 31% to 50% respectively.

It appears that the younger adults are not as committed to carrying out these practices as their elders. We can only

speculate on whether this difference will diminish as they get older. This difference may in fact shrink over time because, as noted earlier, there is virtually no difference in the percent of young adults and the percent of older adults who profess a Muslim worldview.

The results found for this aspect of religious practice are generally consistent with those reported for religious beliefs (i.e., a Muslim worldview). We find the majority of those who claim to be Muslim to NOT hold a Muslim worldview and do not practice the five pillars of Islam. In our next post, we will compare Muslim religious practice with Christian religious practice in the United States.

Note

1. Dr. Abraham Sarkar, *Understand My Muslim People*, page 169, Barclay Press, 2004.

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Basic Religious Beliefs of

Worldwide Muslims

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

Between October 2011 and November 2012, Pew Research Center conducted a major survey of Muslims involving more than 30,000 face-to-face interviews in 26 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The survey asked people to describe their religious beliefs and practices, and sought to gauge respondents' knowledge of and attitudes toward other faiths, as well as some of their attitudes concerning cultural issues.

Since Probe has been commissioning and evaluating similar surveys about the beliefs and practices of Christians and other faiths in America, we wanted to analyze the data in this large survey to see how the beliefs of Muslims in the eastern hemisphere relate to Christians in America. We also wanted to see how Muslim beliefs varied across different regions. To do this, we divided the data into five geographic regions: North Africa, Middle East, Europe, the 'Stans (e.g. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), and South Asia.

If you have read *Cultural Captives* or been following my blog posts, you know that one of the metrics we have been following is the percentage of Americans with a Christian worldview. One survey we analyzed recently is the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) 2012. That survey shows that American Christians holding a biblical worldview were 33% of 18- to 29-year-old self-professed evangelicals,{1} and 46% of those over 30. When we consider all professing Christians (i.e. evangelical, mainline and Catholic), we find 20% of 18- to 29-year-olds and 32% of those over 30 hold a biblical worldview. For the PALS, the definition used for a biblical worldview is:

1. *I definitely believe in God*
2. *Jesus is the Son of God and physically rose from the dead*
3. *The Bible is fully inspired by God*

4. Heaven exists where people live with God forever
5. There is a Hell where people experience pain as punishment for their sin
6. The Devil, demons, or evil spirits exist
7. What is morally right or wrong should be determined by God's law

For Muslims, using questions asked in the Pew survey, we defined a Qur'anic worldview to include the following responses:

1. I believe in one God, Allah, and his prophet Muhammad
2. I know a great deal about the Muslim religion and its practices
3. In Heaven, people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded
4. In Hell, people who have led bad lives and die without being sorry are eternally punished
5. I believe in angels and in jinns (spirit beings similar to demons)
6. I believe Islam is the one, true faith leading to eternal life in heaven

The results of the survey showing those Muslims who agreed to all the above points are as shown in the table below.

	North Africa	Middle East	Europe	The 'Stans	South Asia
18 – 29	33.2%	24.1%	12.3%	4.0%	28.2%
30 plus	35.3%	30.4%	11.8%	4.8%	27.5%

What do we see in this data? First, the vast majority of Muslims living in the Eastern Hemisphere do not hold to a strong Qur'anic worldview. North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia all show about one third with a Qur'anic worldview. These numbers are much like those for a Christian worldview in the U.S. In Europe and the 'Stans, we see only about one in

ten and one in twenty, respectively, hold a strong Qur'anic worldview. One might speculate that the European downturn is due to the general decline in religious interest in Europe, and the low percentage in the 'Stans is due to a lack of teaching in their heart language.{2}

In understanding these low responses, one should consider that on the whole, only about 40% of Muslims claim to know a great deal about their religion and its practices. This lack of knowledge is probably a major factor in why only about 20% of them hold a strong Qur'anic worldview. This view is consistent with my personal experience in South Asia where I found that most of the people in a Muslim
country were born into their faith culture and had never considered in any depth what it really meant.

One other interesting note is that in all areas other than the Middle East, the percentage of those aged 18 to 29 with a strong Qur'anic worldview is almost identical to those over 30 years of age. In contrast, among Christians in America, only one in five of those aged 18 to 29 have a biblical worldview while one in three of those age 30 and over have a biblical worldview.

