

PEW SURVEY ON RELIGION IS FASCINATING

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U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious

Modest Drop in Overall Rates of Belief and Practice, but Religiously Affiliated Americans Are as Observant as Before

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Bill Donohue comments on the survey of religion released today by the Pew Research Center:

The latest Pew survey provides an exhaustive look at religious attitudes and trends in 2014, yielding comparisons with its 2007 study. It found that 9 in 10 adults believe in God and that three-quarters say religion is at least “somewhat” important in their lives.

Overall, however, the nation is becoming less religious: 23% now have no religious affiliation, led by youth. While the faithful may not embrace this trend, they might welcome the fact that 56% of Muslims—as compared to 51% of the public—say that religious organizations focus too much on rules. Not a good sign for those who want sharia-type laws.

If there was any doubt that party affiliation and ideology are not identical, this survey proves it. By a margin of 44% to 37%, more Americans identify with the Democrats than the Republicans. Yet 36% say they are conservative and only 24% identify as liberal; 33% prefer the moderate label. Moreover, 51% of Americans would prefer a smaller government providing fewer services, while 42% choose the opposite.

The religiously affiliated are split on support for gay marriage—46% to 46%; nationwide, 53% favor and 39% oppose. It

is worth noting, however, that only 24% “strongly favor” same-sex marriage. Pew reports that “Slightly more than half of U.S. adults say abortion should be legal in all (20%) or most (33%) cases, while fewer say it should be illegal in all (16%) or most (27%) cases.” To put it differently, this means that 8 in 10 Americans *oppose* the current law that okays abortion for any reason and at any time. It also means that 60% (33% + 27%) say abortion should be restricted by law.

Three-quarters of adults believe that religion protects and strengthens morality in society (the figure is higher among believers), and 55% say more people having children without getting married is a “change for the worse.” No wonder only 14% say their church should “adopt modern beliefs and practices.” That’s quite an indictment. Are the elites listening?