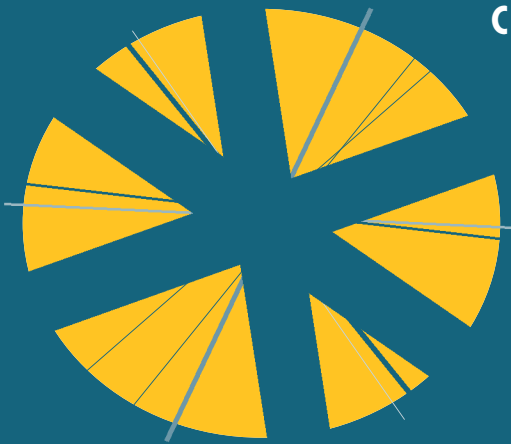


**RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL
CHANGE IN AMERICA:
THE EXPERIENCE OF
MARIN COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA**

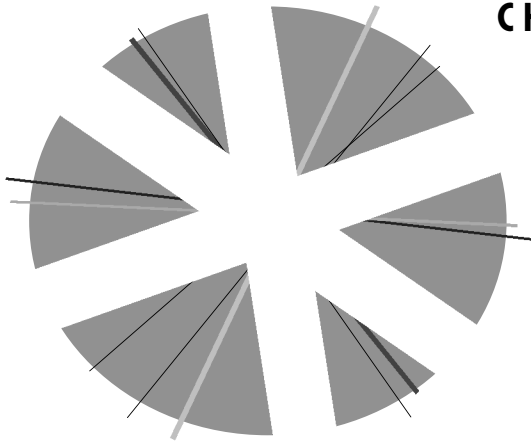


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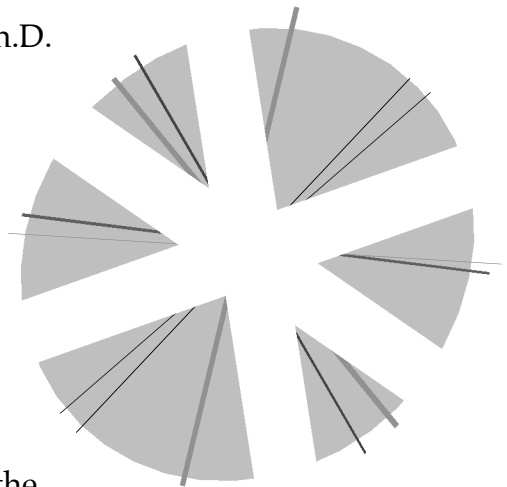


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Marin Community Foundation



All views expressed are those of the authors and not of the Marin Community Foundation or any other organization or institution. Any concerns or comments about this report should be directed to the authors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Major Findings	1
Recommendations	3
Introduction	5
Post-September 11th	6
Methodology	9
Religiosity and Spirituality in Marin by Religious Group	11
Sites of Agreement	13
Tolerance, Ethics and Being Religious.....	13
Charitable Giving and Volunteering	15
Sites of Divergence	16
Congregational Membership, Past and Present.....	16
Service Attendance	19
Congregational Giving	21
Prayer: Forms	22
Prayer: Frequency	22
Prayer: Importance	23
Prayer: Meals.....	23
Reading Scripture	24
Belief in a Divine	25
Religious Beliefs	28
Spiritual Growth, Religious Experiences and Miracles	28
Strength of Identification with and Importance of One’s Religion	29
Religious Satisfaction	31
The Afterlife: Heaven, Hell and Reincarnation	32
Religious Education for Children	34
An Analysis of People Who Have Switched Religions	37
Religious Preference	39
Congregational Membership.....	40
Service Attendance	41
Prayer	42
Religious Beliefs	42
Religious Dissatisfaction, Importance and Experience	42
The Divine, Being Religious and Being Ethical	44
The Afterlife: Heaven, Hell and Reincarnation	44
Social Action, Volunteering and Congregational Giving	45
An Analysis of People in Interfaith Relationships	47
Intermarriage Rates.....	47
Congregational Membership and Service Attendance	48
Belief in a Divine and Religious Beliefs.....	50
Meditation, Religious Experience and Reincarnation	50
Religious Disenchantment and Strength of Identification	51
Religious Education for Children	52
Conclusion	55
Bibliography	57
Appendix: Survey Instrument	65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Religious Preference.....	11
Figure 2: Religious Tolerance: "Other Religions Provide Equally Good Paths to Reaching God"	12
Figure 3: Religion and Ethics: "A Person Can Be Good and Ethical Without Believing in God"	13
Figure 4: Religion and God: "A Person Can Be Religious Without Believing in God"	14
Figure 5: Congregational Membership	15
Figure 6: Frequency of Service Attendance	19
Figure 7: Service Attendance in the Past Seven Days	20
Figure 8: Frequency of Prayer.....	23
Figure 9: Frequency of Prayer Before Meals: "Do you pray aloud before meals?"	24
Figure 10: Frequency of Reading Religious Scriptures.....	25
Figure 11: Belief in a Divine	26
Figure 12: Religious/Spiritual Beliefs	27
Figure 13: Personal Religious Experience: "I Have Had a Religious Experience"	29
Figure 14: Importance of Religion in One's Life: "Importance of Religion in My Life"	30
Figure 15: Religious Satisfaction: "There are Many Things in My Religion That I Do Not Agree With"	31
Figure 16: Opinion about Religious Rules: "Religions Have Unnecessary Rules and Responsibilities"	32
Figure 17: Beliefs About the Afterlife	33
Figure 18: Religious Education Received as a Child vs. Religious Education Provided for Own Children.....	35
Figure 19: Current Members Who Switched From Their Birth Religion.....	37
Figure 20: Religious Origins and Destinations of Switchers	38
Figure 21: Congregational Membership: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers.....	40
Figure 22: Frequency of Attending Services: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers	41
Figure 23: Religious/Spiritual Beliefs: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers.....	42
Figure 24: "Importance of Religion in My Life": Switchers vs. Non-Switchers	43
Figure 25: Belief in a Divine: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers	44
Figure 26: Beliefs about the Afterlife: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers.....	45
Figure 27: Charitable Giving and Volunteering: Switchers vs. Non-Switchers	46
Figure 28: Intermarriage Rates by Religion	47
Figure 29: Congregational Membership Rates: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers	48
Figure 30: Frequency of Attending Services: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers	49
Figure 31: Belief in a Divine: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers	49
Figure 32: Religious/Spiritual Beliefs: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers.....	50
Figure 33: Prayer Types Most Often Used: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers	51
Figure 34: Opinion about Religious Rules: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers	52
Figure 35: Religious Education Received as a Child vs. Religious Education Provided for Own Children: Mixers vs. Non-Mixers.....	53

MAJOR FINDINGS

Religious Diversity and Innovation

Marin is a religiously and spiritually diverse and innovative county, and the residents are keen spiritual seekers most likely to travel on their own paths to God rather than to listen passively to a religious institution's dictates.

Western and Eastern Religions

The majority (62%) of residents still practice Western religions — Protestantism, Catholicism or Judaism. However, a large minority (38%) practices other (Other) or no specific (None) religions. The most common of the other religions is American-style Buddhism.

Tolerance and Involvement

The vast majority of all the religious groups believes in religious tolerance, gives to charity and volunteers.

Respect for Those Who Do Not Believe in God

Nearly all respondents believe that one can be good and ethical without believing in God. A majority of these groups also believes that one can be religious without believing in God.

Tradition and Redefinition

Traditional religious practices, such as congregational membership, regular service attendance, and traditional beliefs, such as in God and heaven, are lower in the county than the nation. However, rates among Protestants and Catholics often approach

national levels. The lower rates for the non-Christian groups do not indicate a drop in religiosity and spirituality but rather a redefinition of what it means and how it is being expressed.

Low Rates of Congregational Belonging

One main reason people do not join congregations is lack of interest. Other factors were dislike of organized religion, low level of religiosity, and lack of time. Age, marital and familial status also seemed to influence membership rates. Couples, parents of young children, and people 36 years of age and over belonged at significantly higher rates than single people, people without young children, and people under age 36.

Spiritual, But Not Religious

A majority of Marin residents (53%) refers to themselves as being "spiritual but not religious;" 28% believe in a "Higher Power" rather than God; 27% use meditation as their primary form of prayer; and 36% believe in reincarnation.

Many Identify Their Religion as Other or None

Many people in the Other and None religious groups express their religiosity and spirituality through Eastern religious practice. Members of the Other group were significantly more likely to say that they are "very strongly" identified and very satisfied with their religion.

Switching Religions

Fifty-one percent (51%) of Marin residents have switched religions from that in which they were raised. Switchers came from all faiths, but Jews were the least likely to switch religions. The vast majority of those in the Other (81%) and None (86%) groups were switchers as were 45% of current Protestants. Catholicism suffered a large net loss because of switching.

Switchers Say They Are More Spiritual

Switchers were much more likely than non-switchers to refer to themselves as “spiritual but not religious” (65% vs. 40%), believe in a “Higher Power” rather than God (40% vs. 16%), use meditation as their primary form of prayer (34% vs. 21%), and believe in reincarnation (41% vs. 30%).

Mixed Religious Households

One-third of the Marin population is in interfaith relationships (mixers). The rate of mixing is high for all religious groups, especially those in the Other and None groups. While some may believe that people in interfaith relationships have weak religious identities, in fact, mixers identified just as strongly with their religion as non-mixers.

Low Rates of Religious Education for Children

Spiritual life in Marin is alive and rich, but the prospect for the next generation is still to be determined. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of national and Marin parents received a religious education as children. However, only 54% of Marin parents are providing their children with the religious training that they received when they were young. In contrast, 89% of parents nationally are providing their children with a religious education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Remove Barriers To Congregational Membership

Religious leaders should begin to remove some of the barriers to congregational membership identified in this research. To attract people who are hindered by time constraints, shortened and more conveniently scheduled services and other activities could be offered. In addition, free on-site childcare could be created or expanded. To welcome those who find cost a barrier, congregations could offer free or low-cost membership and steps could be implemented to fully welcome all people regardless of income. Programs could also be developed to welcome and cater to younger adults, single people, and couples without young children. These programs could include meditation, meals, cooking and exercise classes, career workshops and discussion groups.

Expand Programs For Interfaith Families

With Marin's large percentage of households that are religiously intermarried, religious leaders may want to create or expand programs for interfaith couples and interfaith families more generally, while remaining aware that adults in interfaith relationships are as strongly identified with their own religion as those who are in same faith relationships. A significant issue for exploration with such families is the religious upbringing and identity of children. This issue becomes more complex with children of divorced interfaith parents.

Create More Alternative Venues For Religious and Spiritual Experiences

The feasibility of quasi-houses of worship such as yoga and meditation centers, twelve-step meetings, classes about spirituality, spiritual bookstores, and retreat centers needs to be explored.

Create More Inter-Religious Opportunities

Marin's rich religious diversity and tolerance are great assets. Inter-religious activity already exists in the county. But leaders, members and non-members of all of the county's faiths would benefit from even greater interchange: study, worship, and collaboration in charitable and social justice activities. These added interfaith activities would increase opportunities for those of different religions to further learn about and understand one another. These interactions may also help spiritual seekers on a variety of spiritual paths by increasing opportunities to become knowledgeable about different religions.

Revise Children's Educational Curriculum and Study Opportunities

Leaders of existing children's religious training facilities, religious and community leaders, and parents should work together to explore possible ways to revise the curricula and teaching of religious education for the county's children.

Consider a Non-Denominational Community Spiritual Center

Community and religious leaders and residents may want to consider constructing a spiritual community center to serve all the diverse faiths and spiritual seekers in the county. The center could house worship facilities, offices, classrooms, children's religious schools, a social action center, library, and a café.

Train Clergy For Religious Diversity

This study indicates that there may be a need both for more religious professionals and for professionals specifically trained in the areas of diversity, religious mixing, and spiritual searching. Marin may be just the place to initiate new forms of post-seminary professional development to meet the needs of a religiously fluid population. The feasibility of creating such a new professional initiative should be undertaken.

Additional research should be considered in a number of areas.

- Given the different religious and spiritual behaviors and beliefs of the members of the Other and None groups, it would be useful to know more about these individuals. We know that some are practicing non-Western, particularly Eastern and New Age, religions. What are the reasons they are in these groups? Did those in the Other group leave Western religion because they were disillusioned or was there something special that attracted them to their new form of practice? Why do people in the None group not associate themselves with any one religion despite believing in a Divine and identifying themselves as "spiritual" or "religious?"
- It would be useful to understand why a significant number of people in Marin call

themselves "spiritual but not religious" even though they believe in a Divine and pray. What are the reasons for the dislike of the words "religion" and "religious" and the preference for the word "spiritual?"

- Given the low rates of congregational belonging, further research would be useful to understand the deeper reasons behind the numbers. More than one-fifth of each religious group indicated they had not joined for "some other reason" than the reasons offered. What are these other reasons?
- Our study indicates that those who are "not interested" in becoming congregational members and those who "do not like organized religion" nevertheless identify themselves as "religious" or "spiritual" and are believers in a Divine. Why are they disenchanted with current congregations and organized religion? What changes would they like to see? Would more diverse programming be enough or are structural changes, such as different forms of institutional organization, styles of leadership and sizes, needed? What can congregations learn from the success of informal prayer groups and retreats?
- Thinking about religious education raises a number of questions. What are the barriers to religious education? Is it the dislike of organized religion, lack of acceptable teachers and curricula, lack of suitable or accessible venues, or scheduling conflicts? Is the increasing number of mixed marriages an inhibitor to religious education? Is there a general dissatisfaction among those who currently educate their children or especially among those who do not choose to do so? All of these questions pose serious challenges and suggest an area for further research about religion in Marin.

INTRODUCTION

Religion is central to American life. The majority of Americans continues to believe in God, regularly attends services and prays.¹ Beyond this, there has been a boom in what is commonly referred to as “spirituality,” and the search for life’s meaning.² People have flocked to engage in the practices of yoga, tai chi, Qi Gong and meditation. Companies offer techniques on how to use these practices to “de-stress.” Alternative medicine has taken such a firm foothold in the medical establishment that now a number of insurance plans will cover some acupuncture treatments and massage. Particularly striking is the burgeoning religious and spiritual book industry. Enter virtually any bookstore and the spiritual seeker will find a large section filled with books such as Thomas Moore’s *The Care of the Soul*, M. Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled*, and the ever-expanding series, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.

This report will explore both religiosity and spirituality in Marin County, California. It may seem strange to discuss religion and spirituality separately, but many in our survey define them differently. Furthermore, even standard dictionary definitions note the differences: religion is limited more to institutions and structures while spirituality is more

personal and internal. Marin residents, leading, or following, a national trend, are distinguishing between religion as an institutionally led path to the divine and spirituality as a personalized journey which in practice and belief may borrow from many faith traditions, including those that are non-Western.

Marin County is located across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. It is set in beautiful woodlands, bays and beaches. The vast majority (86%) of the population in Marin is white, and the incomes tend to be quite high. The population which is not white includes a variety of multi-cultural communities.³ Even at first glance, this population seems interested in things both religious as well as spiritual. Its religious institutions include churches of most Christian denominations, synagogues, several Islamic centers and a mosque, a Buddhist meditation center (Spirit Rock) and a Zen Buddhist temple (Green Gulch Farm Center / Green Dragon Temple) whose predominantly white members are led by Caucasian abbots. Marin is also the home of the Dominican University of America which is primarily a Catholic undergraduate institution, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary which is owned by the conservative Southern Baptist

1 George Gallup, Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Press, 1999).

2 Among the many books documenting the boom in spirituality are George Gallup Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999); Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

3 United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Census 1990, 1997 Economic Census, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey.

Convention, and San Francisco Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian institution which is associated with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, itself an excellent collection of schools devoted to religious study and training. Besides these institutions, businesses and individuals in Marin offer instruction in areas such as women's spirituality, meditation, massage, and yoga as well as more esoteric subjects such as crystal healing and astrology.

Religion in Marin County is now part of a new religious environment in the United States. As this study will show, religion in the county is traditional and exploratory, representative and unusual. However, Marin is not unique. It is more like the religious landscape of the United States in general than not. At the same time, Marin serves as a case study of particular changes occurring on the religious landscape of America. This study reveals five trends. First, traditional religious institutions represent more Marin County residents and Americans than other forms of religious identity. Many still identify themselves as Christian, belong to congregations, and use traditional forms of worship. Second, there is a growing population of religious searchers, those on spiritual journeys who are looking beyond the faith in which they were raised for their own individual religious identity. Consequently, the numbers of people practicing faiths other than Christianity are growing. Third, this spiritual searching results in a growing number of people who are switching religions. It can no longer be assumed that a person is born into one religion and will maintain that religious identity all of his or her life. Fourth, many people who have not switched religions are borrowing from different religious traditions. By

incorporating worship practice and/or ritual aspects of other faiths into their own, these people are enriching their own faith. Fifth, there is a growing population of people who live in households where more than one religion is practiced. Someone may have a partner who practices a different religion and therefore two religious identities are present in the family. Or the children, as teens or perhaps at an even younger age, may have chosen practice a different religion than their parents.

Post-September 11th

This study has taken on added meaning since the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The nature of religion, not only in America but around the world, is the subject of public conversation, news reports, and editorials. The President of the United States keeps reminding Americans that we are not at war with Islam. We have heard this statement over and over again, the meaning clear but startling. A devoutly Christian President serving an American population that is overwhelmingly Christian is informing both the American public and the world at large that we are *not* engaged in a *religious* war. At the same time, Osama bin Laden challenges the United States with violence as a nation of infidels, non-believers, a great Satan, which is also the benefactor of the Jews and the state of Israel.

Questions are being asked about the history and nature of Islam, the basic tenets of the religion, and the differences between Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and other religions. Explorations of the nature of religion are pervasive and include questions about which religions are "good" and which are

“bad.” It seems that there is almost a sentiment that staying grounded in a known (and acceptable) religious tradition is more important than ever. Exotic religions, unknown religions, and being where one does not belong are emotional themes emerging as the war on terrorism progresses.

This brings us to John Walker (Lindh), the young man from Marin who chose Islam as his faith and ended up in Afghanistan as an Al Qaeda or Taliban fighter against the United States. Some of the reactions about John Walker were expected. He is a traitor and should be dealt with appropriately. Others argue that he is merely a confused youth and leniency should characterize the punishment he receives. But another set of responses are markedly atypical. These people contend that John Walker behaved as he did because he grew up in Marin County and because he was a spiritual searcher who ended up converting to Islam. A flood of articles and responses have resulted from these two facts.

Commentators play it both ways. One commentator writes, “The problem is, when a Marin kid decides to wear a turban and robes and observe dietary restrictions, it’s not so different from what adults in Marin do.”⁴ The writer continues, “Spiritual quests in Marin range from the high church of low body fat to transcendental tarot card reading, so when a young man chooses to follow an established religion like Islam, his parents must breathe a sigh of relief. Think of it: the religious and social milieu of Marin is so outra-

geous that the problem was that Islam was a reasonable alternative.”

On the hand, another columnist writes that it is not the spiritual searching that is the problem, but rather just the opposite: “Anyone who knows the county knows that Walker is fantastically *out of step* with today’s Marin. Convert to Islam at sixteen? Travel to Yemen and Pakistan in search of spiritual meaning? I don’t think so. In your average Marin home, the kid would find himself in an Episcopal Youth Group before the word ‘Koran’ was out of his mouth.” This writer states further, “If we want to blame Marin for John Walker’s choices, then I guess we should say he was rebelling *against* the values of the community rather than reflecting them. Maybe he wanted more than a two-car garage and winter weekends up at Tahoe.”⁵ In other words, Walker was rebelling not against spiritual uncertainty and wacky religions, but rather against the most traditional of religious institutions represented by the Episcopal church and against Marin’s stifling and materialistic values. A *New York Times* article summarized this sentiment best. The piece stated, “Mr. Walker came of age across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco in Marin County, an affluent suburb frequently caricatured as a haven for politically correct Californians who drive Porsches and raise children who are made muddle-headed by too much freedom.”⁶ While the *New York Times* is careful to note that this is a caricature, the piece cleverly indicates what its authors think of Marin.

4 Rob Morse, “Marvelous adventure of ‘Walker, Taliban Ranger’.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 5, 2001, page A2.

5 Joan Ryan, “Don’t Blame Marin.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 2001, page A27.

6 Blaire Harden with Kevin Sack. “One for His Country, and One Against It: Far Different Paths Led Two Young Americans to Fateful Face-Off.” *New York Times*, December 11, 2001, 1A, B5.

In either case, Marin is in the news, and the subject is religion. Take your pick: the problem with Marin is that people are spiritual seekers; the problem is traditional religious institutions; the problem is materialism; the problem is over-permissive parents. What we know from this study is that Marin is an exemplar of religious change in America. While Christians are the overwhelming majority in the United States, there are growing numbers of people practicing Islam, Buddhism, and New Age religions, to say nothing of the Jewish population already in the United States. Religious intermarriage abounds, significant proportions of the American population are “unchurched,” and religious switching is a mainstream phenomenon. John Walker and Marin County are both convenient targets for the religious phenomena that are both frightening and disconcerting to many Americans. Coupled with the specter of a billion “hostile” Muslims in the world with whom “we are *not* at war,” the religious landscape seems rapidly to be turning topsy-turvy.

Commentators would like to attribute the John Walker phenomenon to the “hot-tub culture” of Marin, but everyone knows that this is not the case.⁷ He is not simply “misguided” because “he grew up in Marin, where being misguided—at least for an anti-American cause—is a rite of passage.”⁸ Religious change and upheaval are an American and world reality, not the result of supposedly anti-American Marin. By showing the complexity of religion in Marin County and the comparison between religion in Marin and America as a whole, this report serves as an excellent basis for talking about religion in a practical way. It is useless to demonize the spiritual seekers, on the one hand, or condemn Christian practices, on the other hand, as the source of religious turmoil. Instead, it is important to recognize that both characterize religion in Marin and the United States. They are not a threat, but a reality.

⁷ Evan Thomas, “A Long Strange Trip to the Taliban,” *Newsweek*, December 17, 2001. The day after John Walker was formally charged, Former President Bush said he had no sympathy for the “poor misguided Marin County hot-tubber.” (Reported by *ABC Television San Francisco affiliate Channel 7*, January 25, 2002.)

⁸ Ryan, “Don’t Blame Marin”, A27.

METHODOLOGY

The survey consisted of a 15-minute telephone interview. The instrument was developed by the Institute for Jewish & Community Research and incorporated many questions that have been used in previous polls conducted by the Gallup Organization. This was done to enable us to make comparisons with national samples. As with the studies conducted by the Gallup Organization, the terms used in this study, such as God, and prayer, meditation, are self-defined by the respondent.

The sample was obtained through random digit dialing of approximately 10,300 telephone records obtained from Survey Sampling. The sampling error is usually expressed as the margin of error around an estimate obtained from a sample, and it is reported with a confidence level of 95%. This confidence level means that if repeated samples of the same population and with the same size were taken, the estimate for the same parameter obtained from these samples will fall 95% of the time within the range constructed around the statistics for the whole population, plus or minus the margin of error.

The margin of error expresses the interval within which there is a certain probability (the confidence level) that an estimate from a sample varies by chance from the true population parameter. The margin of error is larger as the sample size gets smaller. This means that estimates for subgroups of the population based on smaller numbers will be subject to a larger error due to sampling. Therefore particular care must be taken against giving too much significance to differences between groups based on a small number of cases.

Throughout this report, where percentages do not add to 100%, it is because of computer rounding, multiple answers, or “not reported,” (i.e. respondent refused to answer a question). In addition, the terms “residents,” “households,” “population” and so on refer to the respondents of the survey.

A total of 604 completed interviews were obtained. The interviewing phase of the study was managed by CFMC of San Francisco, California. All fieldwork was conducted by Merrill Research and Associates of San Mateo, California. Interviews were conducted between April 7, 2000 and May 1, 2000.

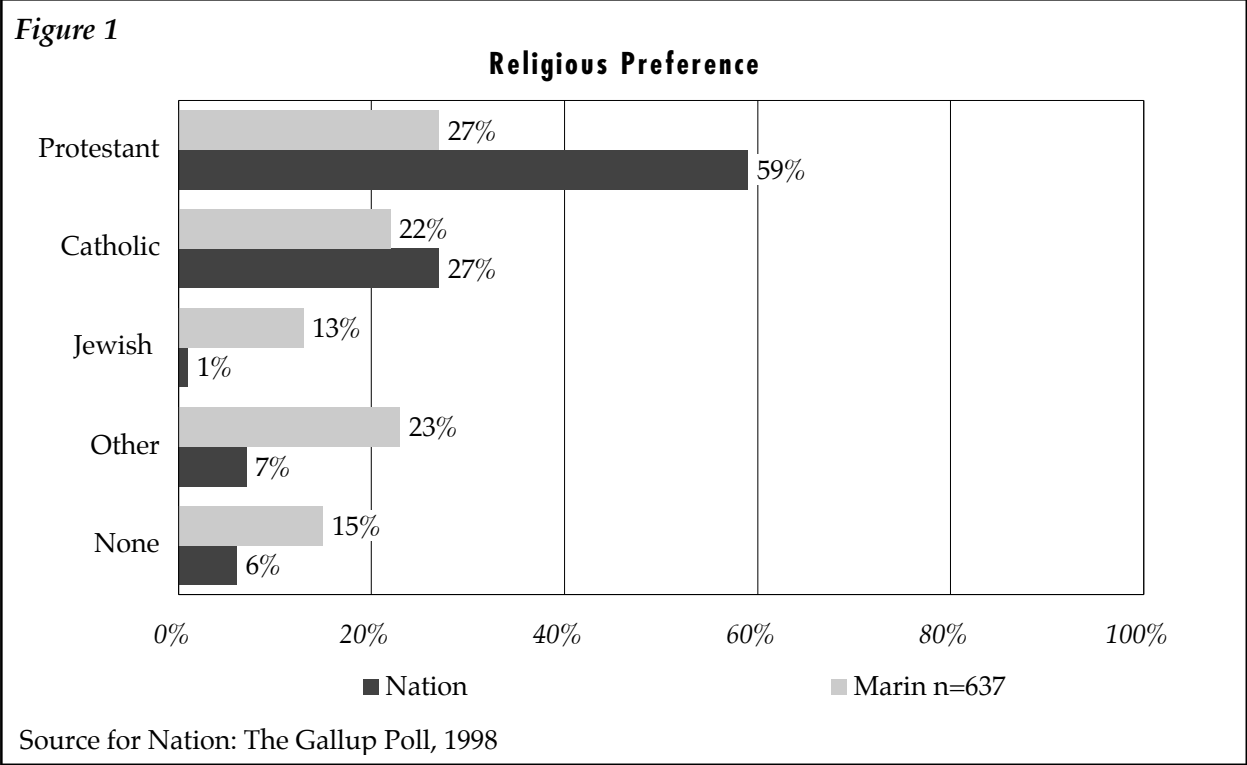
RELIGIOSITY AND SPIRITUALITY IN MARIN BY RELIGIOUS GROUP

Our findings confirm the anecdotal evidence that Marin is a vibrant religious and spiritual space. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the Marin respondents say that they are religious or spiritual. Eighty-four percent (84%) believe in God or a “Higher Power” and 96% have religious scriptures in their home.

