

Faith and values in 2014: 10 telling numbers

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—Scores of studies and surveys in 2014 revealed myriad, quirky ways we live out our faith and values. But the most intriguing findings were not always the headliners. Here are 10 telling numbers about religion and society that caught our eye.

- **One in 3 Americans** want a divorce between clergy and civil marriages. They say it's time for clergy to quit saying "By the power vested in me by the state ... "
- **Suck it up, polar bear.** Just 5 percent of Americans say climate change is their top issue, and religion is a major marker of divided views. White evangelical Protestants were the least likely to believe climate change is a fact and human activity is among the causes.
- **Amen to online.** Almost half of U.S. adults (46 percent) say they saw someone sharing "something about their faith" on the Internet in the last week.
- **Fifty percent of white evangelicals** see themselves as victims of significant discrimination.
- **One in four Millennials** who grew up in a religion but now claim none say an important reason for leaving was their childhood church's negative teachings or treatment of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people.
- **Choral laments.** Since 1998, there has been a 23 percent drop among white conservative evangelicals who heard a choir at worship and a 28 percent drop for members of liberal and moderate Protestant

congregations.

- **No atheist in-laws.** Nearly half of Americans (49 percent) would be unhappy with an unbeliever joining the family. As a point of comparison, 19 percent would gripe about a gun owner.
- **Grads, leave religion off your resume.** New grads hunting for jobs can be 24 to 30 percent less likely to hear back from potential employers if they included a mention of religious ties in college on their resume.
- **Americans skip church and then fib about attending.** Nearly one in seven falsely claimed they attended a religious service.
- **Religion survey babble confuses 103 percent of readers.** Here's why. OK, the 103 percent is made up, but the point of this piece was to bring a discerning eye to news stories packed with numbers and help readers better understand statistics stories like this one.