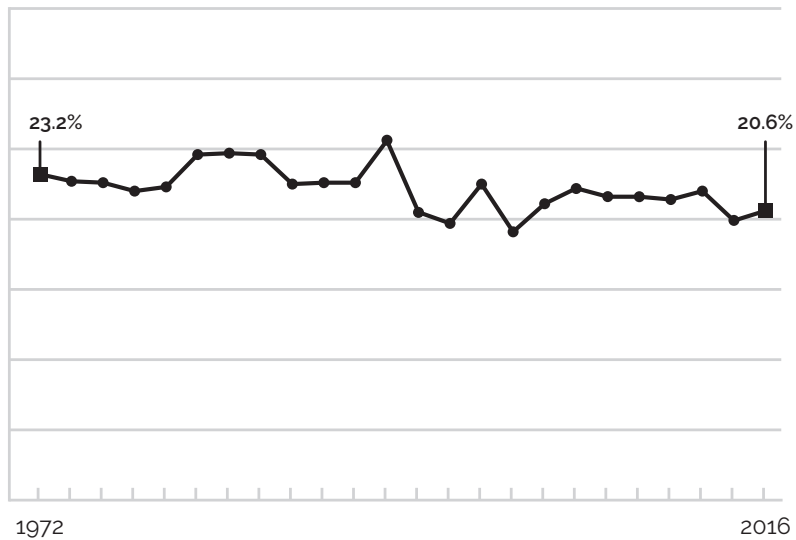


Christians  
*in the* Age *of*  
Outrage

HOW TO BRING OUR BEST  
WHEN THE WORLD IS AT ITS WORST

ED STETZER

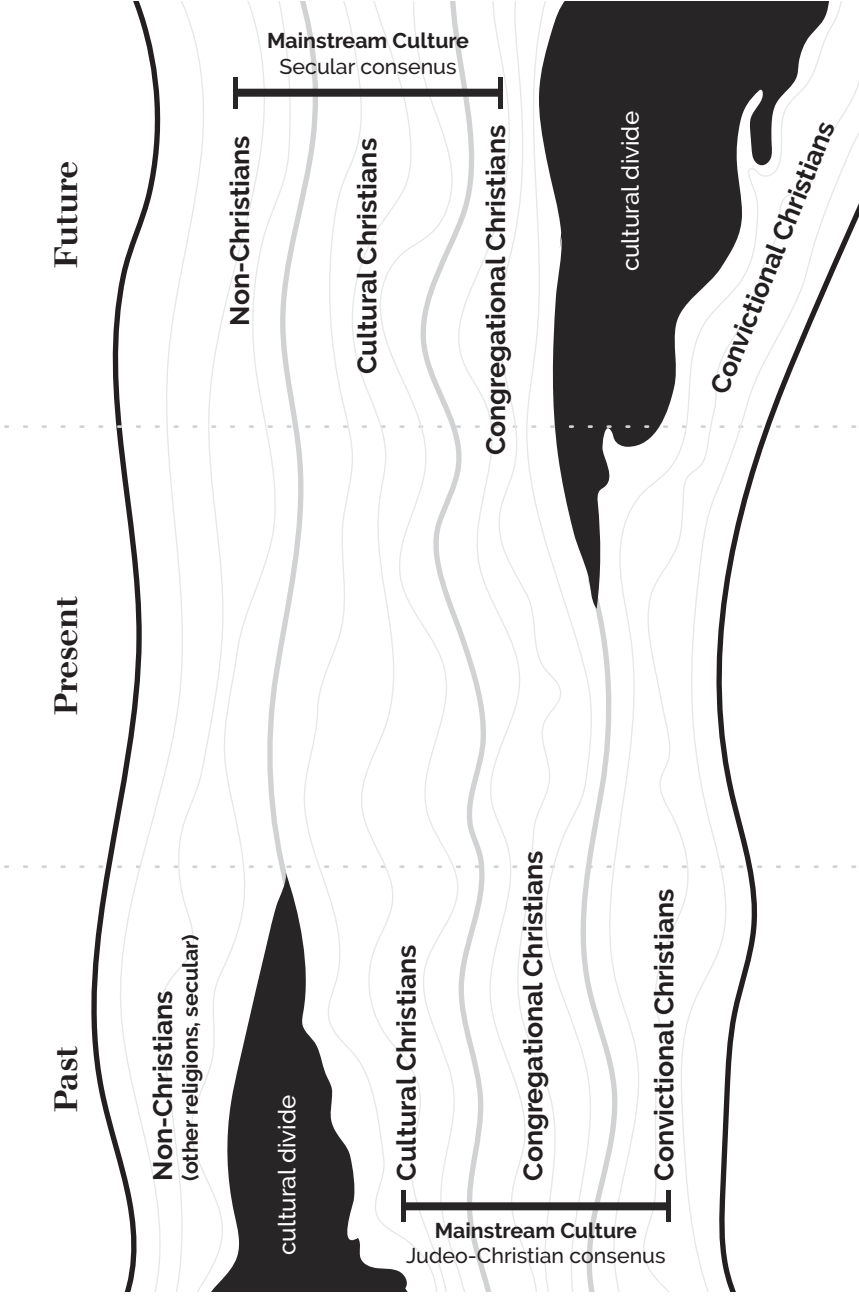
Among Americans:  
**All Protestants and  
non-denominationalists who  
regularly attend church**