Marin is also very diverse religiously and spiritually, much more in fact than the nation as a whole.⁹ Twenty-seven percent (27%) identify themselves as Protestant, 22% as Catholic, 13% as Jewish, 23% Other, and 15% state no religious preference (None). These statistics indicate that Marin has a population that is almost seven times more Jewish (13%

vs. 2%), three times more Other (23% vs. 7%), more than two times more None (15% vs. 6%), 5% less Catholic (22% vs. 27%) and 50% less Protestant (27% vs. 59%) than the national population. The sample size did not allow analysis by specific denomination within Judaism and Christianity. Baby Boomers and those in the subsequent generations make up the vast majority of the Other and None population in the county (see Figure 1).

Many people in Marin are what sociologist Robert Wuthnow has termed “spiritual seekers.” These are people, influenced directly or indirectly by the 1960s, who rather than practicing the religions in which they were raised,

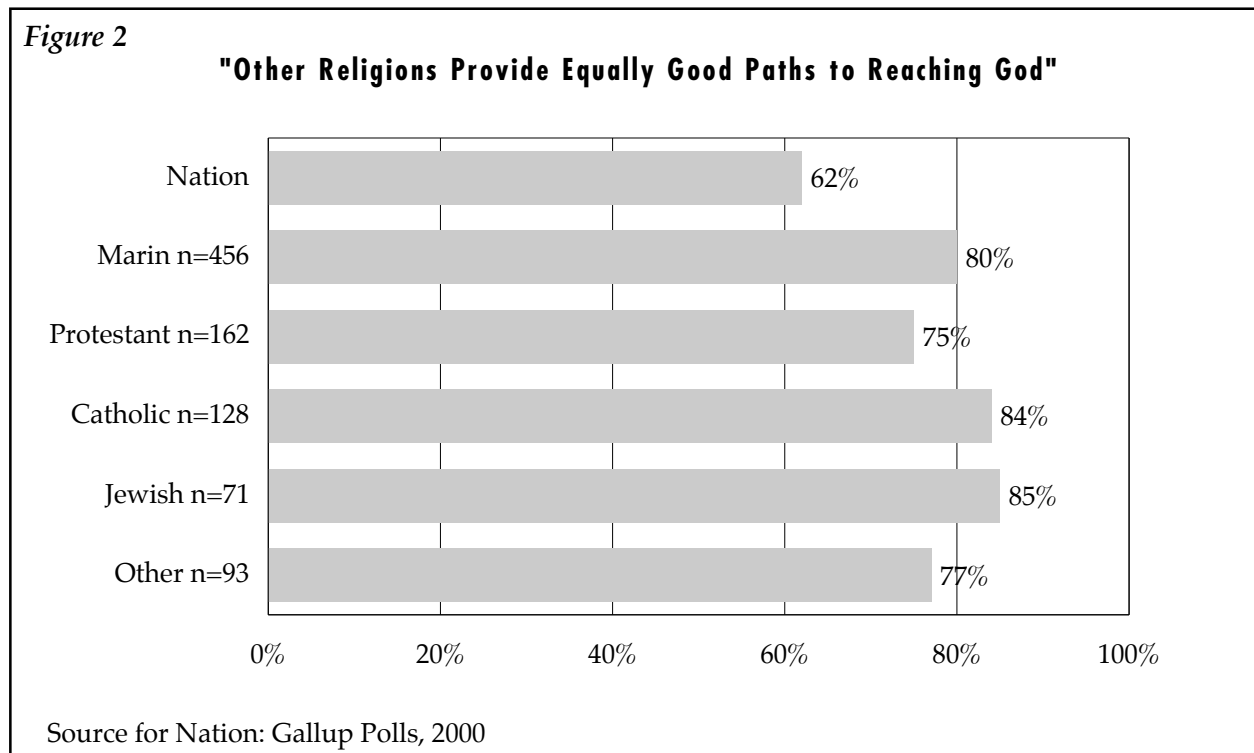


⁹ In this report, we use the definitions of spiritual and spirituality given by Robert Wuthnow in *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

are instead actively seeking the truth on their own, by trying and borrowing from different, particularly non-Western, religious traditions.¹⁰ In terms of the composition of the Marin Other population, for example, the largest subset (26%) practices Buddhism, either alone, or in a few cases, in combination with other religions such as Christianity, or New Age religions such as Celtic spirituality. Nineteen percent (19%) identify as Agnostic, 18% as Atheist, 3% as Hindu and 2% as Muslim.¹¹ Beyond these groups, adherents in small numbers identify their religious preferences as Taoism, Baha'i, Rastafarianism, "goddess religion," paganism, "love," "no name, new paradigm," and "metaphysical," among others. The pre-tests indicate that the numbers of the Buddhists, Muslims and

Hindus were too statistically insignificant to include in separate categories. Further research is necessary to understand the beliefs and practices of these faiths as well as subgroups within Judaism and Christianity. This will require a larger sample as well as qualitative research including personal interviews and focus groups.

In looking at data for the Other group, we should note that less than 5% of Marin residents are of Asian descent, thus the popularity of Buddhism and other Eastern religions should not be attributed to the presence of a large number of Asian-Americans.¹² Rather, as we will explore further in the next section about people who have switched religions, they are faiths to which Caucasians have



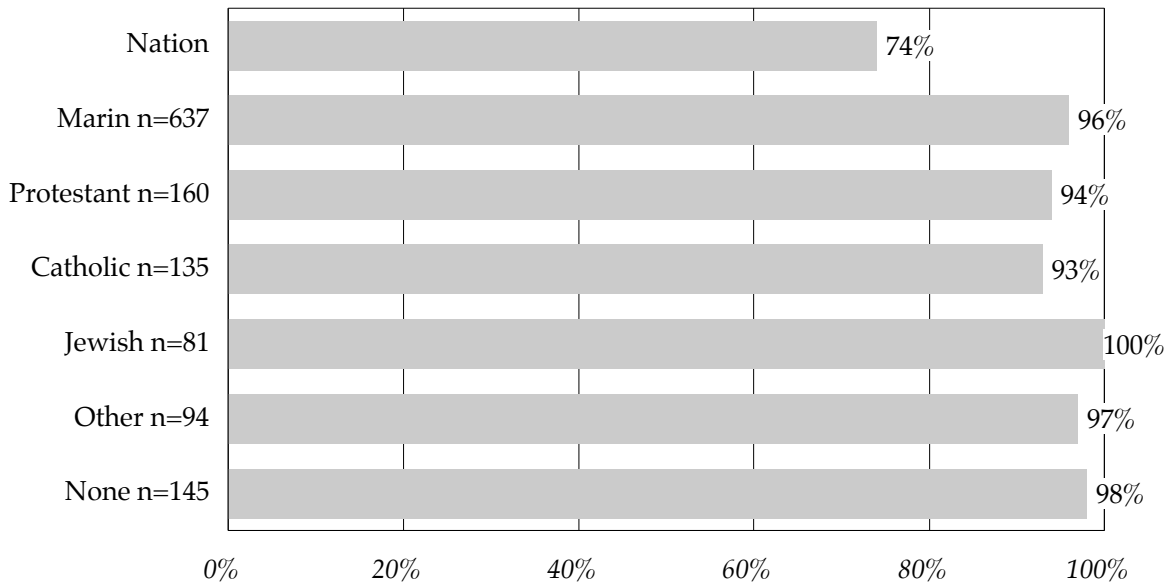
10 Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*.

11 The placement of people identifying themselves as "atheist" and "agnostic" has varied between studies. Some have placed them in the None category while others have done what we have and placed them within the Other category.

12 United States Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Figure 3

"A Person Can Be Good and Ethical Without Believing in God"



Source for Nation: George H. Gallup International Institute, Survey for William Moss, 1994

journeyed in their search for spiritual truth. Unlike most Western religions, Eastern religions as practiced in America do not require absolute loyalty to a system of belief. Rather the truth is constantly being searched for through experiences such as meditation and personally defined. Moreover, in moving to America, a number of these Eastern religions have transformed. The so-called American Buddhism, which primarily serves non-Asians, has moved away from the Asian cultural traditions and traditional hierarchy and controls of celibate Buddhist monks, to become a do-it-yourself religion that is largely lay-led and democratic.¹³ The behavior and beliefs of the different religious groups in Marin differ in a number of areas. However, there are some key areas of commonality.

Sites of Agreement

Tolerance, Ethics and Being Religious

First, the vast majority of all the religious groups in Marin, including the Jews (85%) and Catholics (84%), believe that other religions provide equally good paths to reaching God. These figures approximate those of the Marin average (80%) while significantly exceeding the national average (62%) (see Figure 2).¹⁴

These statistics may partially explain why 51% of the Marin households have switched religions as well as why so many have no specific religious preference. Some people may have chosen to practice their non-birth faith or a mix of religions for reasons other

13 Richard Cimino and Don Lattin, *Shopping for Faith: American Religion in the New Millennium* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 21; Barry Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1993), 152-154.

14 No members of the None group answered this question, most likely because it assumed that respondents practiced a specific religion.

than that they were displeased with the religion in which they were raised. Perhaps, some may have switched because there is a general atmosphere of tolerance which allows them to feel secure in trying other religions without feeling that by doing so they are going to be ostracized socially, or worse, lose their soul.

Even more significant than the high rate of religious tolerance in Marin and in America generally today is that nearly all, and in the case of Jews, 100%, of the religious groups in Marin agreed that “a person can be good and ethical and not believe in God.” In this case, the numbers vastly exceed the 74% figure for the national population (see Figure 3).

Although the meaning and existence of God is paramount in the religious structures with which people in Marin identify, individuals do not see belief in God as necessary for themselves or others. Essentially all people in

Marin believe that belief in God and, by extension, religious authorities, is not the only way to ethical behavior. Such behavior and standards of right and wrong can be taught by secular teachers, parents (who may or may not believe in God), friends, the natural world or literature.

Fewer people in Marin, especially Protestants and Catholics, believe that one can be religious and not believe in God. But in all cases, the numbers are still clearly a majority (see Figure 4).

How do we explain these figures? The term “religious” is commonly defined to mean believing in or being devoted to God. However, 53% of the Marin population believes in a “Higher Power” rather than God. Some of these people might well consider themselves religious despite referring to their divine as a “Higher Power” and not God. In addition, we should ask how differ-

Figure 4

"A Person Can Be Religious Without Believing in God"

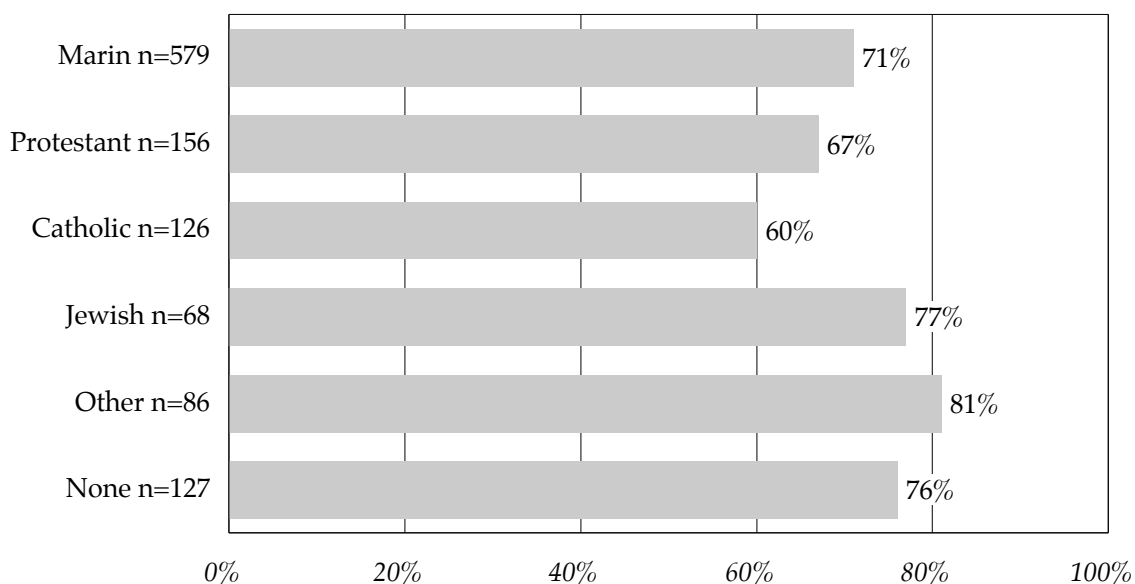
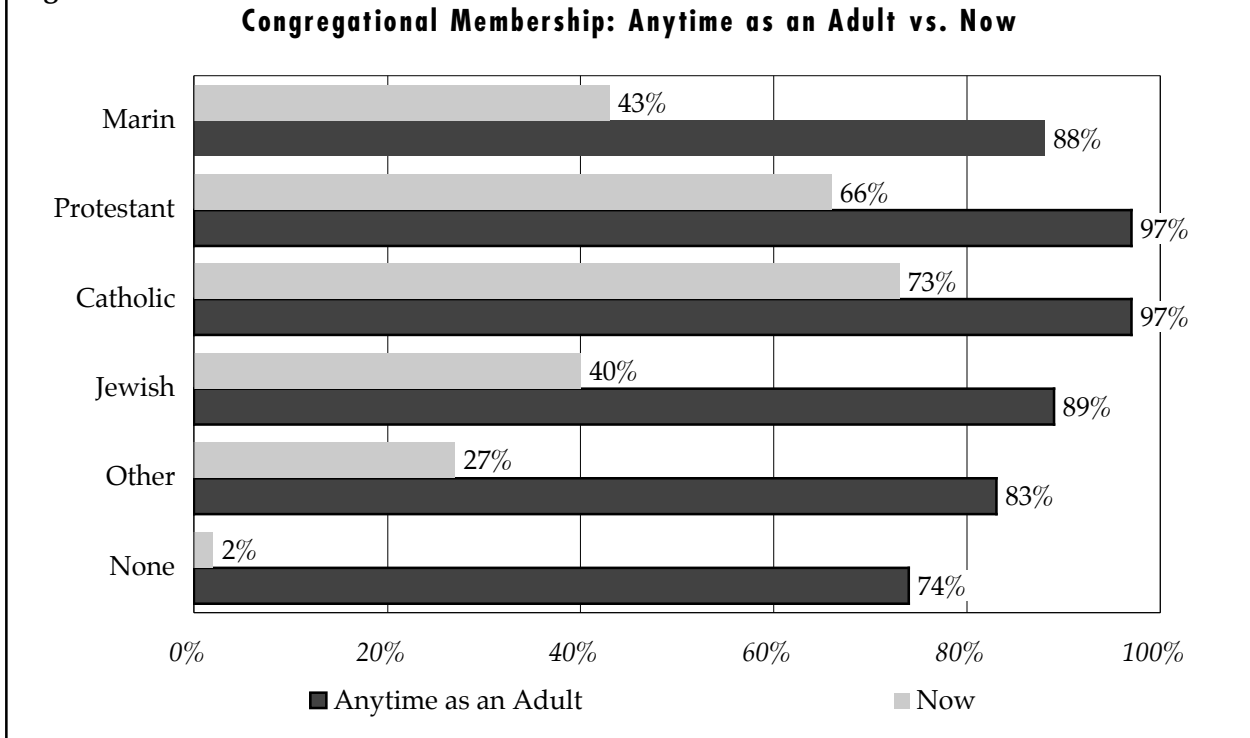


Figure 5



ent respondents define the term “religious.” Does it necessarily have to refer to one’s beliefs or can it mean simply devotedly performing certain rituals?

Charitable Giving and Volunteering

The last areas where the religious groups are in broad agreement are charitable works and giving. Nearly 90% or more people belonging to each religious group gave food, clothing, and other non-monetary items to charities in the past year. The Jews at 96% were slightly higher in their giving than the Marin total of 91% and the national average of 84%. Despite the fact that Protestantism also believes that charity is important, its practitioners contributed at a slightly lower rate (88%) than the Catholics (94%). The Protestant figure approximated the giving rates of the Other (89%) and None (88%) groups.

A large majority of each religious group also gave monetary assistance to charities. The Protestants were just slightly lower (84%) in giving than the Jews (90%) and the Catholics (89%). All of these groups gave at higher rates than Marin overall (82%) and the national average (79%). The monetary donation levels for the Other and None group were lower than the other groups, but at 75% and 74%, still indicate that the majority of the members of these groups also believes in the importance of supporting charities with cash as well as in-kind contributions.

The giving levels of Protestants, Catholics and Jews are significantly higher than those in the Other and None groups. The None numbers may partially be explained by the fact that non-congregational members, which in this case covers almost all of the None population and more than 70% of the Other

population, generally give less to charities than congregational members.¹⁵

In the area of volunteering for charities, practitioners of the Other and None populations behaved much more like the Protestants, Catholics and Jews with 61% of the Other group and 63% of the None group volunteering, contradicting studies that argue that the rate of volunteering is directly related to the rate of congregational membership. Catholics volunteered at exactly the same 61% rate as those in Other religions.

However, Protestants (70%) and Jews (68%) did slightly better. Volunteerism for Marin respondents in aggregate (65%) exceeded the national volunteering rate of 56%. This statistic confirms the findings of national studies which show a directly link between income level and volunteering rate.

Thus the vast majority of each of the religious groups believes in religious tolerance, performs charitable activities, and believes that one can be good and ethical without believing in God. It is in the areas of worship-related behavior, the language used to describe God and belief, their critiques of religion, and their concepts of the afterlife that the groups diverge.

Sites of Divergence

Congregational Membership, Past and Present

Marin, in aggregate, had a much lower congregational membership rate compared to the national population, 43% vs. 68%. Yet at the

same time the county rate was much higher than some may have believed. Considered by individual religious group, the membership rates varied widely. In fact, Marin Protestants and Catholics, at the rates of 66% and 73%, approximated the level of national average of 69%. In contrast, those preferring Other and no specific religion had very low level of current membership, with the later group belonging at a rate of only 2%. The Jewish population, at 40%, belonged at a rate approximating the county's average (see Figure 5).¹⁶

The Marin Jewish findings are consistent with national studies: the rate of congregational affiliation is low for non-Orthodox Jews across the country. There are also low levels of belonging in the Other and None populations. Members of these populations, however, may belong to groups/communities which provide the spiritual and social sustenance that congregations traditionally have offered.

Robert Wuthnow and others have shown that a large number of people of all backgrounds in America are turning to these groups to seek spiritual sustenance. Among these "new" spiritual communities are meditation groups, self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, spiritually oriented classes, retreats and small prayer gatherings. These communities tend to be organized on less formal and hierarchical lines than congregations.

Marin offers many opportunities to join such communities. Local residents offer classes in in spiritual drumming, singing and yoga. The

15 Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1999.

16 In looking at both statistics, we should be aware that people generally over-report their congregational membership by nearly 100%.

spiritually oriented bookstore has become a community center with regularly scheduled gatherings and talks. Women gather in informal prayer groups. At the local community college, a number of courses with a spiritual character are offered. Among them are “Stirring the Water: Writing to Find Your Spirit” and “Lunchtime Enlightenment,” which the teacher describes as blending “the best of modern Western science with the ancient teaching of Chinese medicine and yoga therapy.” Recent conferences have been organized around talks by the Dalai Lama and Dr. Deepak Chopra, one of the earliest advocates of incorporating the spirit as well as the body in healing. Anyone wanting to go on retreat can turn to the local Buddhist retreat center or drive north to the Immaculate Heart Hermitage, or the Esalen Institute, where they can soak in the natural hot springs and learn “mind brainwave training” or tai chi. None of these places requires that guests be members of the institution or the faith tradition running the centers. People are free to come and deepen their personal relationship with God in the space that they need. Of course, the same opportunities and more are available throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Participation in any of the above events is missed in our method of measuring religious behavior through congregational membership. Yet clearly, these are practices in which individuals are trying to reach the divine or participate in a spiritual, moral, and ethical life. For a number of people in Marin, yoga and meditation centers, twelve-step meetings, classes on spirituality, spiritual bookstores, and retreat centers may have become their present-day church, temple, or mosque. Further research will be required to determine the level of participation in these activities.

The majority of all groups did belong to congregations as children. Seventy percent (70%) of the Other and None groups were members of congregations as children. Protestants (83%), Catholics (91%), and Jews (79%) were even more likely to be members. Nearly four of every five (79%) Marin residents were members of congregations growing up. When we include congregational membership at anytime during one’s adulthood, the numbers grow even higher, 88% of Marin residents were members. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of Protestants were members sometime when they were adults, along with 89% of Jews, 83% of the members of the Other group, and 74% of members of the None group.

Yet sometime after this peak in membership, large numbers of all groups left congregational life. Jewish congregational belonging has dropped from 89%, at some time in one’s adult life, to 40% currently. Catholic congregational belonging dropped from 97% to 73%. Protestant belonging dropped from 97% to 66%. Inclusion in the Other group dropped from 83% to less than a third of this level at 27%, and belonging in the None population dropped precipitously from 74% to 2%. The Marin average dropped from 88% to 43%.

We asked respondents who did not belong to a congregation at the time of being surveyed why they did not belong. The top four reasons given by the county as a whole were: “not interested” (27% of respondents), “do not like organized religion” (15%), “not religious enough” (11%), and “some other reason” (28%). “Not interested” and “some other reason” remained top explanations when we looked at the population by religious group. Twenty-three percent (23%) of

Protestants said they were not members because they were “not interested” as did 28% of the Catholics, 20% of the Jews, 17% of the Other group and 34% of the None group. In addition, 25% of Protestants did not join because of “some other reason;” this explanation was also given by 22% of the Catholics, 24% of the Jews, 38% of the Other group and 25% of the None group.

Given that “some other reason” was chosen as an explanation by so many of each group, it would be worthwhile to find out what some of the other reasons were. What we can discount, because they were among the other available choices, are, lack of interest, insufficient religiosity, dislike of organized religion, geography, lack of time, and inability to find a compatible congregation. Moreover, these respondents did not indicate that they had just moved to the area nor were they in the process of looking to join a congregation.

Some possible “other” reasons may be related to age, marital and/or familial status. Our findings indicate that younger and/or single individuals and people without young children are less likely to become members. Thirty-five percent (35%) of people under 36 years of age join congregations compared to 46% of people over age 36. Moreover, only 37% of singles are members compared to 47% of married/partnered people. Finally, 41% of people without children or with grown children compared to 50% of parents with children under age eighteen belong to congregations. Perhaps churches, synagogues, mosques and temples are seen as places primarily serving, and more welcoming to, somewhat older, partnered people with young children.

One thing that is noticeable in our findings is that members of the Other group were much more likely than people in other religious groups to state “some other reason” as their primary reason for not becoming a congregation member. Considering that the majority of the Other population are affiliated with religions that are organized on less formal structures those of Western origin, this is understandable. One can identify as a Buddhist in Marin, for example, regularly meditate and attend retreats without being a formal member of a temple. Additionally, 37% of those in the Other category identified themselves as atheists or agnostics, making it more unlikely that they would belong to a congregation.

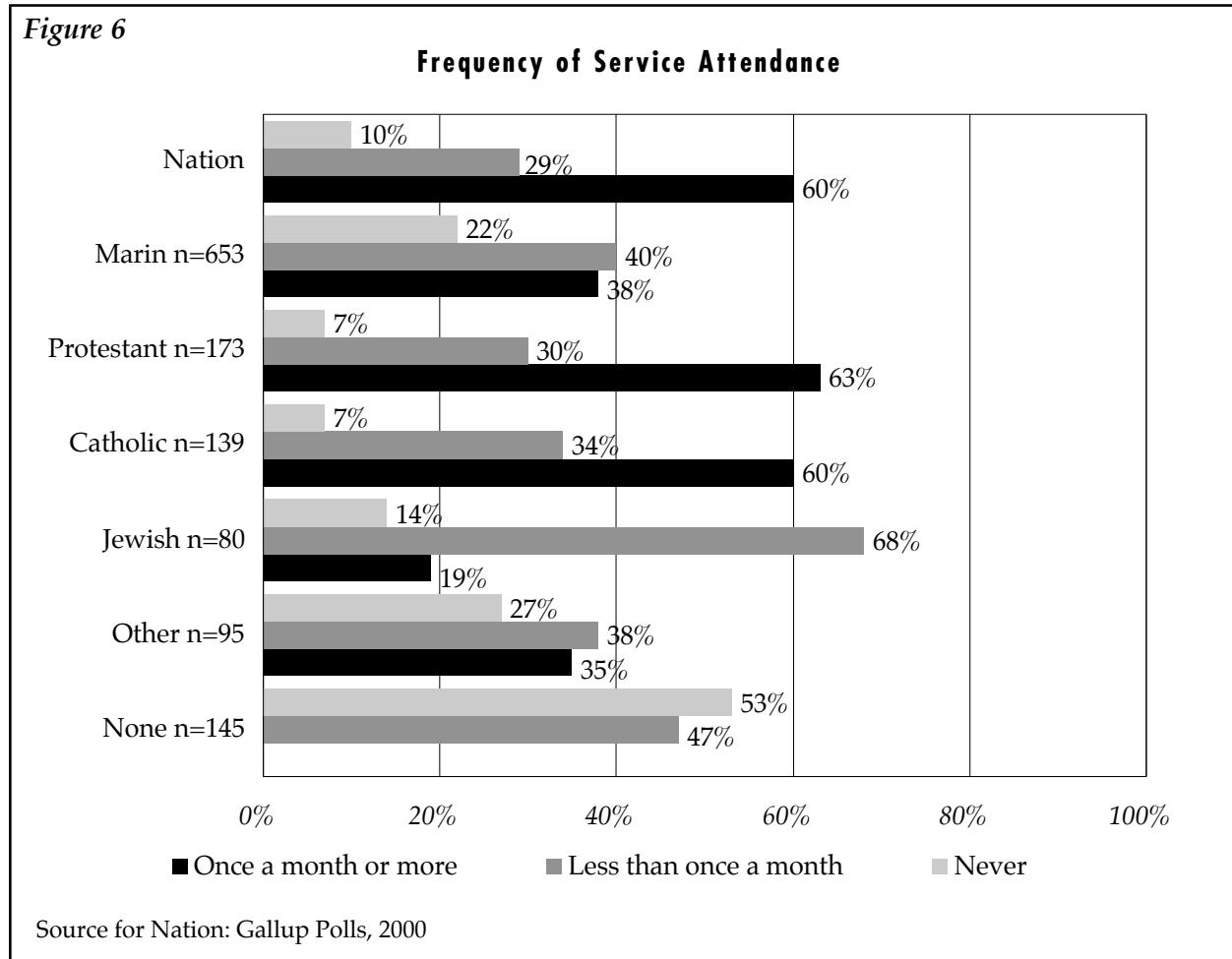
The other top reasons why people did not belong to a congregation varied by religious group. Some Catholics (28%) and Protestants (12%) indicated that lack of time was the major factor for their decision. Other Catholics (9%) did not join because they felt they were “not religious enough;” they were joined by 16% of the Jews and 16% of the None group. Fifteen percent (15%) of the None group joined nearly one-third (30%) of the Other group and 14% of the Protestants in withholding their membership because they “do not like organized religion.” Ten percent (10%) of Protestants could not find a congregation they liked. Finally, 11% of the Jews were alone in saying that cost prevented them from joining a congregation.

