

# POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGION SURVEY

A new Pew Research Center survey, "Changing World: Global Views on Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life and the Importance of Religion," offers many fascinating insights on these subjects. What it has to say about religion, in particular, has grave political implications.

Almost 6 in 10 Americans (58%) believe that religion plays a less important role today as compared to 20 years ago. Just as many (57%) believe this is a bad thing for society.

The survey also found that 73% say religion plays an important role in their lives (47% said it is "very important" and 26% said it is "somewhat important"). A Gallup poll released last December came to the same conclusion: 72% said religion was important to them.

Does this matter? Two months into his presidency, Donald Trump's job approval with those who are "highly religious" was 51%; it was 32% with those who are "not religious."

What these surveys suggest is that the issue of religion in public life could be problematic for Democrats. They are, as every survey in the past few decades suggests, the party of secularists, many of whom have grown more extreme in recent years. A look at the Platform of the two parties underscores this phenomenon.

The 2016 Republican Party Platform cites "religious freedom" six times; it also cites "religious liberty" six times. The 2016 Democratic Party Platform has no mention of "religious liberty," and its references to religious freedom, and to religion more generally, raise some serious issues.

One of the three times where "religious freedom" is cited in

the Platform is simply a nominal reference to the role of religious freedom in civil society. The other two evince the Platform's political colors.

"We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate." Nowhere does it define what a "progressive vision of religious freedom" means, or how it differs from other visions. But we are not left in the dark: This sentence appears in a section titled, "Guaranteeing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights."

In other words, when the First Amendment right to religious liberty collides with the non-constitutionally recognized rights of homosexuals and the sexually confused, the former must yield. The majority of Americans who think that the declining role of religion in society is a bad thing are not likely to applaud.

The other normative reference to religious liberty notes that Donald Trump's "vilification of Muslims" is proof that this "violates the religious freedom that is the bedrock of our country." It does not attempt to show a cause and effect, but it is interesting to note that the only time religious freedom is cited as "the bedrock of our country" is in reference to the rights of Muslims, not Christians or Jews (upon which our Judeo-Christian heritage is anchored).

Besides Muslims, the 2016 Platform of the Democratic Party shows great respect for the religious rights of Indians.

We are told of "our sacred obligation to the Indian nations and Indian peoples"; it fails to note how many Indian nations there are in America. No matter, we also learn of the need to respect "tribal sacred places" and of the right of Indians to "maintain and pass on traditional religious beliefs, languages, and social practices without fear of discrimination or suppression." Even the "religious rights of Native

prisoners” merit a shout-out.

If the Democrats showed as much respect for the religious rights of Christians and Jews as they do Indians, they would even the playing field with Republicans on this issue.

Finally, it is ironic to note how adamantly the Platform opposes “attempts to impose a religious test,” given the enthusiasm that leading Democrats have shown for imposing a religious test on Catholic candidates for the federal bench. So what’s the difference? The difference can be explained by what we left out.

Here is the sentence in its entirety. “We reject attempts to impose a religious test to bar immigrants or refugees from entering the United States.” Score another win for Muslims.

As the survey found, the role of religion in American society is waning, and most do not believe that is a good thing. To turn things around, we will have to have both parties committed to the religious liberties of all people of faith, and not just a few protected groups.

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## **BUTTIGIEG’S RELIGION PROBLEM**

Pete Buttigieg, unlike most of his Democratic competitors, is not shy when talking about religion. His problem is that no one knows who his audience is.

When it comes to matters of sexuality and the family, Buttigieg can’t persuade traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants, orthodox Jews, and most Mormons and Muslims, that he is right. His rejection of marriage, properly understood, and his celebration of abortion rights, will not get him one

of their votes. So he is trying to appeal to the “religious left.”

The “religious left,” however, is almost indistinguishable from the secular left: their socialist vision is what conjoins them. The problem for Buttigieg is that many in the secular camp are militants, and they don’t want to hear his “God-talk” routine.