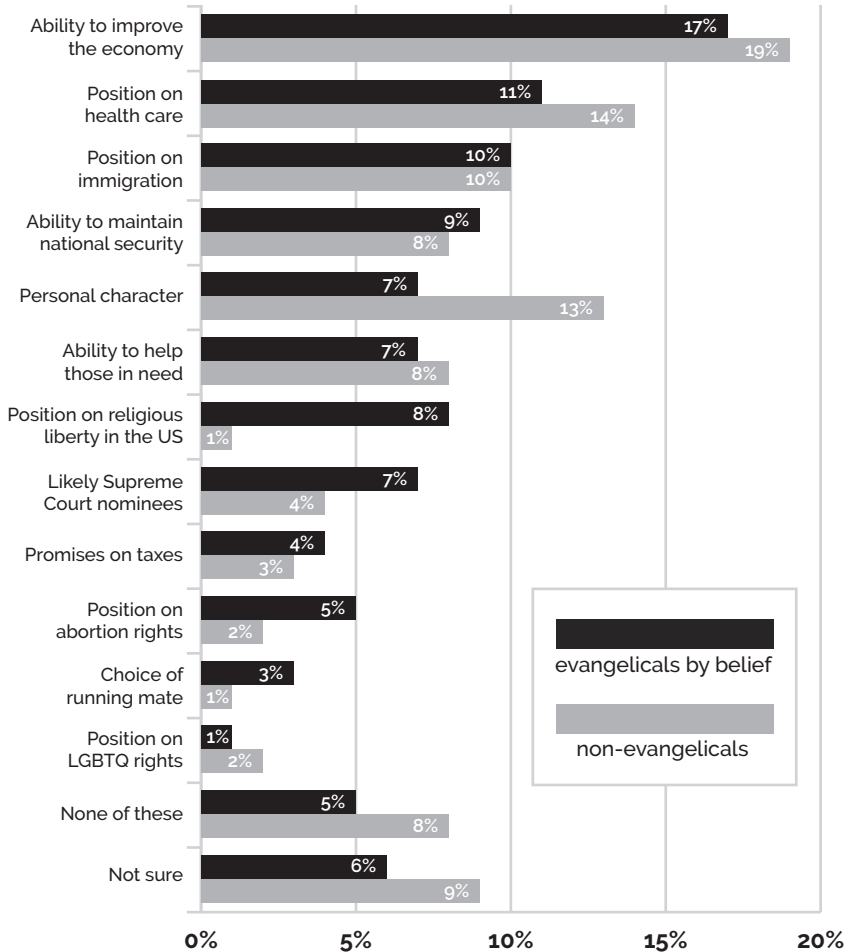
Daniel Price / Ed Stetzer (Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College) based on data within GSS materials.

