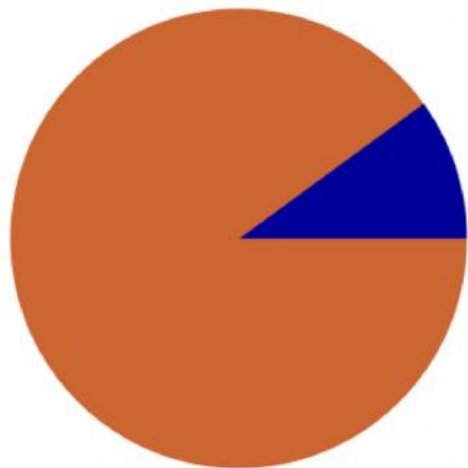


A Defense and a Reason

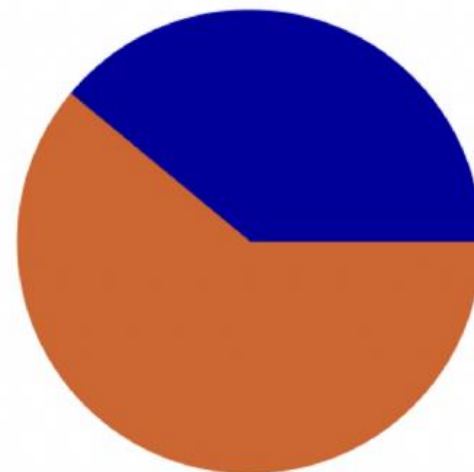
- *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 1Pet 3:15*
- Defense from 1800's until present – Bible Authority and truth about the church.
- Things are changing in last few decades

The number of Americans ages 18-29 who have no religious affiliation has nearly quadrupled in the last 30 years.

10%



39%



At First Glance ... Good News

- From 2007 – 2014
- 8% of adults No longer see themselves as Christians.
- atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has jumped more than 6% 16.1% to 22.8%.
- Mormons growth is under 1 percent in each of the last two years. grew by just 0.75% in this country in 2017, barely keeping pace U.S. population growth (+.71 percent).

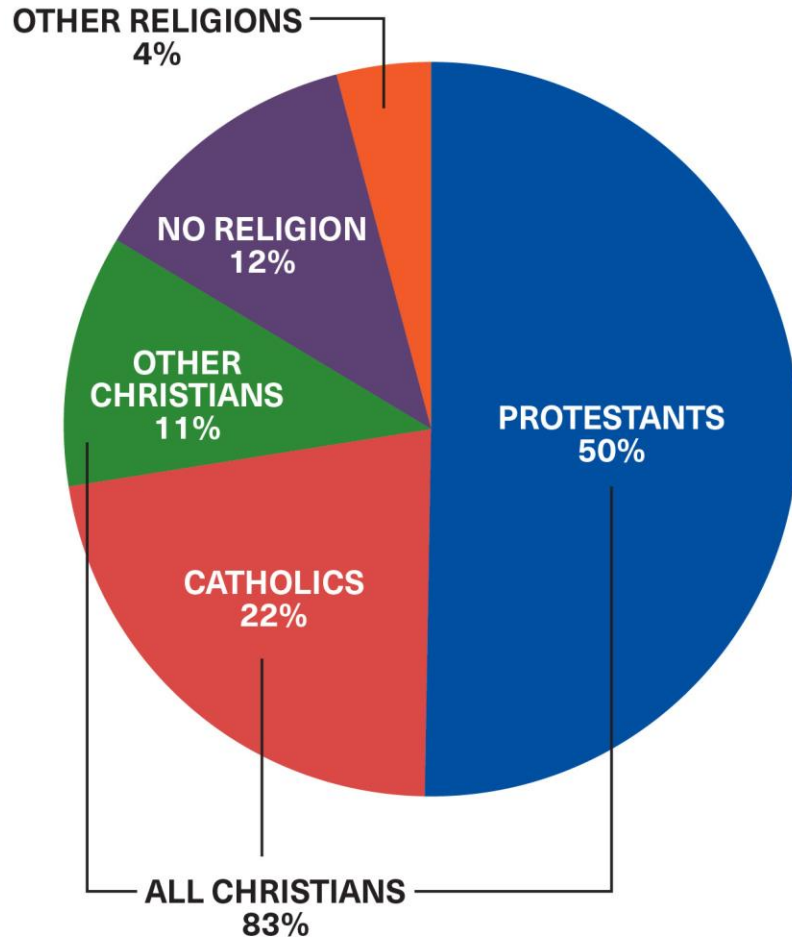
Are We Doing Something Wrong?