Low congregation membership rates can be attributed, depending on religious group, to lack of interest, dislike of organized religion, lack of time, low level of religiosity or inability to find a suitable congregation. Moreover, approximately 25% or more of each religious

group indicated their reason for not joining was not among the choices available. These “other reasons” may be related to age, marital and/or familial status. In part, the large numbers of people that indicated a lack of interest in membership and organized religion may be attributed to the inability, perceived or real, of congregations to meet the spiritual and religious needs of these people. Congregational membership varies in Marin. Some residents are finding that religious congregations are not the type of communities for which they are looking. Yet others find exactly these qualities in congregations. Still others belong but do not attend or attend infrequently.

Service Attendance

Marin residents attend services at levels lower than the nation.¹⁷ Over three of every five (62%) of the Marin population either never attended services (22%) or attended services less than once a month (40%). Only 24% attended at least once a week, and only 38% attended once a month or more. In contrast, 35% of the national population attends once a week with nearly two-thirds (60%) attending at least once a month. Only 10% of the national population never attends services.

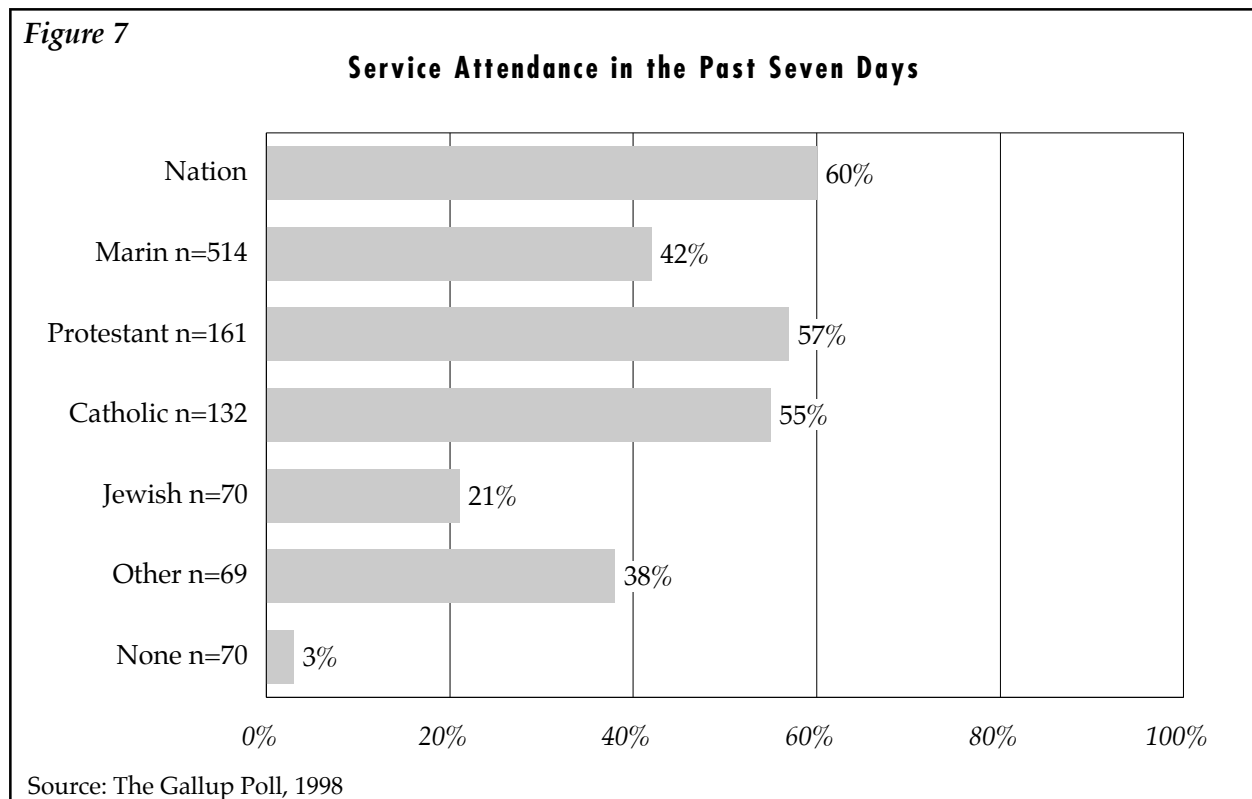


¹⁷ People generally over-report their service attendance by nearly 100%.

However, not all the religious groups in Marin had low levels of service attendance. Protestants and Catholics equaled or exceeded national levels. Forty-three percent (43%) of Protestants and 38% of Catholics attended at least once a week. The majority of both Protestants (63%) and Catholics (60%) attended services once a month or more and only 7% of each group never attended services. In contrast, Jews attend at a much lower rate, with only 9% attending at least weekly and only a slightly larger number, 19%, attending once a month or more. The vast majority (68%) attended less than once a month, most likely only on special occasions and holidays such as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Interestingly, the Other group is nearly twice as likely (18%) as Jews to attend services weekly as well as twice as likely (35%) as Jews to attend services monthly. The Other group is also, at 27%, twice as likely as Jews

(14%) to never attend services. Not surprisingly, half (53%) of the None population never attends services, but the other half (47%) did attend, albeit less than once a month (see Figure 6).

The same pattern of service attendance can also be seen when looking at activity over the week prior to when the respondent was surveyed. Here we see that 57% of Protestants and 55% of Catholics attended during this period, statistics nearly identical to the 60% of the nation who attended during the same period. The Other population, at a rate of 38%, approximated the Marin average of 42%, and attended at higher rates than Jews (21%). As in the previous graph, only a tiny (3%) number of those following no specific religion attended services in week prior to being surveyed (see Figure 7).



When analyzing the data for Figures 6 and 7, the above two charts, we need to keep several things in mind. First, traditional religion in Marin is still strong. Protestant and Catholic service attendance is as high as the national average. Second, Jews in America have traditionally attended services at significantly lower rates than Protestants and Catholics. Among non-Orthodox Jews, regular service attendance does not play an important role in determining whether one is a “good Jew.” If there is one such litmus test in terms of service attendance, that would be the percentage of Jews who *never* attended services, even on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. When we look at that number, we see that it approximates that of Catholics and Protestants – only 14% of Jews never attend services during the year, a figure below the Marin average and significantly below that of the Other and None groups. When the holiest days of the year come around, most Jews can be found in synagogue.

In terms of interpreting the figures for the Other community, we should certainly note that services do seem to play a somewhat important role for this population, with more than one-third (35%) attending once a month or more, and 73% attending at least once a year. However, we should also note less formal and hierarchical forms of worship. This is particularly true as a number of this group formally practice Buddhism. Others borrow rituals from Buddhist practice. In this faith, worship can include non-service gatherings such as meditation sittings, retreats or lighting incense for home or temple altars. The lower level of service attendance should not be interpreted as lower levels of religiosity.

Similar care must also be taken when considering the figures for the None community. With 53% of people never attending, services obviously play a less important role even than for members of the Other group. But how many of these people are, like those in the Other group, worshiping in alternative ways? Moreover, almost half (47%) are attending services at least once a year.

Congregational Giving

Given its relatively low congregational affiliation level, one might expect that the Marin population would donate money to congregations at significantly lower rates than the nation. However, what we find is that both groups gave at essentially the same rate. Only 45% of the national population and 48% of the Marin population gave to congregations. Moreover, when we take into account congregational membership levels, we see that Marin was substantially *more* generous than the nation.

While only 43% of county residents are members, 48% gave to congregations. In contrast, while 68% of the nation are members, only 45% contributed funds. This translates into a contribution to membership ratio of 112% in Marin compared to only 66% among the nation. Marin Catholics, Protestants and Jews contribute to congregations at the same levels at which they belong. More surprising are the numbers for the Other and None groups. While only 27% of the Others belong to a congregation, 44% gave to such an institution. Similarly, while only 2% of the None group belong to a congregation, 12% gave to one. Thus, the respective contribution to membership ratios for these groups are 163% and 600% respectively.

Prayer: Forms

Our study indicates that people in Marin were more likely than the national population to use alternative, in particular Eastern, forms of prayer. We asked Marin residents which type of prayer they used most frequently: formal, conversational, meditative/reflective, or a combination of some of these methods. We found that people in Marin were nearly twice as likely as the national sample (27% vs. 15%) to use reflective or meditative prayers (meditation). Still, the vast majority of those in Marin are not using meditation (73%). At the same time, they were considerably less likely than the nation to use the formal or conversational prayers (51% Marin vs. 68% Nation) most commonly used in Western religious worship.

If we look at preference of prayer method by religious group, we find that Protestants and Catholics were the most likely to use traditional forms of prayer while the remaining groups were more likely to seek alternatives. The members of the Other (53%) and None (39%) groups, as well as the Jews (42%), were three times as likely as Protestants (16%) and Catholics (13%) to use meditative or reflective types of prayers. The large number of Jews using meditative prayers is not totally surprising considering the substantial number of people in the area who identify themselves “Jew-Bu’s.” These individuals, noting the similarity between some Buddhist techniques and Jewish mysticism, are re-integrating meditation in their method of prayer.

Consider, for example, the popularity of books such as *That’s Funny, You Don’t Look Buddhist: On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist* by Sylvia Boorstein, a founding teacher of Marin’s Buddhist retreat center, Spirit Rock,¹⁸ and *The Jew in the Lotus: a Poet’s Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India* by Roger Kamenetz.¹⁹

The Other (7%) and None (2%) groups were much less likely than the other groups to use formal prayers, giving support to the argument that formal services are not the primary format in which their practitioners worship, and thus figures about attendance at services are not the best yardstick by which to measure religiosity in these communities. On the other hand, considerably more Catholics and Jews used formal prayers, at the rates of 15% and 19% respectively. The largest segment of Catholics, 41%, as well as the majority of Protestants, 57%, used conversational prayers.

Prayer: Frequency

Marin residents were much less likely than the nation to pray. While 75% of Americans say that they pray at least once daily,²⁰ only 50% of Marin residents say they pray “frequently” or “a lot.” As with method of prayer, Protestants and Catholics behaved more like the national population than the Marin average. Approximately two-thirds of each of these groups prays “frequently” or “a lot.” Unexpectedly, a similar number of the Other group also chose these categories. On

18 Sylvia Boorstein, *That’s Funny, You Don’t Look Buddhist: On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

19 Roger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the Lotus: a Poet’s Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995).

20 The LIFE Survey on Prayer conducted by the Gallup Organization for the LIFE, March 1994 issue.

the other hand, Jews, at a rate of 26%, were less likely to pray frequently; far more prayed only occasionally (40%), with more than a third, 35%, never praying. Only 13% of the None group prays frequently or “a lot;” 27% pray occasionally and 60% never pray (see Figure 8).

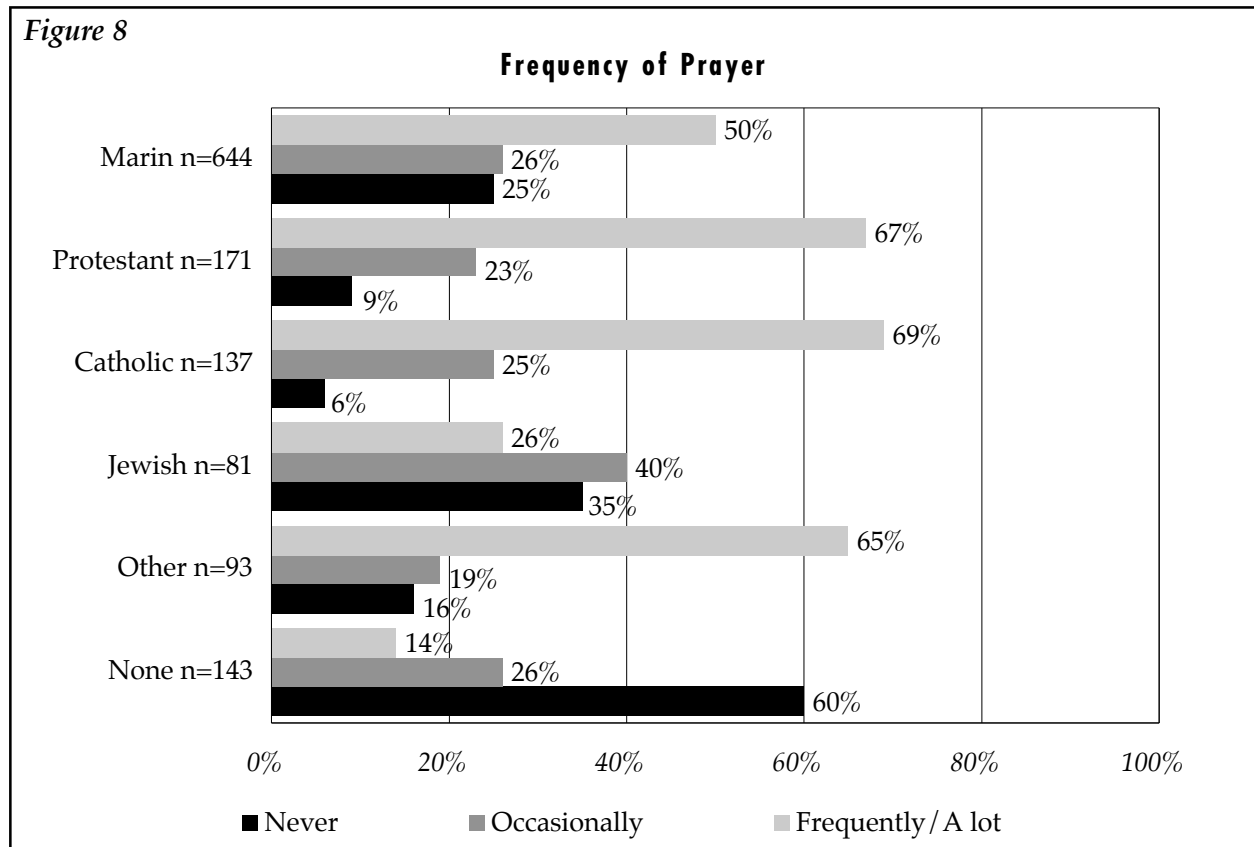
In analyzing these figures, we should recall that many Jews consider themselves cultural, rather than religious, Jews, and do not incorporate prayer on a regular basis into their cultural lives. In terms of the statistics for the None population, we need to find out more about what those in this population define as prayer. Moreover, the 40% who say they do pray at least occasionally further attests to the fact that the None group is not made up of people who necessarily reject religion and spirituality.

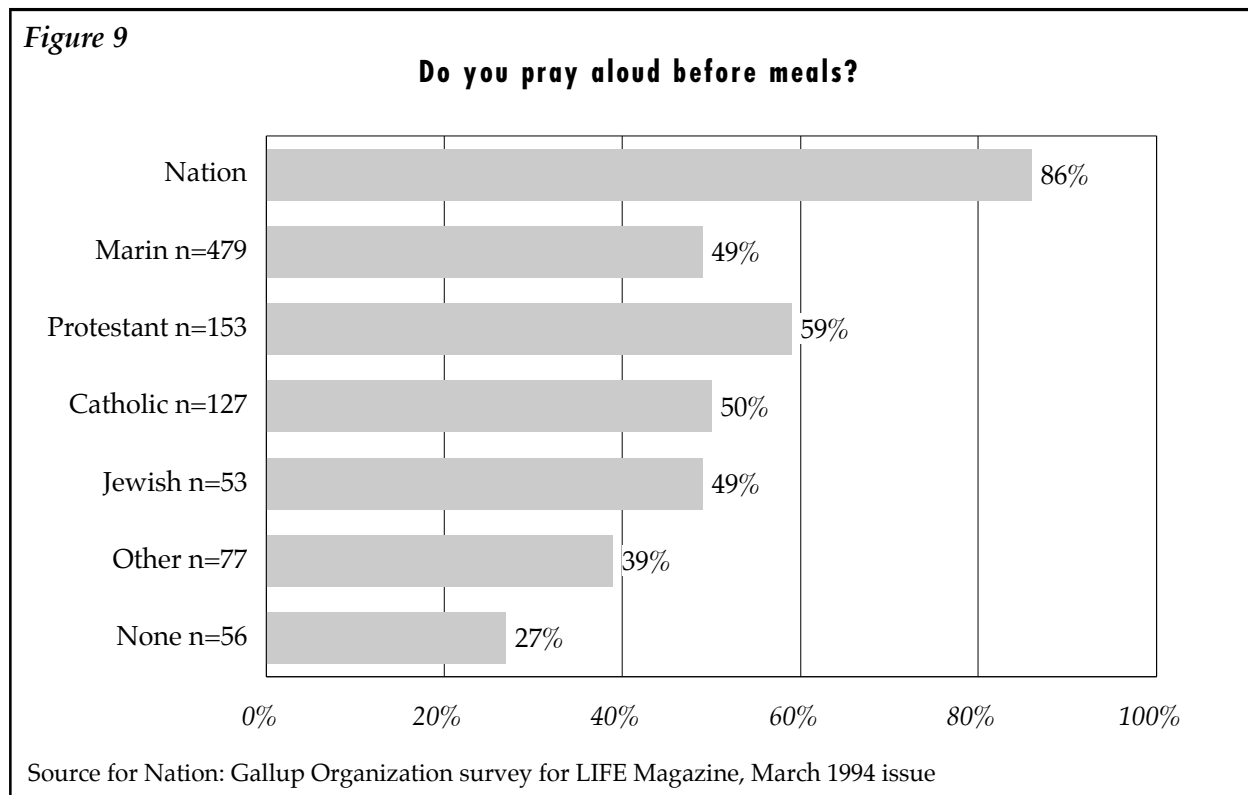
Prayer: Importance

It is notable that even among the None population, more than a third (35%) of the people believe that prayer is more important to them now compared to five years ago. This number is less than the Protestant (46%), Catholic (45%), Other (42%) and Marin (42%) figures, but higher than the Jewish figure (31%). The national figure was 55%. Significantly, less than 6% of any of the Marin religious groups believed that prayer had become less important to them. The remainder of all groups believed that prayer had the same level of importance as five years ago.

Prayer: Meals

The various groups differed, however, on where they prayed. In the more traditionally





associated activity of praying before meals, it was the Western religions where such prayer is most prevalent. One-half or more of the Protestant (59%), Catholic (50%) and Jewish (49%) populations engaged in this activity while approximately one-third of the Other (39%) and None (27%) groups did so. Again, while the None statistic is significantly lower than the other groups, it further attests to a certain level of religiosity and spirituality within the None population. Of course, this question did not ask how frequently respondents prayed at family meals, whether it was once a day, once a week or once a year. Nationally, 86% of people pray at meals (see Figure 9).

Reading Scripture

Reading religious scriptures also plays a less important role in Marin residents' lives than it does nationally. While nearly all residents

have religious scriptures in their homes, almost one-half (46%) never read them, with an additional 34% only reading them occasionally. In contrast, 47% of the national population read scriptures at least once a week, 17% read them at least once a month and 19% read them less than once a month. Only 16% said they never read them. However, the statistics varied by religious group (see Figure 10).

While our numbers have indicated that meditative practices are an important form of religious practice for the Other population, the majority also study their holy texts. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the Other group study texts "frequently" or "a lot" with an additional third (34%) doing so occasionally. Not surprisingly, these figures do not exceed that of adherents to Protestantism, a religion which was founded on and continues to emphasize the idea of congregants being able

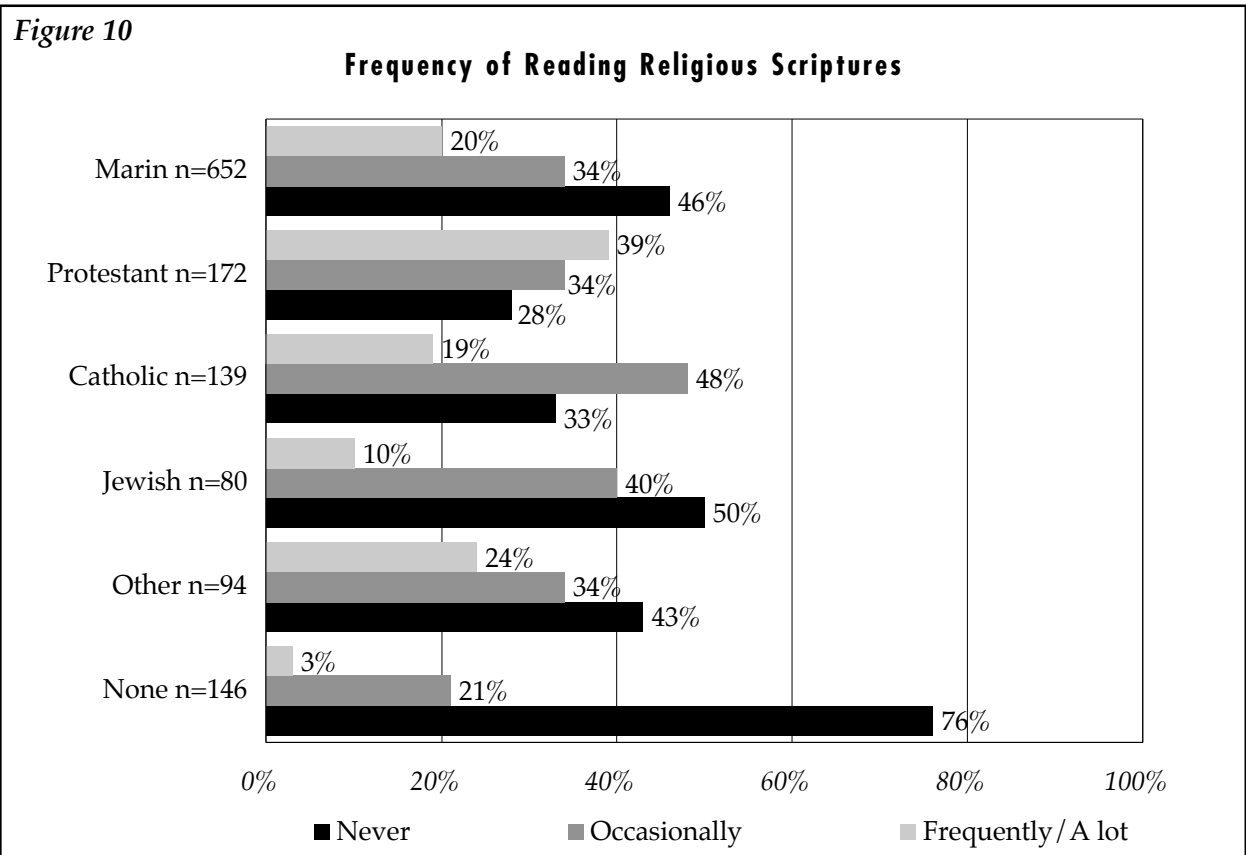
to read and interpret the Bible themselves. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the Protestants read the Bible “frequently” or “a lot” and an additional 34% did so “occasionally.”

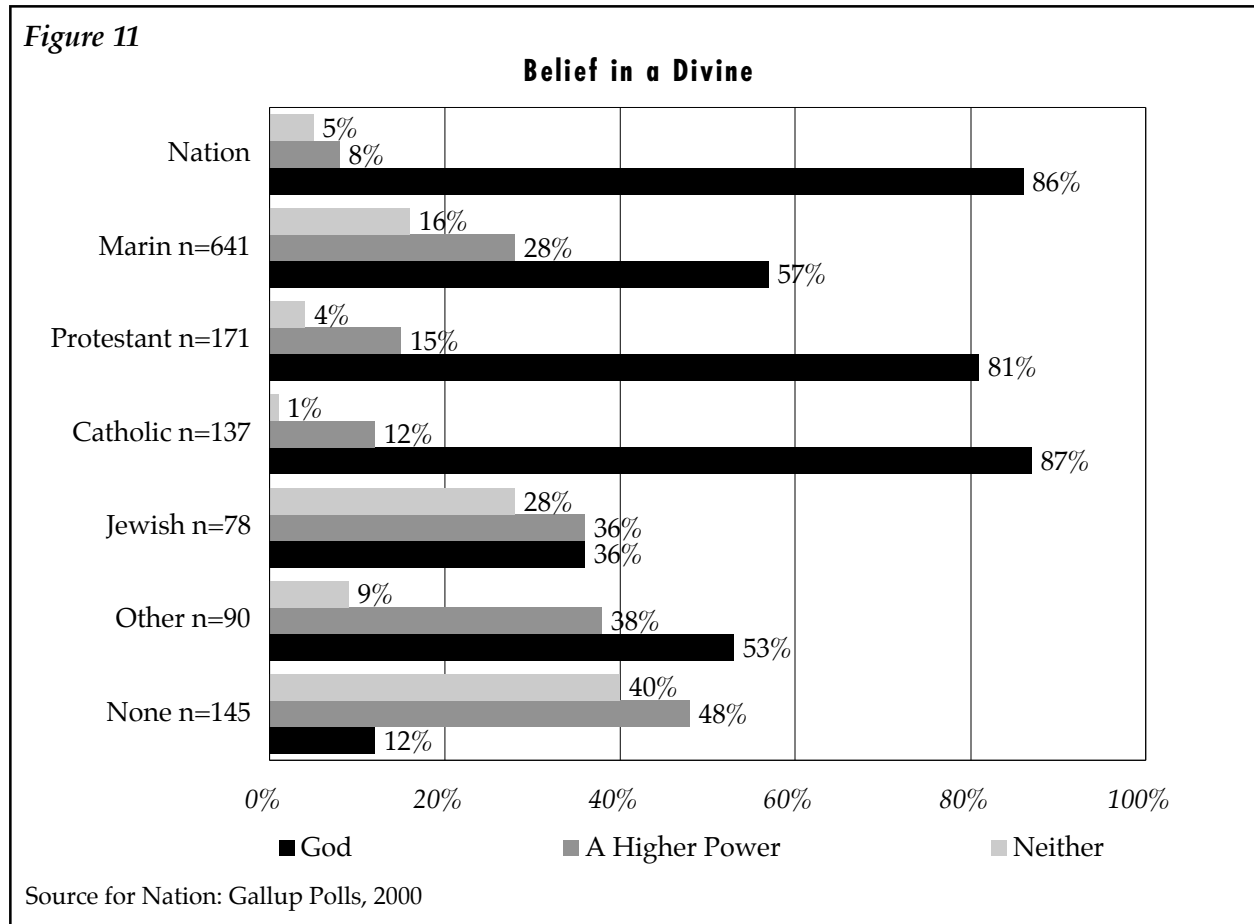
The rates for the Other group approximated those of the Catholics, at least in terms of who read their texts most often. Nineteen percent (19%) of Catholics read the Bible “frequently” or “a lot” and an additional 48% did so occasionally. Here the differences between the Catholics and Protestants are not surprising. The Catholic Church places more emphasis on ritual as the way to reach God. The Other group exceeded the scripture reading frequency of the Jews. Only 10% of the Jews read their holy texts, including the Torah, “frequently” or “a lot,” and 40% read them only “occasionally.” Note, though, that this does not at all mean that the rest of the Jews are not learning any scripture. As we

noted above, 86% of Jews attend services at least once per year, the vast majority of whom at least attend on the High Holidays. On the High Holy Days, and at regular Saturday Shabbat services, congregants hear the chanting of portions of the Torah, as well as a sermon/teaching on that portion. The faith practice of the None group does not focus on texts – a full 75% never read their holy scriptures; only 3% read their scriptures “frequently” or “a lot.”

