

Chapter 1:

The Religious Composition of the United States

The Landscape Survey details the great diversity of religious affiliation in the U.S. at the beginning of the 21st century. The adult population can be usefully grouped into more than a dozen major religious traditions that, in turn, can be divided into hundreds of distinct religious groups. Overall, nearly eight-in-ten (78.4%) adults report belonging to various forms of Christianity, about 5% belong to other faiths and almost one-in-six (16.1%) are not affiliated with any particular religion.

Members of Protestant churches now constitute only a slim majority (51.3%) of the overall adult population. But Protestantism in the U.S. is not homogeneous; rather, it is divided into three distinct traditions – evangelical Protestant churches (26.3% of the overall adult population and roughly one-half of all Protestants); mainline Protestant churches (18.1% of the adult population and more than one-third of all Protestants); and historically black Protestant churches (6.9% of the overall adult population and slightly less than one-seventh of all Protestants). Protestantism is also comprised of numerous denominational families (e.g., Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal) that fit into one or more of the traditions.

Catholics account for nearly one-quarter (23.9%) of the adult population and roughly three-in-ten American Christians. Other Christian traditions are much smaller. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other Mormon groups account for 1.7% of the adult population, while Jehovah’s Witnesses and members of Orthodox churches each account for slightly less than 1% (0.7% and 0.6%, respectively). A variety of other Christian churches account for an additional 0.3% of the adult population.

Major Religious Traditions in the U.S.

	Among all adults %
Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
<i>Evangelical churches</i>	26.3
<i>Mainline churches</i>	18.1
<i>Hist. black churches</i>	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah’s Witness	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Buddhist	0.7
Muslim*	0.6
Hindu	0.4
Other World Religions	<0.3
Other Faiths	1.2
Unaffiliated	16.1
Don’t know/Refused	0.8
	100

* From “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” Pew Research Center, 2007

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

Other major faith traditions in the U.S. include Jews (1.7% of the adult population), Buddhists (0.7%), Muslims (0.6%), Hindus (0.4%) and members of other world religions, including Baha'is, Zoroastrians and others (which together account for less than 0.3% of the population). Members of a variety of other faiths, including Unitarians, New Age groups and Native American religions, combine to make up an additional 1.2% of the population.

Finally, individuals who are not affiliated with any particular religion make up about one-sixth (16.1%) of the adult population. They thus comprise the fourth largest "religious" tradition in the United States, nearly approximating the number of members of mainline Protestant churches.

The following table summarizes the religious affiliation of U.S. adults and provides a sense of the remarkable diversity that characterizes the U.S. religious landscape.

Religious Composition of the U.S.