Smith, Tom W, Peter Marsden, Michael Hout, and Jibum Kim. *General Social Surveys, 1972-2016* [machine-readable data file] / Principal Investigator, Tom W. Smith; Co-Principal Investigator, Peter V. Marsden; Co-Principal Investigator, Michael Hout; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer]; Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut [distributor], 2015.

1 data file (57,061 logical records) + 1 codebook (3,567p.). -- (National Data Program for the Social Sciences, No. 22).



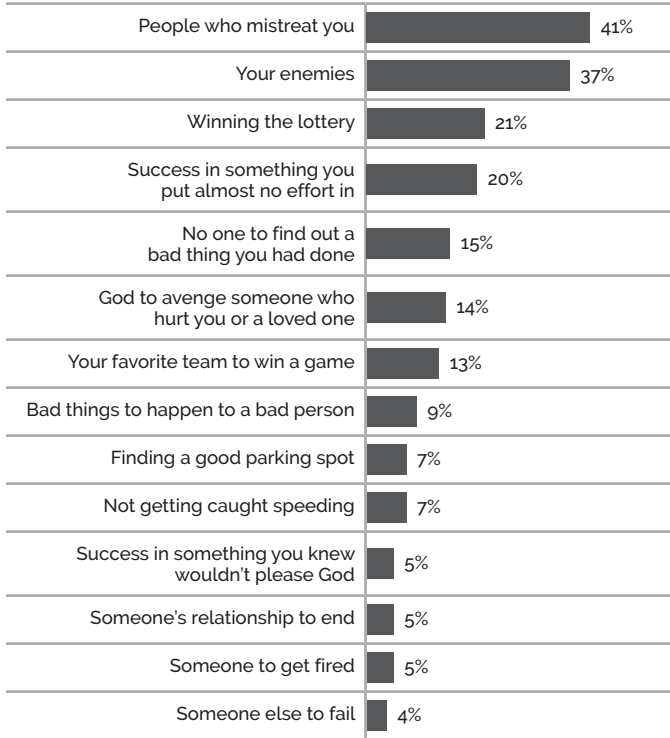
## In the 2016 presidential election, which reason was most important to you in deciding how to cast your vote? (select one)



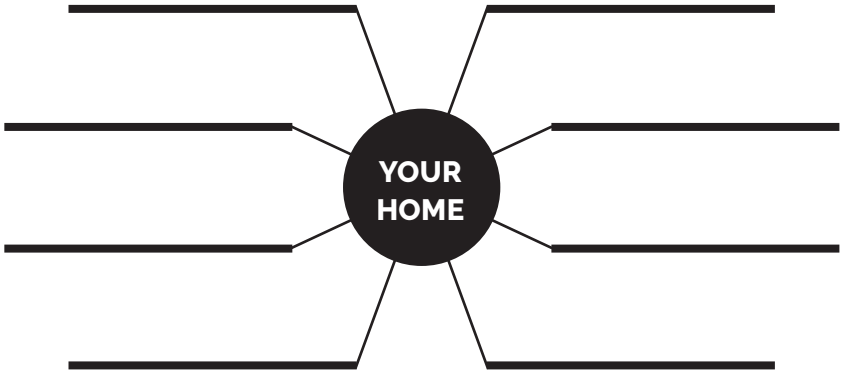
From 2018 research study conducted by the Billy Graham Center Institute, in partnership with LifeWay Research

Among Americans who pray:

## Have you ever prayed for . . .



LifeWay Research. Note: Participants could select all that apply.



Kathy Jones—employer  Pray  Engage  Invite

Tim & Mary Chung—PTA  Pray  Engage  Invite

Lamar Shields—coworker  Pray  Engage  Invite

Alexi Fredricks—Amy's soccer coach  Pray  Engage  Invite

Omar & Yasma Khan—new neighbors  Pray  Engage

## APPENDIX

# Key Findings from the Billy Graham Center Institute

### Chapter 1: Outrage Cause #1: A Cultural Forking

- Of evangelicals with an opinion, 82 percent believe that since the 2016 presidential election, groups within the Christian church have become increasingly polarized on issues of politics.  
  
Q: “Since the 2016 presidential election, groups within the Christian church have become increasingly polarized on issues of politics.”  
  