Belief in a Divine

Belief in a divine force is high in Marin, albeit slightly lower than that of the nation as a whole. Eighty-four percent (84%) of county residents believe as compared to 95% of all Americans. When we look at beliefs by religious groups, we see that Protestants and Catholics were most likely to believe in a





divine presence, at rates of 96% and 98% respectively. Nearly all of the “Others” (91%) also believe. Jews, at 74%, believe at a lesser rate. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of those in the None group believe, highlighting again that the population’s lack of specific religious preference does not mean that members of this group are not religious / spiritual despite what other findings in this study may indicate.

However, Marin residents were less likely to describe the divine in conventional ways. Only 57% of Marin residents referred to their divine force as “God” compared to 86% of those in the nation. Twenty-eight percent

(28%) of the Marin population, but only 8% of the nation, said they believed not in God, but rather a “Higher Power.” This is most likely the result of the questioning of traditional authorities and concepts. Since the 1960s, an increasing number of people have become uncomfortable with using the word “God.” For the generation who became young adults during that period, the word has connotations of a masculine supreme being that was distant, severe and punishing. Some chose to stop believing in God altogether. But others created or resurrected new terms to refer to God, terms that did not have negative connotations (see Figure 11).²¹

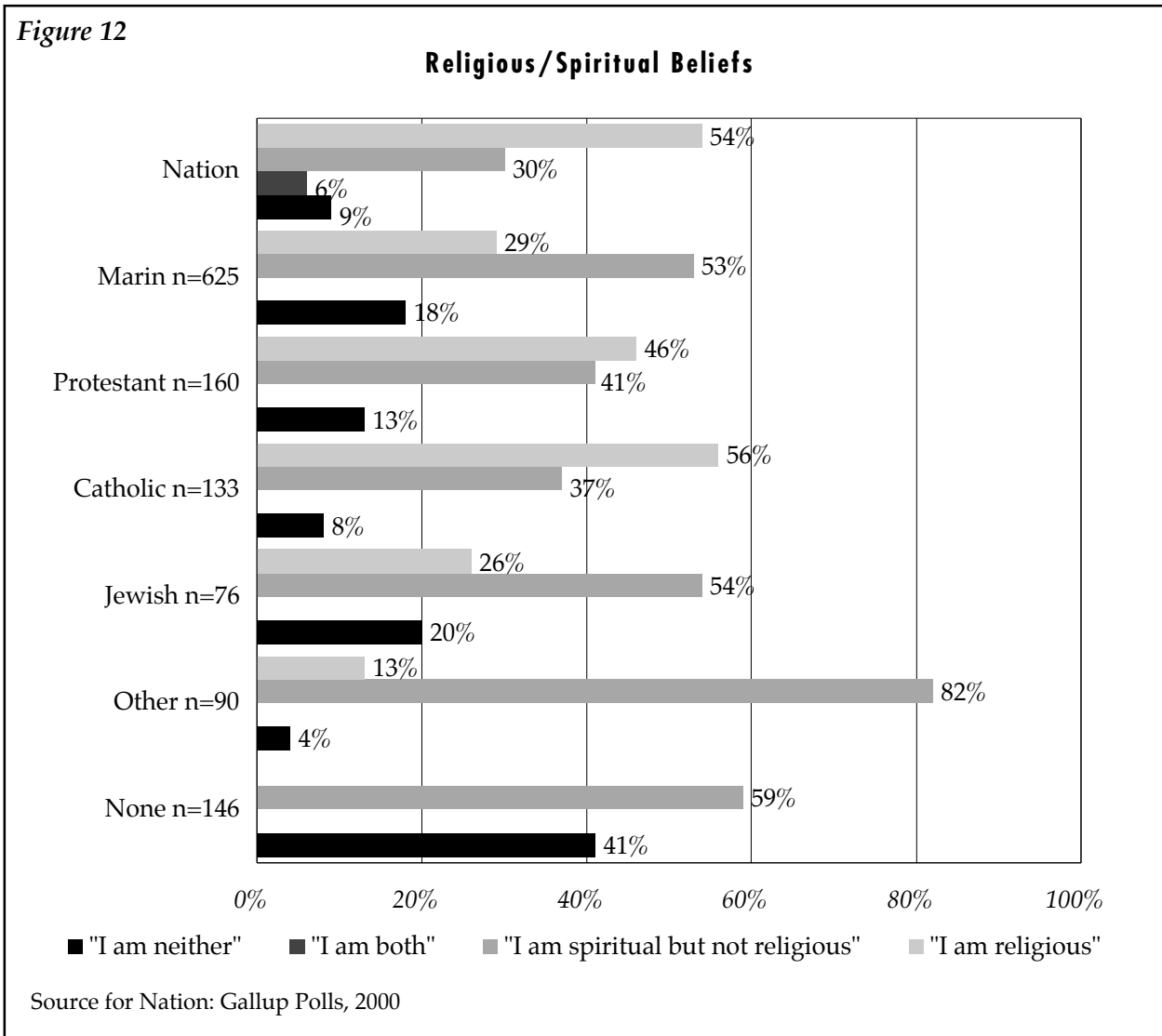
21 Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 54-56.

Protestants and Catholics, at 81% and 87% respectively, were the most likely to refer to the divine using the traditional name "God." They were joined by half of the Other group (53%), somewhat fewer Jews (36%) and only 12% of the None population. The rest of the None population (48%) rejected this language and stated instead that they "did not believe in a personal God but did believe in a "Higher Power." A significant number of the "Others" (38%) and the Jews (36%) did the same. Interestingly, even a notable number of Protestants (15%) and Catholics (12%), more than the national average, stated that they

believed in a "Higher Power" rather than God.

People in Marin also preferred to use non-traditional language when referring to the character of their beliefs, i.e. are you religious? The vast majority (82%) of those in the county declared that they are religious or spiritual. Ninety percent (90%) of the national population said the same. But the majority, 53% of those in Marin, stated that they are spiritual but not religious. The figure for the nation was 30%.

Figure 12



Religious Beliefs

What distinguishes the terms “religious” and “spiritual?” Studies have shown that the term “religious” usually is associated with religious institutions and adherence to beliefs and rules established by hierarchical religious bodies. In contrast, the term “spiritual” usually signifies a personal, emotional journey to the divine which may include use of psychology, alternative medicine, or recovery resources and allows considerable borrowing from different religious traditions, particularly those outside the Christian and Jewish mainstream.²²

The Other group, at 82%, is most likely to say they are “spiritual but not religious.” A smaller majority of the None group (59%) and the Jews (54%) says the same. In contrast, more than half of the Catholics (56%) and nearly half (46%) of the Protestants refer to themselves as “religious” only. Even among these groups, however, there is a significant move away from using traditional terms to refer to their beliefs; more than one-third of the Catholics (37%) and 41% of the Protestants refer to themselves as “spiritual but not religious” (see Figure 12).

Spiritual Growth, Religious Experiences, and Miracles

The importance of the “spiritual” in the lives of the Other population and the Marin population in general is viewed again in the survey query about spiritual growth. Here, the vast majority, 85%, of the Other group felt a need to experience spiritual growth. This type of growth was also important to the majority of Catholics 67%, Protestants 66%,

and Jews 55%, and almost half of the None group (46%). This was one statistic where the Other group, not the Christian groups, matched the national average (82%).

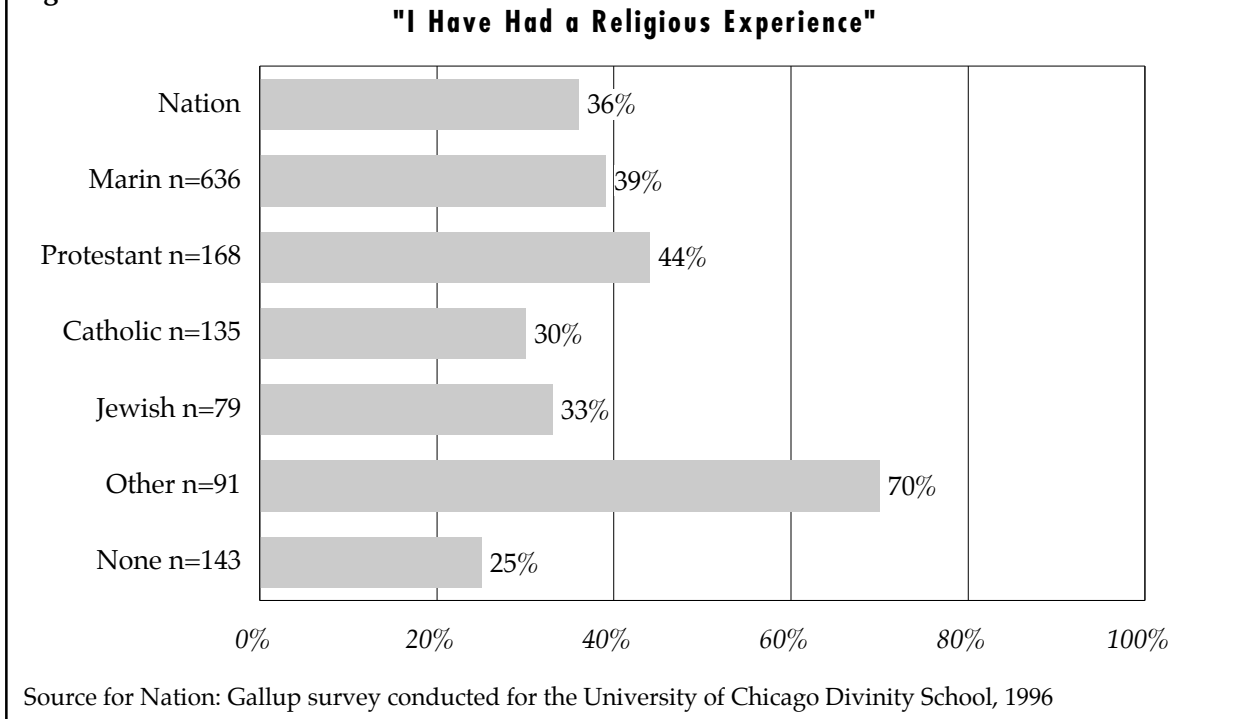
The statistics about “religious experience” – defined to the Marin respondents by the survey takers as “a particularly powerful, sudden religious insight or awakening” – add further evidence of the role of the “spiritual” in the lives of a number of people in Marin. This can be shown through the case of the Other population. We see in our chart that the vast majority of the Other group (70%) said they had a “religious experience.” The figure greatly exceeds the Marin (39%) and national (36%) averages, and as well as that of the remaining groups: 44% of the Protestants said they had a religious experience; 30% of the Catholics; 33% of the Jews; and 25% of the None population. This finding would be surprising if we only defined “religious experience” to mean a “born again” experience. However, for many members of the Other population, “religious experience” has a broader, more spiritual definition, separated from Christianity. These occurrences can include a particularly insightful meditation, revelation, a near-death or healing experience, or a sudden sensation of a deep connection with a deceased family member. For some members of the national Other population, it was this type of non-traditional, non-Christian, religious experience that resulted in their adopting non-Western beliefs and practices (see Figure 13).²³

Belief in miracles among the Other population was also very substantial, equaling the belief rate of the nation and exceeding the

22 Wuthnow, *After Heaven*; Cimino and Lattin, *Shopping for Faith*, 9-51.

23 Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, 174-175.

Figure 13



rate of the total Marin population. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the Other members believe in miracles compared with 79% of the nation and 66% of the total Marin population. Looking at the rest of the county's religious groups, Protestants and Catholics also strongly believed in miracles; the rates were 81% and 76% respectively. Only 43% of Jews and 40% of the None group believe in the same.

The widespread belief in miracles among the Christians, especially the Catholics, is not surprising given that miracles are used to explain many core parts of the faith such as Jesus' conception, his resurrection, and transubstantiation. What is more striking is the level of belief among the Other group. Here we should distinguish between the more biblically based definition of "miracles" that Christians use and the more spiritual and/or "New Age" definitions probably held by the Other population. In the latter definition,

incredible events do not have to result from the work of God, Jesus, or biblical figures, but can come about through the intervention of a less formally conceived, and less-Western, divine spirit, or through the work of non-Western or lay healers felt to be inspired by the divine. While miracles are described in the Torah, contemporary non-Orthodox Judaism does not emphasize them in its teachings.

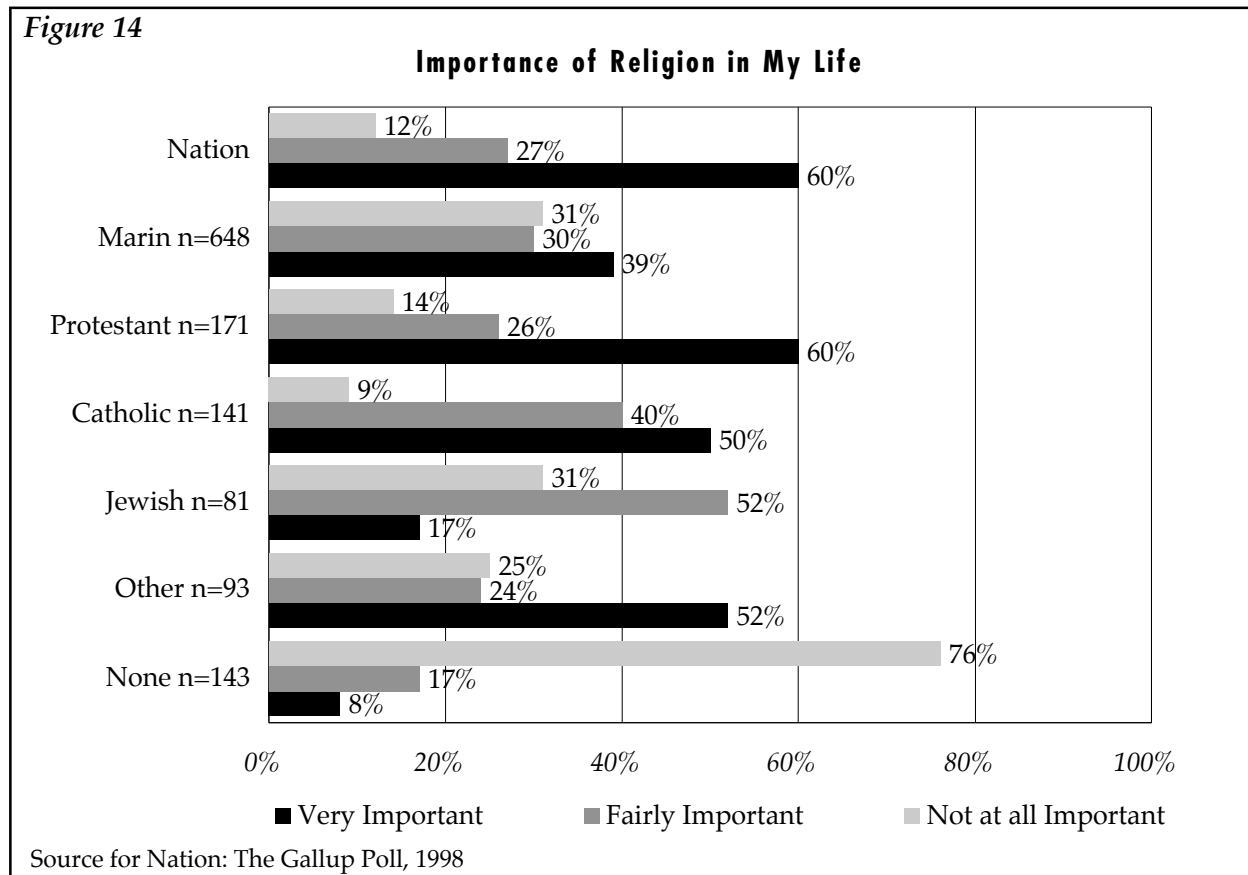
Strength of Identification with and Importance of One's Religion

Despite preferring the "spiritual" to the "religious" in their lives, the Other group (58%) was the most likely to say that they are "very strongly" identified with their religion. Their affinity level was significantly higher than that of the Protestants (49%), Catholics (45%), Jews (41%) and the Marin average (42%), and almost three times the rate of the None population (20%), which by definition is com-

prised of people with no specific religious affinity. The strength of the Other population's association is particularly striking given that 81% were not raised in their current faith, while in all but the None group, most had been members since birth. Of course, the fact that the majority of the Other group chose their current religion may explain their strong attachment to it. Usually for someone to switch a religion, one has to have a stronger connection to the religion into which one is going to be switching than the religion that is being left behind.

The majority of the Other group (52%) also stated that their religion is "very important" in their lives, a statistic partially explained by their deliberate choice to practice religions in this category. Fifty percent (50%) of Catholics and 60% of Protestants also rated their religion as "very important" in their lives. These

numbers were not far from the national figure of 59% and greatly exceeded the Marin average of 39%. Less than one-fifth of Jews felt the same way (17%), albeit the majority (52%) did say it was fairly important. The difference between the Jews and the other groups can be explained once again by the large number of people who identify themselves as cultural, but not religious, Jews. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the None group said that religion was not at all important in their lives. Given that 60% of this same group stated that they believe in God or a "Higher Power" and that 59% of them say that they are "spiritual but not religious," we need to ask whether the high number of people saying that religion is not important in their lives is a result of semantics – "religion" versus "spirituality" – and/or problems they may have with "organized religion" (see Figure 14).

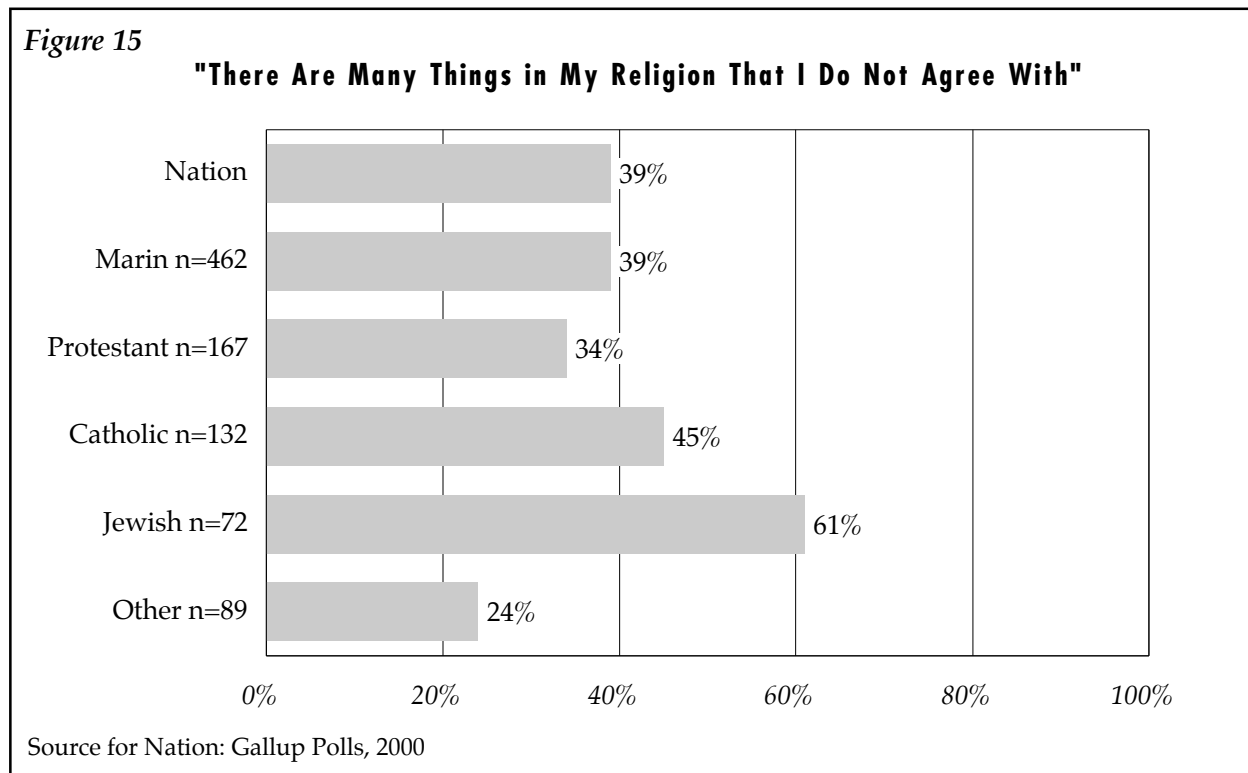


Religious Satisfaction

Given that such a large percentage of the Other group so strongly identifies with their religion and states that their religion plays a very important part in their lives, we should not be surprised that the Other group is very satisfied with their religion. The Other group was considerably more satisfied than the remaining religious groups. Only 24% of the Other category agreed that there were many things in their religion that they did not like. This was much less than the Marin and national dissatisfaction averages of 39%. This statistic is not so surprising given that 81% of the Other group chose to switch into their current religion. In contrast to the Other group, the majority of Jews (61%), as well as large numbers of Catholics (45%) voiced their dissatisfaction. National studies have shown

that American Catholics are particularly dissatisfied with the Vatican’s positions on birth control, divorce, and celibacy for priests.²⁴ Protestants (34%) were less likely to be dissatisfied than people practicing other Western religions (see Figure 15).

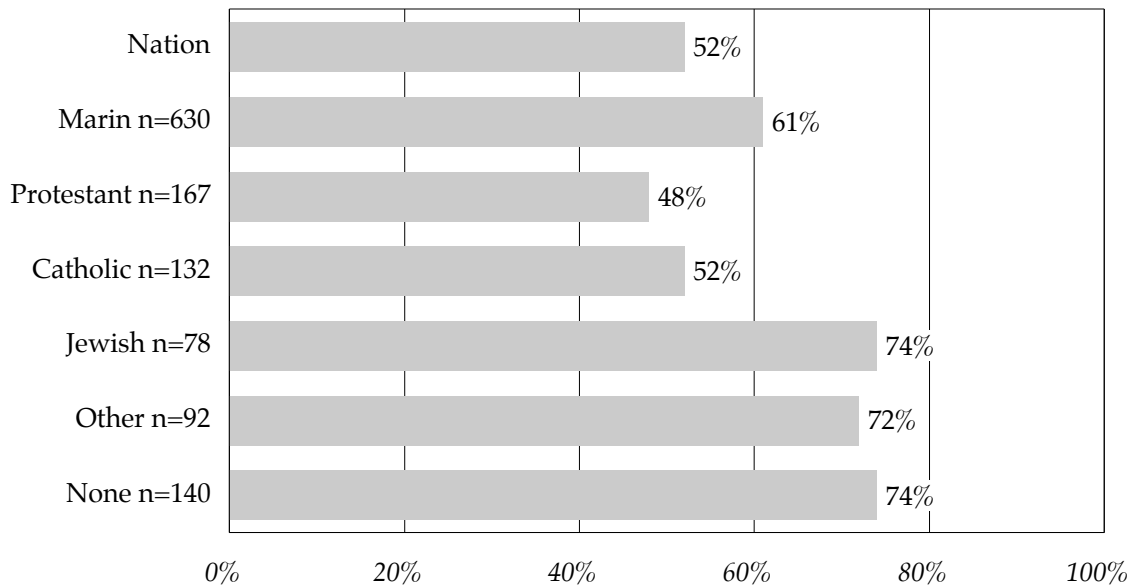
It would be wrong to conclude from the Other group’s high level of satisfaction with their own religion that they are pleased with religion in general. In fact, 72% of the Other group joined similar percentages of Jews and the None group (74% each) in stating that “religions have unnecessary rules and responsibilities.” Protestants and Catholics are hardly satisfied. At rates of 48% and 52%, these Christians did, however, approximate the national average of 52% and were considerably more content than the other groups and the Marin average (61%). These statistics



24 Gallup and Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape*, 81. No members of the None group responded to this question most likely because the question assumed that the respondents practiced a specific religion.

Figure 16

"Religions Have Unnecessary Rules and Responsibilities"



Source for Nation: Gallup Polls, 2000

might explain why considerable numbers of all groups, but especially the Jewish, Other, and None groups, say that they are “spiritual but not religious” (see Figure 16).