	% of U.S. Adult Population		% of U.S. Adult Population		% of U.S. Adult Population
Evangelical Protestant Churches	26.3	Mainline Protestant Churches	18.1	Jehovah's Witness	0.7
Baptist in the Evangelical Tradition	10.8	Baptist in the Mainline Tradition	1.9	Orthodox	0.6
Southern Baptist Convention	6.7	American Baptist Churches in USA	1.2	Greek Orthodox	<0.3
Independent Baptist in the Evangelical Tradition	2.5	Other Baptist denomination in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Russian Orthodox	<0.3
Baptist Missionary Association	<0.3	Baptist in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	0.6	Other Orthodox church	<0.3
Free Will Baptist	<0.3	Methodist in the Mainline Tradition	5.4	Orthodox, not further specified	<0.3
General Association of Regular Baptists	<0.3	United Methodist Church	5.1		
Other Baptist denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Other Methodist denomination in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Other Christian	0.3
Baptist in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	0.9	Methodist in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	0.4	Metaphysical	<0.3
Methodist in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Nondenominational in the Mainline Tradition	0.9	Spiritualist	<0.3
Nondenominational in the Evangelical Tradition	3.4	Interdenominational in the Mainline Tradition	0.3	Unity; Unity Church; Christ Church Unity	<0.3
Nondenominational evangelical	1.2	Other nondenominational group in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Other Metaphysical	<0.3
Nondenominational charismatic	0.5	Nondenominational in the Mainline Trad., not further specified	0.6	Other	<0.3
Nondenominational fundamentalist	0.3	Lutheran in the Mainline Tradition	2.8		
Nondenominational Christian	<0.3	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	2.0	Jewish	1.7
Interdenominational in the Evangelical Tradition	0.5	Other Lutheran denomination in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Reform	0.7
Community Church in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Lutheran in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	0.8	Conservative	0.5
Other nondenominational group in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Presbyterian in the Mainline Tradition	1.9	Orthodox	<0.3
Nondenominational in the Evang. Trad., not further specified	0.8	Presbyterian Church USA	1.1	Other Jewish groups	<0.3
Lutheran in the Evangelical Tradition	1.8	Other Presbyterian denomination in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Jewish, not further specified	<0.3
Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod	1.4	Presbyterian in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	0.7		
Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Synod	<0.3	Anglican/Episcopal in the Mainline Tradition	1.4	Buddhist	0.7
Other Lutheran denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Episcopal Church in the USA	1.0	Theravada (Vipassana) Buddhism	<0.3
Lutheran in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Anglican Church (Church of England)	0.3	Mahayana (Zen) Buddhism	<0.3
Presbyterian in the Evangelical Tradition	0.8	Other Anglican/Episcopal denomination in the Mainline Trad.	<0.3	Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism	<0.3
Presbyterian Church in America	0.4	Anglican/Episcopal in the Mainline Trad., not further specified	<0.3	Other Buddhist groups	<0.3
Other Presbyterian denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Restorationist in the Mainline Tradition	0.4	Buddhist, not further specified	0.3
Presbyterian in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Disciples of Christ	0.3		
Pentecostal in the Evangelical Tradition	3.4	Restorationist in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Muslim*	0.6
Assemblies of God	1.4	Congregationalist in the Mainline Tradition	0.7	Sunni	0.3
Church of God Cleveland Tennessee	0.4	United Church of Christ	0.5	Shia	<0.3
Four Square Gospel	<0.3	Congregationalist in the Mainline Trad., not further specified	<0.3	Other Muslim groups	<0.3
Pentecostal Church of God	<0.3	Reformed in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Muslim, not further specified	<0.3
Pentecostal Holiness Church	<0.3	Reformed Church in America	<0.3		
Nondenominational, Independent Pentecostal	<0.3	Other Reformed denomination in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Hindu	0.4
Church of God of the Apostolic Faith	<0.3	Reformed in the Mainline Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Vaishnava Hinduism	<0.3
Apostolic Pentecostal in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Anabaptist in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Shaivite Hinduism	<0.3
Other Pentecostal denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Friends in the Mainline Tradition	<0.3	Other Hindu groups	<0.3
Pentecostal in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	0.7	Other/Protestant nonspecific in the Mainline Tradition	2.5	Hindu, not further specified	<0.3
Anglican/Episcopal in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3			Other World Religions	<0.3
Restorationist in the Evangelical Tradition	1.7	Historically Black Churches	6.9	Other Faiths	1.2
Church of Christ	1.5	Baptist in the Historically Black Tradition	4.4	Unitarians and other liberal faiths	0.7
Christian Churches and Churches of Christ	<0.3	National Baptist Convention	1.8	Unitarian (Universalist)	0.3
Restorationist in the Evangelical Trad., not further specified	<0.3	Progressive Baptist Convention	0.3	Liberal faith	<0.3
Congregationalist in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Independent Baptist in the Historically Black Tradition	0.5	Spiritual but not religious	<0.3
Conservative Congregational Christian	<0.3	Missionary Baptist	<0.3	Eclectic, "a bit of everything," own beliefs	<0.3
Other Congregationalist denomination in the Evangelical Trad.	<0.3	Other Baptist denomination in the Historically Black Tradition	<0.3	Other liberal faith groups	<0.3
Congregationalist in the Evangelical Trad., not further specified	<0.3	Baptist in the Historically Black Tradition, not further specified	1.7	New Age	0.4
Holiness in the Evangelical Tradition	1.0	Methodist in the Historically Black Tradition	0.6	Wica (Wiccan)	<0.3
Church of the Nazarene	0.3	African Methodist Episcopal	0.4	Pagan	<0.3
Free Methodist Church	0.3	African Methodist Episcopal Zion	<0.3	Other New Age groups	<0.3
Wesleyan Church	<0.3	Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	<0.3	Native American Religions	<0.3
Christian and Missionary Alliance	<0.3	Other Methodist denomination in the Historically Black Trad.	<0.3		
Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)	<0.3	Methodist in the Historically Black Trad., not further specified	<0.3	Unaffiliated	16.1
Other Holiness denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Nondenominational in the Historically Black Tradition	<0.3	Atheist	1.6
Holiness in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Pentecostal in the Historically Black Tradition	0.9	Agnostic	2.4
Reformed in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Church of God in Christ	0.6	Nothing in particular	12.1
Christian Reformed Church	<0.3	Apostolic Pentecostal in the Historically Black Tradition	<0.3		
Other Reformed denomination in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	United Pentecostal Church International	<0.3	Don't Know	0.8
Reformed in the Evangelical Tradition, not further specified	<0.3	Other Pentecostal denomination in the Historically Black Trad.	<0.3		
Adventist in the Evangelical Tradition	0.5	Pentecostal in the Historically Black Trad., not further specified	<0.3		
Seventh-Day Adventist	0.4	Holiness in the Historically Black Tradition	<0.3		
Other Adventist group in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Protestant nonspecific in the Historically Black Tradition	0.5		
Anabaptist in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3				
Pietist in the Evangelical Tradition	<0.3	Catholic	23.9		
Other Evangelical/Fundamentalist	0.3	Mormon	1.7		
Protestant nonspecific in the Evangelical Tradition	1.9	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	1.6		
		Community of Christ	<0.3		
		Mormon, not further specified	<0.3		

