

VANISHING ATHEISTS



Bill Donohue comments on a study, "Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020," published by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary:



Looks like the best days for agnostics and atheists are long past: in 1970, agnostics were 14.7 percent of the world's population, and atheists were 4.5 percent; in 2010, the figures dropped to 9.8 and 2.0 percent, respectively; by 2020, it is estimated that agnostics will constitute 8.9 percent, and atheists will make up 1.8 percent.

Much of the decrease is attributable to the demise of that atheistic genocidal wonderland called Communism: the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a spike in religious affiliation, both in Russia and in Eastern Europe; China is also in the throes of a religious revival. Russia was 38 percent Christian in 1970, and in 2010 the number jumped to 71 percent. The world's first officially atheistic state, Albania, is now 63 percent Muslim and 32 percent Christian.

It is expected that by 2020, the percent of the world's population that is Christian will witness a slight uptick; the increase will be greater for Muslims. Asia, as a whole, is witnessing a sharp drop in agnostics and atheists, as are those who live in the Caribbean. Even in Europe it is expected that atheists will decrease markedly: they were 8.2 percent in

1970, and are projected to be 2.1 percent in 2020; agnostics are expected to stay steady at 13.1 percent. It is in places such as Northern America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand where non-believers will realize some gains.

Data like these undercut the superstition that the world is becoming increasingly secular. In the U.S., for instance, we hear a lot about the growth of the “nones,” those who are not affiliated with any religion. But even among this segment of the population, only 2.6 percent of Americans are agnostic, and a mere 1.9 percent are atheist.

In the U.S., as well as globally, the belief in nothingness is mostly confined to white people who stayed in school for a long time. Too bad they didn't learn to think independently.