



The Twelve Tribes of American Politics

This analysis by John Green, of the University of Akron, and Beliefnet is based on the Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted June-August 2008 by the University of Akron. The survey produced a national random sample of 4,017 adult Americans (with a margin of error plus or minus 1.5 percent).

Candidates, Parties & Ideology

PARTY IDENTIFICATION			
2008			
	Democrats	Independents	Republican
Religious Right	17.5	11.2	71.2
Heartland Culture Warriors	30.9	13.2	55.9
Moderate Evangelicals	37.2	17.5	45.3
White Bread Protestants	38.8	15.3	45.9
Convertible Catholics	41.2	16.7	42.1
Religious Left	63.2	14.4	22.4
Spiritual But Not Religious	42.7	24.6	32.7
Seculars	56.0	27.4	16.7
Latino Christians	62.0	18.1	19.9
Muslims and others	68.7	16.2	15.2
Jews	64.4	18.6	16.9
Black Protestants	82.9	9.7	7.5
ALL	47.5	16.1	36.4
2004			
	Democrats	Independents	Republican
Religious Right	19.6	9.9	70.5
Heartland Culture Warriors	28.5	17.3	54.2
Moderate Evangelicals	30.8	22.0	47.2
White Bread Protestants	32.6	21.1	46.2
Convertible Catholics	46.6	19.6	33.7
Religious Left	50.6	18.1	31.3
Spiritual But Not Religious	35.2	37.1	27.7
Seculars	47.1	26.8	26.1
Latino Christians	54.0	22.3	23.7
Muslims and others	55.1	32.7	12.1
Jews	68.0	10.7	21.3
Black Protestants	70.8	18.5	10.7
ALL	41.9	20.3	37.9

CANDIDATE PREFERENCE	2008		
	McCain	Obama	Undecided
Religious Right	70.5	10.7	18.8
Heartland Culture Warriors	55.6	25.2	19.2
Moderate Evangelicals	47.4	27.0	25.6
White Bread Protestants	47.6	31.2	21.2
Convertible Catholics	48.7	34.5	16.8
Religious Left	25.7	55.5	18.8
Spiritual But Not Religious	26.7	38.2	35.1
Seculars	17.8	56.2	26.0
Latino Christians	22.9	59.7	17.4
Muslims and others	17.3	67.3	15.5
Jews	23.3	51.7	25.0
Black Protestants	5.6	78.8	15.6
ALL	37.4	41.9	20.7
Survey conducted June-August 2008			

2004 & 2000 ACTUAL RESULTS	2004		2000	
	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Gore
Religious Right	88%	12%	84%	16%
Traditional Christians	72%	28%	62%	38%
Moderate Evangelicals	64%	36%	61%	39%
Conventional Mainline Protestants	58%	42%	57%	43%
Convertible Catholics	55%	45%	43%	57%
Religious Left	30%	70%	49%	51%
Spiritual but not Religious	37%	63%	32%	68%
Seculars	26%	74%	34%	66%
Latino Christians	45%	55%	29%	71%
Non-Christians	23%	77%	28%	73%
Jews	27%	73%	27%	73%
Black Protestants	17%	83%	4%	96%
Total	51%	49%	50%	50%

PERSUADABLES, 2008		
	Persuadable	Firm
Religious Right	47.2	52.8
Heartland Culture Warriors	51.9	48.1
Moderate Evangelicals	55.4	44.6
White Bread Protestants	52.6	47.4
Convertible Catholics	48.1	51.9
Religious Left	46.8	53.2
Spiritual But Not Religious	60.3	39.7
Seculars	48.9	51.1
Latino Christians	45.6	54.4
Muslims and others	49.5	50.5
Jews	41.7	58.3
Black Protestants	24.2	75.8
ALL	47.7	52.3
"Persuadable" = those who are undecided, a "weak" supporter or "lean" to one candidate		