* From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007

American Protestantism: Diverse, Fragmented and Declining in Number

Protestants account for roughly half (51.3%) of the adult population and nearly two-in-three (65%) Christians in the United States. But American Protestantism is very diverse. It encompasses more than a dozen major denominational families, such as Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans and Pentecostals, all with unique beliefs, practices and histories. These denominational families, in turn, are composed of a host of different denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Churches in the USA and the National Baptist Convention.

Because of its great diversity, American Protestantism is best understood not as a single religious tradition but rather as three distinct traditions – evangelical Protestant churches, mainline Protestant churches and historically black Protestant churches. Each of these traditions is made up of numerous denominations and congregations that share similar beliefs, practices and histories.

For instance, churches within the evangelical Protestant tradition share certain religious beliefs (such as the conviction that personal acceptance of Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation), practices (such as an emphasis on bringing other people to the faith) and origins (including separatist movements against established religious institutions). In contrast, churches in the mainline Protestant tradition share other doctrines (such as a less exclusionary view of salvation), practices (such as a strong emphasis on social reform) and origins (such as long-established religious institutions). Meanwhile, churches in the historically black Protestant tradition have been uniquely shaped by the experiences of slavery and segregation, which put their religious beliefs and practices in a special context.

The Protestant denominational families include denominations that are associated with different Protestant traditions. For instance, some Baptist denominations (such as the Southern Baptist Convention) are part of the evangelical tradition; some (such as the American Baptist Churches in the USA) are part of the mainline tradition; and still others (such as the National Baptist Convention) are part of the historically black

The Terminology of Affiliation

Denominations

The term “denomination” refers to a set of congregations that belong to a single administrative structure characterized by particular doctrines and practices. Examples of denominations include the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Churches in the USA and the National Baptist Convention.

Families

A denominational family is a set of religious denominations and related congregations with a common historical origin. Examples of families include Baptist, Methodist and Lutheran. Most denominational families consist of denominations that are associated with more than one of the three Protestant traditions. The Baptist family, for instance, consists of some denominations that fall into the evangelical tradition, others that belong to the mainline tradition and still others that are part of the historically black church tradition.