It should also be noted that among Muslims, over three out of four of them believe that Islam is the one true faith leading to eternal life. But among American Christians, only one out of five believe Jesus is the only way to receive eternal life. Even though a minority of Muslims claim to know what their religion teaches, the vast majority believe that what it teaches is the only way to eternal life. Even though they believe it is the only way, only about one in five believe that members of their religion "have a duty to try and convert others to their religious faith."

I imagine that many Americans think that Muslims hold to a common set of beliefs throughout the world. As we have seen from this survey, that is not the case. The majority of

Muslims do not understand the basic tenets of Islam as taught in the Qur'an. Surprisingly, most of them admit it, saying that they do not know a great deal about the Muslim religion. Next week, we will look at their religious practices which tend to be more consistent than their religious beliefs.

Notes

1. Evangelicals include those associated with an evangelical denomination including historically Black Protestant churches.

2. Please note that this is only speculation on my part; there is no information in the Pew survey to enlighten us on this question.

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Biblical Worldview Beliefs from PALS Survey of 2012: No Rebound Seen

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

In my previous blog post, we looked at the *Faith Matters* survey taken in 2011 to see if the trend was continuing toward fewer people holding a biblical worldview. In this post, we ask a similar question looking at the *Portraits in American Life Survey* (PALS) taken in 2012{1}. The PALS is an extensive, national-level panel study focused on religion in the U.S., with a particular focus on capturing ethnic and racial diversity. In this survey of over 1400 people across America, a set of questions was asked which
are very similar to the biblical worldview questions asked in the Probe and Barna surveys.

The questions used to establish a basic biblical worldview are as follows:

1. I definitely believe in God
2. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and physically rose from the dead
3. The bible was fully inspired by God
4. I believe in Heaven where people live with God forever
5. I believe there is a Hell where people experience pain as punishment for their sin
6. The devil, demons or evil spirits exist
7. Moral right or wrong should be determined by God's law

Let's begin by looking at how many have a biblical worldview; i.e., agreeing with all the statements above. The results look like this (where Evan/BP stands for Evangelical or Historically Black Protestant):

Biblical Worldview					
Evan/BP		Not Evan/BP		All	
20-29	30+	20-29	30+	20-29	30+
32.5%	46.2%	5.4%	11.4%	14.7%	22.9%

Note that the youngest respondents in this survey are 20 years old rather than 18 as in the other surveys. As you can see, about one in three evangelical or black Protestant believers under the age of 30 profess to holding a biblical worldview and only about one in 20 of those who do not affiliate with an evangelical or black Protestant denomination. These results are very similar to those reported in my book, *Cultural Captives*, one area of focus was the number of people possessing a biblical worldview. The worldview questions formulated by the Barna Group were used in the *Probe Ministries Culturally Captive Christian* survey of 2010. For the other surveys used in the book, I selected a similar set of questions to define a biblical worldview for each survey. Looking across those surveys, we saw that about one in three evangelical emerging adults and about one in ten non-evangelical emerging adults held a biblical worldview.

In this post, we want to look at a newer survey to see what light it sheds on the worldviews of Americans. The survey is called *Faith Matters 2011*{1}, conducted on behalf of Harvard University and the University of Notre Dame. They surveyed over 2,600 people, asking them about their religion (beliefs, belonging and behavior) and their social and political engagement. The questions we used to define a biblical worldview were on: 1) belief in God, 2) belief in life after death, 3) the path to salvation, 4) inspiration of the Bible, 5) existence of hell, and 6) how one determines what is right or wrong in a particular situation.

Let’s begin by looking at how many have a biblical worldview on all of the questions above except for the question about the correct path to salvation. The results look like this

(where Evan/BP stands for Evangelical or Historically Black Protestant):

Biblical Worldview w/o Salvation Question					
Evan/BP		Not Evan/BP		All	
18-29	30+	18-29	30+	18-29	30+
50.0%	54.8%	15.1%	21.8%	25.6%	32.7%

So we see that about half of those with an Evangelical or Historically Black church affiliation take a stand on these questions consistent with biblical teaching. And, about a quarter of all emerging adults (those 18-29) take a biblical view.

Now let’s see what happens when we add the question about the path to salvation.