The Afterlife: Heaven, Hell and Reincarnation

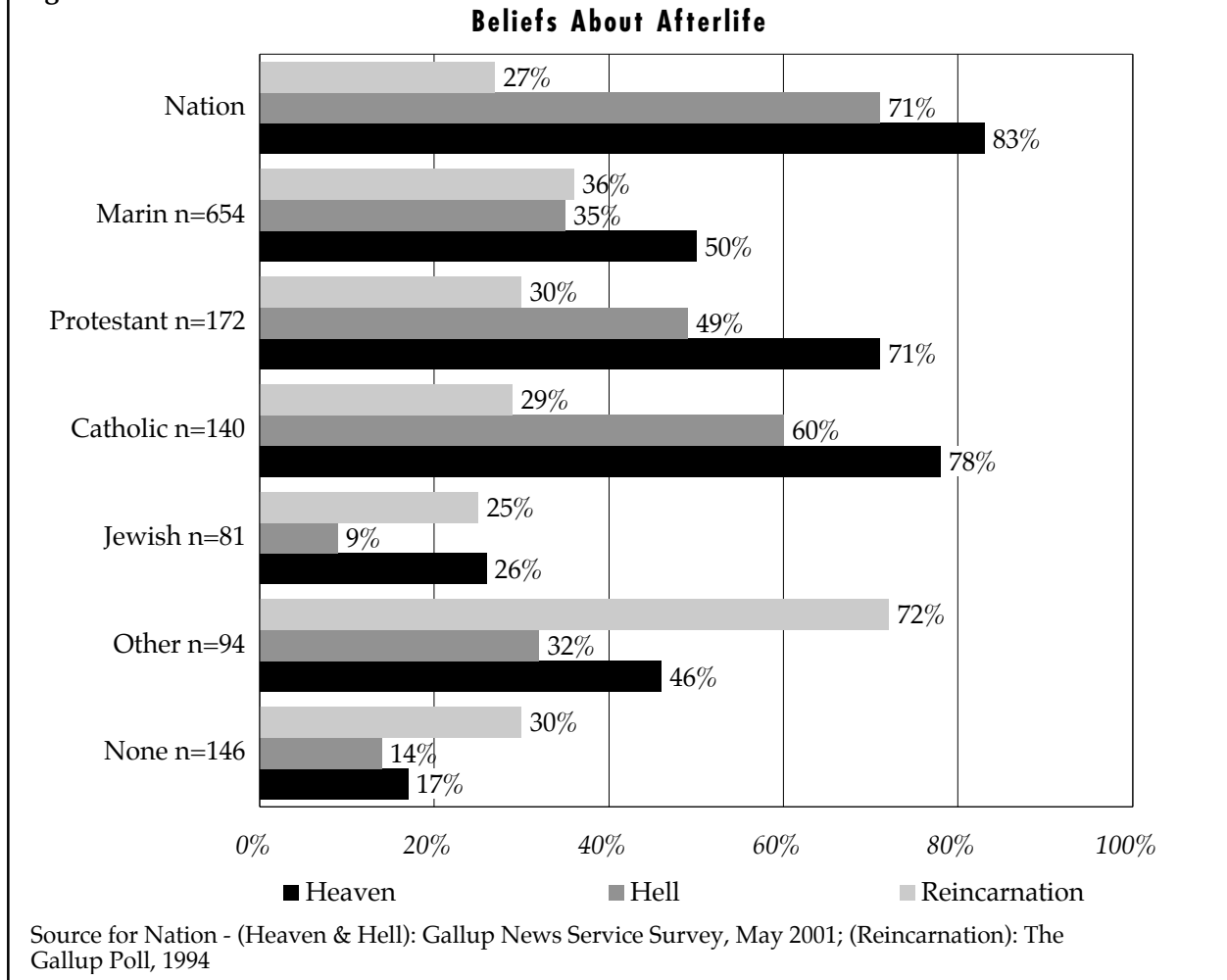
Finally, in their beliefs about the afterlife, Protestants and Catholics were most likely to think in traditional terms. The vast majority of both groups, 71% of Protestants and 78% of Catholics, believe in heaven, for example. These figures approached the national rate (82%) and greatly exceeded the Marin average (50%). In contrast, only a minority of the remaining groups believes in heaven. However, the Other group, at 46%, was much more likely to believe in heaven than the Jews (26%) and the None group (17%) (see Figure 17).

Protestants and Catholics, at rates of 49% and 60% respectively, were also much more likely

to believe in hell. These figures were much closer to the national average of 71% than the belief rates of the other groups. Only 9% of Jews and 14% of the None population believed in the same. The Other group, with 32% believing, fell somewhere in between, and in doing so, approximated the Marin average of 35%. It should be noted, however, that all these religious groups, as well as the Marin and the national populations in general, are significantly less likely to believe in hell than in heaven.

The widespread belief in heaven and, to a lesser extent, hell, in the Protestant and Catholic communities is to be expected given that this structure of the afterlife is emphasized in the teaching of the faith, and that the afterlife itself plays a very important role in each faith. For some faiths, behavior in this world is said to be a determinant of the place of the soul in the afterlife. The Jewish rejection of both heaven and hell is understandable given that most branches of Judaism de-

Figure 17



emphasize the concept of the afterlife. To understand the Other group’s belief in the afterlife, we need to turn to the results for the survey question about reincarnation.

Many people in Marin are open to reincarnation, a tenet of the Eastern religions of Buddhism and Hinduism. Thirty-six percent (36%) of those in Marin believe without doubt that reincarnation exists compared to only (27%) of the national population.²⁵ The Other group particularly stands out. Seventy-

two percent (72%) of the Other population believes without doubt in reincarnation. This is some 2.5 times the rate of all the other groups. Given that 26% of the Other population is Buddhist, and 3% is Hindu, we should not be surprised that some of this population believe in reincarnation. However, the large percentage of this group which believes in reincarnation, combined with the large percentage that prefers meditative and reflective types of prayers, indicates that besides those people officially aligning themselves to the

25 There is a much larger difference between Marin and the nation in terms of firm non-believers in reincarnation. Fifty three percent (53%) of the nation firmly does not believe in reincarnation compared to only 37% of those in Marin.

Eastern religions, there are many who are borrowing from their practices. However, given that a significant number of the Other group also believes in heaven and hell, we can characterize a significant minority of this group as believing in a combination of Western and Eastern beliefs.

To summarize our above findings, Marin County is a religiously and spiritually rich and innovative area. Two of the county's smaller religious groups, the Other and None populations, have contributed richness and diversity.

The Other population's rituals and beliefs combine influences from East and West. It is a group which, in behavior and belief, shares some of the characteristics of Western and especially Christian religions, but which in other areas, including organization, form of worship, strength of attachment to their religion, the importance of the "spiritual" in their lives, and the use of non-traditional language to describe the divine and their beliefs, is using new, in some cases, Eastern or partially Eastern, religious forms. Many of this group describe the divine as a "Higher Power," meditate, and believe in reincarnation.

The None population shares a number of characteristics with the Other population. They prefer to describe themselves as "spiritual," use Eastern ways of prayer and also describe their divine as a Higher Power. They are less likely than the other groups to engage in formal religious behavior or share traditional beliefs, but the majority of them, despite lacking a religious preference, are spiritual in some manner or form.

The majority of the county continues to practice Western religions. Particularly among the Protestants and Catholics, traditional behavior, such as congregational membership and service attendance, remains strong, though not necessarily as strong as at the national level. However, the practices and beliefs of people in these Western faiths, especially the Jews, are clearly being influenced by those of the Other and None groups. Some Protestants say they are "spiritual but not religious;" some Jews meditate; some Catholics believe in reincarnation; and these are only a few examples. These people are not content being passively religious. They, like many members of the Other and None groups, are "spiritual seekers."

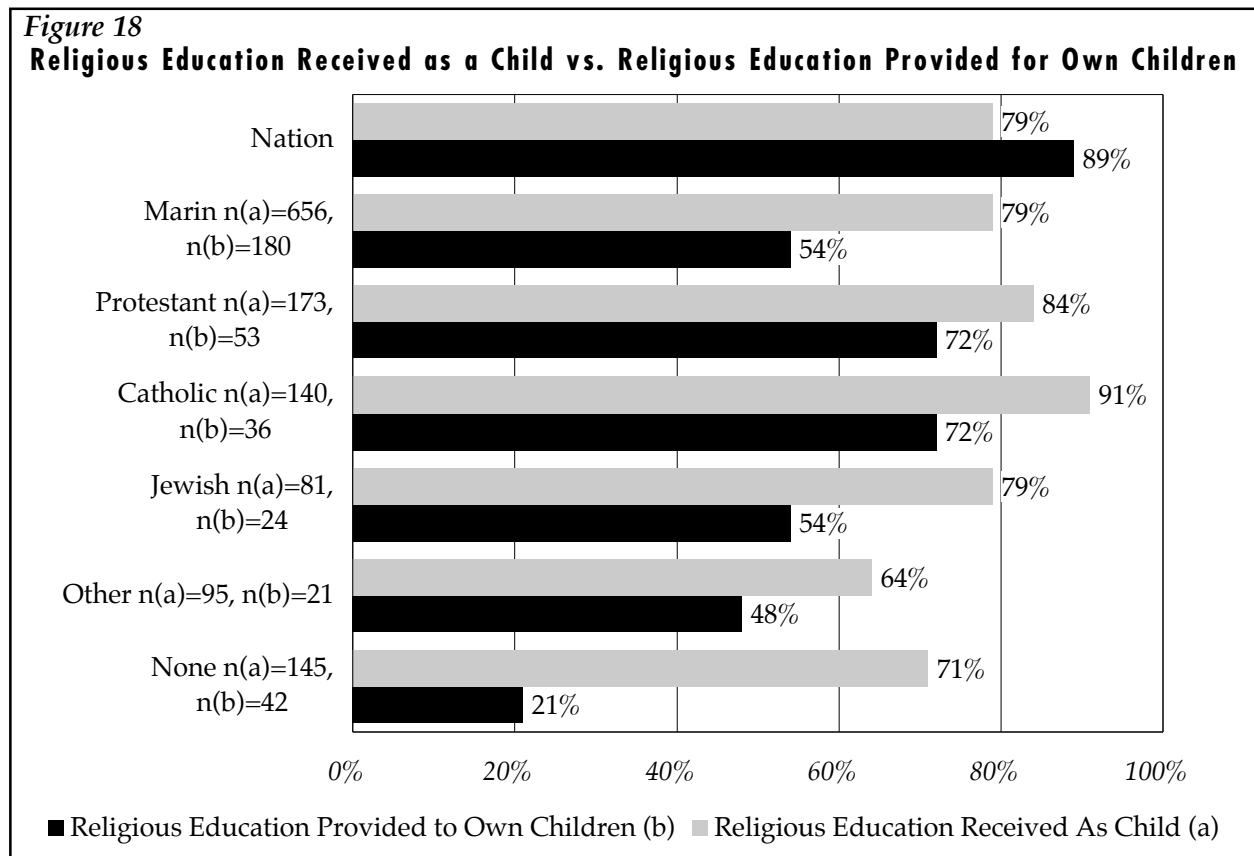
Religious Education for Children

Unfortunately, many of the children of Marin are not reaping the rewards of their parents' deep spiritual lives. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of both the Marin and national population received religious training as a child. Yet only 54% of the Marin parents were currently providing, or did provide in the past, religious education for their children. In contrast, the parents in the national population want to educate their children at an even higher rate than they themselves were educated (89% vs. 79%).

When considered by specific religious group in Marin, the numbers look quite different. The Protestants (72%), Catholics (72%), and to a lesser extent, Jews (54%), continue to provide religious educations for their children. Still, this marks a significant drop in levels for all groups when compared to religious training of the parents. As children,

84% of current Protestants received a religious education, as did 91% of Catholics and 79% of Jews. A drop is also seen when looking at the Other and None groups. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the Other group received a religious education, while only 48% are providing one to their children. The None group was the least likely to religiously educate their children; 71% had received such training, but only 21% have decided to provide one for their children (see Figure 18).

Disenchantment with religious institutions has not prevented adults from a relationship with the divine. They have pursued their own spiritual paths, borrowing on the way from a number of different traditions and practices. However, the dislike of, or as the parents might say, deficits of the existing religious institutions has prevented almost a majority of parents from providing their children with even the religious and spiritual basics with which they were raised.



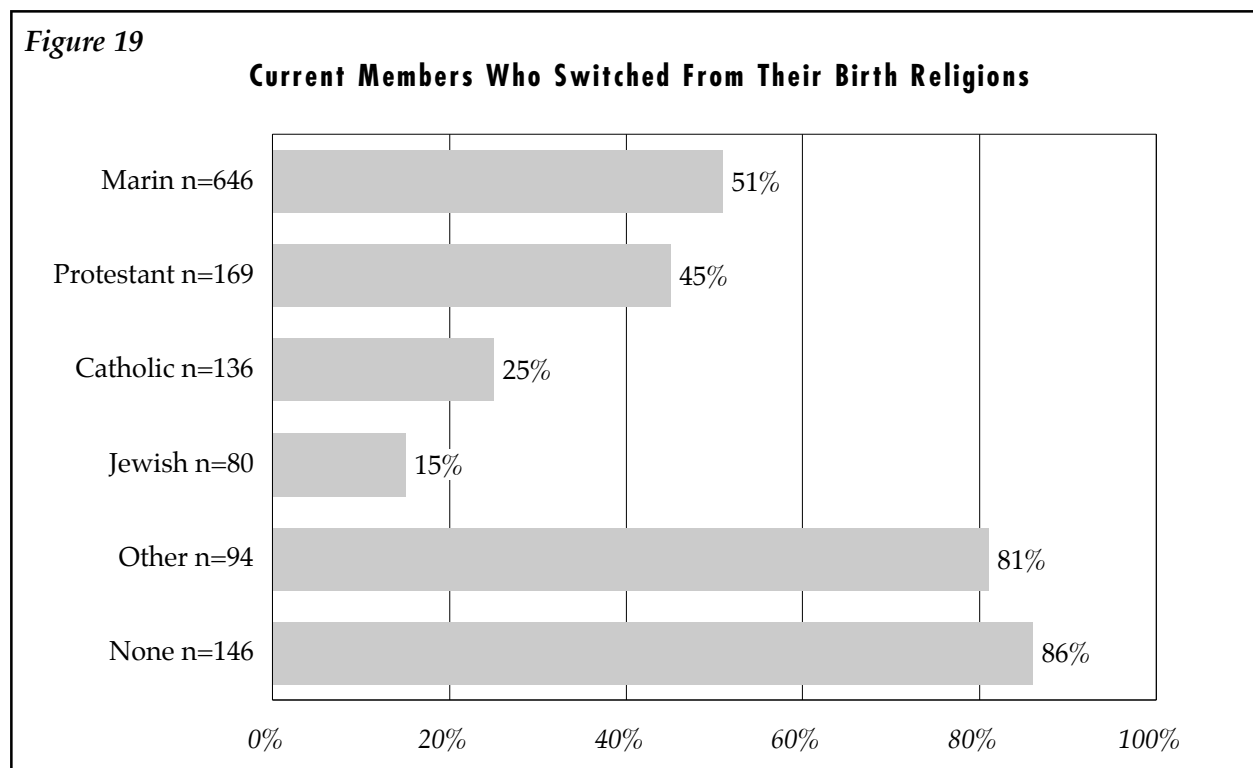
AN ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SWITCHED RELIGIONS

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Marin population has switched religions from that in which she or he was born. This figure is approximately two times the national figure. Reasons for switching commonly cited by scholars include marriage/long-term partnership with someone of a different faith, changing religious beliefs, and relocation.²⁶ Baby Boomers were the most likely to switch religions. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of this generation has switched compared to a minority of other generations.

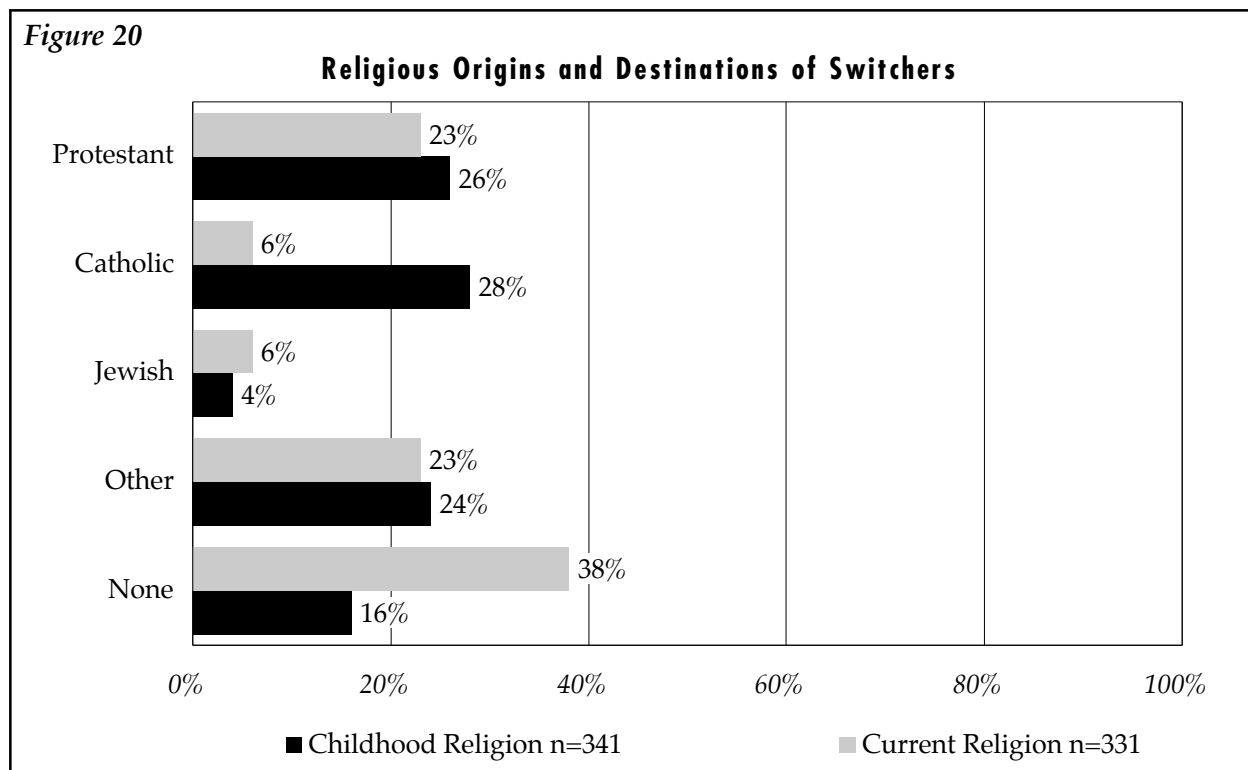
Marin switchers include the vast majority of those who are in the Other (81%) and None

(86%) groups, as well as almost half of currently practicing Protestants (45%). The Jewish and Catholic communities, with 25% and 15% of current members joining after childhood, were the destinations of choice for considerably fewer switchers. These lower rates may be explained by the difficulty of converting to Judaism and the relatively conservative policies of the Catholic Church (see Figure 19).

Of those who switched, approximately one-quarter was raised as Protestants, Catholics and in Other religions, 16% with no specific religion, and 4% as Jews.



²⁶ Kosmin and Lachman, *Under One God*, 239.



Except for Jews, the groups switched at rates that reflected the current religious makeup of Marin County. Jews switched at a much lower rate. While they comprise 13% of the Marin population, Jews made up only 4% of the switchers. Traditionally, Jews in America do not formally convert to other religions.

Where did the switchers from all the religious groups go? One of the biggest shifts that we see is that there was a substantial move away from Catholicism. While 28% of those who switched were raised as Catholics, only 6% of the switchers became Catholic. At the same time, we see a marked switch toward having no religious preference (None). While 16% of switchers moved away from this group, 38% of switchers moved into this category. The remaining groups stayed approximately the same size.

Twenty-six percent (26%) of the switchers left Protestantism and 23% joined. Twenty-five percent (25%) of switchers left the Other category and 23% joined. Four percent (4%) of switchers left Judaism while 6% joined. These patterns are quite different from that of national switchers, 81% of whom became Protestants (see Figure 20).²⁷

Of course, these statistics do not reveal the fluidity of respondents' religious lives; for example the answers do not reveal if respondents had once switched away from their birth religions and then switched back, nor how many different religions they might have practiced since birth. Yet, studies have shown that for some people, particularly Baby Boomers, fluidity, not simple switching, characterizes the religious journey.²⁸ We can imagine in the heat of the 1960s, that a Jewish

²⁷ Gallup and Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape*, 19.

²⁸ Kosmin and Lachman, *One Nation Under God*, 239; Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, 111-144; Wuthnow, *After Heaven*.

woman named Rebecca rejected God and religion altogether. Then maybe in the 1980s, after she settled down, found a partner and had children, she decided that she wanted to raise her children as Jews. Since the late 1990s, however, she has not been a member of a synagogue, prefers meditation as her method of prayer and has been on several Buddhist retreats. How many people in Marin have been on a journey similar to our imaginary Rebecca? How many are still on that journey?

Religious Preference

When comparing the religious preferences, practices, and beliefs of switchers and non-switchers, we find clear differences. Non-switchers continue to adhere to many of the traditional Christian and Jewish practices and beliefs. In contrast, the switchers, no matter what religion they switched into, made their spiritual journeys on non-traditional paths. If we look specifically at the current religious preferences of the switchers and non-switchers, we see that switchers were more likely to join the non-traditional Other and None groups, while non-switchers continue to favor Western religions. Of the switchers, 23% are now members of the Other group and 25% include themselves in the None group while only 6% are Catholics and 6% are Jews. In contrast, among the non-switching population, 37% are Catholic and 19% are Jewish while only 6% are members of each the Other and None groups.

Interestingly, the proportion of switchers who left Protestantism, the proportion of switchers who became Protestant and the proportion of non-switchers who remained

Protestant, are all approximately 25%. What we see here is the revolving door phenomenon: there are a significant number of people in the population who are content with existing Protestant practices and institutions; there are a significant number of people who are leaving their denominations in search for more fulfillment; and there are an equally significant number of those not raised as Protestants who are joining a denomination to see if it will meet their needs.

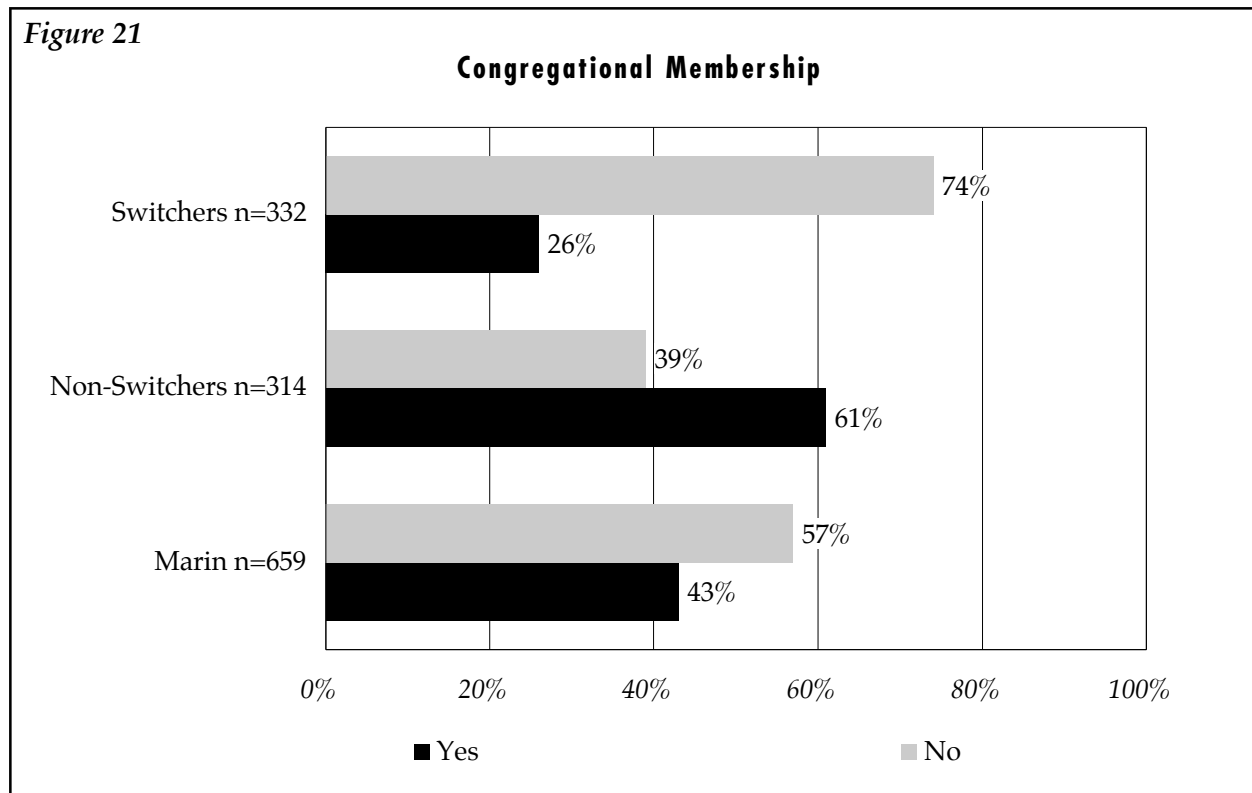
Congregational Membership

When we look at current congregational membership, we see that only a minority of switchers (26%) now belong to a congregation. This number is far less than the comparable statistics for non-switchers (61%) and the Marin population as a whole (43%) (see [Figure 21](#)).

The same pattern exists when we consider adult congregational belonging. Here only 32% of the switcher population has ever belonged to a congregation as an adult. Considerably more non-switchers (55%) have belonged as adults.

This difference cannot be attributed to respondents' congregational affiliation as children. The vast majority of both switchers and non-switchers, 73% and 86% respectively, belonged to congregations as children. Moreover, we cannot attribute the difference to the switchers' lack of spiritual life. Most of the switchers identify themselves as religious or spiritual and believe in God or a Higher Power. Where we do find some guidance is in the explanations given by switchers and non-switchers for their choices.

Figure 21



Approximately the same proportion of both groups said they were not members because they were “not interested” or for “some other reason.” Twenty-seven percent (27%) of switchers and 29% of non-switchers gave the former answer, and 29% of both groups gave the latter answer. However, switchers were five times more likely than non-switchers (20% vs. 4%) to say they were not members of congregations because they “did not like organized religion.” These figures suggest that the barriers to increasing membership among switchers are more structural, while for non-switchers they are more circumstantial. Changes in event scheduling may draw some non-switchers, but to attract most switchers, as well as many non-switchers, program changes are needed that demonstrate that congregational and organized religious life meets their needs.

Service Attendance

Switchers were much less likely than non-switchers to attend formal services. More than half (52%) of non-switchers attend services once a month or more while only 24% of switchers do the same. Meanwhile, more than one-third of switchers never attend services. The figure for non-switchers was only 3%. The remainder of both groups attends services less than once a month (see Figure 22).