- *There is a generation that curses its father,
And does not bless its mother. 12 There is
a generation that is pure in its own eyes,
Yet is not washed from its filthiness. 13
There is a generation — oh, how lofty are
their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.
Pr. 30:11-13*

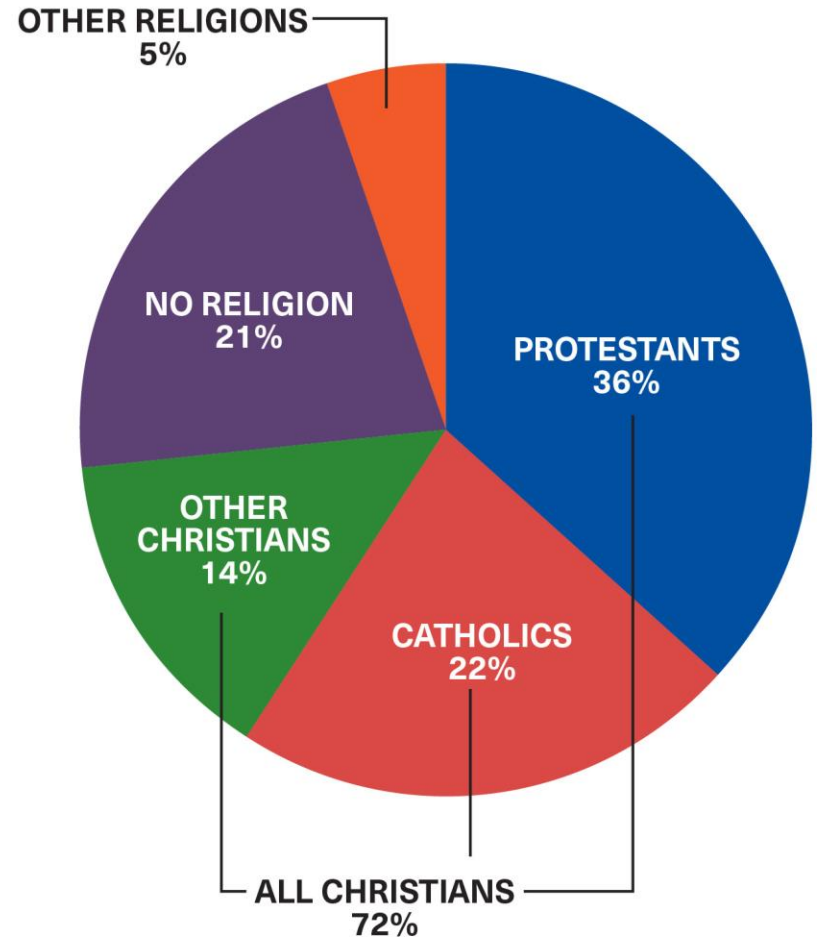
- *Southern Baptists lost more than 1,000,000 members in last 10 years*
- *Giving and attendance are down,*
- *more gray and silver heads in the pews*

