

Racist Trump Voters Less Religious Than Nonracist Trump Voters, Survey Says

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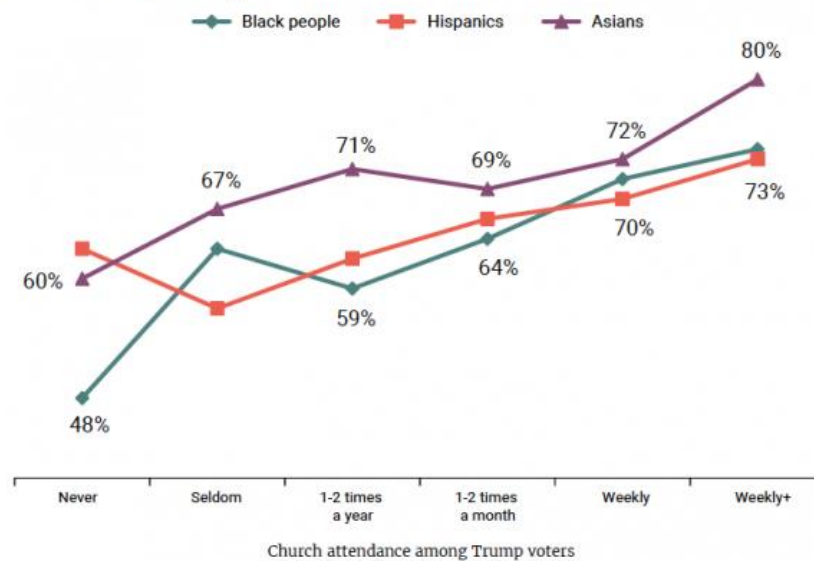
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Trump voters with unfavorable attitudes to minority groups were less religious, while Trump voters who attended church often were less likely to demonstrate racist attitudes, according to a new report.

Twenty-six percent of nonreligious white Trump voters said their white identity was "extremely important" to them, while only nine percent of religious white Trump voters answered the same. Only about half, 48 percent, of nonreligious Trump voters said they have warm feelings toward black people, while nearly three-in-four, 73 percent, of religious Trump voters said the same. Similar patterns emerged with attitudes toward Hispanics and Asians.

Churchgoing Trump Voters Have More Favorable Attitudes Toward Black People, Hispanics, and Asians

Percent with warm feelings toward...



Note: "Warm feelings" = ratings of 52 to 100 on feeling thermometer scale.

Democracy Fund Voter Study Group Available:

<https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publications/2018-voter-survey/religious-trump-voters>

The report, written by Emily Ekins, research fellow and director of polling for The Cato Institute, used the Democracy Fund Voter Study Group surveys conducted in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The sample included 6,005 Americans interviewed between April 5 and May 14 of this year, 4,705 of whom had been previously interviewed.

When asked if racial and religious diversity is at the core of American identity, 83 percent of Trump voters who attend religious services weekly agreed. Trump voters who never attend religious services were the least likely to agree at 67 percent.

Trump voters who attend church weekly were also the least likely to agree with Trump on immigration. About half of them supported a border wall (49 percent), wanted less legal immigration (48 percent), and opposed a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants (51 percent). Among Trump voters who never go to church, about two-thirds agree with Trump on those issues: 65 percent, 67 percent, and 68 percent, respectively.

White evangelicals comprised an important part of the coalition that helped Trump win office. Their support for him has been a topic of interest due to what many see as Trump's display of values antithetical to Christianity, such as his mean tweets, misogyny, race-baiting, adultery and narcissism.

The findings are consistent with the view that Trump's most religious supporters voted for him more out of concerns about a Hillary Clinton presidency than affinity for Trump.

For example, Southern Evangelical Seminary President Richard Land, executive editor of The Christian Post, explained his reasons for voting for Trump in an August 2016 CP op-ed this way: "Mr. Trump will in all probability not be a good president, and he will do many things with which I profoundly disagree. However, I fear Hillary Clinton may be a terminal president who will destroy this venerable republic."

The report found evidence that Trump's anti-Muslim attitudes are rubbing off on some of his religious supporters. Feelings toward Muslims were low across the board for Trump voters. But in 2016, the weekly churchgoers were the most likely to have warm feelings toward Muslims, at 27 percent. That number dropped, however, 13 percentage points, to 14 percent in 2017, the lowest among all the church attendance groups that year.

Writing about the report on Saturday, Ross Douthat, a conservative columnist for The New York Times, noted that Trump's devout Christian supporters made the gamble that backing Trump would delay the decline of their influence in American culture, but in doing so, they allied "with a leader whose core appeal depends upon and possibly furthers the de-Christianization of conservatism."

"Such a bet might be understandable as an act of desperation. But it's hard to see how it can reverse de-Christianization, and easy to see how it might accelerate it. Which, on the evidence of this survey, is something that secular liberals should fear as well," he concluded.