IDEOLOGY			
2008			
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Religious Right	5.4	23.3	71.4
Heartland Culture Warriors	8.4	39.0	52.6
Moderate Evangelicals	14.0	47.8	38.2
White Bread Protestants	15.9	43.0	41.2
Convertible Catholics	18.4	44.9	36.7
Religious Left	31.7	48.7	19.6
Spiritual But Not Religious	16.7	46.2	37.1
Seculars	45.0	42.6	12.4
Latino Christians	32.3	34.0	33.7
Muslims and others	40.6	47.2	12.3
Jews	47.5	33.9	18.6
Black Protestants	24.1	45.8	30.1
ALL	22.2	40.7	37.1
2004			
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Religious Right	8.8	25.2	66.0
Heartland Culture Warriors	9.5	40.5	50.0
Moderate Evangelicals	16.1	35.9	48.0
White Bread Protestants	19.5	43.8	36.7
Convertible Catholics	22.3	49.0	28.7
Religious Left	29.5	50.0	20.5
Spiritual But Not Religious	25.3	48.9	25.8
Seculars	34.7	48.0	17.3
Latino Christians	26.9	45.1	28.0
Muslims and others	44.4	45.6	10.0
Jews	45.7	35.7	18.6
Black Protestants	24.8	48.4	26.9
ALL	22.2	42.6	35.2

The Issues

ISSUE PRIORITIES			
% Saying #1 Priority Is...			
2008			
	Economic Issues	Foreign Policy	Social Issues
Religious Right	42.0	22.0	36.0
Heartland Culture Warriors	57.1	23.5	19.4
Moderate Evangelicals	65.1	25.4	9.5
White Bread Protestants	68.1	28.1	3.9
Convertible Catholics	63.9	32.4	3.6
Religious Left	64.7	30.9	4.4
Spiritual But Not Religious	73.2	15.8	11.0
Seculars	61.5	28.6	9.9
Latino Christians	61.2	26.6	12.2
Muslims and others	56.5	37.0	6.5
Jews	52.5	42.4	5.1
Black Protestants	70.1	18.1	11.8
ALL	61.0	26.1	12.9
2004			
	Economic Issues	Foreign Policy	Social Issues
Religious Right	18.0	31.3	50.7
Heartland Culture Warriors	27.7	33.2	39.1
Moderate Evangelicals	37.1	38.3	24.6
White Bread Protestants	41.2	43.9	14.9
Convertible Catholics	44.1	44.7	11.2
Religious Left	36.6	45.0	18.3
Spiritual But Not Religious	44.6	27.0	28.4
Seculars	28.4	56.0	15.5
Latino Christians	48.4	23.0	28.7
Muslims and others	33.3	57.1	9.5
Jews	17.4	63.0	19.6
Black Protestants	65.3	15.9	18.8
ALL	35.8	38.1	26.1

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT			
Should government provide more services, and spend more? Or fewer services and spend less?			
2008			
	Fewer services	Same	More Services
Religious Right	49.7	30.8	19.4
Heartland Culture Warriors	40.0	40.5	19.5
Moderate Evangelicals	39.2	39.0	21.8
White Bread Protestants	36.9	40.8	22.3
Convertible Catholics	37.6	35.8	26.6
Religious Left	26.5	42.8	30.7
Spiritual But Not Religious	34.7	37.5	27.8
Seculars	28.0	41.7	30.3
Latino Christians	17.4	40.9	41.7
Muslims and others	37.0	25.9	37.0
Jews	26.2	39.3	34.4
Black Protestants	23.1	21.8	55.1
ALL	33.7	37.1	29.3
2004			
	Fewer services	Same	More Services
Religious Right	41.1	37.2	21.7
Heartland Culture Warriors	32.8	36.7	30.5
Moderate Evangelicals	22.8	39.6	37.6
White Bread Protestants	31.1	41.9	27.0
Convertible Catholics	25.5	35.2	39.3
Religious Left	22.0	40.7	37.4
Spiritual But Not Religious	22.8	34.0	43.2
Seculars	27.3	44.3	28.4
Latino Christians	20.1	33.3	46.6
Muslims and others	12.5	41.3	46.2
Jews	19.4	36.1	44.4
Black Protestants	19.6	32.8	47.7
ALL	26.6	38.0	35.4

ENVIRONMENT			
Do you favor strict environmental regulation even if it means high prices, job loss?			
2008			
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Religious Right	40.7	12.6	46.7
Heartland Culture Warriors	53.3	13.1	33.6
Moderate Evangelicals	48.6	14.1	37.2
White Bread Protestants	52.9	15.5	31.6
Convertible Catholics	56.8	8.6	34.6
Religious Left	67.3	10.6	22.0
Spiritual But Not Religious	44.4	22.9	32.7
Seculars	68.4	12.0	19.5
Latino Christians	64.9	13.8	21.3
Muslims and others	79.6	5.6	14.8
Jews	63.3	11.7	25.0
Black Protestants	44.6	23.8	31.6
ALL	55.6	13.8	30.6
2004			
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Religious Right	53.4	12.7	33.9
Heartland Culture Warriors	58.7	17.4	23.9
Moderate Evangelicals	52.9	16.9	30.1
White Bread Protestants	56.2	19.2	24.6
Convertible Catholics	59.7	16.9	23.4
Religious Left	65.8	17.5	16.7
Spiritual But Not Religious	46.4	19.0	34.6
Seculars	61.4	19.2	19.4
Latino Christians	45.7	19.4	34.9
Muslims and others	62.6	16.8	20.6
Jews	66.7	13.3	20.0
Black Protestants	40.1	20.2	39.8
ALL	55.4	17.4	27.2