Traditions

A religious tradition is a set of denominations and congregations with similar beliefs, practices and origins. In this report, Protestant denominations are grouped into three traditions: evangelical churches, mainline churches and historically black churches.

Protestant tradition. Not all families, however, are represented in all three traditions. (For more details, see the “Religious Composition of the U.S.” table on page 12.)

Despite the detailed denominational measures used in the Landscape Survey, many respondents (roughly one-third of all Protestants) were either unable or unwilling to describe their specific denominational affiliation. Some respondents, for instance, describe themselves as “just a Baptist” or “just a Methodist.” In this report, Protestant respondents with this type of vague denominational affiliation were sorted into one of the three traditions in two ways.

First, blacks who gave vague denominational affiliations (e.g., “just a Methodist”) but who said they were members of Protestant families with a sizeable number of historically black churches were coded as members of the historically black church tradition. Black respondents in families without a sizeable number of churches in the historically black tradition were coded as members of the evangelical or mainline traditions depending on their response to a separate question asking whether they would describe themselves as a “born-again or evangelical Christian.”

Second, non-black respondents who gave vague denominational affiliations and who described themselves as a “born-again or evangelical Christian” were coded as members of the evangelical tradition; otherwise, they were coded as members of the mainline tradition. (For more details on the analytical processes used to sort respondents with vague denominational affiliations into Protestant traditions, see Appendix 2.)

The Composition of American Protestantism

The largest of the Protestant families in the U.S. is the Baptist family, which accounts for one-third of all Protestants and close to one-fifth (17.2%) of the overall adult population. Baptists are concentrated within the evangelical tradition, making up a plurality (41%) of this tradition. Baptists also account for nearly two-thirds (64%) of members of historically black churches. However, they constitute a much smaller share (10%) of mainline Protestantism.

The largest Baptist denomination, and the largest Protestant denomination overall, is the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention accounts for more than a quarter (26%) of the membership in evangelical Protestant churches and nearly 7% of the overall adult population. The National Baptist Convention is the largest of the historically black Baptist denominations, while the American Baptist Churches in the USA is the largest mainline Baptist denomination. (For details, see the “Religious Composition of the U.S.” table on page 12.)

Methodists represent the second largest Protestant family, accounting for more than one-in-ten of all Protestants (12.1%) and 6.2% of the overall adult population. Methodists are particularly well represented within mainline Protestantism, accounting for nearly one-third (30%) of all members of mainline churches, as well as within the historically black church tradition, where they account for nearly one-in-ten (9%) of all members. Most Methodists within mainline Protestantism are members of the United Methodist Church, while most Methodists in the historically black church

The Composition of American Protestantism

	Total Population	All Protestants	Evangelical Protestant Churches	Mainline Protestant Churches	Historically Black Protestant Churches
	%	%	%	%	%
Baptist	17.2	33.5	41	10	64
Methodist	6.2	12.1	1	30	9
Lutheran	4.6	9.0	7	16	0
Nondenominational	4.5	8.9	13	5	3
Pentecostal	4.4	8.5	13	0	14
Presbyterian	2.7	5.2	3	10	0
Restorationist	2.1	4.0	6	2	0
Anglican/Episcopal	1.5	3.0	<0.5	8	0
Holiness	1.2	2.2	4	0	2
Congregationalist	0.8	1.5	<0.5	4	0
Adventist	0.5	0.9	2	0	0
Reformed	0.3	0.5	1	1	0
Anabaptist	<0.3	0.4	1	<0.5	0
Pietist	<0.3	<0.3	<0.5	0	0
Friends/Quakers	<0.3	<0.3	0	1	0
Other Evangelical/Fundamentalist	0.3	0.5	1	0	0
Protestant nonspecific	4.9	9.5	7	14	8
	51.3% PROTESTANT	100	100	100	100

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100.

tradition are affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. Methodists represent a very small share (1%) of the evangelical Protestant tradition.

Nearly 5% of the adult population consists of Protestants who attend nondenominational churches, that is, churches that are not affiliated with any specific denomination. Members of these churches are particularly well represented within the evangelical tradition; 13% of all members of evangelical churches belong to nondenominational congregations. By contrast, only 5% of the members of mainline churches and 3% of the members of historically black churches belong to nondenominational congregations.