A: Evangelical by belief: 82 percent agree (strongly agree, 35 percent; somewhat agree, 47 percent)
- Of evangelicals with an opinion, 73 percent believe the 2016 presidential election revealed political divides within the Christian church that have existed for a long time.  
  
Q: “The 2016 presidential election revealed political divides within the Christian church that have existed for a long time.”  
  
A: Evangelical by belief: 73 percent agree (strongly agree, 30 percent; somewhat agree, 43 percent)



## **Chapter 2: Outrage Cause #2: The Technology Discipleship Gap**

- Evangelicals are more likely than non-evangelicals (49 percent to 38 percent) to connect with people like themselves on social media, leading to the formation of possible echo chambers.  
  
Q: “I prefer to follow or befriend people on social media who have the same or similar thoughts on social and political issues as mine.”  
  
A: 49 percent of evangelicals by belief and 48 percent of self-identified evangelicals follow or befriend people with similar thoughts, compared to 38 percent of non-evangelicals.
  
- Evangelicals (73 percent) and non-evangelicals (67 percent) overwhelmingly agree that interactions on social media have increased the divisive political climate in America.  
  
Q: “Interactions on social media have increased the divisive political climate in America.”  
  
A: Over two-thirds (73 percent of evangelicals by belief; 71 percent of self-identified evangelicals; 67 percent of non-evangelicals) agree that interactions on social media have increased the divisive political climate in America.

## **Chapter 3: Lie #1: “Christians Are the Worst!”**

- Of non-evangelicals who changed their opinion about evangelicals since the 2016 election, six said their opinion worsened for every one who said it improved.  
  
Q: “Since the 2016 presidential election, my perceptions of evangelical Christians have . . . (select one)”

- A. - Improved: 5 percent
- Stayed about the same: 64 percent
- Worsened: 31 percent

#### **Chapter 4: Lie #2: “My Outrage Is Righteous Anger”**

- Evangelicals (78 percent) and non-evangelicals (74 percent) express high levels of concern about the lack of civility in the public discussion of social issues.

Q: “I am very concerned about the lack of civility in today’s public discussions of important social issues.”

A: Three-fourths (78 percent of evangelicals by belief; 74 percent of self-identified evangelicals; and 74 percent of non-evangelicals) are very concerned about the lack of civility in today’s public discussions of social issues.

#### **Chapter 5: Lie #3: “\_\_\_\_\_ Will Save Me from the Outrage!”**

- When asked to describe their feelings when each party held the presidency, evangelicals’ top responses for how they felt during a Republican administration were protected (34 percent) and safe (33 percent). During a Democratic presidency, they said they felt fearful of the future (34 percent) and frustrated (29 percent). This difference suggests that evangelicals, along with the rest of society, associate political control with the safety and stability of their community.

Q: “Typically, when the US has a Republican president, I feel . . . (select all that apply)”

A: Evangelical by belief: protected, 34 percent; safe, 33 percent; respected, 25 percent

Q: “Typically, when the US has a Democratic president, I feel . . . (select all that apply)”

A: Evangelical by belief: fearful of the future, 54 percent; frustrated, 29 percent; threatened, 21 percent

### **Chapter 6: Lie #4: Mission Is Optional**

- 42 percent of evangelicals agree that the divisive political climate in America makes it harder for them to share their faith. Only a small percentage said it was easier.

Q: “The divisive political climate in America today makes it harder for me to share my Christian faith.”

A: - Evangelical by belief: strongly agree, 18 percent; somewhat agree, 24 percent  
- Self-identified evangelicals: strongly agree, 15 percent; somewhat agree, 29 percent

- 41 percent of evangelicals agree that the divisive political climate in America makes it harder for them to build relationships with neighbors, coworkers, or acquaintances.

Q: “The divisive political climate in America today makes it harder for me to build relationships with neighbors, coworkers, or acquaintances.”

A: - Evangelical by belief: strongly agree, 17 percent; somewhat agree, 24 percent  
- Self-identified evangelicals: strongly agree, 15 percent; somewhat agree, 28 percent

### **Chapter 7: A Worldview Shaped by the Gospel**

- 62 percent of evangelicals attend a religious service at least once a week compared to only 15 percent of non-evangelicals.