Evidence of his problem can be seen in an op-ed column by Kate Cohen in the *Washington Post*. She is drawn to Buttigieg in many ways, but she has one nagging problem with him: She is an atheist—and an angry one at that—and he is a Christian.

Cohen hates the way Buttigieg equates religion with morality. She prefers a morality without religion, arguing that morality is an individual attribute.

She is badly educated. Religion is first and foremost an expression of morality. This is true even of those religions which have very different tenets. While it is true that individuals may have their own moral compass, no society can exist without a moral consensus. This is Sociology 101. Good luck trying to craft a moral consensus that is not grounded in religion.

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## **EQUALITY ACT IS MADNESS ON STILTS**

On May 17, the House of Representatives passed the Equality Act; every Democrat voted for it. It is the most comprehensive assault on religious liberty, the right to life, and privacy rights ever packaged into one bill in the history of the

United States.

This act is based on the idea that sexually challenged men and women—those who think they can transition to the other sex—should be treated as if they were members of a minority race. There is no basis in either the natural law or the positive law for such a judgment: “gender identity” is not analogous to race.

Unlike race, which is a natural characteristic, “gender identity” is an unnatural condition. Moreover, the former is an ascribed attribute; the latter is an act of volition. They have nothing in common.

Here are 12 reasons why the Equality Act is so insane.

- It would mean that homosexuals and the sexually challenged would qualify for affirmative action. Though the 1964 Civil Rights Act explicitly did not allow for preferential treatment, it has been interpreted by the courts that way. Therefore, if homosexuals and the sexually challenged are included in this historic piece of legislation, they would get preferential treatment in hiring.
- The act would effectively gut the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, eviscerating important religious rights.
- State laws that protect religious liberty would be gutted.
- Freedom of speech, belief, and thought, as the U.S. Bishops have said, would be put “at risk.” Conscience rights are the most important of all rights. When they are attacked, all liberties are jeopardized.
- Taxpayer-funded abortions would become a reality.
- The bishops stress that “Houses of worship and other religious spaces will be turned into places of ‘public accommodation.’”
- Adoption and foster care providers would have their rights stripped.
- Catholic hospitals would no longer be allowed to govern as Catholic facilities, threatening healthcare for everyone,

especially the poor.

- Starting in kindergarten, students would be indoctrinated in the LGBT agenda.
- Parental rights would be decimated.
- Men who transition to female could compete in women's sports, effectively working against the rights of women.
- Privacy rights would be a thing of the past. As has already happened, a man who thinks of himself as a woman would be allowed to use the women's locker room, parading around with male genitalia. In normal times, he would be arrested for indecent exposure.

If anyone thinks this is an exaggeration, check out what has happened to religious liberty in New Jersey and Ohio where Catholic hospitals have been targeted. Unless they agree to perform a hysterectomy on a woman who claims to be a man, they can be sued. The ACLU has been suing Catholic hospitals all over the nation trying to force them to adopt its anti-Catholic agenda. While it typically loses, this legislation will reverse that record.

All persons are equal in the eyes of God, and that certainly includes the sexually challenged. But no society grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition is required to sabotage its heritage in the name of truly bizarre notions of liberty and equality.

Those who fantasize that they are a member of the opposite sex, and take steps to achieve that result, suffer from a mental disorder. The research on this subject is clear. Years following sex reassignment surgery, the suicide rate spikes for those who undergo this operation. They need our help, and our prayers. What they don't need is pandering or affirmation.

Even those radical feminists and lesbians who belong to the Women's Liberation Front came out against the Equality Act. They are certainly more enlightened than the big corporations who supported it, to say nothing of some rogue Catholics who

pushed it.

If the American people knew more about this act, they would be livid, and this is doubly true of parents. This isn't about fairness—it's about a war on religion, privacy, and common sense. The Equality Act is madness on stilts. Hopefully, it will not survive a Senate vote.