Like nondenominational Protestants, the Lutheran and Pentecostal¹ families each account for slightly less than 5% of the overall adult population (4.6% and 4.4%, respectively). Lutherans are

¹ For more detailed information about American Pentecostals, see "Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals," Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2006.

Ten Largest Protestant Denominations

	Percent of Total Population	Percent of Total Protestants
	%	%
Southern Baptist Convention (Evangelical Tradition)	6.7	13.1
United Methodist Church (Mainline Tradition)	5.1	9.9
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Mainline Tradition)	2.0	3.8
National Baptist Convention (Historically Black Tradition)	1.8	3.5
Church of Christ (Evangelical Tradition)	1.5	3.0
Assemblies of God (Evangelical Tradition)	1.4	2.8
Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (Evangelical Tradition)	1.4	2.7
American Baptist Churches in the USA (Mainline Tradition)	1.2	2.4
Presbyterian Church USA (Mainline Tradition)	1.1	2.2
Episcopal Church in the USA (Mainline Tradition)	1.0	2.0
Total	23.2	45.3

Note: The Protestant tradition to which each denomination belongs is indicated in parentheses.

highly represented within mainline Protestantism and less so within evangelicalism. More than one-in-ten members of evangelical churches and historically black churches are affiliated with the Pentecostal family (13% and 14%, respectively).

The Presbyterian family is the next most numerous Protestant denominational family (2.7% of the overall adult population), followed by the Restorationist family (2.1% of the adult population). The Anglican/Episcopal and Holiness families each account for slightly more than 1% of the adult population. Episcopalians and Anglicans account for nearly 10% of the mainline Protestant tradition, while the Holiness family is distributed among the evangelical and historically black church traditions. None of the remaining Protestant families account for more than 1% of the overall adult population.

Finally, Protestants who do not identify with any particular family, including those who describe themselves as “just a Protestant,” account for nearly 10% of all Protestants and roughly 5% of the overall adult population.

Protestant Traditions and Denominational Families

Although most denominational families include denominations that belong to different Protestant traditions, it is also true that certain denominational families tend to fall primarily into one of the three traditions. For example, the Baptist, Pentecostal, Restorationist, Holiness and Adventist families as well as nondenominational churches are primarily associated with the evangelical tradition. The denominational families that consist primarily of members of mainline Protestant

churches include the Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican/Episcopal and Congregationalist families. No Protestant denominational family consists primarily of historically black churches, though the Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal and Holiness families all include a sizable number of members of historically black churches.

Classification of Protestant Traditions by Denominational Family

	Evangelical Protestant Churches	Mainline Protestant Churches	Historically Black Protestant Churches	
	%	%	%	
Total Protestants	51	35	13	=100
<i>Largely Evangelical Families</i>				
Reformed	56	44	0	=100
Baptist	63	11	26	=100
Nondenominational	75	20	5	=100
Pentecostal	79	0	21	=100
Restorationist	83	17	0	=100
Holiness	88	0	12	=100
Adventist	100	0	0	=100
<i>Largely Mainline Families</i>				
Lutheran	39	61	0	=100
Presbyterian	30	70	0	=100
Congregationalist	14	86	0	=100
Methodist	2	88	10	=100
Anglican/Episcopal	6	94	0	=100
Protestant nonspecific	38	50	11	=100

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100.

The Decline of American Protestantism

The detailed religious composition of the United States provided in the Landscape Survey raises an important question: How does the current religious makeup of the United States differ from previous years?