Q: “How often do you attend religious services at a Christian church? (select one)”

A: - More than once a week: evangelicals by belief, 29 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 21 percent; non-evangelicals, 3 percent  
- Once a week: evangelicals by belief, 33 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 31 percent; non-evangelicals, 12 percent

- 59 percent of evangelicals by belief say their pastor uses Scripture to address political topics at least once a month, perhaps showing that such topics are not often addressed.

Q: “How often does your pastor use Scripture to address topics that politicians are debating? (select one)”

A: - More than once a week: evangelicals by belief, 17 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 14 percent; non-evangelicals, 10 percent  
- 2 or 3 times a month: evangelicals by belief, 13 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 16 percent; non-evangelicals, 15 percent  
- Once a month: evangelicals by belief, 9 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 12 percent; non-evangelicals, 8 percent

- Only 43 percent of evangelicals agree that their pastor should address issues currently being debated by politicians, with the largest share of respondents (31 percent) *strongly* disagreeing, perhaps showing that many people adamantly oppose their pastors weighing in on political issues.

Q: “I desire advice from my pastor on how to think about issues debated by politicians.”

- A: - Evangelicals by belief: strongly agree, 17 percent; somewhat agree, 26 percent; somewhat disagree, 17 percent; strongly disagree, 31 percent; not sure, 10 percent
- Self-identified evangelicals: strongly agree, 14 percent; somewhat agree, 26 percent; somewhat disagree, 17 percent; strongly disagree, 32 percent; not sure, 8 percent

## **Chapter 8: Kingdom Ambassadors in a Foreign Land**

- Politics were identified as *extremely important* to a greater percentage of evangelicals than to non-evangelicals (30 percent to 18 percent).

Q: “How important is politics to you?”

A: 13 percent of evangelicals by belief, 15 percent of self-identified evangelicals, and 22 percent of non-evangelicals say politics is not important, whereas 30 percent of evangelicals by belief, 23 percent of self-identified evangelicals, and 18 percent of non-evangelicals say politics is extremely important to them.

- A significant majority of evangelicals (67 percent) agreed that a Christian can benefit from a political leader even if that leader’s personal life does not line up with Christian teaching.

Q: “Committed Christians can benefit from a political leader even if that leader’s personal life does not line up with Christian teaching.”

A: - Evangelicals by belief: strongly agree, 33 percent; somewhat agree, 34 percent; somewhat disagree, 12 percent; strongly disagree, 12 percent; not sure, 9 percent

- Self-identified evangelicals: strongly agree, 27 percent; somewhat agree, 59 percent; somewhat disagree, 15 percent; strongly disagree, 10 percent; not sure, 9 percent

## Chapter 9: Winsome Love

- Over a third of evangelicals (35 percent) say they disagree with their friends and family up to half of the time. Evangelicals disagree with their *friends and family* often. We have to learn how to disagree effectively and winsomely, or we are going to be lonely.

Q: “How often do your friends and family agree with your political views?”

- A: - Evangelicals by belief: always, 9 percent; most of the time, 42 percent; half the time, 23 percent; less than half the time, 9 percent; never, 3 percent; not sure, 13 percent
- Self-identified evangelicals: always, 7 percent; most of the time, 40 percent; half the time, 25 percent; less than half the time, 10 percent; never, 3 percent; not sure, 14 percent

## Chapter 10: Online Activity Aligned with Gospel Mission

- Evangelicals largely reflect culture in the choice of social media platforms they use, with the top four being Facebook (77 percent), YouTube (46 percent), Instagram (28 percent), and Twitter (22 percent). The question is how they use it.