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## PRO-INFANTICIDE GOV. CALLED A MODERATE

Infanticide is the deliberate killing of infants, either by active or passive measures. In Nazi Germany, they preferred the former; in this country, we prefer the latter.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says it is okay to allow a baby born alive as a result of a botched abortion to die unattended by hospital staff. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam agrees. The latest to agree is Montana Gov. Steve Bullock: In early May, he vetoed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act.

The difference between these three men is that only Bullock is running for president; he announced the week after that veto. The media know that he is okay with allowing a newborn baby who survives an abortion to die without any medicinal care whatsoever. Do you know what they are calling him? A moderate.

The following media outlets described Bullock as a moderate after he vetoed the bill and after he announced his bid for the presidency: Fox News, CNN, CBS, NPR, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post* (in a blog column.) Only the *Los Angeles Times* made even a passing reference to his veto of a bill that would protect newborns. The most

accurate coverage was given by the *Washington Times*.

We have come to a new junction in American life when those who support infanticide are branded as moderate. What would it take for a governor to be labeled an extremist? Would he have to say that it should be legal for a mother to decide with her doctor to put down her newborn baby for up to a year after birth?

Gov. Bullock can get away with this because the media are overwhelmingly in the pro-abortion camp, and, more recently, in the pro-infanticide camp as well. We live in sick times.

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## TIME TO REIN IN TREVOR NOAH

Recently Trevor Noah joked about the tragedy in France. On second thought, it is not clear whether he thinks the Notre Dame fire was a tragedy at all. “Why doesn’t France ask for the Catholic Church to pay for the repairs? A billion dollars is nothing to them. It’s like three child abuse settlements.”

In this #MeToo world, everyone is walking on eggshells. But not when it comes to trashing Catholics. If the Catholic League were to follow the lead of so many other civil rights organizations, and social media activists, we would be calling for Noah to be fired. After all, he is a repeat offender—he frequently assaults Catholic sensibilities with below the belt comments.

Instead of calling on Noah to be fired, we are calling on his bosses to have him treat Catholics the same way he treats other religious, racial, and ethnic groups, to say nothing of the LGBTQ community. If he continues, our response will be very different.



Following a recent anti-Catholic remark, we asked our supporters to contact Renata Luczak, the communications director for the “Daily Show.” This time we asked our base to contact the head of Viacom, the parent company of Comedy Central.

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## **“SNL” RIPS GAY PRIESTS**

“SNL” went on a tear against homosexual priests recently. Michael Che Campbell (his father named him after Che Guevara, the Cuban terrorist) made a quip about Pope Francis’ warning against the negative aspects of gossip. Campbell asked, “Did you hear what happened to those altar boys?”

It is true that heterosexual priests rarely act inappropriately with altar girls, so Campbell is right not to indict straight men for the behavior of homosexuals. But even if homosexual priests are largely responsible for the sexual abuse of minors—they account for more than 80 percent of the cases—it smacks as homophobic to keep bringing this up.

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## **SETH MEYERS LIVES IN A BUBBLE**

In his NBC-TV show recently, Seth Meyers told viewers that “Pope Francis has announced new rules designed to change how the Catholic Church deals with abuse accusations, and not 2,000 years too soon.”

This guy lives in a bubble. There is no town or city in

America that houses more sexual predators per square inch than Hollywood, yet late-night talk show hosts rarely take shots at their own home-grown molesters.

Recently Steven Spielberg was in the news for pulling out of the CBS show “Bull” because the network had to dish out \$9.5 million in a settlement regarding the sexual harassment of actress Eliza Dushku; she was fired after she confronted the star of the show, Michael Weatherly.

This is the way they still do business in Hollywood. Unlike the Catholic Church, which is instituting new reforms to combat sexual misconduct, Hollywood is still writing checks to victims, allowing offenders like Weatherly to keep his job. Why is he still working for CBS?

Don’t look for Meyers to say anything about this, or about the serial problems that NBC has had over the years with its own perverts.

