

# Protestant Churchgoer Views on Leaders Leaving the Faith

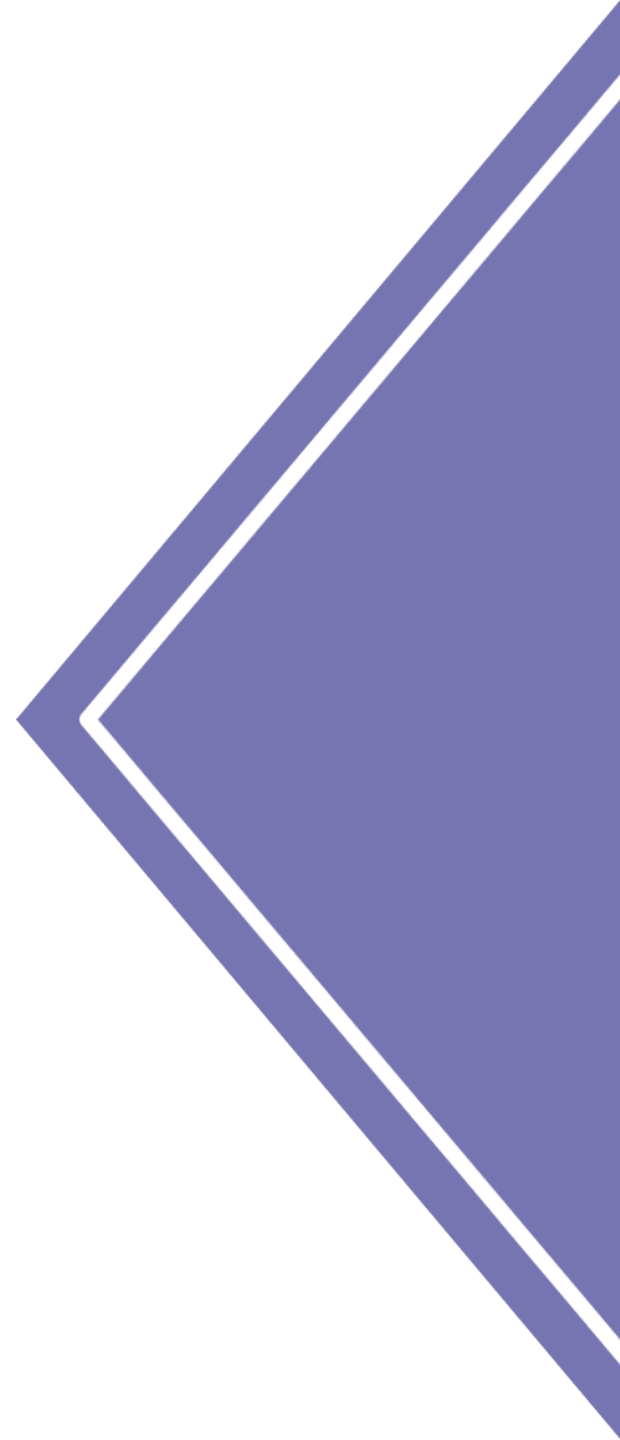
---

Survey of American Protestant  
Churchgoers

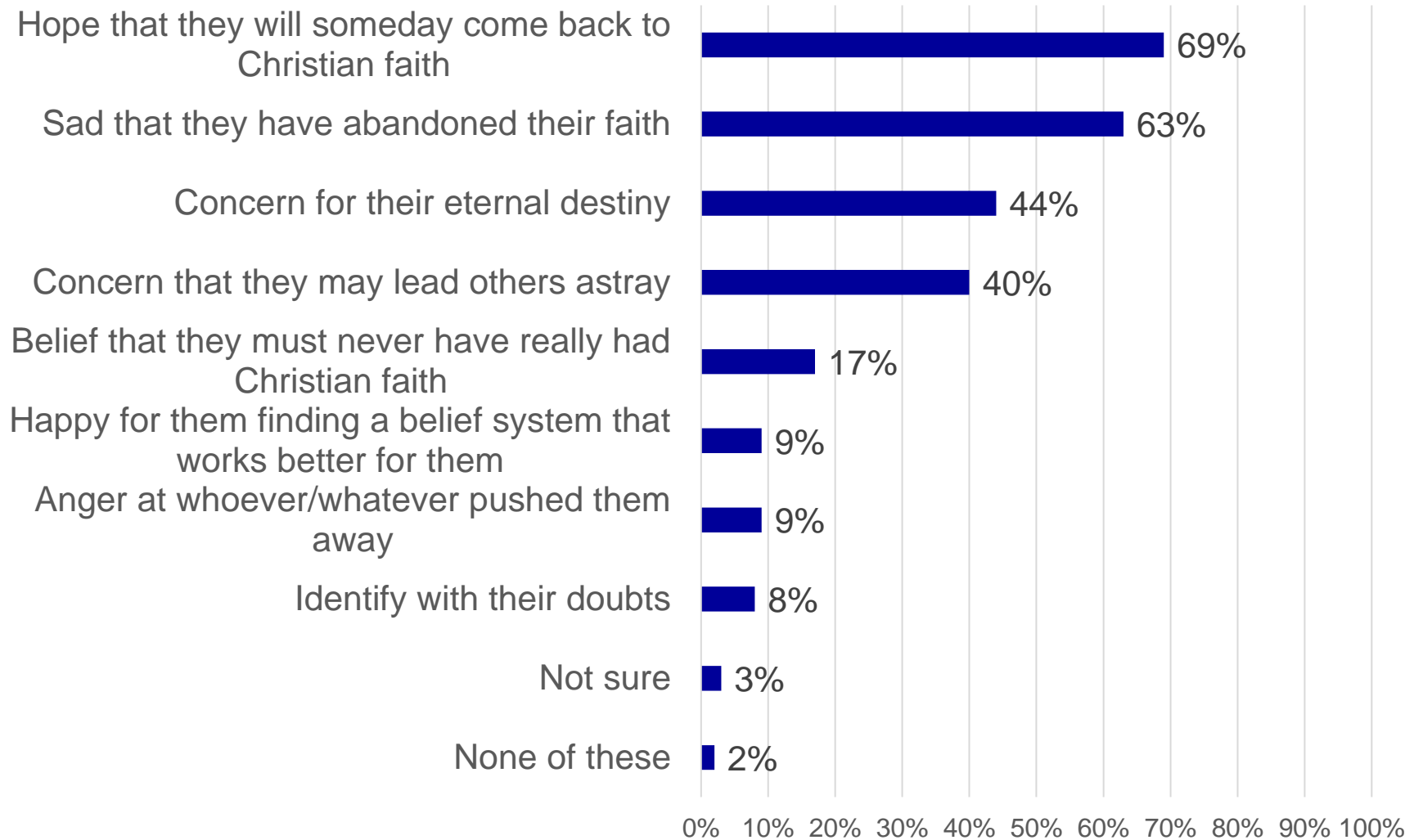
# Methodology

- The online survey of 1,002 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted September 20-27, 2019 using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, and education to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,002 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed  $\pm 3.2\%$
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

# Survey Responses



# “If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”



Q44: “If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel? (Select all that apply)”

# Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Denomination

Worship Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

Church Size

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Region	Education
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by US Census locations

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among denomination, worship service attendance, evangelical beliefs, and church size.

Denomination	Worship Service Attendance	Evangelical Beliefs	Church Size
Baptist	4 or more times a month	Yes	Less than 50
Christian/Churches of Christ	Less than 4 times a month	No	50 to 99
Lutheran			100 to 249
Presbyterians			250 to 499
Non-denominational			500 or more

# “If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”

## Sad that they have abandoned their faith

- Those age 18-34 are the least likely to select (50%)
- Whites are the most likely to select (70%)
- Those in the South (66%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (55%) and Midwest (58%)
- Non-denominational (70%) are more likely to select than Christian/Churches of Christ (51%) and Lutherans (55%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are more likely to select those who attend less than 4 times a month (67% v. 56%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (72% v. 53%)
- Those who attend a church of 500 or more people (72%) are more likely to select than those who attend a church of 50 to 99 (59%) and 100 to 249 (62%)



# “If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”

## Concern for their eternal destiny

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select (54%)
- Whites (48%) are more likely to select than African Americans (34%)
- Those in the South (47%) and West (54%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (32%) and Midwest (38%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (46%) or with some college (45%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (34%)
- Baptists (49%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (36%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are more likely to select those who attend less than 4 times a month (49% v. 37%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (59% v. 27%)

# **“If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”**

## **Concern that they may lead others astray**

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select (50%)
- Whites (43%) are more likely to select than African Americans (35%)
- Those in the South (44%) and West (44%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (27%) and Midwest (34%)
