RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND RISING RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION IN THE U.S.

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Faith Angle Forum, Washington D.C.
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PART I

The Growth of Non-Religion
Accelerating growth of the unaffiliated, 1972-2016

Percent of the U.S. Population

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2018
More young adults are unaffiliated than in the past

Percent of each age group who are religiously unaffiliated, 1986-2016

More young people are religiously unaffiliated

Percent Unaffiliated by Age

Americans raised without a religion more likely to remain unaffiliated than in the past

Percent of American adults who were raised unaffiliated and are still unaffiliated as adults

Source: General Social Survey, 1973-2018
Reasons for leaving religion

Would you say any of the following were important reasons why you no longer identify with your childhood religion?

- You stopped believing in the religion's teachings: 60% important, 38% not important, 12% don't know/refused.
- Your family was never that religious growing up: 32% important, 66% not important, 12% don't know/refused.
- Negative religious teachings about or treatment of gay and lesbian people: 29% important, 70% not important, 12% don't know/refused.
- The clergy sexual-abuse scandal: 19% important, 79% not important, 12% don't know/refused.
- A traumatic event in your life: 18% important, 81% not important, 12% don't know/refused.
- Your church or congregation became too focused on politics: 16% important, 82% not important, 12% don't know/refused.

Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.
How old were you when you no longer identified with your childhood religion?

Among those raised in a religious household but currently unaffiliated

- Under age 18: 62
- Between 18 and 29: 28
- Between 30 and 49: 5
- Age 50 or older: 2
- Don’t know/Refused: 3

Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.
Most young adults disaffiliate during childhood

Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.
Americans raised by divorced parents attend religious services less often as adults

Currently attend religious services...

- Weekly or more
- Monthly or yearly
- Seldom or never
- Don't know/Refused

Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.
Americans raised in religiously-mixed households participate less in religious activities in childhood

Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.
Greater religious diversity is associated with lower levels of religious commitment

Source: Gallup 2016 and PRRI American Values 2016
Americans with diverse religious networks attend religious services less often

Percent who attend religious services...

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Once or twice a month
- A few times a year
- Seldom
- Never

Low Religious Diversity
- 13
- 25
- 10
- 18
- 19
- 13

High Religious Diversity
- 8
- 10
- 7
- 13
- 28
- 35

Secular Couples Are Now More Common

Percent of religiously unaffiliated who have...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Unaffiliated Spouse</th>
<th>Religious Spouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART II

GROWING RELIGIOUS DIVIDE BETWEEN LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES
Religious Realignment among Liberals

Growing Secularization Gap between Liberals and Conservatives
Percent who identify as religiously unaffiliated

Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018


Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018
Political Ideology and Religious Identity Are Becoming More Closely Aligned

Percent who identify as religiously unaffiliated

*Combined 1988, 1989, and 1990
Declining Membership in Religious Congregations

Percent who report that they are members of a church or religious congregation

Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018
Confidence in Institutional Religion Plummets among Liberals

Percent who report "complete" or "a great deal of" confidence in churches and religious organizations

Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018
Secular Homogamy More Common among Liberals

Percent of nonreligious Americans who have nonreligious partners and spouses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Have nonreligious spouse or partner</th>
<th>Have religious spouse/partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center, 2014 Religious Landscape Survey
Liberal Parents Less Likely to Raise their Children in Religion

Percent of parents who ever do the following with their children

- **Pray or read Scripture together**
  - Liberal parent: 50%
  - Conservative parent: 76%

- **Send to Sunday school or religious education program**
  - Liberal parent: 42%
  - Conservative parent: 68%

- **Do volunteer work**
  - Liberal parent: 45%
  - Conservative parent: 49%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2014 Religious Landscape Survey
PART III

The Changing Cultural & Religious Context
Young adults reimagining what it means to be American

Percent who say the following are important to be "truly American"

Source: PRRI/RNS June 2015 Survey
More Americans say belief in God is not necessary to be moral

Percent who think it is...

Source: Pew Research Center, 2017
Few young adults say a belief in God is necessary to be moral

Percent who think it is...

- Necessary to believe in God to be moral
- Not necessary to believe in God to be moral

Source: Pew Research Center, 2017
Young adults are more likely to know an atheist than an evangelical Christian

Source: Pew Research Center, 2017
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