

# Few Americans have qualms about cremation

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—A growing number of Americans are taking “ashes to ashes, dust to dust” literally when they die.

- ✘ Forty-one percent of Americans say they plan to be cremated, according to a survey of 1,036 Americans from Nashville-based [LifeWay Research](#).

About six in 10—58 percent—say being cremated won’t keep you from being resurrected to live in heaven. Only 14 percent say cremation is wrong.

The LifeWay online survey reflects the growing acceptance of cremation, which has become common in the United States.

More than four in 10—43.5 percent—of Americans who died in 2012 were cremated, according to the [Cremation Association of North America](#). That’s nearly double the rate from 1996 (21.8 percent.)

LifeWay researchers found few Americans have qualms about the practice.

Seventy-one percent disagree with the statement, “I believe it is wrong to cremate a body after someone dies.”

Only three in 10 disagree with the statement, “I plan to have my body  cremated when I die.” Forty-one percent agree, while 29 percent do not know.

Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research, said that cremation fits the way most Americans live these days.

“Few people stay in the same place all their lives, so they don’t have strong connection to a place they want to be buried,” he said. “Cremation is also often less expensive than burial. And many of the social taboos about cremation are fading.”

The survey found few Americans think cremation has any consequences for the afterlife. Fifty-eight percent disagree with the statement, “If someone’s body is cremated, there is no way for them to be resurrected to live in heaven.” Only 8 percent agree. Twenty percent say they don’t know, and 14 percent say there is no resurrection.

✘ Evangelical Christians have been wary of cremation in the past, and the practice remains less common in the Bible belt. In Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee, the cremation rate is among the lowest in the country, at 23.9 percent, according to the Cremation Association of North America. By contrast, in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, the cremation rate is 60.3 percent.

In LifeWay’s survey, self-identified born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist Christians are most likely (27 percent) to say cremation is wrong and to disagree (42 percent) when asked about being cremated. They’re also most likely to disagree (70 percent) when asked if cremation would keep someone from being resurrected to live in heaven.

Researchers conducted the online survey of adult Americans Sept. 6, 2013. A sample of an online panel representing the adult population of the United States was invited to participate. Analysts weighted responses by region, age, ethnicity, gender and income to reflect the population more accurately.

The completed sample is 1,036 online surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence the sampling error from this panel does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percent. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.