White Christians now a minority in 19 states

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—The notion of America as a mostly white, mostly Christian country is rapidly becoming a fact for the history books.

"The U.S. religious landscape is undergoing a dramatic transformation that is fundamentally reshaping American politics and culture," said Dan Cox, research director for Public Religion Research Institute.

The institute recently released the [American Values Atlas](#), an interactive online tool that compiles data about Americans' opinions, identities and values. One of the biggest takeaways of this years' study was that, for the first time ever, America is not a majority Protestant nation.

Part of this shift is due to the growing number of religiously unaffiliated Americans, now at 22 percent nationally and 34 percent of young people.

Texas has the same population of white Christians as New York.

In 19 states, white Christians are now a minority, the study revealed. The list of states where this is the case includes a few surprises. Several Bible Belt states such as Georgia (No. 16) made the list; Texas (No. 7) had the same population of white Christians as New York (No. 5).

While one might want to blame these shifts on "secularism," one force at work seems to be America's increasing ethnic diversity. According to the institute, Hispanic Catholics are a growing proportion of Catholics. and evangelical Protestants are becoming less white.

Here is the full ranking of the 19 states with their corresponding

percentages of white Christians:

1. Hawaii – 20 percent

2. California – 25 percent

3. New Mexico – 33 percent

4. Nevada – 36 percent

5. New York – 37 percent

6. Alaska – 37 percent

7. Texas – 37 percent

8. Maryland – 38 percent

9. Arizona – 38 percent

10. Washington – 42 percent

11. Florida – 42 percent

12. Oregon – 43 percent

13. New Jersey – 43 percent

14. Colorado – 44 percent

15. Illinois – 46 percent

16. Georgia – 46 percent

17. Vermont – 47 percent

18. Delaware – 48 percent

19. Louisiana – 49 percent

The institute's definition of "white Christian" includes evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Mormons who identify as "white, non-Hispanic." According to PRRI, "The American Values Atlas draws upon 50,000 annual telephone interviews among a random sample of Americans to deliver an unprecedented level of detail about the United States' cultural and religious landscape."