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

2003 AVERAGE



2017 AVERAGE

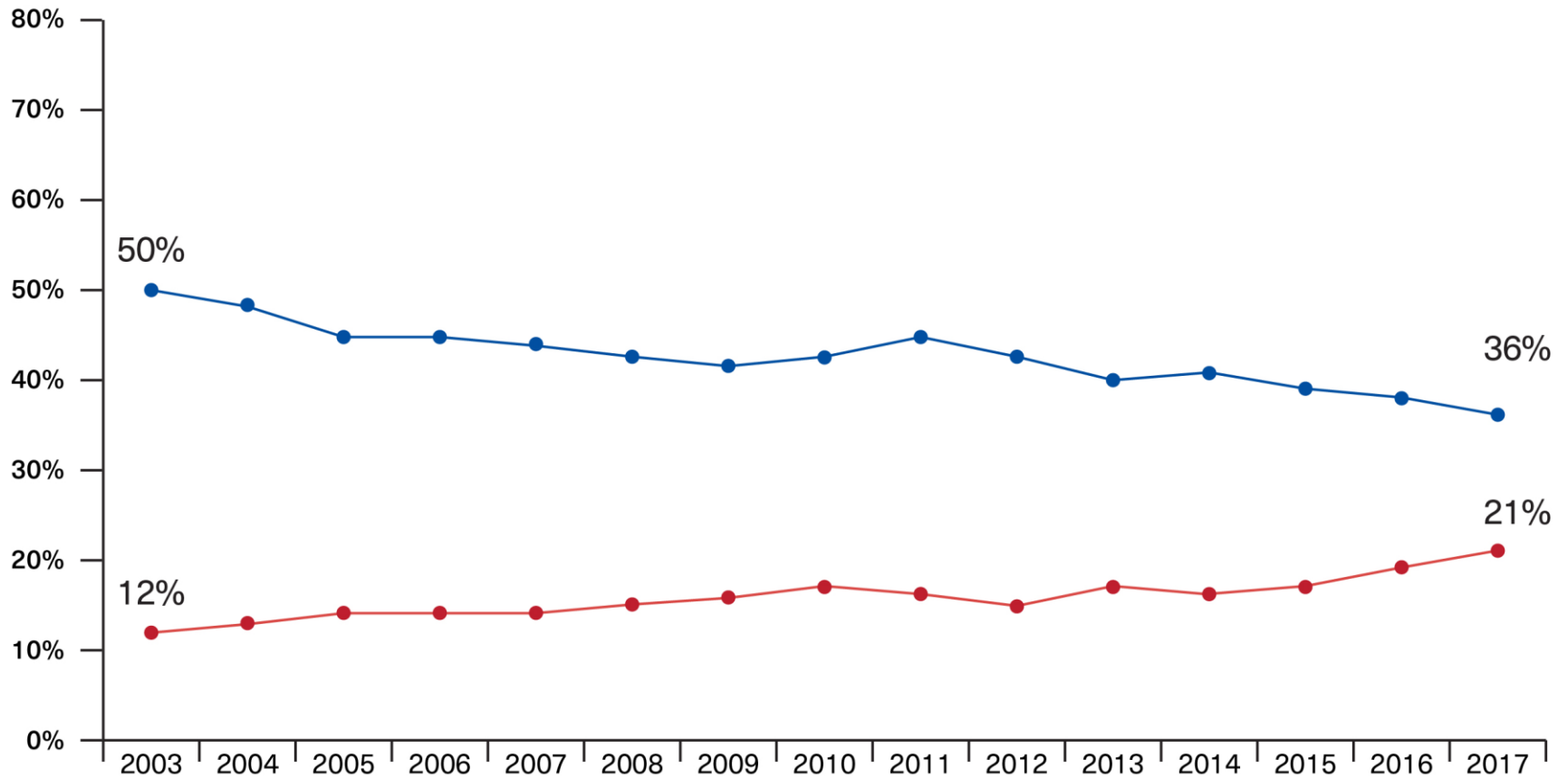


SOURCES: ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST AND ABC NEWS POLLS

- *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2Tim 4:2-5*

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THE US: ANNUAL AVERAGES 2003-17

■ PROTESTANTS ■ NO RELIGION



Why?

- most “religious nones” left because:
- 51% question a lot of religious teaching
- 46% dislike positions churches take on social/political issues
- 34 % “ don’t like religious organizations”
- 31 % don’t like religious leaders
- 26 % Religion is irrelevant to me
- These stats reveal why many churches have decided not to take stands or to change their stands to match what people want to hear.

- *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight! Isa 5:20-21*

- Views about God had “evolved”
- some having a “crisis of faith.”
- “Learning – evolution when in college”
- “Religion is the opiate of the people”
- “Rational thought makes religion go out the window”
- “Lack of any sort of scientific or specific evidence of a creator”
- “I just realized somewhere along the line that I didn’t really believe it”

A Defense and a Reason

- *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to **everyone who asks you a reason** for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*
1Pet 3:15
- Defense from 1800's until present – Bible Authority and truth about the church.
- Things are changing in last few decades
- What is needed now for many are evidences for God and for Christianity.

- Some believe the reason we are not growing is because we are not preaching as strongly as we did in the 50's
- Others believe it is the change in the culture.
- Each of us must answer that question for ourselves.
- There is plenty of evidence for the latter.
- Only our conscience can reveal the former.

● *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, Rom 1:18-23*

● *21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, Rom 1:18-23*

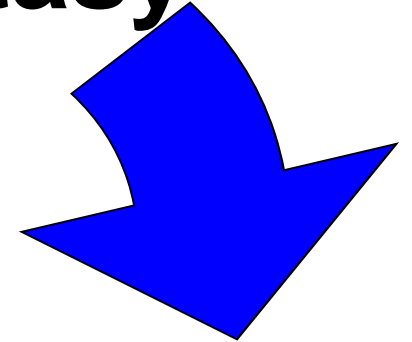
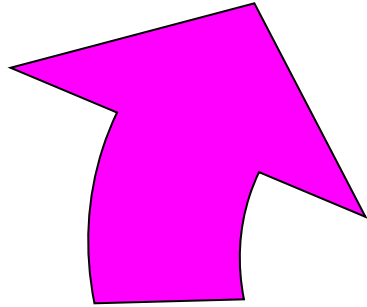
Nothing New Here

- *That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. 11 There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after. Ecc. 1:9-11*

Cycle of Judges

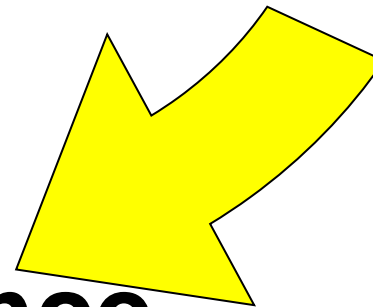
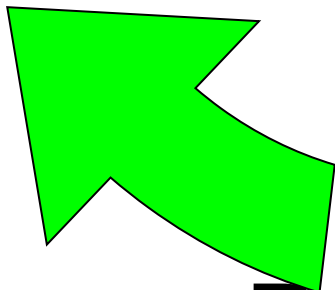
Peace

Apostasy



Deliverance

Affliction



Repentance

- *31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? Jer 5:31*

We just do our Work

● *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, **as we have opportunity**, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal 6:9-10*

● *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense to everyone** who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 1 Peter 3:15-16*

We do our Work; God Does His

- *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*
- *1 Cor 3:5-8*