Biblical Worldview w/ Salvation by Faith Alone					
Evan/BP		Not Evan/BP		All	
18-29	30+	18-29	30+	18-29	30+
5.1%	2.7%	1.4%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%

Wow, we observe a massive reduction among the Evan/BP group from 50% down to around 5%. The question that caused this reduction was worded as follows: “Some people believe that the path to salvation comes through our actions or deeds and others believe that the path to salvation lies in our beliefs or faith. Which comes closer to your views?” The vast majority of evangelicals responding to this survey were unwilling to say that salvation is by faith alone even though the Bible clearly states this is the case (see for example Ephesians 2:8-9).

Interestingly enough, many of the respondents volunteered another answer, saying that salvation comes through a mixture

of faith and actions. If we allow this answer as well as the faith alone answer, the results for a biblical worldview look like this:

Biblical Worldview w/ Salvation by Faith & Actions					
Evan/BP		Not Evan/BP		All	
18-29	30+	18-29	30+	18-29	30+
40.9%	46.6%	9.7%	13.5%	13.3%	24.4%

Note that in all of the cases, there is only a small difference between emerging adults and those 30 years old and older. It appears that evangelicals across the board are unwilling to fully accept the position that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and no set of good works is going to change that.

However, the reason may not be that evangelicals feel that they need to do some good works to become acceptable for heaven. It may be instead that they want to leave room for a pluralistic view that surmises that others, not really knowing of Jesus' sacrifice, may be able to enter heaven because of their righteous activities on this earth. Supporting this possibility, the *Faith Matters* survey shows that about 80% of evangelicals believe that there are more ways to heaven other than faith in Jesus Christ.

In the Probe survey of 2010, we asked a similar question worded as follows: "Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement: if a person is generally good enough, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven." We found that around half of emerging adults disagreed strongly with this statement. This result correlates very well with the result from *Faith Matters* when we allow the answer "salvation comes through a mixture of faith and actions." If you think about it, someone who answered that salvation comes through faith and actions could

also be a person who would disagree strongly with the Probe survey statement. So perhaps the Probe survey was overestimating the number of people who correctly believed that salvation
came through faith alone.

Note

1. Data downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected on behalf of Harvard University and the University of Notre Dame, principal investigators: Robert Putnam, Thomas Sander, and David E. Campbell.

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An Update on Pluralism in America

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

In my book, *Cultural Captives,* I talk about the state of pluralistic beliefs among American young adults. Pluralism is the belief that there are multiple ways by which one can obtain eternal life, e.g. Christianity and Islam both provide valid paths to eternal life. Looking across multiple surveys taken from 2005 through 2010, I found that approximately 90% of young adults who were not evangelical ascribed to pluralistic beliefs. Among those young adults who were evangelical (or born again depending upon the survey), the percentage dropped to about 70%. So, in the first decade of this century, the vast majority of young American adults believed that there are multiple ways to reach heaven.

Has that position changed over the last six years? To answer this question, I analyzed data from two newer surveys: the *Portraits of American Life Survey 2012*{1} and the *Faith Matters Survey 2011*{2}. In the PALS survey, if a person disagreed strongly with the following two statements, we categorized them as not pluralistic:

> *1. It doesn't much matter what I believe so long as I am a good person.*
>
> *2. The founder of Islam, Muhammad, was the holy prophet of God.*

In the *Faith Matters* survey, if a person agreed strongly with the following statement, we categorized them as not pluralistic:

> *1. One religion is true and others are not.*

Using these survey questions, we found the following:

For 18- to 29-year-olds, emerging adults who were not evangelical, we found that 93% were pluralistic according to the PALS and 91% were pluralistic according to the Faith Matters survey. For those who are evangelical, the numbers were 76% and 77% respectively. These numbers are slightly higher than the numbers I reported in 2010. But, the number were
already so high in 2010, these new numbers just continue a trend. The PALS survey indicates that for those thirty and over the number of evangelicals who are pluralists drops to 64%, which is still a disturbing majority of those who are called to evangelize their fellow citizens.

The apostle Peter told the Jewish Sanhedrin under the threat of imprisonment or death, "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in **no one else**, for there

is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12)

God chose to send His Son to die for our sins because there was no other way to provide forgiveness for our sins. Many Americans claiming to be evangelical Christians do not seem to appreciate that the great sacrifice God made for us is not one of many ways to reconciliation. As Jesus told us, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one** comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Notes

1. Data downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected on behalf of Emerson, Michael O., and David Sikkink. Portraits of American Life Study, 2nd Wave, 2012.
2. Data downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected on behalf of Harvard University and the University of Notre Dame, principal investigators: Robert Putnam, Thomas Sander, and David E. Campbell.