However, given the near 50% of switchers who include themselves in the Other and None groups, and were thus more likely to use Eastern styles of prayer, we should ask ourselves if the numbers would have changed had we rephrased our question. Would the numbers have increased had we asked not only about attendance at religious

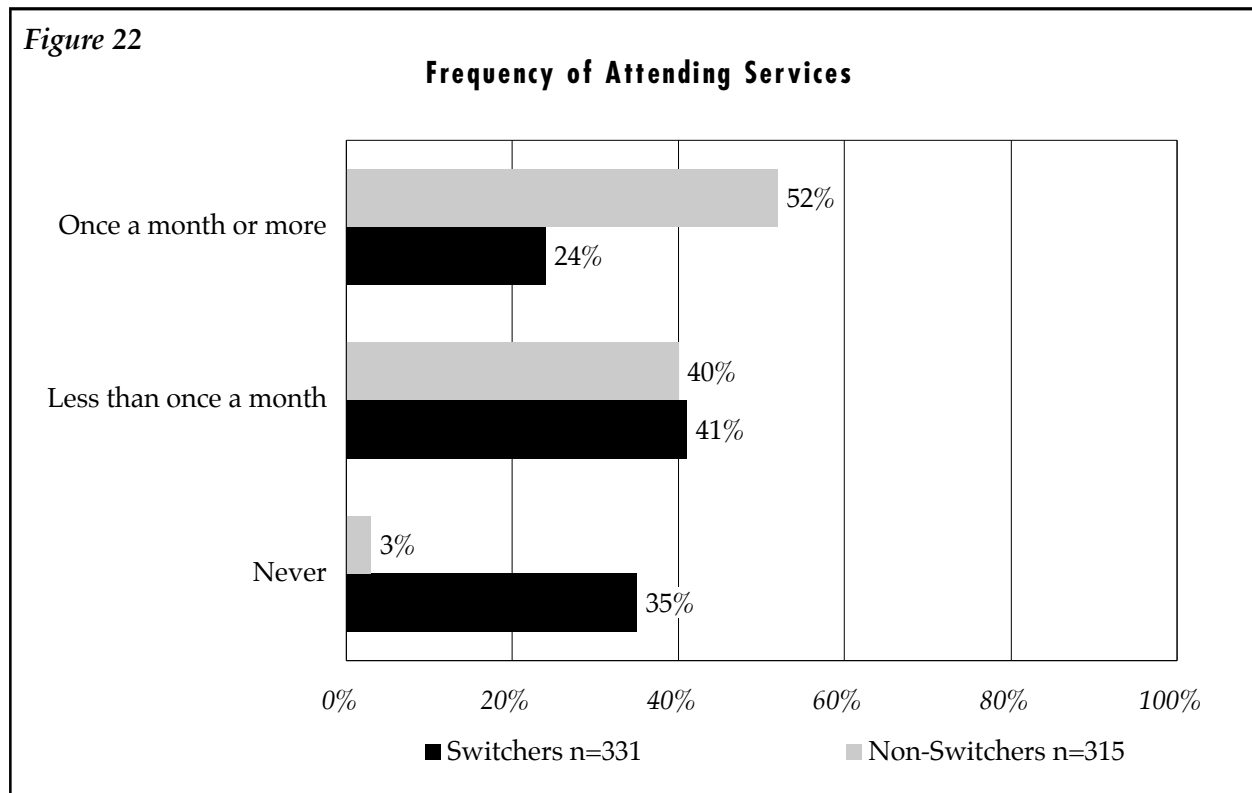
services – which for most means a choreographed activity that is led by someone formally trained – but also about attendance at a meditation sitting group, women’s prayer meeting or spiritual chanting gathering? The answers to other questions in the survey indicate that the statistics would rise if this question were altered in this manner.

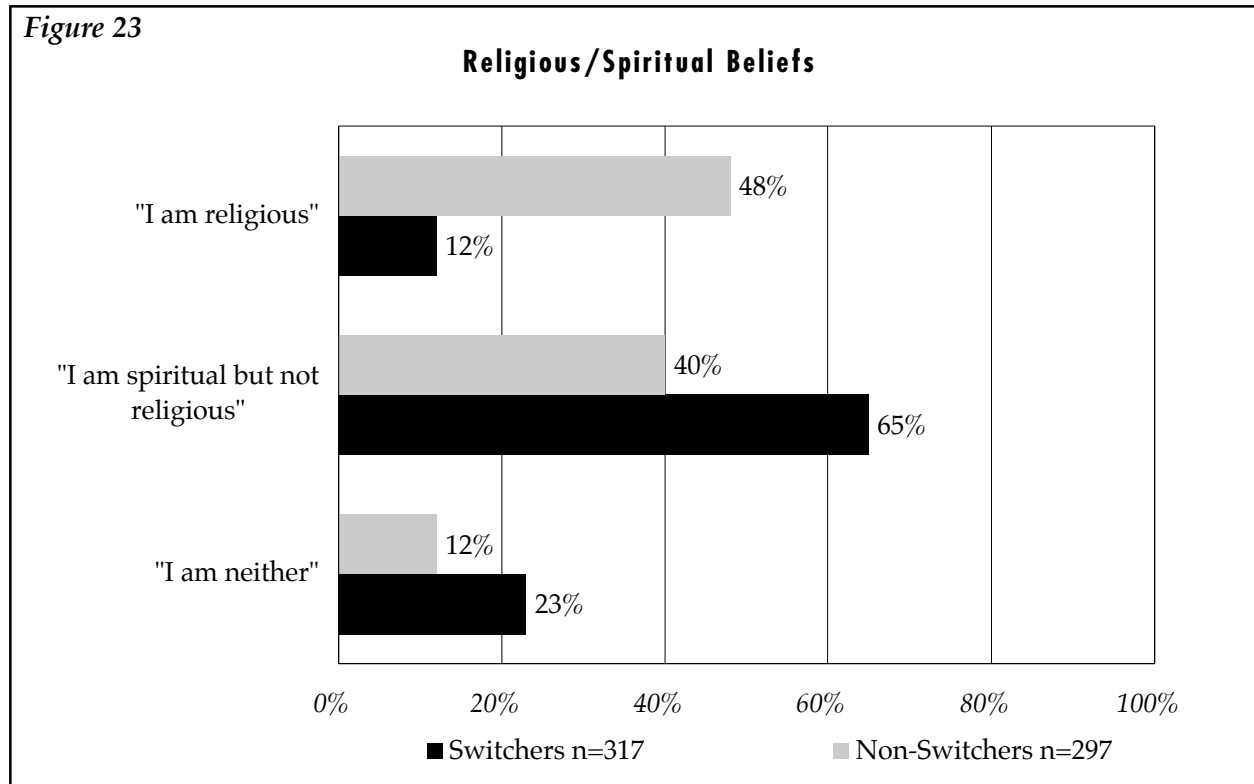
Prayer

When we consider the figures detailing how people pray, we see that switchers are significantly more likely to favor meditative or reflective prayers (34% vs. 21%), and non-switchers were significantly more likely to favor formal prayers (13% vs. 4%). Switchers were also much less likely to say a formal prayer regularly at family meals.

Religious Beliefs

In looking at the beliefs of switchers, if we begin with the very words “religious” and “religion” themselves, we find that the vast majority of the switchers reject these terms. Only 12% of switchers call themselves religious in contrast to 48% of non-switchers. Furthermore, 65% of switchers say they are “spiritual but not religious,” compared to 40% of non-switchers. Since “religious” is commonly associated with an institutional path toward the divine while “spiritual” connotes a more personal path, the latter seems to fit people who have taken the significant step of leaving their birth religion in order to explore the possibility of a more fulfilling spiritual life (see Figure 23).





Religious Dissatisfaction, Importance and Experience

What about religions and religious institutions do the switchers dislike? For one, only 23% of switchers believe that religions can answer all of today's questions. This compares to 43% of the non-switchers. Given this disenchantment, it is more likely that a switcher would seek answers elsewhere.

Furthermore, about two-thirds (67%) of the switchers believe that religions have unnecessary rules and responsibilities, compared to 55% of non-switchers. However, the non-switchers remained with formal religion despite their frustrations, indicating that switchers were more likely to be risk-takers in their religious quest.

Given the switchers' higher dissatisfaction with "religion" and their proclivity to identi-

fy themselves as "spiritual but not religious," we need to interpret with care questions that use the term "religion." For example, when asked how important "religion" was to their lives, a full 47% of switchers said "not all important," 31% saying it was "very important." In contrast, only 13% of non-switchers said that religion was "not at all important," and a full 48% said it was "very important" (see Figure 24).

From this we might easily conclude that things commonly associated with religion are not important to the switchers. However, when we asked how many in each group felt a need to experience spiritual growth, a full 63% of the switchers and non-switchers responded in the affirmative. How could this be given that nearly 50% of the switchers stated that religion was "not all important" in their lives? It is with questions like this that we need to consider how the switchers' disaf-

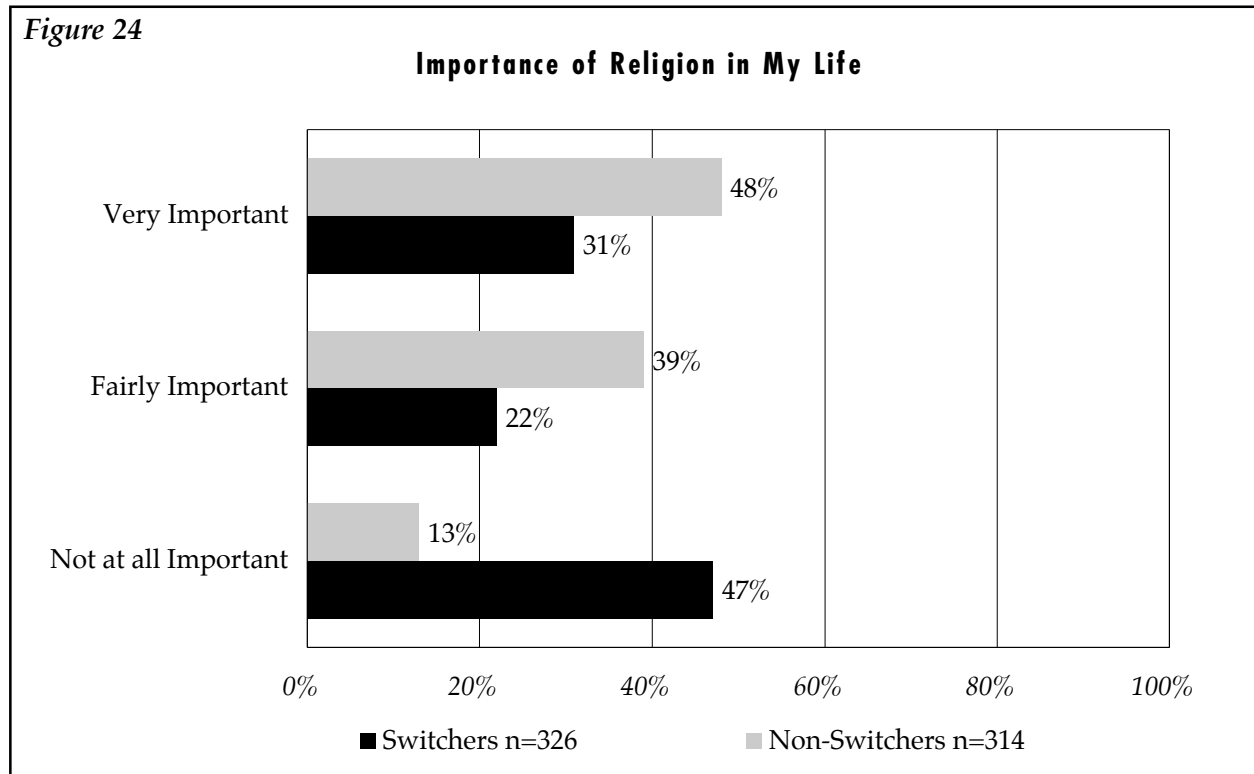
fection with the terms “religion” and “religious” might prevent us from understanding the full extent of what in their former years would be considered religious practices, beliefs, and needs. How would the answers have differed had the question not simply asked about the importance of religion in their lives, but about “religion and/or spiritual matters” in their lives. Indeed, when asked if they had ever had a “religious experience,” almost half of switchers answered “yes,” in contrast to only one-third of non-switchers.

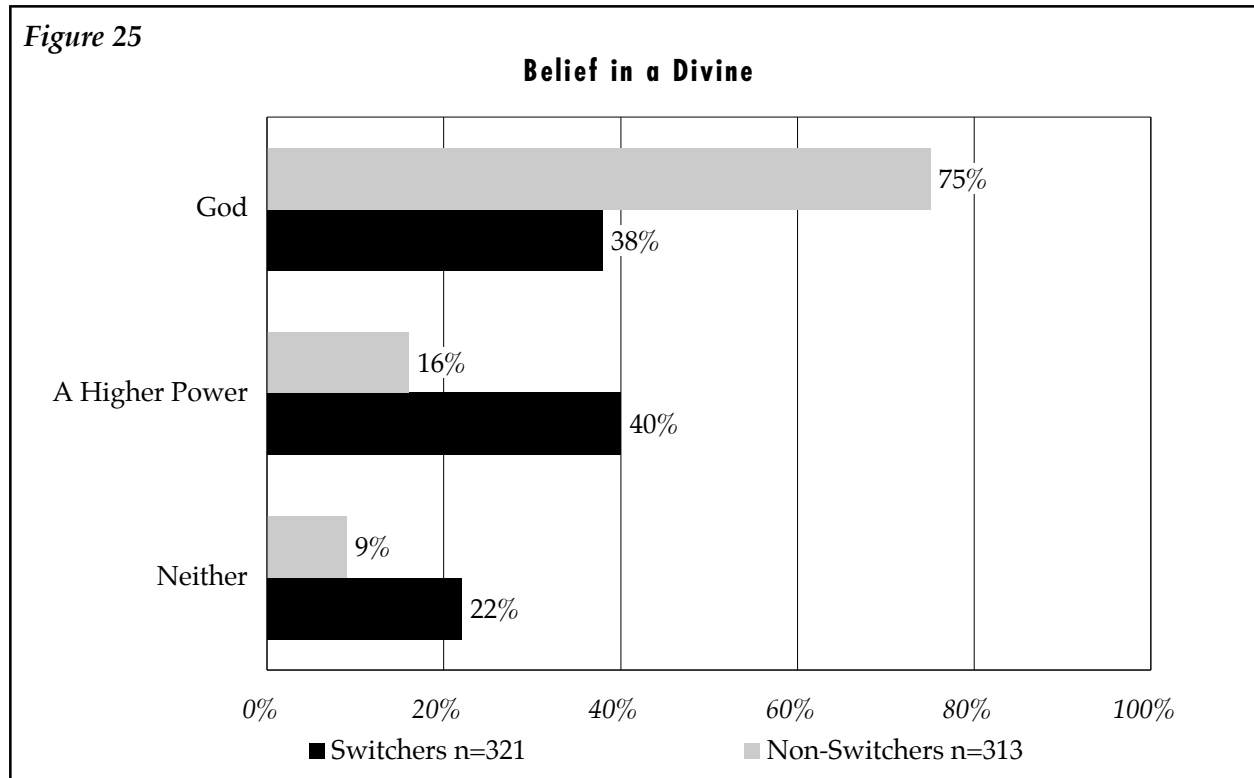
Given that many people in America switch religions because of a “born again” experience, the answers are not unexpected. But given that our statistics show that the large majority of switchers became adherents of non-Christian religions or chose no specific religious preference, we should also ask our-

selves whether the rate for religious experiences is higher because these experiences — which are defined by some as “supernatural” experiences — provide answers which those seeking the divine on their own cannot answer by themselves.

The Divine, Being Religious, and Being Ethical

Switchers were also more likely to use non-traditional means to describe the divine. While nearly 80% of all switchers believe in God or a “Higher Power,” 40% of the switchers chose the term “Higher Power” rather than “God.” This contrasts sharply with only 16% of non-switchers who chose this term. Moreover, among those who believe in God, switchers were one-half as likely as non-switchers to believe without doubt (28% vs. 55%). On the other hand, switchers, at a rate





of 22% to 9%, are more than twice as likely as non-switchers to not believe in God's existence (see Figure 25).

However, for the majority of switchers as well as non-switchers, lack of belief in God did not at all mean that a person could not be religious. More importantly in terms of treatment of one's fellow human beings, virtually all switchers and non-switchers agreed that a person can be good and ethical despite not believing in God.

The Afterlife: Heaven, Hell and Reincarnation

Switchers and non-switchers diverged again in their beliefs about the afterlife (see Figure 26). Only 38% of switchers definitely believe in heaven, for example, while a full 63% of non-switchers definitely do so. Switchers were also significantly more likely to reject

the concept of hell. Here the majority of switchers (53%) definitely did not believe that hell exists, while only 25% said that it definitely did exist. In contrast, only one-third (37%) of non-switchers stated that hell definitely did not exist. Nearly half (46%) believed without doubt that hell does exist.

If switchers are skeptical about the concepts of heaven and hell, what then is their concept of the afterlife? Nearly half (41%) of the switchers believe in the Eastern concept of reincarnation. This figure is larger than the 30% of non-switchers who hold this belief. While less than the majority of switchers believe in reincarnation, it should be pointed out that switchers were more likely to state that they believe in reincarnation without doubts than say they believe in heaven or hell without doubts.

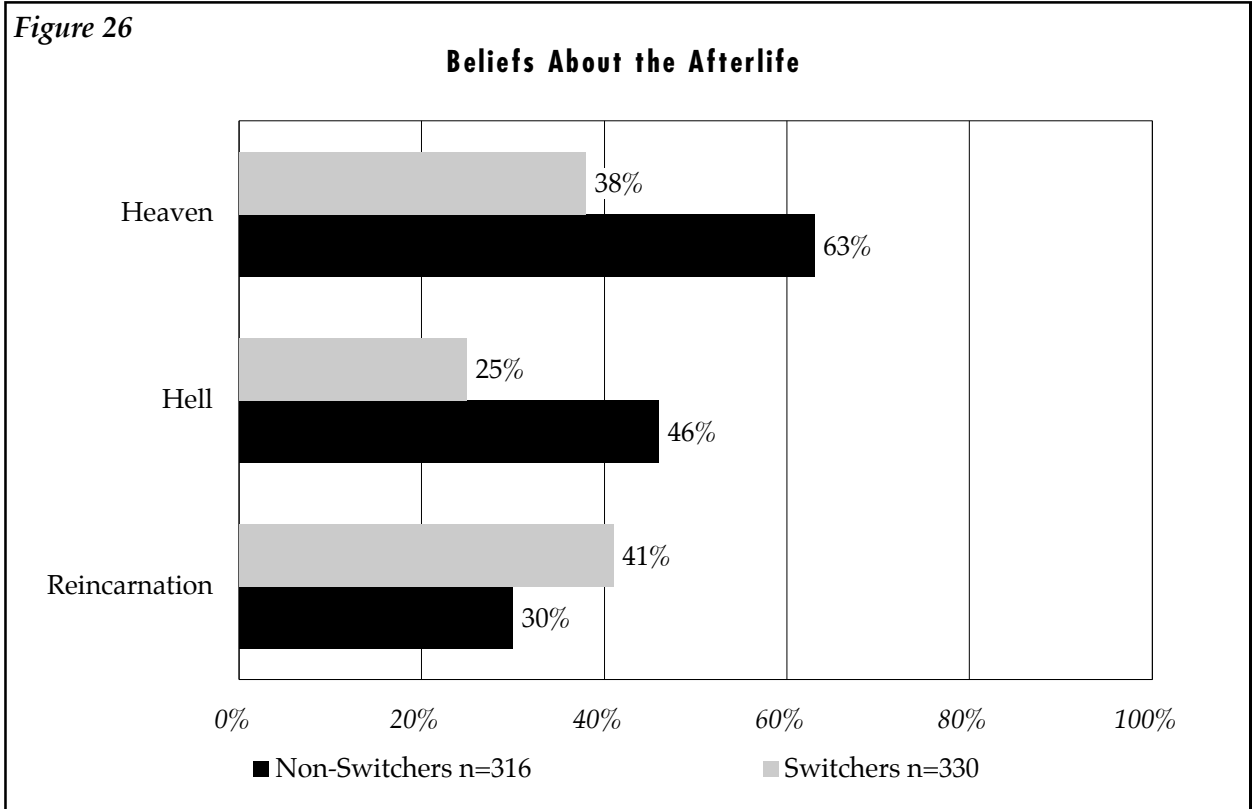
Social Action, Volunteering and Congregational Giving

In the area of social action, switchers closely approximated non-switchers. Almost all of both groups, eighty-nine percent (89%) of switchers and 94% of non-switchers, contributed food and other non-monetary goods to charities. The vast majority of both groups, 78% of switchers and 87% of non-switchers, gave money to charitable groups. Two-thirds of both groups, 66% of switchers and 64% of non-switchers, volunteered for a charity in the past year (see Figure 27).

The one area where switchers did not appear as generous as non-switchers or the national average was in contributing money to congregations. Only one-third (34%) of switchers gave compared to two-thirds (64%) of non-switchers. Again, however, if we consider the rates of congregational membership, we find

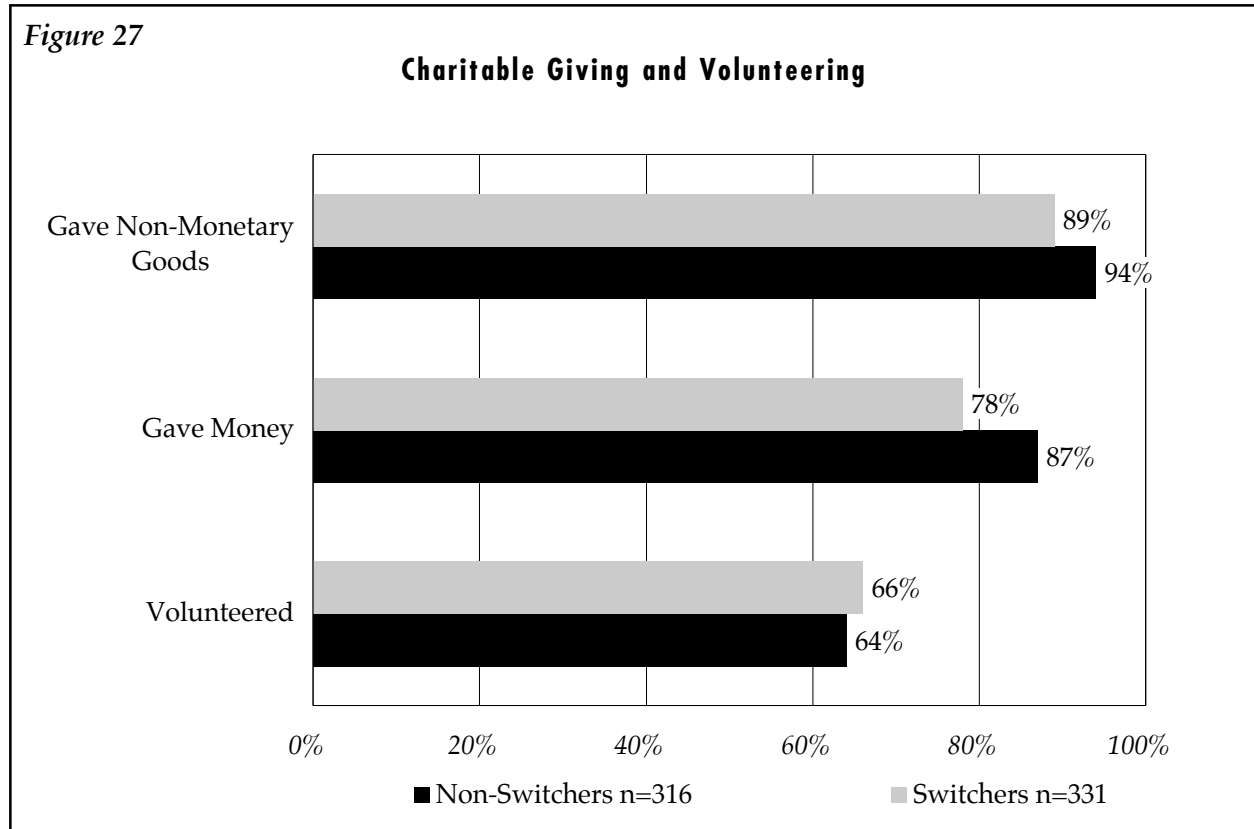
that the switchers are actually more generous. Twenty-five percent (25%) of switchers are congregational members. The ratio of giving to membership, in percentages, is thus 131%.

More than 50% of people in Marin have switched from the religion in which they were raised. While some, as we have noted, became atheists, the vast majority continued their spiritual quest but in different forms and using different language. They are “spiritual seekers.” Some are choosing Western religions while many are not. Significant numbers were raised as Catholics. Large numbers of the switcher populations, including the Western ones, are now using Eastern, and particularly, Buddhist religious practices and beliefs. They are also borrowing from a combination of different spiritual traditions rather than linking themselves with one firm line of thought. In their search for spiritual



satisfaction, they are looking inward and are practicing meditation, as well as most likely going on retreats and taking spiritually oriented classes. But the switchers, like the

Marin population in general, have not forgotten about their fellow human beings and continue to perform acts of community service despite leaving their birth religion.