Q: “Which, if any, of the following types of social media do you use regularly? (select all that apply)”

- A: - Facebook—evangelicals by belief, 77 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 74 percent; non-evangelicals, 71 percent

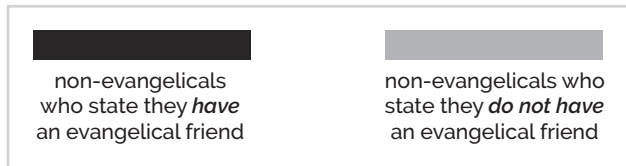
- YouTube–evangelicals by belief, 46 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 46 percent; non–evangelicals, 44 percent
  - Instagram–evangelicals by belief, 28 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 29 percent; non–evangelicals, 33 percent
  - Twitter–evangelicals by belief, 22 percent; self-identified evangelicals, 22 percent; non–evangelicals, 23 percent
- Evangelicals cite a higher willingness than non-evangelicals to engage with social or political issues on social media on a *daily basis* (24 percent to 15 percent). Over a third of evangelicals (38 percent) engage on social and political issues through social media at least several times a week.
- Q: “How often do you engage others on social or political issues on social media?”
- A: - Every day: 24 percent
- Several times a week: 14 percent
  - Several times a month: 9 percent

## **Chapter 11: Neighborly Engagement**

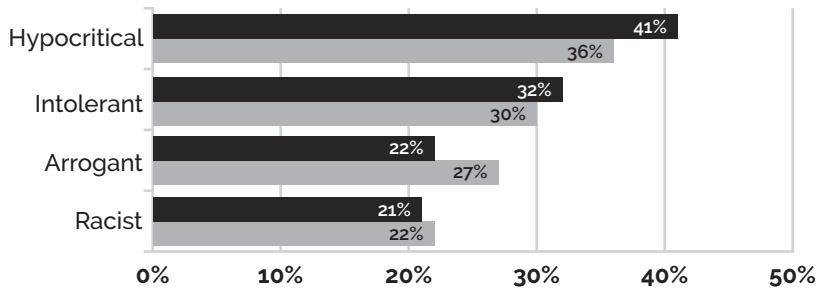
- 46 percent of those who have friendship(s) with an evangelical Christian describe evangelicals with one or more of these positive descriptors: compassionate, principled, charitable, and/or ethical.
- 14 percent of those with no friendships with evangelical Christians describe evangelicals with one or more of these same positive descriptors: compassionate, principled, charitable, and/or ethical.

See page 291 for the related question and a summary of the responses.

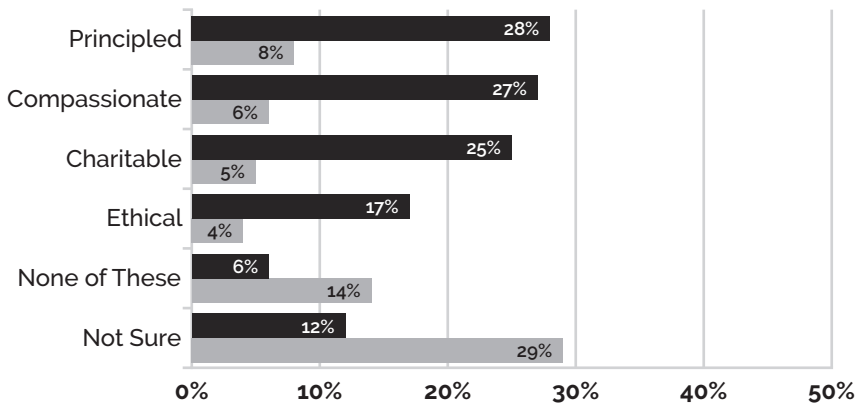
# Which, if any, of the following traits describe evangelical Christians?



## Negative Traits



## Positive Traits



This research study was conducted in 2018 by the Billy Graham Center Institute, in partnership with LifeWay Research. The completed sample includes three thousand surveys, with a margin of error that does not exceed  $\pm 5.2$  percent for non-evangelicals;  $\pm 5.1$  percent for those with evangelical beliefs; and  $\pm 2.4$  percent for self-identified evangelicals.



# Notes

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## PART 2: OUTRAGEOUS LIES AND ENDURING TRUTHS

1. The e-mail has been edited slightly for readability.

### CHAPTER 3: LIE #1: “CHRISTIANS ARE THE WORST!”

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#### CHAPTER 11: NEIGHBORLY ENGAGEMENT

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