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## **NEW      SEX      ABUSE      REFORMS WELCOMED**

After much delay, the Vatican has finally set forth reforms to combat clergy sexual abuse. Fortunately, they are comprehensive and meaningful. Due to widely different cultural practices, reforms are not easy to craft for global institutions. Those who wrote these strictures did a commendable job.

The reforms target a wide range of persons victimized by sexual misconduct: minors, “vulnerable” adults (those who are physically or mentally challenged), seminarians, nuns—all are

covered. In addition to coerced sexual acts, possession of child pornography qualifies as an offense.

What is perhaps most refreshing about these reforms is the dramatic break with the protracted pace of previous initiatives. The norms go into effect, worldwide, on June 1. The senior bishop in the area, known as the local metropolitan, has 90 days to complete an investigation. Moreover, the Vatican has just 30 days to render a decision on whether to pursue the case.

The laity will have a place at the table. Bishops can draw on their expertise in many areas while conducting an investigation. Safeguarding the rights of whistleblowers is also a step in the right direction. As important as anything, the due process rights of the accused will be honored.

Bishops will be expected to follow the civil law in their diocese regarding reporting alleged offenses, and there are penalties for those who do not. Bishops are also required not to interfere with civil probes of accused priests.

While these structural reforms are important, if the rules are not followed, they mean nothing.

Naturally, the reforms are being denounced by those who perpetually find fault with anything the Church does to remedy this problem.

Anne Barrett Doyle of BishopAccountability, an entity which has made serious and bogus accusations against some bishops, is not happy. "It's not nearly enough," she said. It's never enough.

Robert Hoatson, an angry ex-priest, says the reforms are "too little, too late." They always are, aren't they?

Mitchell Garabedian, who spends his life suing and condemning priests—including those found not guilty—charges that the

Church is continuing “the secrecy which has enabled the clergy sexual abuse to exist.” What secrets the Church is keeping he does not say, nor will anyone in the media ask him to unmask these “secrets.”

Peter Isely, a professional victims’ advocate, complains that the “new law leaves it up to the bishop to report it to civil authorities.” Does he know of a single institution, secular or religious, which outsources its authority to police internal instances of sexual misconduct?

Kudos to Pope Francis for his leadership on this issue. Most practicing Catholics are reasonable. They are likely to applaud these measures. That is what matters most.

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## **RAPPER VIDEO SPURS BIGOTRY AND VIOLENCE**

Rapper Joyner Lucas is not exactly a household name, but he should be. Not for his singing, but for his thuggery. Lucas deceitfully secured access to a Catholic church, never telling the pastor that he was going to cut a vicious video, “The Devil’s Work.”

The opening scene shows Lucas drinking a bottle of whiskey in an empty church, St. Peter’s in Worcester, Massachusetts, while holding a Bible. That is objectionable enough, but it is nothing compared to what follows.

He then goes into an extended lament over the murders of Nipsey Hussel, BIGGIE, Tupac Shakur, Selena, and other performers. He should have stopped there. Instead, he starts cheering for the death of innocent persons. Lucas’ dislike of

President Trump, Fox News host Laura Ingraham, and Fox contributor Tomi Lahren leads him to call for their speedy death. Here is a sample of his offensive lyrics.

“I pray you give us back the real ones and try again  
Or maybe take the niggas that deserve to die instead  
Tomi Lahren run her mouth and then she get defensive  
Laura Ingraham laughin’ at death and disrepectin’  
I really feel like you should teach them stupid hoes a lesson  
Either that or give us back somebody who deserve the  
blessings”

What makes Lucas’ performance so particularly vile is his depiction of Trump, Ingraham and Lahren on a funeral easel surrounded by flowers; their pictures are prominently displayed.

Lucas’ misuse of a Catholic church shows his anti-Catholicism. By referring to the two women as “hoes,” he flashes his sexism. By calling African Americans “niggas,” he sports his racism. And by making a plea for the sudden death of Ingraham and Lahren, he demonstrates his affinity for terrorism.

That this cruel video has won the applause of Rihanna, garnering over 5 million hits, proves that he is not alone in his sickness.

