



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 26, 2022

New Survey Reflects the Rise (and Fall?) of Post-religious America

The 2006 documentary film *Jesus Camp* chronicled the events at an evangelical children's ministry camp in, ironically, Devil's Lake, North Dakota. Portrayed was hope and fear, both induced by the same idea. That is, the evangelical camp organizers and a left-wing talk show host featured in [the film](#) all agreed on one thing: that the Christian movement in question was poised to transform the nation by raising up "right-wing" foot soldiers for Jesus. In reality, though, the hopes and fears were unfounded, as America's secularization was already quite obvious in 2006 — and was continuing apace.



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And now a new study, *Deseret News*' recently released Faith in America Survey (FAS), reveals how far along this phenomenon is. Conducted by the Marist Poll, it "sheds light on the state of faith in America, and how Americans of different backgrounds do or do not incorporate religion and faith into key aspects of their lives," informs *Deseret News*. The site [continues](#):

With the demographic characteristics of the American population shifting as baby boomers enter retirement, the state of religion is reaching a tipping point. Religious service attendance has continued to trend downward over the past decade, despite over half of Americans saying they believe in God as described in the Bible or pray daily. Age is shown to be one of the strongest indicators of whether or not one attends religious services. With younger age groups less likely to attend religious services than their older counterparts, the downward trend of religious attendance is likely to continue.

As the demographic face of religion within America changes, so does the role religion plays in society. All generations of Americans believe it is necessary to follow the Golden Rule; however, younger generations are less likely than their older counterparts to believe that being religious is necessary in order to live a moral life. Americans find themselves looking to family more often than religious teachings when looking for sources of moral guidance.

The connection between faith and politics is also at an interesting crossroads. Although a majority of Americans do not feel as though their religion plays a role in their political affiliation, one's political stance can be a strong indicator of the role they feel religion does and should play in society. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe the future of the nation lies in God's hands rather than in the American people's control, and Republicans are also more likely to see divine inspiration as having a hand in the creation of the Constitution and key Amendments.



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Most Americans may not “feel” their faith influences their political affiliation. But the reality is that “First Things” — a person’s personal philosophy or theology, his “world view” — absolutely influence secondary matters such as politics.

This is why church attendance is one of the greatest predictors of voting patterns, with people attending regular services breaking Republican and those who never do leaning Democrat. So while Andrew Breitbart noted that “Politics is downstream from culture,” there’s a deeper truth: Politics and culture are downstream from personal philosophy.

Given the above, and that younger people are far more apt to vote Democrat than older ones, another FAS finding is unsurprising. “Americans ‘60 or older (43 percent) are more likely than their younger counterparts to attend religious services at least weekly,” [related](#) The Week Wednesday. “By contrast, just ‘21 percent of those 18-29, 25 percent of those 30-44, and 27 percent of those 45-59 attend religious services at least weekly.’”

Quite interesting here is that while The Week calls today’s America “post-religious,” it points out that this “doesn’t mean atheist.” As with “other recent research, the new study found that majorities continue to express religious beliefs even while they disengage from organized worship and formal institutions,” the site continues. “Fifty-four percent continue to express belief in God ‘as described in the Bible.’ And a further 29 percent profess to believe in a non-Biblical God or some other higher power. The large cohort of professed believers is roughly consistent with the 71 percent of Americans who describe themselves as ‘spiritual,’ whether or not they embrace any traditional theology.”

This may seem comforting to some, but should it? It is common to hear people say today, often with an air of justification or even pride, “I’m not religious — I’m spiritual.” But you know who else isn’t an atheist and is spiritual?

Satan.

If you’re not a believer, consider this a thought exercise. But the Devil not only believes in God, he *knows* God exists. What’s more, Satan is literally “spiritual”: he’s *only* spirit (incorporeal), having no physical form.

The point is this: Saying “I’m spiritual” is as meaningful as saying “I’m political” or “I’m ideological.” As with millions of other people, Senator Barry Goldwater was political and ideological. But so were Adolf Hitler and Pol Pot. These are statements of kind or category — not *quality*.

The Week related something else interesting, writing, it’s “clear that the religious landscape continues to fragment as Americans pursue more personalized forms of expression and association.” The term “fragment” echoes how I’ve long noted that we’re not just *divided* (with the implication of separation into two opposed parts), but *fractured*. There is a reason for this.

An analogy: In what situation would you expect to find more uniformity in diet, one in which people recognized there were things known as the “rules of human nutrition”?

Or one in which they fancied diet was solely a matter of taste?

While rules can be hard to follow and are sometimes broken, awareness of their existence gives people a uniform guide pointing them all in the same direction, one prescribing common behavior *where conformity is desirable*.

If people fell victim to what could be called “culinary relativism/nihilism,” however, all they’d have left as a menu guide is *taste*. And, of course, what people would then put in their mouths would be as varied



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as taste itself — especially, and this is important, if making a direct association between ingesting toxins and this behavior’s negative consequences (e.g., dying from eating poison) was somehow difficult.

It’s no different in the spiritual/moral realm, except that making that direct association between imbibing spiritual swill and this behavior’s consequences *is* more difficult. This no doubt is one reason moral-relativism/nihilism has swept our civilization. And that it has and has reduced people to personal governance based on feelings, helps explain our fractured state. Feelings change with the wind, after all — and with the people. Why, some could even begin to *feel* they’re the opposite sex and, disconnected from the objective (Truth), could fancy their feelings facts.

As for solutions, if there’s a war on Objective Reality, it follows that we must robustly rally to Objective Reality’s side: Talk and act as if Truth exists (because it does). Also know that while modern culture is seductive, it’s not a given that children will be initiated into the spirit of the age. Just consider the aforementioned *Jesus Camp* documentary. It appears that [three of the four kids](#) profiled therein still, as adults now, retain their faith. So whatever one thinks of their theology, it goes to show that the post-Christian West’s siren of sin can be eluded — if parents raise their children, as opposed to letting the culture do so.



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