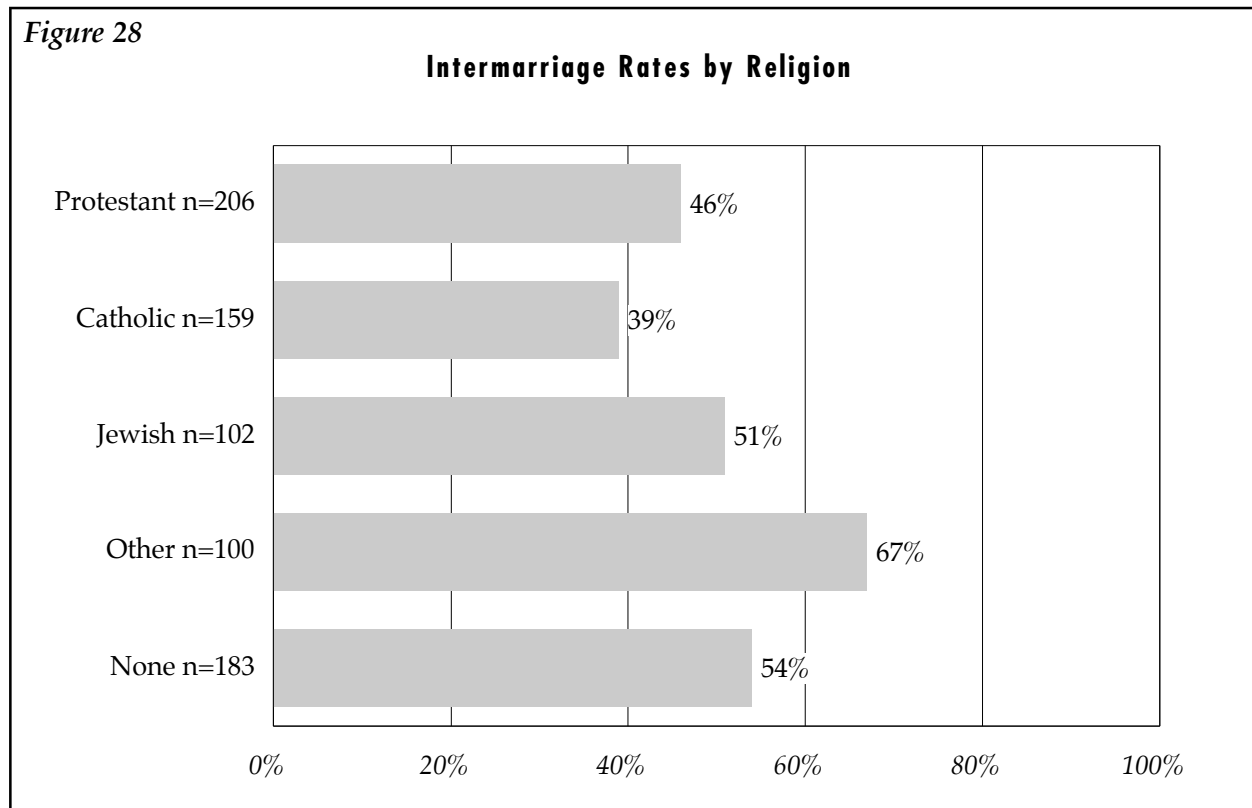
AN ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE IN INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS

The 1990 National Survey of Religious Identification revealed that 22% of Americans lived in mixed-faith households.²⁹ Our survey, a decade later, reveals that 33% of marriages in Marin are religiously mixed. The majority of the mixers (55%) are Baby Boomers.

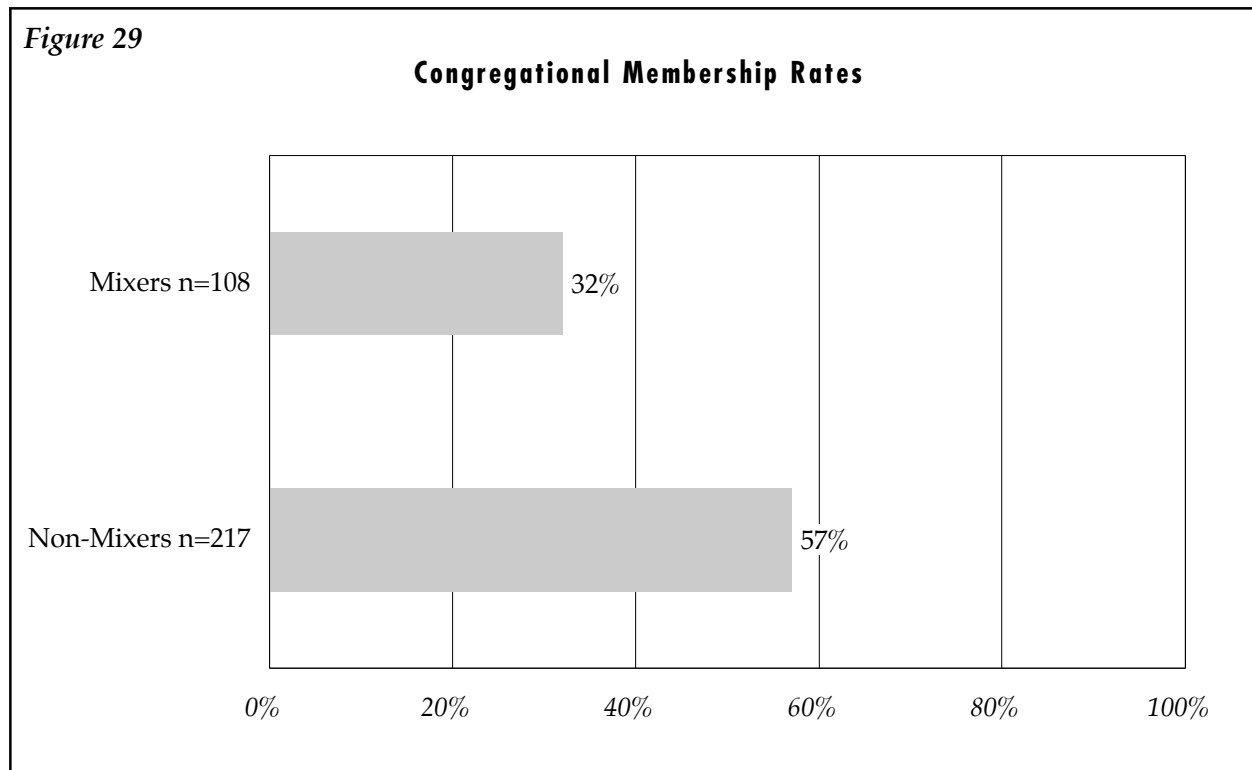
Marin residents enter mixed marriages at approximately the same rate as their religion is represented in the county population. Of the people who are in mixed marriages in Marin, 23% are Protestant, 18% are Catholic, 15% are Jewish, 23% are in the Other group, and 21% are in the None group.

Intermarriage Rates

Our statistics reveal that intermarriage is significant for each of the religious groups but especially the Other and None groups. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of individuals who favor a religion in the Other category share a household with someone practicing a different religion. The majority of the None households (54%) were also mixed. The intermarriage rates for those preferring traditional Western religions were not much lower: Forty-six percent (46%) of Protestant households in Marin are mixed as well as 39% of Catholic households and 51% of Jewish



²⁹ Kosmin and Lachman, *One Nation Under God*, 243.



households. Of course, when Protestants and Catholics intermarry with each other, the family remains Christian and can pass on some of the core Christian beliefs and or rituals to its children. In Jewish, Other, or None interfaith households, more religious difference exists between partners, and it is much more likely that the child will be raised with more than one set of beliefs or rituals (see [Figure 28](#)). Like the Other and switcher populations, the mixed marriage population (mixers) is much more likely to be characterized as spiritual seekers, that is they are more likely to be on non-traditional, non-institutional spiritual journeys.

**Congregational Membership
and Service Attendance**

Less than one-third of mixers (32%) belong to a congregation compared to a majority of non-mixers (57%) (see [Figure 29](#)). When asked about their reasons for not belonging,

the responses of the mixers and the non-mixers closely matched that of the switchers and non-switchers. Like the switchers and non-switchers, more than a quarter of each group gave “not interested” or “some other reason” as their primary explanation. Twenty-five percent (25%) of mixers and 29% of non-mixers said they were not members because they were “not interested” and an additional 25% of mixers and 28% of non-mixers said they had “some other reason” for their choice. Beyond this, however, mixers, like switchers, were significantly more likely to not belong because they “did not like organized religion.” Twenty-one percent (21%) of mixers presented this explanation compared to only 11% of non-mixers.

Mixers also attend services much less frequently than the non-mixers. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the mixers attend services less than once a month and 24% never attend ser-

Figure 30

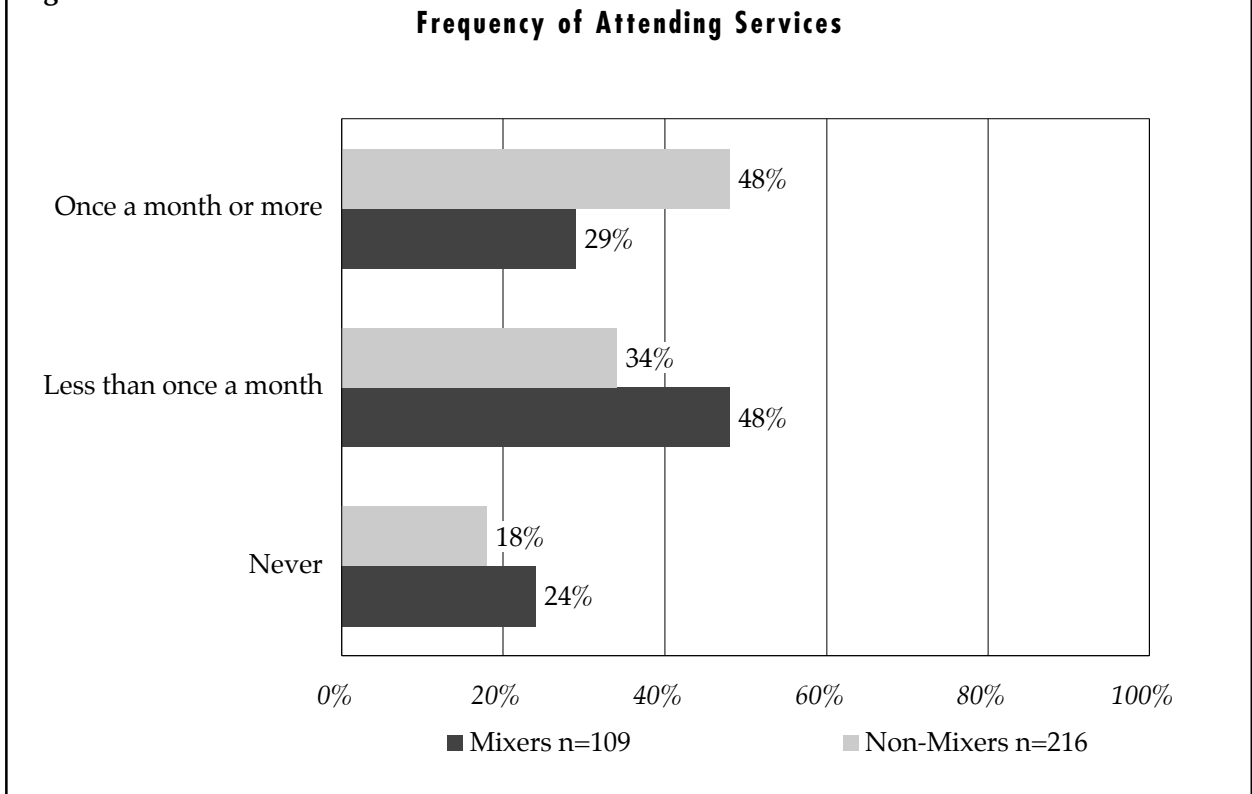
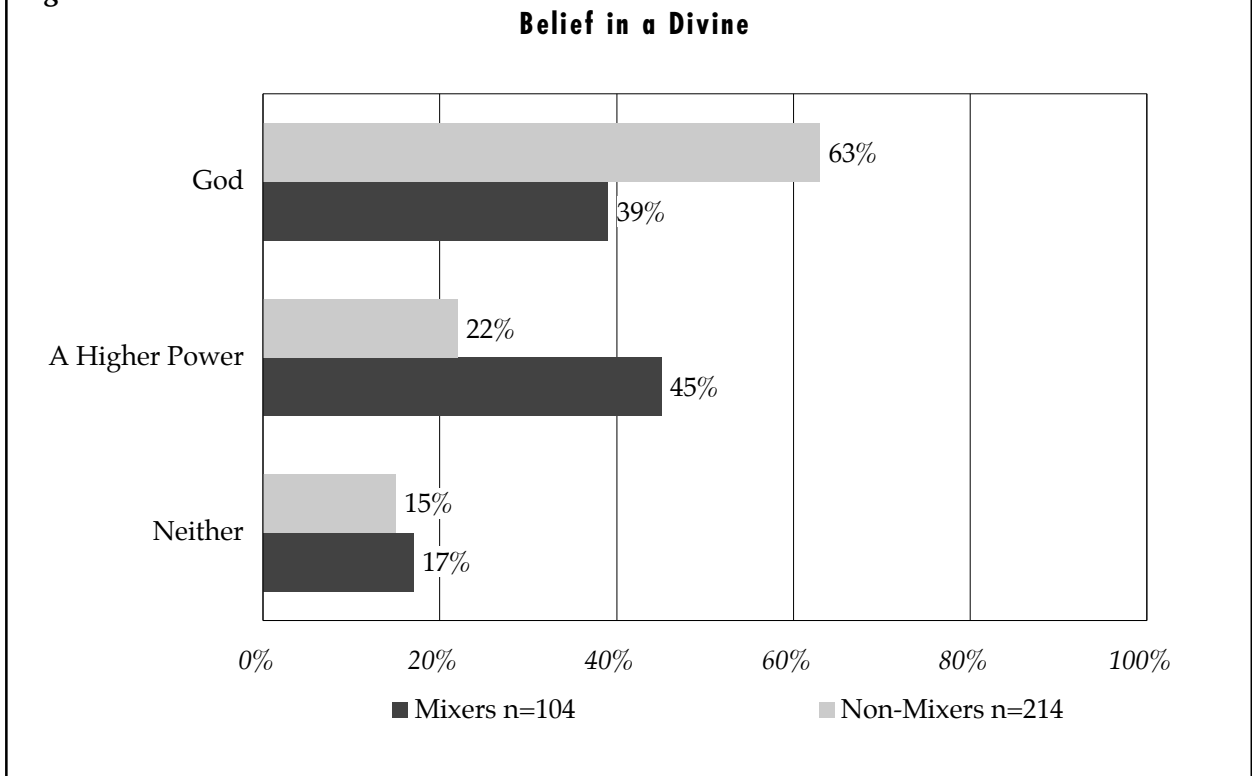


Figure 31



VICES. In contrast, only 34% of non-mixers attend less than once a month and 18% never attend (see Figure 30).

Belief in a Divine and Religious Beliefs

Also like the Other and switcher populations, the mixers were much more likely, compared to non-mixers, to use non-traditional terms to refer to the divine and to describe their beliefs. Forty-five percent (45%) of mixers said they did not believe in God, but did believe in a "Higher Power." Fewer mixers (39%) said they believed in God. In contrast, only one-half as many non-mixers (22%) believe in a Higher Power; they were much more likely to prefer the term "God" (63%). The remainder of both the mixers and non-mixers did not believe in God (see Figure 31).

Mixers were also considerably more likely than non-mixers to describe themselves as

spiritual rather than religious. Sixty-six percent (66%) described themselves this way compared to only 47% of non-mixers. In contrast, only 17% of mixers described themselves as religious compared to 35% of non-mixers. The remainder of both groups rejected both terms (see Figure 32).

Meditation, Religious Experience, and Reincarnation

In terms of prayer, the mixers again followed along the path of the Other group and the switchers. Mixers were significantly more likely than non-mixers to use meditative or reflective prayers (37% vs. 22%) (see Figure 33).

Mixers were also significantly more likely to have had a religious experience compared to non-mixers (45% vs. 31%). Likewise, mixers were much more likely to believe in reincar-

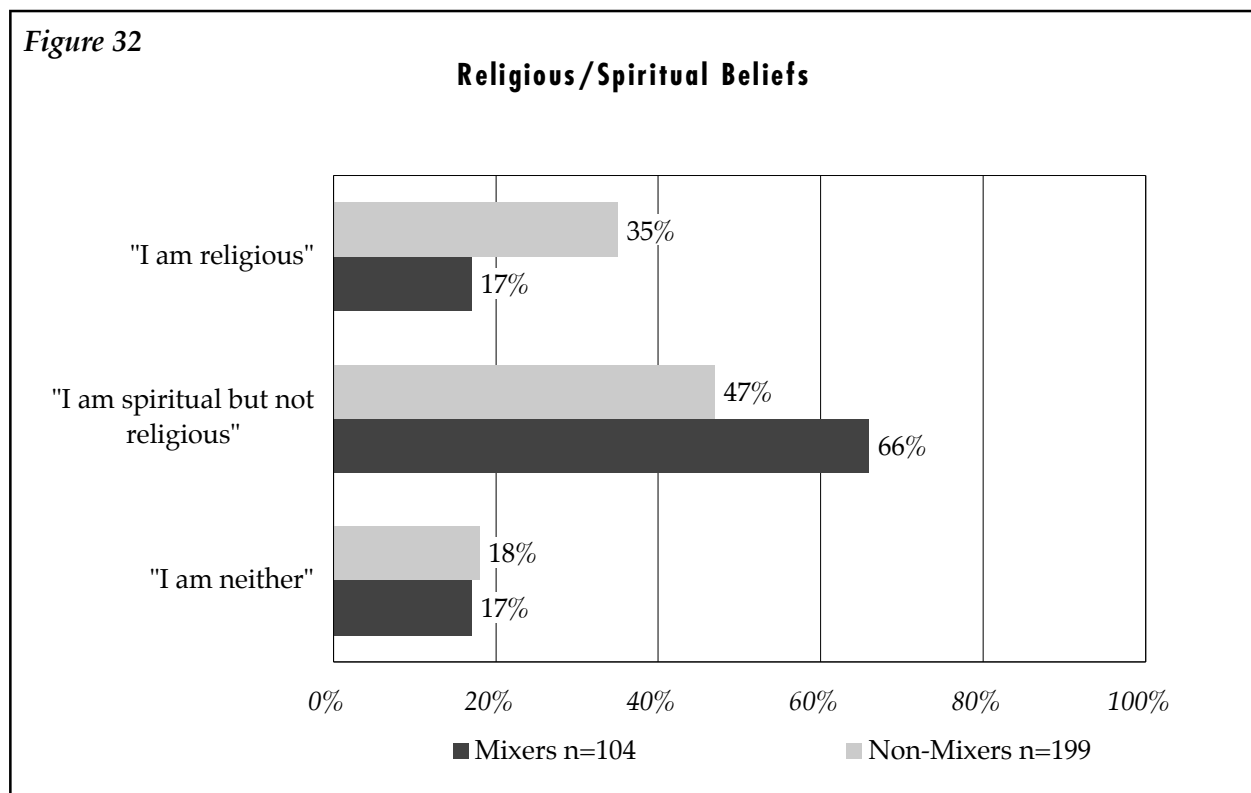
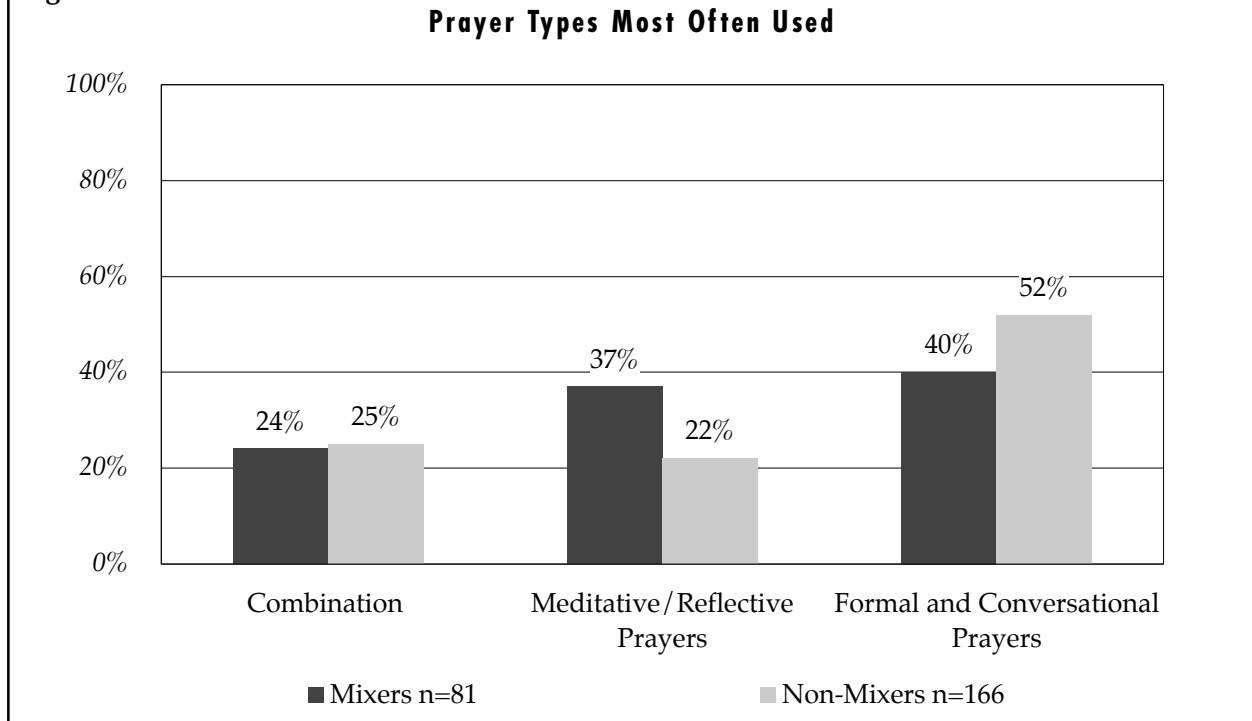


Figure 33



nation. Nearly one-half (45%) of mixers definitely believe in reincarnation compared to only one-quarter (25%) of non-mixers.

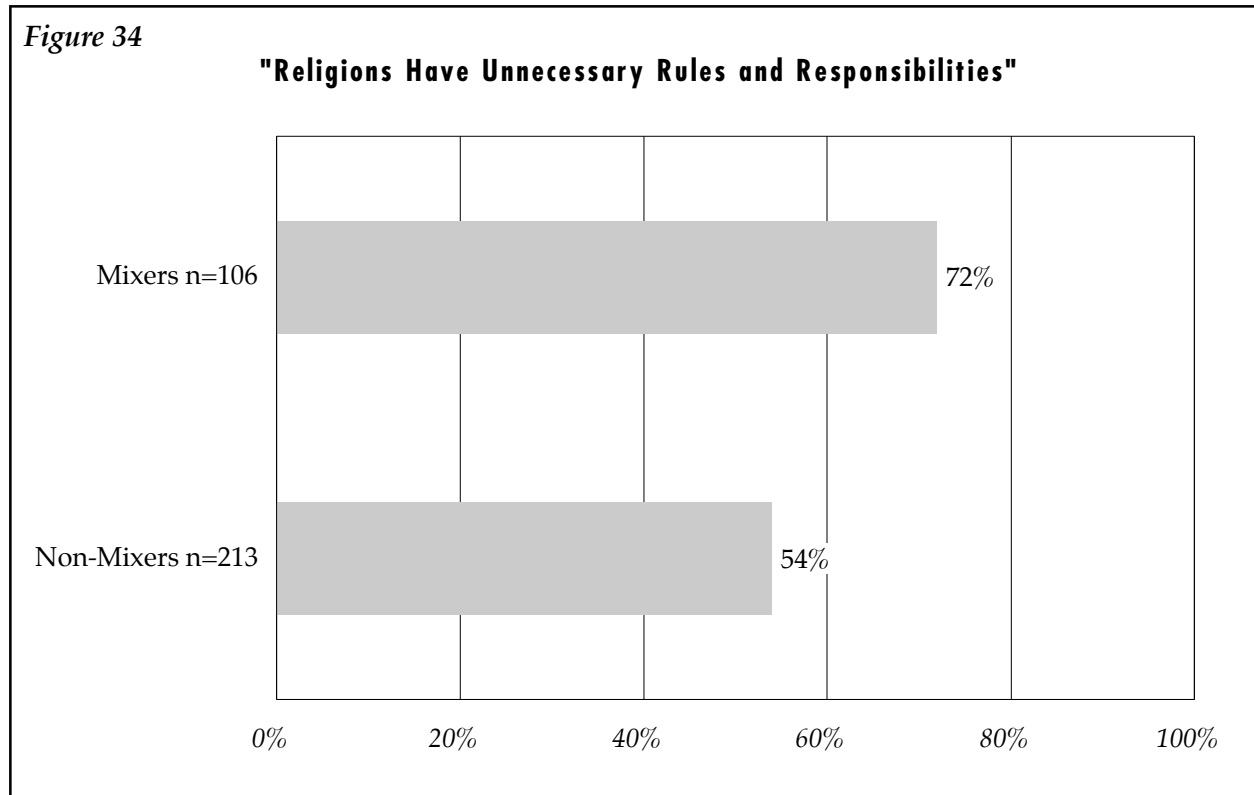
Religious Disenchantment and Strength of Identification

Mixers were also more likely to be disenchanted with their own religion and religion in general. Forty-four percent (44%) of mixers agreed that there are many things in their religion that they did not agree with; only 33% of non-mixers said the same. Even more striking, 72% of mixers said that religions in general have unnecessary rules and responsibilities; this number was much higher than the 54% of the non-mixers (see Figure 34).

It is noteworthy, however, that in terms of strength of identification with one's religion, mixers were very similar to non-mixers. Forty percent (40%) of mixers and 45% of non-mixers identify very strongly with their

religion. Thirty-four percent (34%) of mixers and 30% of non-mixers identify somewhat strongly. And 26% of mixers and 25% of non-mixers identify not at all strongly. Thus we cannot conclude that people who are in inter-faith relationships have weaker religious identities than those whose long-term relationships are with people of the same faith, nor can we conclude that people are in inter-faith relationships because they have weak religious identities.

The above statistics are particularly important because they might explain why fewer numbers of mixers than might be expected have switched religion. We noted at the beginning of the switcher section that marriage/long-term romantic commitment to a person of another faith is a leading reason why people switch religions. Yet in the Marin population, we see that while of the level of



switching among the mixer population was greater than the non-mixer population (55% vs. 44%), this difference was not overwhelming. This is an indication that in Marin at least, inter-marriage does not necessarily lead to conversion.

Religious Education for Children

A difference does exist between religious training for children of mixers and non-mixers, but again it is not huge. Forty-seven percent (47%) of mixer children were or are being religiously educated compared to 59% of the children of non-mixers. Of course, we do not know how the faith of the religious school was chosen nor the religious influences on the child outside of the classroom. Is it in the next generation that faiths are being switched (see Figure 35)?