ABORTION		
2008		
	Pro-Choice	Pro-Life
Religious Right	16.7	83.3
Heartland Culture Warriors	24.8	75.2
Moderate Evangelicals	45.6	54.4
White Bread Protestants	62.4	37.6
Convertible Catholics	55.0	45.0
Religious Left	78.0	22.0
Spiritual But Not Religious	55.4	44.6
Seculars	87.0	13.0
Latino Christians	41.1	58.9
Muslims and others	80.7	19.3
Jews	83.3	16.7
Black Protestants	47.6	52.4
ALL	51.6	48.4
2004		
	Pro-Choice	Pro-Life
Religious Right	16.3	83.7
Heartland Culture Warriors	33.2	66.8
Moderate Evangelicals	40.7	59.3
White Bread Protestants	63.8	36.2
Convertible Catholics	50.9	49.1
Religious Left	77.9	22.1
Spiritual But Not Religious	54.2	45.8
Seculars	83.0	17.0
Latino Christians	41.0	59.0
Muslims and others	78.5	21.5
Jews	84.0	16.0
Black Protestants	45.5	54.5
ALL	51.4	48.6

GAY MARRIAGE			
2008.0			
	Traditional Marriage	Civil Unions	Same-sex Marriage
Religious Right	85.7	10.7	3.5
Heartland Culture Warriors	64.9	19.6	15.5
Moderate Evangelicals	58.0	20.6	21.4
White Bread Protestants	42.0	28.8	29.2
Convertible Catholics	38.9	35.3	25.7
Religious Left	21.4	28.0	50.6
Spiritual But Not Religious	54.1	14.1	31.8
Seculars	17.2	19.9	62.9
Latino Christians	59.0	13.3	27.7
Muslims and others	26.2	17.8	56.1
Jews	25.0	21.7	53.3
Black Protestants	65.0	11.6	23.4
ALL	50.0	20.0	30.0
2004			
	Traditional Marriage	Civil Unions	Same-sex Marriage
Religious Right	89.2	7.8	3.0
Heartland Culture Warriors	73.5	15.6	10.9
Moderate Evangelicals	66.6	16.0	17.4
White Bread Protestants	44.4	28.7	26.9
Convertible Catholics	52.2	19.4	28.4
Religious Left	27.9	29.4	42.7
Spiritual But Not Religious	58.2	9.4	32.4
Seculars	18.0	23.0	59.0
Latino Christians	59.4	11.5	29.0
Muslims and others	30.2	19.8	50.0
Jews	15.8	28.9	55.3
Black Protestants	71.8	10.0	18.2
ALL	55.1	17.6	27.3

IRAQ WAR		
2008		
	War justified	War not justified
Religious Right	73.4	26.6
Heartland Culture Warriors	62.1	37.9
Moderate Evangelicals	56.5	43.5
White Bread Protestants	54.4	45.6
Convertible Catholics	55.7	44.3
Religious Left	33.2	66.8
Spiritual But Not Religious	49.8	50.2
Seculars	24.0	76.0
Latino Christians	37.2	62.8
Muslims and others	14.8	85.2
Jews	31.7	68.3
Black Protestants	13.6	86.4
ALL	45.5	54.5
2004		
	War justified	War not justified
Religious Right	83.1	16.9
Heartland Culture Warriors	70.4	29.6
Moderate Evangelicals	70.3	29.7
White Bread Protestants	65.0	35.0
Convertible Catholics	60.1	39.9
Religious Left	47.9	52.1
Spiritual But Not Religious	54.2	45.8
Seculars	40.7	59.3
Latino Christians	54.3	45.7
Muslims and others	30.5	69.5
Jews	39.7	60.3
Black Protestants	35.4	64.6
ALL	57.7	42.3