If this isn’t bad enough, Lucas directs all his anger at God. He blames God for the murder of these troubled celebrities, and is outraged that the Almighty would allow for the premature deaths of Michael Jackson and Trayvon Martin. That’s right, God is responsible, not those who self-destructed.

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# CHRISTIANS ASSAULTED FROM ALL SIDES

Muslim fanatics, so-called Islamists, are the most violent enemy of Christians in the world. While it is considered controversial to even mention this today, even less reported is the non-violent counterpart to these barbarians: militant secularists. The latter are growing in influence by leaps and bounds, even to the point of accommodating the Islamists.

According to CBN News, thus far this year there have been well over 1,000 attacks on French Christian churches and symbols, most of them Catholic. That's an increase of 17 percent in one year. As everyone knows, radical Muslims are to blame.

In the Middle East and Africa, Christian persecution is routine. The Christian character of Mosul in Iraq is gone—Christianity has been obliterated. Eritrea, known as the “North Korea of Africa,” is under siege by a madman; women and girls are bearing the worst of the brunt.

In Nigeria, more than 2 million people, many of them Christians, are being driven from their homes by Islamists known as Boko Haram. During the first half of 2018, 6,000 Christians were killed in Nigeria, most of whom were women, children, and the elderly.

As University of Mississippi professor, and Catholic League advisory board member, Ronald Rychlak notes, “The only place in the Middle East where Christians face no restrictions on the practice of their faith is Israel.” That, too, is underreported.

On Easter Sunday, a reporter for the *Guardian*, Giles Fraser, offered the following astute observation. “Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, Christians have been driven from the Middle East with bombs and bullets, and with hardly a bat

squeak of protest from the secular west.”

Fraser is correct. Just last month, his own nation, the U.K., denied asylum to an Iranian Christian convert (from Islam) on the grounds that Christianity is not a “peaceful” religion (various books from the Bible were cited as proof). According to another British writer, Becket Adams, there is a “trend in the U.K. of government officials taking explicitly anti-Christian positions.”

How bad is it getting? “If you’re a Christian living in the U.K., now might be a really good time to think about emigrating to the land of the free and the home of the brave,” Becket Adams says, “where the biggest nuisance for people of faith is an overabundance of options for worship.” He also noted that Sweden is deporting Christians seeking asylum to countries such as Afghanistan.

What’s driving this? A minister in the U.K. explains that this is all a reflection of “post-colonial guilt.”

Matters are better here at home, though militant secularists are targeting Christians and Jews at an alarming rate.

Government officials at the federal, state, and local levels, along with elements in the media, Hollywood, the artistic community, and higher education, are doubling down these days in their efforts to smear or otherwise denigrate people of faith. Ready to assist them are radicals who staff non-profit activist organizations, and the foundations that support them.

In the “civilized” world of the West, Christian men and women who take their religion seriously are subjected to bigoted inquisitions when being considered for a judicial appointment. Christian clubs on college campuses are denied the right to have Christians lead them.

Catholic schools are told they don’t qualify for matching corporate gifts because they teach Catholicism. More common is

the practice of denying Christian organizations a religious exemption, even when it is clear that not granting the exemption effectively neuters their right to be Christian. They are told that by clinging to their Judeo-Christian teachings, they are interfering with the rights of others.

Jews are accused of “dual loyalties,” an anti-Semitic trope that has recently resurfaced in elite quarters. The BDS movement, which is popular on many college campuses, is out to crush Israel. The fact that such bigotry is led by young people—including in the halls of Congress—makes this all the more disturbing.

If those who preach the virtue of tolerance meant what they say, we wouldn't have any of these problems. But they don't—they are content to lie for a living. Worse, they are the guilty parties in the West.

Is it any wonder that militant secularists rarely condemn radical Muslims? To be sure, the former don't want to live under Sharia law, but they are prepared to take that risk provided their Muslim allies keep whittling away at our Judeo-Christian heritage. This is a sick pact that has grown exponentially since 9/11. It needs to end before more damage is done.