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Changing Hispanic Demographics and Religious Affiliation

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

Hispanics will have a larger and larger influence on the religious makeup of America in the years ahead. Since 1980,

the Hispanic percentage of the population has grown from about 6% to over 17%. The Census Bureau is predicting that percentage will grow to over 28% by 2060.

Perhaps most people assume that the Hispanic population from the 1980's through to today and beyond would be primarily Catholic. We took a look at the General Social Surveys from 1976 through 2014 to see what the actual situation is. Not surprisingly, in 1976 approximately 80% of Hispanics in American self-identified as Catholics. But the 1980's saw a downward trend in this number, so that through the 1990's up until 2006, approximately 68% of Hispanics identified as Catholics. From 2006 to 2014, this percentage has dropped significantly, down to about 55%.

At the same time, the percentage of Hispanics identifying as "nones,"(i.e., having no religious affiliation) has grown from about 6% in the 1990's to 16% in 2014 (and to a high of 22% for emerging adult, Hispanics). It is interesting to note that the percentage of "nones" among Hispanics trails that found among whites by over ten percentage points in the GSS data.

A majority of Hispanics still identify at Catholics. How closely are they associated with their local Catholic church through regular attendance? Among emerging adult Hispanics affiliated with a Catholic church, about two out of three state that they only attend church once a month or less. So, the vast majority are not frequent attenders, but are still more likely to attend than their white counterparts. Among emerging adult whites affiliated with a Catholic church, about four out of five state that they attend church once a month or less.

Although Hispanics are most likely to be Catholic today, if current trends continue, in the next decade this will no longer be the case as more and more become "nones," evangelicals, and mainline Protestants.

Acknowlegements:
The General Social Surveys data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by Tom W. Smith and the National Opinion Research Center.

The Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study interactive tool, located at http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/ was the source of the Pew survey data

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Hispanic Religious Affiliation in 2014

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

Since 1980, America's Hispanic population has grown from 14.5 million to over 55 million individuals, an increase of over 275%. More importantly, as a percentage of our total population, from 1980 to 2014 Hispanics have grown from 6.5% to 17.4%. Although the U.S. Census Bureau predicts some moderation in this rate of growth, they are still expecting them to grow to over 28% of the population by 2060.

Most people would suspect that the vast majority of our Hispanic population affiliate with the Catholic faith. Is this so? Let's look at data from 2014 surveys by the General Social Survey and the Pew Research Center to see what we can learn. Looking at adults 30 and over, the GSS results show 60% of Hispanics in America indicate an association with a Catholic church, and the Pew Survey results show 51%. The difference in these numbers is larger than one would expect and is probably due to a difference in the way the two surveys identify

Hispanics. In any case, both numbers are probably lower than what most people would guess.

For the same over-30 group, we find that between 15 to 20% of them indicate an Evangelical connection barely exceeding the 15% in both surveys who identified as a “none”, i.e. one having no religious affiliation.

The median age of Hispanics is America is much lower than that of other ethnicities. Many Hispanics in America are emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 29. How do their beliefs stack up? The GSS data shows that about 45% of Hispanic emerging adults indicate a Catholic affiliation, while the Pew survey show only 35%. Both surveys show that significantly less than half of emerging adult Hispanics are Catholic. So have they become mainline, evangelical, “nones” or some Eastern religion?

Both surveys show a significant increase in the percentage of Hispanic “nones” for emerging adults compared to those over 30. The GSS survey shows an increase from 15% to 22% while the Pew data shows an increase from 15% to 31%. As with other ethnic groups, Hispanic emerging adults are much more likely to select a religious affiliation of “none” than are older adults. According to extensive data in the Pew Research survey, among emerging adults, the 31% of Hispanics who identify as “nones” are coming very close to surpassing the 35% who identify as Catholic.

Many assume that Hispanics are a monolithic block of Catholics, but the survey data shows than in a very few years the number of emerging adult Hispanics who consider themselves to be “nones” will eclipse the number who identify with Catholicism.

