

African-Americans more religious than most others in United States

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—African-Americans surpass others in the United States in a range of expressions of faith, from praying more to attending religious services more frequently, a new report shows.

Congregants link hands while singing during a Sunday church service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. (Pew Forum Photo)

“Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, African-Americans are among the most likely to report a formal religious affiliation, with fully 87 percent of African-Americans describing themselves as belonging to one religious group or another,” states “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans,” released by the [Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#).

The research, drawn from Pew’s 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, showed most African-Americans—59 percent—are affiliated with historically black churches. Another 15 percent belong to evangelical churches, 4 percent to mainline Protestant churches and 5 percent to Catholic churches. One percent each are affiliated with Jehovah’s Witness and Muslim congregations, and 12 percent are unaffiliated.

Even blacks who are not affiliated with congregations demonstrated significant religious interest. Almost three-quarters of African-Americans who are unaffiliated with a particular faith say religion plays at least a

“somewhat important” role in their lives.

Almost half—45 percent—of unaffiliated African-Americans say it is “very important” in their lives. In comparison, 16 percent of the overall population of unaffiliated Americans said religion is very important.