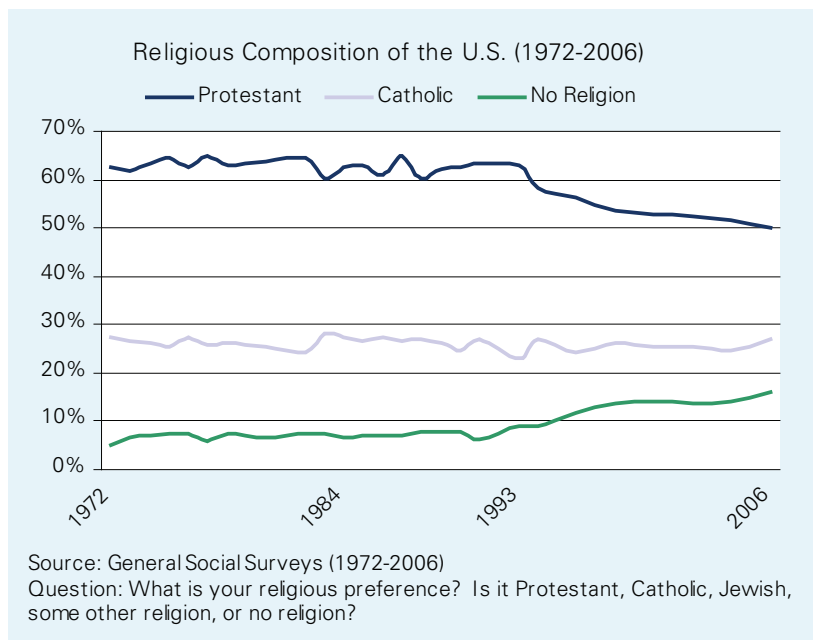
Although the questions on religious affiliation in the Landscape Survey are not directly comparable to those in previous surveys, there is a rich body of research that looks at the question of change

over time in the religious affiliation of the U.S. population. Although scholars contributing to this research have adopted a variety of definitions of major religious groups and pursued various approaches to measuring change over time, this research arrives at a similar conclusion: The proportion of the population that is Protestant has declined markedly in recent decades while the proportion of the population that is not affiliated with any particular religion has increased significantly.

This trend is clearly apparent, for example, in the findings of the General Social Surveys (GSS), conducted between 1972 and 2006 by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Over this period, the GSS have asked the same basic religious identification question each time the survey was conducted: "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?" Through the 1970s and 1980s, between 60% and 65% of respondents described themselves as Protestant. In the early 1990s, however,

the proportion of adults identifying as Protestant began a steady decline. By 2006, the GSS registered Protestant affiliation at 50%, an estimate that is very similar to the one produced by the Landscape Survey.

The decline in the Protestant share of the U.S. population raises another important question, namely, whether the decline in Protestantism has occurred across all three traditions or has been concentrated in one or another of the traditions. What scholars who have analyzed the GSS data have found is that the proportion of the population identifying with the large mainline Protestant denominations has declined significantly in recent decades, while the proportion of Protestants identifying with the large evangelical denominations has increased.



Catholicism

Unlike Protestants, who have seen their ranks dwindle as a share of the population, the GSS findings suggest that the proportion of the adult population that identifies itself as Catholic has held fairly steady, at around 25%, in recent decades. But the Landscape Survey makes clear that this apparent stability obscures a great deal of change in the makeup of Catholicism in the U.S.

An analysis of changes in religious affiliation (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) finds that Catholicism has lost more people to other religions or to no religion at all than any other single religious group. These losses, however, have been offset partly by people who have switched their affiliation to Catholicism, but mostly by the significant number of Catholics who have immigrated to the U.S. in recent decades, primarily from Latin America. The Landscape Survey finds, for example, that nearly half of all immigrants (46%) are Catholic, compared with 21% of the native-born

Religious Composition of the Native Born and Foreign Born

	Total Population	Born in U.S.	Born in a Foreign Country*
	%	%	%
Christian	78	79	74
Protestant	51	55	24
Catholic	24	21	46
Mormon	2	2	1
Jehovah's Witness	1	1	1
Orthodox	1	<0.5	2
Other Christian	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Other Religions	5	4	9
Jewish	2	2	1
Muslim	1	<0.5	2
Buddhist	1	1	2
Hindu	<0.5	<0.5	3
Other world religions	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Other faiths	1	1	1
Unaffiliated	16	16	16
Don't Know/Refused	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100
<i>Share of Total Population</i>	<i>(100%)</i>	<i>(88%)</i>	<i>(12%)</i>

* Includes respondents who were born in U.S. territories (Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, etc.) and Puerto Rico

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100.

population. (Differences in the native-born and foreign-born Catholic population are discussed further in Chapter 3.)