- Baptists (47%) are more likely to select than Christian/Churches of Christ (30%), Lutherans (29%), and Presbyterians (28%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are more likely to select those who attend less than 4 times a month (46% v. 29%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (51% v. 27%)

# “If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”

## Identify with their doubts

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (2%)
- Other Ethnicities (26%) are more likely to select than Whites (6%) and African Americans (7%)
- Those in the Northeast (10%) and West (13%) are more likely to select than those in the South (5%)
- Those with some college (10%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (10%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (5%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are less likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (6% v. 11%)
- Those who attend a church of 50 to 99 people (10%) are more likely to select than those who attend a church of less than 50 people (5%)

# **“If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”**

**Happy for them finding a belief system that works better for them**

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (19%)
- African Americans (14%) are more likely to select than Whites (7%)
- Those in the Northeast (16%) are more likely to select than those in the South (7%) and West (6%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s Degree (12%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (7%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are less likely to select those who attend less than 4 times a month (7% v. 12%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are less likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (4% v. 15%)

# **“If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”**

## **Belief that they must never have really had Christian faith**

- Those age 18-34 (22%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (14%)
- Those in the South (20%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (11%) and Midwest (13%)
- Lutherans are the least likely to select (5%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (20% v. 13%)

# **“If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”**

**Hope that they will someday come back to Christian faith**

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select (77%)
- Those in the Northeast are the least likely to select (55%)
- Those with some college (76%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (65%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (66%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (75% v. 62%)
- Those who attend a church of 500 or more people (78%) are more likely to select than those who attend a church of 50 to 99 people (63%) and 250 to 499 (67%)

# **“If a person who is well known for their work in Christian ministry announced they no longer believed in Christianity, how would you expect to feel?”**

## **Anger at whoever/whatever pushed them away**

- Whites (10%) and Other Ethnicities (18%) are more likely to select than African Americans (5%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (12%) are more likely to select than those with some college (7%) or a Graduate Degree (3%)

# Protestant Churchgoer Views on Leaders Leaving the Faith

---

Survey of American Protestant  
Churchgoers