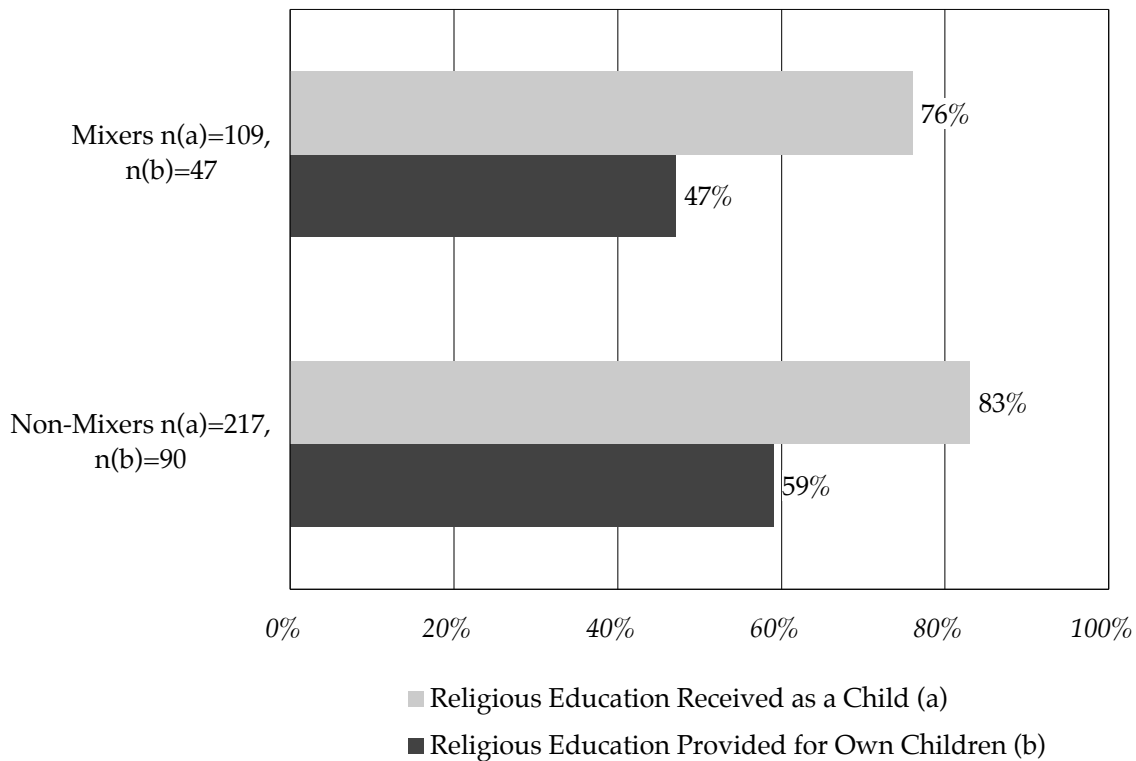
One-third of long-term relationships in Marin is mixed. Rates of mixing are high for all the religious groups, but especially for those in the Other and None groups. In terms of age, Baby Boomers form the majority of those who are in mixed relationships.

In terms of religious and spiritual belief and behavior, the people who are in interfaith partnerships behave much like the Other and switcher populations. The interfaith population tends to favor the innovative over the traditional. The people in this group belong to congregations and attend services much less than their non-mixer counterparts. They are more likely to describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” and believe not in God but in a Higher Power. In their method of praying and beliefs of the afterlife, they have been influenced by Eastern traditions.

This group is also much more disenchanted with religion than non-mixers. Significantly, however, despite being in interfaith relationships, mixers are as strongly identified with their own religion as are non-mixers. The faith of the mixers' children is more

uncertain. Nearly 50% of mixers are providing their children with religious education, but our survey does not ask in what faith, or faiths, the children are being educated or raised.

Figure 35
Religious Education Received as a Child vs. Religious Education Provided for Own Children



CONCLUSION

This study highlights that most adults in Marin are experiencing significant spiritual growth. They are spiritual seekers on journeys to the divine that have taken them to traditional institutions, practices, beliefs and languages, and to other destinations as well. They do not belong to congregations as much as other Americans nor attend formal services as frequently. Yet one would be hard pressed to say that they are not religiously engaged. Nearly all believe in a “Higher Power” or God, have scriptures in their homes, and pray.

Significantly, however, a number of people consider themselves “spiritual but not religious” despite their beliefs and behavior. It would be worthwhile to explore the reasons why people reject the word “religious” and prefer the word “spiritual.” Do some people believe that religion is too entwined with institutions that feel foreign and distasteful to them? Are these feelings engendered by past negative experience, myth, or current reality? How do these feelings impact behavior?

One area of direct impact is congregational membership rates. A significant number of people are not members because they are “not interested” or “do not like organized religion” despite their active extra-institutional religious lives. Do these people’s perceptions of present-day congregations and organized religion match current reality? If so, what changes would these people like to see? It may not be enough to simply offer more diverse programs and places of worship; it may be necessary for religious leaders

to rethink the concepts of congregation, leadership and organized religion altogether. What can congregations learn from the success of informal prayer groups and retreats? How many people are attracted to these activities because of their informality, emphasis on lay leadership and limited size that facilitates authenticity and connection? More research will also be needed to discover the reasons behind the actions of the more than 20% of each religious group that did not become members for “some other reason” than those offered. The success of certain individual Marin congregations in rapidly increasing their memberships should not hide the fact that the overall county membership rates are still very low.

Negative conceptions of and past experiences with organized religion may also have greatly influenced the size and beliefs of the Other and None groups. We know that some members are practicing non-Western, particularly Eastern and New Age (e.g. pagan), religions. How many are part of the Other group because they are disillusioned with organized religion or because they have had unpleasant experiences in a Western faith, or multiple faiths, and have abandoned religion altogether? How many are interested in more informal religious opportunities because they seem less institutional or less threatening? It would be particularly useful to explore the causes for disaffection among those who are included in the None group.

Finally, negative views of and experiences with organized religion may be important

reasons why a significant number of Marin's spiritually engaged parents are not providing a religious education for their children. Other barriers may include lack of appropriate teachers or acceptable curricula, lack of suitable or accessible venues, scheduling conflicts, and the increasing number of mixed marriages. All of these pose serious challenges and suggest an area for further research about religion in Marin. This research will be particularly important if future generations are to have the foundation to later be spiritual seekers.

This report also highlights the diversity of the religious make-up of Marin, a diversity that brings with it many opportunities and challenges for religious leaders. Given the large percentage of households that are religiously intermarried, for example, it may be useful to consider developing more programs for interfaith couples. There may also be issues in families of divorce where the religious identity of the children needs to be explored. Typically interfaith issues deal with subjects such as the Christmas dilemma for Christian/Jewish households around the Hanukkah and Christmas holidays. Given the large number of interfaith households, we expect there may be a significant number of such topics that are worth exploring for many faiths.

The county's religious diversity also makes it an ideal and important place for organizing interfaith activities. These interactions would increase opportunities for those of different religions to learn about and understand one another. We may also want to establish programs specifically designed to help those on their spiritual journeys. The goal would be to

call attention to the unique qualities of different religions and congregations so that individuals can make informed choices about their religious lives.

Is the current institutional network, including many of the clergy, equipped with all the requisite training and skills to handle the issues presented in this report? In particular, the numbers of switchers, mixers, and non-members in Marin are so high as to require special approaches. This study suggests that there may be a need both for more religious professionals and for professionals specifically trained in the areas of diversity, religious mixing, and spiritual searching. Marin may be just the place to initiate new forms of post-seminary professional development to meet the needs of a religiously fluid population. A study of the feasibility of creating such a new professional initiative should be undertaken.

Religion in Marin weaves a remarkable fabric, one that is multi-colored and multi-textured. Traditional religion is both successful and unsuccessful; people are both engaged and disengaged, tradition as well as change exists. Marin residents are not disinterested in religion by any means, but their religious identities are multi-dimensional. Attempts to engage the people in Marin in religious or spiritual activities, as well as to educate their children, must also be multi-dimensional. The Marin religious institutions are challenged to attract people to congregations, make worship meaningful, and serve a population that constantly questions. While all spiritual paths will not lead to the same destination, we hope that religious leaders and institutions in Marin can provide more and better guideposts along the way.

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APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

Religious & Spiritual Change in America: The Experience of Marin County, California
Institute for Jewish & Community Research 2000

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling from Merrill Research and Associates, a marketing research company. This is not a sales call. I just wanted to ask you a few questions for research purposes.

We are conducting a survey on religious identity and behavior among Marin County residents. Your phone number was selected at random and your answers will be strictly confidential. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes.

May I please have your first name only so we can ask for you if we need to call back?

(ENTER RESPONDENTS NAME OR 'RF' IF REFUSES)

Q51. Are you at least 18 years of age?

(DO NOT READ LIST)

- 0 No (SKIPTO Q52)
- 1 Yes (SKIPTO Q1)
- 8 Don't Know (SKIPTO Q52)
- 9 Refused (SKIPTO Q52)

Q52. Is there someone else at home who is 18 years of age or older that I can speak to?

(ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 0 No one 18 years or older
- 1 Yes at home (ASK FOR THAT PERSON)
- 2 Yes, not at home (SKIPTO Q53)
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 Refused

Q53. May I please have the person's name so we can ask for him or her when we call back?

I'd like to start by asking you some questions about yourself.

Q1. What is your current marital or partner status? Are you....

(READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Single / Never Married | 6 | Widowed |
| 2 | Married | 8 | Don't Know |
| 3 | Living together but not married | 9 | Refused |
| 4 | Separated | | |
| 5 | Divorced | | |

Q2. In what state were you born?

(ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE) (DO NOT READ LIST)

- | | | | |
|----|----------|----|-------------|
| 01 | Alabama | 05 | California |
| 02 | Alaska | 06 | Colorado |
| 03 | Arizona | 07 | Connecticut |
| 04 | Arkansas | 08 | Delaware |

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

09	District of Columbia	33	New York
10	Florida	34	North Carolina
11	Georgia	35	North Dakota
12	Hawaii	36	Ohio
13	Idaho	37	Oklahoma
14	Illinois	38	Oregon
15	Indiana	39	Pennsylvania
16	Iowa	40	Rhode Island
17	Kansas	41	South Carolina
18	Kentucky	42	South Dakota
19	Louisiana	43	Tennessee
20	Maine	44	Texas
21	Maryland	45	Utah
22	Massachusetts	46	Vermont
23	Michigan	47	Virginia
24	Minnesota	48	Washington
25	Mississippi	49	West Virginia
26	Missouri	50	Wisconsin
27	Montana	51	Wyoming
28	Nebraska	52	Other US Territory
29	Nevada	53	Other Country
30	New Hampshire	98	Don't Know
31	New Jersey	99	Refused
32	New Mexico		

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q2_S. In what state was your spouse or partner born?

(ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE) (DO NOT READ LIST)

Q3. What is your age?

(ENTER AGE. DK=DON'T KNOW, RF=REFUSED)

[IF DK OR RF, ASK]

Q3A. Can you tell me if you are...

(READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 18-34 |
| 2 | 35-49 |
| 3 | 50-64 |
| 4 | 65 or over |
| 8 | (DO NOT READ LIST) Don't Know |
| 9 | (DO NOT READ LIST) Refused |

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q3_S. What is your spouse or partner's age?

(ENTER AGE. DK=DON'T KNOW, RF=REFUSED)

[IF DK OR RF, ASK]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

Q3A_S. Can you tell me if he or she is.....

(READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 1 18-34
- 2 35-49
- 3 50-64
- 4 65 or over
- 8 (DO NOT READ LIST) Don't Know
- 9 (DO NOT READ LIST) Refused

Q4. Code Respondent Gender

(DO NOT READ LIST)

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 Refused

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q4_S. What is your spouse or partner's gender?

(DO NOT READ LIST)

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 Refused

The next set of questions are about congregational membership.

Q5. Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other congregation?

- 0. No [SKIPTO Q7]
- 1. Yes [GOTO Q6]
- 8. DK [SKIPTO Q7]
- 9. RF [SKIPTO Q7]

Q6. Is your congregation located in Marin County?

- 0. No [GOTO Q6A]
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q6A. In what Bay Area county is your congregation located?

[DO NOT READ LIST]

- 01. San Francisco [SKIPTO Q9]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

- 02. Napa [SKIPTO Q9]
- 03. Sonoma [SKIPTO Q9]
- 04. Contra Costa [SKIPTO Q9]
- 05. Alameda [SKIPTO Q9]
- 06. San Mateo [SKIPTO Q9]
- 07. Other Bay Area [SKIPTO Q9]
- 08. Not in Bay Area [SKIPTO Q9]
- 98. DK [SKIPTO Q9]
- 99. RF [SKIPTO Q9]

Q7. What are the reasons that you or your household are not currently a member of a congregation?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ALL THAT APPLY]

- 01. Not interested
- 02. Not religious enough
- 03. Too expensive
- 04. My spouse/partner does not want to belong
- 05. Do not like organized religion
- 06. Just moved here
- 07. No congregation in my area
- 08. Cannot find a congregation I like
- 09. Kids too old
- 10. Too busy
- 11. Currently looking to join one
- 12. Some other reason
- 98. DK
- 99. RF

Q8. As an adult, have you ever been a member of a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other congregation?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q9. When you were growing up, was your family a member of a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other congregation?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q10. In general, how often do you attend any type of organized religious service? Would you say...

[READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- 00. Never [SKIPTO Q12]
- 01. One or twice a year on special occasions, such as weddings or funerals

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

- 02. Only on special holidays, such as Christmas, Yom Kippur
- 03. Less than once a month
- 04. About once a month
- 05. Several times a month
- 06. About once a week
- 07. Several times a week
- 09. At least once a day
- 98. (DO NOT READ) Don't Know
- 99. (DO NOT READ) Refused

Q11. Did you attend church, synagogue, or another type of religious service in the last seven days?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your religious identity.

Q12. What is your current religious preference?

(DO NOT READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 01. Protestant [Go to Q13] | 08. Other [go to Q12A] |
| 02. Roman Catholic | 09. None [SKIPTO Q12B] |
| 03. Jewish [Go to Q14] | 10. Atheist [SKIPTO Q12B] |
| 04. Orthodox religion | 11. Agnostic [SKIPTO Q12B] |
| 05. Mormon | 98. DK [SKIPTO Q12B] |
| 06. Muslim | 99. RF [SKIPTO Q12B] |
| 07. Hindu | |

Q12A. What is your current religious preference?

Q12B. Do you identify yourself ethnically or culturally with a religious group, even if you are not religious?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes [SKIPTO Q12C]
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q12C. Which group do you ethnically or culturally identify with?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- 1. Jewish
- 2. All others
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

[IF Q12 is Protestant]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

Q13. What is your denominational preference?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 01. Southern Baptist | 08. Church of Christ |
| 02. Other Baptist | 09. Unitarian |
| 03. Methodist | 10. Non-denominational |
| 04. Presbyterian | 11. Other |
| 05. Episcopalian | 98. DK |
| 06. Lutheran | 99. RF |
| 07. Pentecostal / Assembly of God | |

[IF Q12 is Jewish, ask; otherwise SKIPTO Q12_S]

Q14. What is your denomination?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Orthodox | 6. Other |
| 2. Conservative | 7. No specific denomination |
| 3. Reform | 8. DK |
| 4. Reconstructionist | 9. RF |
| 5. Renewal | |

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married; otherwise SKIPTO Q15]

Q12_S. What is the current religious preference of your spouse or partner?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 01. Protestant [Go to Q13_S] | 08. Other [SKIPTO Q12A_S] |
| 02. Roman Catholic [SKIPTO Q15] | 09. None [SKIPTO Q12B_S] |
| 03. Jewish [Go to Q14_S] | 10. Atheist [SKIPTO Q12B_S] |
| 04. Orthodox religion [SKIPTO Q15] | 11. Agnostic [SKIPTO Q12B_S] |
| 05. Mormon [SKIPTO Q15] | 98. DK [SKIPTO Q12B_S] |
| 06. Muslim [SKIPTO Q15] | 99. RF [SKIPTO Q12B_S] |
| 07. Hindu [SKIPTO Q15] | |

Q12A_S. What is the current religious preference of your spouse or partner?

Q12B_S. Does your spouse or partner identify ethnically or cultural with a religious group, even if he or she is not religious?

- 0. No [SKIPTO Q15]
- 1. Yes [SKIPTO Q12C_S]
- 8. DK [SKIPTO Q15]
- 9. RF [SKIPTO Q15]

Q12C_S. Which group does your spouse or partner ethnically or culturally identify with?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- 1. Jewish [SKIPTO Q15]
- 2. All others [SKIPTO Q15]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

8. DK [SKIPTO Q15]

9. RF [SKIPTO Q15]

Q13_S. What is his or her denominational preference?

[DO NOT READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 01. Southern Baptist | 07. Pentecostal / Assembly of God |
| 02. Other Baptist | 08. Church of Christ |
| 03. Methodist | 09. Unitarian |
| 04. Presbyterian | 10. Non-denominational |
| 05. Episcopalian | 11. Other denomination |
| 06. Lutheran | 98. DK |
| | 99. RF |

[IF Q12_S is Jewish ask; otherwise SKIPTO Q15]

Q14_S. What is his or her denomination?

1. Orthodox
2. Conservative
3. Reform
4. Reconstructionist
5. Renewal
6. Other
7. No specific denomination
8. DK
9. RF

Q15. How strongly do you identify with your religion? Would you say...

[READ LIST]

1. Very strongly
2. Somewhat strongly
3. Not at all strongly
8. (DO NOT READ) DK
9. (DO NOT READ) RF

Q16. Did you receive any religious training as a child?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q17. Are you currently practicing the same religion you were raised in?

0. No [GOTO Q17A]
1. Yes [SKIPTO Q18]
8. DK [GOTO Q17A]
9. RF [GOTO Q17A]

Q17A. What religion were you raised in?

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 01. Protestant | 07. Hindu |
| 02. Roman Catholic | 08. Other |
| 03. Jewish | 09. None |
| 04. Orthodox religion | 98. DK |
| 05. Mormon | 99. RF |
| 06. Muslim | |

Q18. Have you ever had a religious experience—that is, a particularly powerful, sudden religious insight or awakening?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q19. Do you feel the need to experience spiritual growth?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q20. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your beliefs....

[READ LIST]

- 1. You are religious
- 2. You are spiritual but not religious
- 3. You are neither
- 8. (DO NOT READ) DK
- 9. (DO NOT READ) RF

Q21. How important would you say that religion is in your life? Would you say it is very important, fairly important, or not at all important?

- 1. Very important
- 2. Fairly important
- 3. Not at all important
- 8. (DO NOT READ) DK
- 9. (DO NOT READ) RF

Q22. Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or is religion largely old-fashioned and out of date?

- 1. Can answer today's problems
- 2. Old-fashioned / out-of-date
- 3. Other (volunteered)
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Now I'm going to ask you about your participation in some religious practices.

Q23. How often do you pray?

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

[READ LIST]

1. Never [SKIPTO Q29]
2. Occasionally
3. Frequently
4. A lot
8. (DO NOT READ) DK [SKIPTO Q29]
9. (DO NOT READ) RF [SKIPTO Q29]

Q24. When you pray, do you more often use formal prayers or are your prayers conversational, such as having a conversation with God, or are they more meditative?

1. Formal prayers
2. Conversational prayers
3. Meditative or reflective prayers
4. Combination
8. DK
9. RF

Q25. Do you more often pray silently or aloud?

1. Silently
2. Aloud
8. DK
9. RF

Q26. Do you more often pray alone or with others?

1. Alone
2. With others
8. DK
9. RF

Q27. At family meals at home, does someone say grace or give thanks to God aloud before meals?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q28. Compared to five years ago, would you say prayer is more important to you, less important, or does it have the same level of importance?

1. More important
2. Less important
3. Same level of importance
8. DK
9. RF

Q29. How frequently do you read the Bible or other Scriptures?

[READ LIST]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

1. Never [SKIPTO Q32]
2. Occasionally
3. Frequently
4. A lot
8. (DO NOT READ) DK [SKIPTO Q32]
9. (DO NOT READ) RF [SKIPTO Q32]

Q30. Do you have a Bible or other Scriptures in your household?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q31. Do you more often read the Bible or other Scriptures alone or with others?

1. Alone
2. With others
8. DK
9. RF

Now I want to ask you some questions about your religious and spiritual beliefs.

Q32. Please tell me which statement comes closest to expressing what you believe about God.

[READ LIST] [ENTER ONLY ONE ANSWER]

1. I know that God really exists, and I have no doubt about it.
2. While I have some doubts, I feel that I do believe in God
3. I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others
4. I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Power of some kind
5. I don't know whether there is a God, and I don't believe there is any way to find out
6. I don't believe in God
8. (DO NOT READ) Don't Know
9. (DO NOT READ) Refused

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Q33A. Religions have unnecessary rules and responsibilities.

1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. No opinion
8. DK
9. RF

[IF Q12 =09 or Q12=10 or Q12=11 or Q12=98 or Q12=99 SKIPTO Q33C]

Q33B. There are a lot of things in my religion that I don't really believe.

1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. No opinion

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q33C. If you are a good person, you will go to heaven, whether or not you believe in God.

- 1. Agree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. No opinion
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q33D. There will be a day when God judges whether you go to heaven or hell.

- 1. Agree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. No opinion
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

[If Q12 =09 or Q12=10 or Q12=11 or Q12=98 or Q12=99 SKIPTO Q35]

Q34. Do you think your religion is the best path to God, or are others equally good?

- 1. Own religion is best
- 2. Others are equally good
- 3. No opinion
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q35. In your opinion, can a person be a good and ethical person if he or she does not believe in God?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q36. In your opinion, can a person be religious and not believe in God?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

For each of the following, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in....

Q37A. In miracles?

- 1. Believe in
- 2. Not sure about it
- 3. Don't believe in
- 9. RF

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

Q37B. In heaven?

1. Believe in
2. Not sure about it
3. Don't believe in
9. RF

Q37C. In hell?

1. Believe in
2. Not sure about it
3. Don't believe in
9. RF

Q37D. In reincarnation; that is rebirth of the soul in a new body?

1. Believe in
2. Not sure about it
3. Don't believe in
9. RF

Please tell me if you, yourself, have done the following in the past twelve months...

Q38A. Contributed any food, clothing, or other property to a charitable organization that helps people?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q38B. Contributed money to any charitable organization or other group, not including your congregation, that used your donation to help other people?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q38C. Contributed money to your congregation that was used specifically for the congregation's charitable activities?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK
9. RF

Q38D. Done any unpaid volunteer work for organizations, such as health organizations, social welfare groups, local community groups, youth organizations, education groups and religious charities?

0. No
1. Yes
8. DK

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

9. RF

Now I'd like to ask you some other questions about yourself and the people in your household.

Q39. Are you Latino/Hispanic or Spanish?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q39_S. Is your spouse or partner Latino/Hispanic or Spanish?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

In terms of race, which of the following best describes how you and your spouse identify yourself.

Q40. Do you identify as...

(READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 1 White or Caucasian
- 2 Black or African American
- 3 Asian
- 4 Native American
- 5 Biracial or multiracial
- 6 Other
- 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't Know
- 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q40_S. How does your spouse or partner identify himself or herself?

(DO NOT READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 1 White or Caucasian
- 2 Black or African American
- 3 Asian
- 4 Native American
- 5 Biracial or multiracial
- 6 Other
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 Refused

Q41. Do you identify as

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

(READ LIST)

- 1 Heterosexual
- 2 Lesbian/gay
- 3 Bisexual
- 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't Know
- 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused

Q42. What is the highest degree or level of school you completed?

(DO NOT READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 01 12th grade or less
- 02 High school graduate or equivalent
- 03 Associates Degree
- 04 Bachelors degree
- 05 Master's degree (MA, MS, MSW, MBA)
- 06 Doctorate degree (PhD or EdD)
- 07 Professional degree (MD, DDS or similar)
- 08 Something else
- 98 (DO NOT READ) Don't Know
- 99 (DO NOT READ) Refused

[IF Q1 is Married or Q1 is Living together but not married]

Q42_S. What about your spouse or partner?

(DO NOT READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 01 12th grade or less
- 02 High school graduate or equivalent
- 03 Associates Degree
- 04 Bachelors degree
- 05 Master's degree (MA, MS, MSW, MBA)
- 06 Doctorate degree (PhD or EdD)
- 07 Professional degree (MD, DDS or similar)
- 08 Something else
- 98 Don't Know
- 99 Refused

Q43. What is your current zip code?

Q44. How long have you lived at your current residence (in years)?

(ENTER A SINGLE NUMBER. DK=DON'T KNOW, RF=REFUSED)
(If less than one year enter 1 in box below)

Q45. Do you have any children under 18? (IF VOLUNTEERED: Include biological, adopted and stepchildren and those who may reside with another parent)?

(DO NOT READ LIST)

- 0 No [SKIPTO Q47]

A Survey of Religious Identity and Behavior Among Marin County Residents

- 1 Yes [GOTO Q45A]
- 8 Don't Know [SKIPTO Q47]
- 9 Refused [SKIPTO Q47]

Q45A. How many children under 18 do you have?

(ENTER NUMBER. DK=DON'T KNOW, RF=REFUSED)

Q46. Have your children received or are they currently receiving any religious training?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 8. DK
- 9. RF

Q47. For statistical purposes only, could you please stop me when I reach the category that best represents your household's combined income in 1999 before taxes?

(READ LIST) (ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE)

- 01 Under \$10,000
- 02 \$10,000-\$24,999
- 03 \$25,000-\$49,999
- 04 \$50,000-\$74,999
- 05 \$75,000-\$99,999
- 06 \$100,000-\$149,999
- 07 \$150,000-\$249,999
- 08 Over \$250,000
- 98 (DO NOT READ) DK
- 99 (DO NOT READ) RF

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

THE INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH & COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Dr. Gary A. Tobin, *President*

The Institute

The Institute for Jewish & Community Research, San Francisco, is an independent research institute devoted to the study of contemporary American Jewish life. The Institute serves as a national and international think tank providing policy-oriented research findings to the Jewish and other communities.

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- Jewish philanthropy, including patterns of giving, motivations for giving, and the growth and character of foundations.
- Racial and ethnic diversity in the Jewish community. Asian, African-American and Latino Jews are a growing segment of the Jewish population through adoption, intermarriage, and conversion.
- The American public's attitudes about Israel, U.S. support for Israel, and the attitudes of American Jews about Israel.
- Ethnic heritage and religion in the United States. Our studies focus on Americans in general and Jews specifically switching their religions, practicing more than one religion, and creating new religious forms.
- Changing aspects of anti-Semitism in the United States, looking at age, political affiliation and other factors. We are also studying anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on college campuses.

GARY A. TOBIN

Gary A. Tobin, Ph.D. is president of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research in San Francisco. He is also Director of the Leonard and Madlyn Abramson Program in Jewish Policy Research, Center for Policy Options at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles. He earned his Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley. He was the Director for eleven years of the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. Prior to joining Brandeis, Dr. Tobin spent eleven years at Washington University in St. Louis and was the Director of the University College Urban Affairs Program.

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