In addition to helping keep the Catholic share of the U.S. population steady, immigrants are also fueling the growth of many non-Christian religious groups in America. For instance, immigrants are roughly four times as likely as native-born adults to be Muslim (2% vs. less than 0.5%), twice as likely to be Buddhist (2% vs. 1%), more than six times as likely to be Hindu (3% vs. less than 0.5%) and roughly four times as likely to be affiliated with Orthodox churches (2% vs. less than 0.5%).

The Unaffiliated

According to the Landscape Survey, more than one-in-six American adults (16.1%) are not currently affiliated with any particular religious group. Through the 1980s, the GSS consistently found that between 5% and 8% of the public was not affiliated with any particular religion. By 2006, however, the GSS showed that 16% of U.S. adults reported no religious affiliation.

The Landscape Survey finds that the unaffiliated population is quite diverse and that it is simply not accurate to describe this entire group as nonreligious or “secular.” Roughly one-quarter of the unaffiliated population identifies itself as atheist (1.6% of the overall adult population) or agnostic (2.4% of the adult population). But the remaining three-quarters (12.1% of the adult population) consists of people who describe their religion as “nothing in particular.” (A fuller discussion of the religious beliefs and practices of the unaffiliated population will be included in a subsequent report.)

This latter group consists of two smaller, fairly distinct subgroups. About half of people who describe their religion as nothing in particular (6.3% of the overall adult population) say that religion is not too important or not at all important in their lives. Thus, they can be thought of as being mostly secular in their orientation. But the other half of this group (5.8% of adults) says that religion is somewhat important or very important in their lives, despite their lack of affiliation with any particular religious group. Thus, this group can be thought of as the “religious unaffiliated.” (Differences in the demographic characteristics of the religious unaffiliated and their more secular counterparts are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.)

Makeup of the Unaffiliated

<i>Among all adults...</i>	
	%
Unaffiliated	16.1
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
No particular religion	12.1
<i>Secular unaffiliated</i>	<i>6.3</i>
<i>Religious unaffiliated</i>	<i>5.8</i>
Affiliated with a religion	83.1
Don't know/Refused	0.8
	100

Due to rounding, nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

Diversity Within Smaller Religious Traditions

Even smaller religious traditions in the U.S. exhibit considerable internal diversity. For example, members of the Orthodox Christian tradition, who account for 0.6% of the adult population, come from a number of different Orthodox churches, including the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches as well as at least a dozen other Orthodox churches mentioned by respondents in the survey, such as the Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

Judaism (1.7% of the overall adult population) also consists of several distinct groups. More than four-in-ten Jews (43%) describe themselves as Reform Jews. Nearly one-in-three (31%) describe themselves as Conservative Jews and 10% say they are Orthodox Jews. The Buddhist tradition (0.7% of the adult population), too, is made up of several distinct groups, the largest of which is Zen Buddhism. Muslims (0.6% of the adult population) fall primarily into two traditions: Half of the Muslims in the U.S. identify as Sunni and 16% are Shia; one-in-three, however, either say they are affiliated with a different Muslim group or describe themselves as “just a Muslim.”

Makeup of Smaller U.S. Religious Traditions

<i>Among all adults...</i>	
	<i>%</i>
Orthodox	0.6
Greek Orthodox	<0.3
Russian Orthodox	<0.3
Others	<0.3
Jewish	1.7
Reform	0.7
Conservative	0.5
Orthodox	<0.3
Others	0.3
Muslim*	0.6
Sunni	0.3
Shia	<0.3
Others	<0.3
Buddhist	0.7
Zen Buddhism	<0.3
Theravada Buddhism	<0.3
Tibetan Buddhism	<0.3
Others	0.3
Other Faiths	1.2
Unitarians and other liberal faiths	0.7
New Age	0.4
Native American relig.	<0.3

* From “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” Pew Research Center, 2007

Due to rounding, nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.