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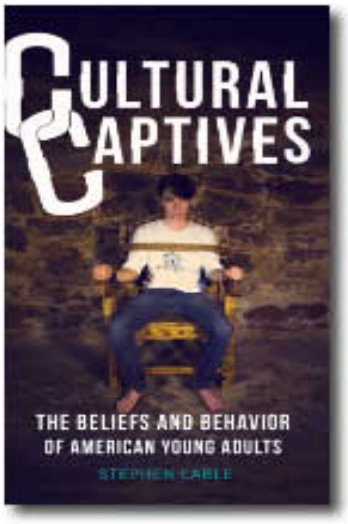
The Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study interactive tool, located at http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/ was the source of the Pew survey data

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"Nones" are Not Christians Who Choose Not to Identify with a Specific Tradition

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

In our first post, we discussed the distressing rise of **"nones,"** those who select for their affiliation no religion at all, among our emerging adults (18- to 29-year-olds). As of 2014, over 35% of emerging adults classify as **"nones."** Some distinguished scholars have suggested that a large percentage of **"nones"** are actually Christians who just have an aversion to identifying with a particular religious tradition.



This position seems somewhat odd since the GSS survey, for example, has only four choices that reflect a Christian tradition□Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Christian. None of those four are very specific as to one's religious beliefs.

But we have another way to see if these **“nones”** are either actually involved, practicing Christians, or are truly wanting to distinguish their beliefs from those of Christianity. Using the GSS survey taken in 2014, we can probe this question to find answers. First, how many of the **“nones”** in this survey say they actually attend a church at least once a month? The answer is less than 7% of them.

Second, how many of these **“nones”** say they believe in a God, believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and believe that there is life after death? The answer is about 12% of them.

Third, how many of these **“nones”** attend a church and have the three beliefs listed above. The answer is about 1%, or 1 out of every one hundred young adults not identifying as practicing Christians.

These three answers make it very clear that the increase in **“nones”** among emerging adults is not a result of them avoiding association with a particular religion. It is clear that the vast majority of **“nones”** are disassociating themselves from organized religion and from basic Christian doctrine as well.

Note: What about the **“nones”** who select “nothing at all” as their religious preference as opposed to those who claim they are atheists or agnostics? Perhaps, these “nothing at alls” simply do not want to identify with a specific Christian tradition. Well, the 2014 Pew survey indicates that two-thirds of the **“nones”** fall into this “nothing at all” category. So, if all of the positive answers to the three questions above were given by “nothing at alls,” their percentages would be 10%, 18% and 2% respectively.

So, again it is very clear that the vast majority of “nothing at alls” have broken away from organized religion and mere Christian doctrine. Most are not, as some scholars suggest, young believers keeping their identity options open.

Acknowlegements:
The Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study interactive tool, located at http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/ is the source of our data from the 2014 Pew survey.

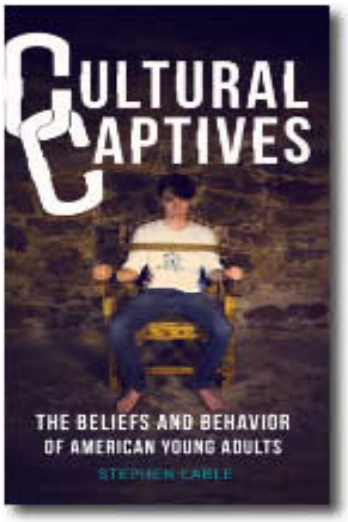
General Social Survey 2014 conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by Tom W. Smith of the NORC.

Born-again Protestants Make Up Only 20% of Our Emerging Adult Population and That Number is Trending Down

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

As reported earlier, more than 43% of American emerging adults (ages 18-25) do not identify themselves as being part of the Christian faith. But, that means we still have a majority of emerging adults selecting a Christian faith as part of their identity. How many of that majority are born-again evangelicals, and how has that changed over the years?

In my book, *Cultural Captives*, I reported that the percentage of emerging adults who identified themselves as born-again Protestants had only dropped a small amount from 1976 to 2008, from 28% to 25% of the population. However, the same survey organizations report that the number in 2014 has dropped to 20%. If this sudden drop is a precursor to the rest of this decade, we could see the number drop down to 15% by 2020.



In any case, we find that 20% of emerging adults are born-again Protestants while 43% of them are **"nones"** or of other faiths.

Looking at Protestants who do not consider themselves to be born-again, we find an even more dismal situation. Among emerging adults, they have dropped from around 25% of the population in 1990, down to around 14% of the population in 2014. But they have only dropped one percentage point since 2008 and appear to have leveled off. So perhaps, they will comprise around 12% of the emerging adult population in 2020.

We appear to be heading down a path where over half of emerging adults will be non-Christians and less that one-fourth will identify as Protestants. We are experiencing a major change in the religious make-up of our country.