AMERICAN ROLE IN THE WORLD			
Do you believe the United States should mostly mind its own business internationally or....			
2008			
	Strongly agree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree
Religious Right	34.0	8.7	57.3
Heartland Culture Warriors	33.6	13.4	53.0
Moderate Evangelicals	43.1	10.6	46.3
White Bread Protestants	45.9	10.3	43.8
Convertible Catholics	40.4	8.3	51.3
Religious Left	46.0	6.9	47.2
Spiritual But Not Religious	56.3	16.1	27.7
Seculars	48.9	11.5	39.7
Latino Christians	60.6	14.9	24.5
Muslims and others	48.6	22.0	29.4
Jews	37.7	4.9	57.4
Black Protestants	47.9	17.6	34.5
ALL	44.7	11.6	43.7
2004			
	Strongly agree	No opinion	Strongly disagree
Religious Right	26.3	12.2	61.6
Heartland Culture Warriors	32.0	16.7	51.3
Moderate Evangelicals	40.5	15.8	43.7
White Bread Protestants	38.1	16.2	45.7
Convertible Catholics	40.0	15.1	44.9
Religious Left	33.3	15.7	51.0
Spiritual But Not Religious	54.5	10.8	34.7
Seculars	37.9	14.3	47.9
Latino Christians	40.0	14.1	45.9
Muslims and others	39.6	12.3	48.1
Jews	17.6	5.4	77.0
Black Protestants	43.2	18.6	38.2
ALL	36.9	14.8	48.3

The Basics

THE SIZE OF THE TRIBES	
	% of Adult Population
Religious Right	12.9
Heartland Culture Warriors	11.3
Moderate Evangelicals	9.2
White Bread Protestants	7.3
Convertible Catholics	8.4
Religious Left	12.7
Spiritual But Not Religious	5.6
Seculars	10.1
Latino Christians	9.6
Muslims and others	2.7
Jews	1.5
Black Protestants	8.5
Total	100.0

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS			
	Say Bible is literally true	Report attending worship weekly	Say all great religions true and good
Religious Right	80.4	83.8	7.5
Heartland Culture Warriors	36.5	79.2	27.6
Moderate Evangelicals	45.2	35.7	28.5
White Bread Protestants	23.9	23.9	39.6
Convertible Catholics	13.9	39.1	51.0
Religious Left	5.3	25.3	67.3
Spiritual But Not Religious	34.1	25.0	28.0
Seculars	0.0	4.0	44.1
Latino Christians	37.3	48.2	42.9
Muslims and others	0.9	29.4	68.2
Jews	8.2	26.2	48.3
Black Protestants	46.3	60.3	32.6
ALL	31.8	44.1	38.0

BY REGION				
	Northeast	Midwest	West	South
Religious Right	11.4	23.4	12.4	52.7
Heartland Culture Warriors	22.7	25.8	29.6	21.9
Moderate Evangelicals	11.7	28.9	12.5	46.9
White Bread Protestants	23.9	34.8	14.3	27.0
Convertible Catholics	39.6	28.1	12.4	19.8
Religious Left	31.8	26.1	16.3	25.7
Spiritual But Not Religious	17.0	27.4	26.9	28.7
Seculars	25.3	22.6	32.8	19.4
Latino Christians	14.5	5.2	49.5	30.8
Muslims and others	21.6	20.7	29.7	27.9
Jews	45.9	8.2	29.5	16.4
Black Protestants	12.4	18.2	6.5	62.9
ALL	21.5	23.4	21.7	33.4

Methodology

This analysis by John Green, of the University of Akron, and Beliefnet is based on the Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted June-August 2008 by the University of Akron. The survey produced a national random sample of 4,017 adult Americans (with a margin of error plus or minus 1.5 percent).

The twelve tribes were defined in three steps. First, the survey respondents were sorted into the major religious traditions in the United States by means of affiliation, ethnicity and race.

Second, an index of traditional religious beliefs was used to subdivide category the affiliation categories into those with high, medium, and low levels of religious traditionalism. The questions include: Belief in god, life after death, view of scripture, evolution and the devil; worship attendance; frequency of prayer, scripture reading and small group participation outside of worship; level of financial contribution to a congregation.

Finally, groups with similar religious backgrounds and levels of traditionalism were grouped into the twelve tribes. Some times a single category that was distinctive became its own tribe. For example, the "religious right" are evangelical protestants with a high level traditional beliefs and practices, and "convertible catholics" were non-latino catholics with medium level of traditional beliefs and practices. But sometimes a variety of groups were put in the same tribe. For example, the "Religious Left" is made up of Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, and Catholics with low levels of traditional beliefs and practices.