



# The Condition of The Church in America

How Healthy is the Contemporary Church?

Part 1



# The Current Age

*"The sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do..."*

I Chronicles 12:32

*"We are living in an age of deep secularism, aided by an apostate institutional church..."*

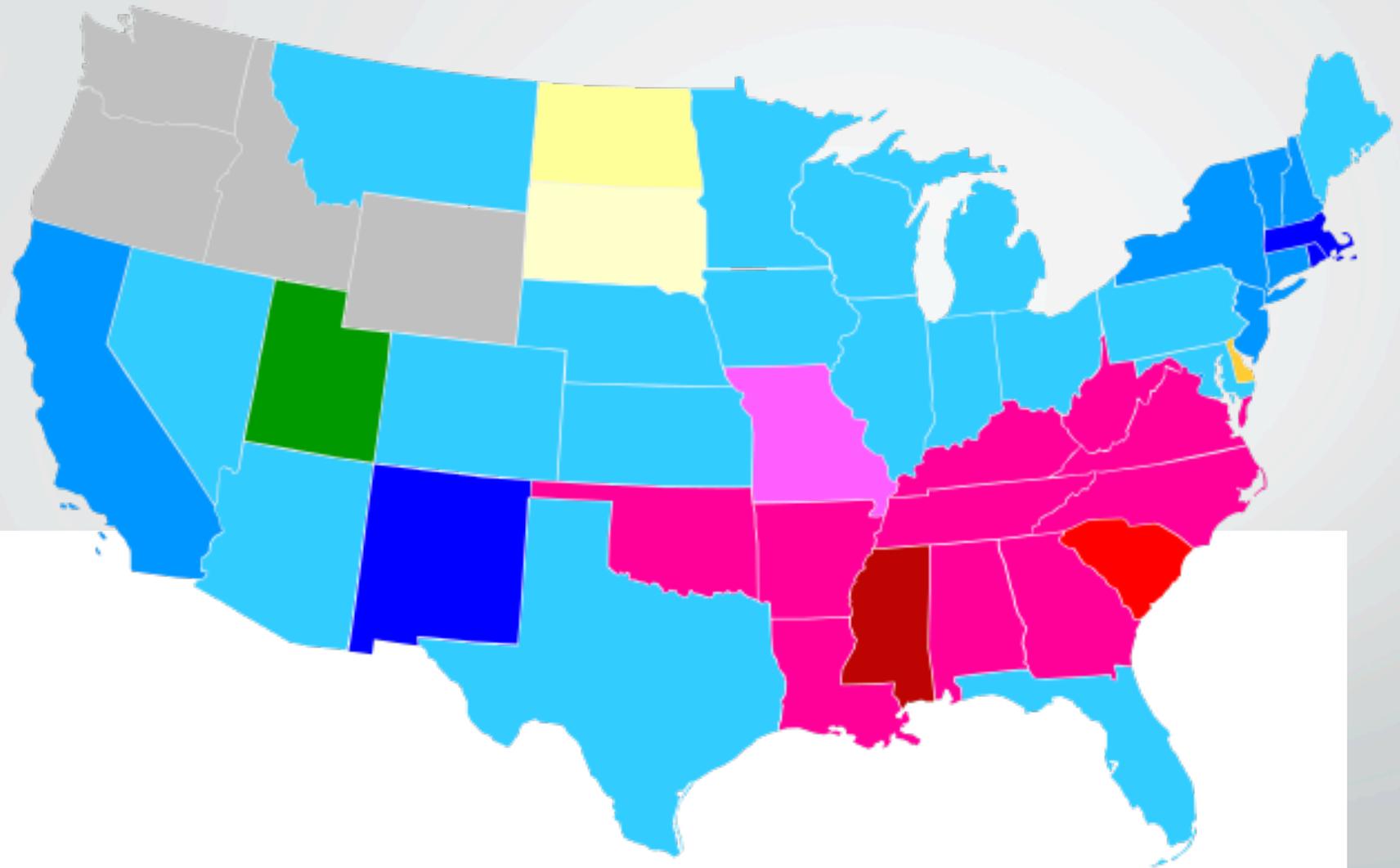
I Chronicles 12:32

# The Current Age - Definitions

- **Secularism** – A system of political or social philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faith and worship.
- **Apostasy** - The formal disaffiliation from or renunciation of previously held religious beliefs. Embracing an opinion contrary to one's previous beliefs. One who commits apostasy is known as an *apostate*.
- **Institutional church** - Organized religion involves belief systems and rituals being systematically arranged and formally established in defined organizational structures.

# The Current Age - Definitions

- **Institutional American Christian Church** – divided into 3 main groups:
  - Catholicism – Under the Papacy in Rome – 600 AD
  - Protestant – Sprang up out of the Protestant Reformation – 1517 AD
    - Evangelical Protestant Churches
    - Mainline Protestant Churches – 1920's
- **Minority Religions - Non-Christian religious groups are growing, but they still represent less than one in ten Americans combined.** (September, 2017)
  - Jewish Americans (2%)
  - Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus (1%)
  - Other non-Christian religions (1%).



<30% <40% <50% >50%



Numbers in the chart below come from statistics collected by the ASARB<sup>[95]</sup> in surveys of the churches themselves. Congregational "adherents" include all full members, their children, and others who regularly attend services. 2014.

## Weekly Church Attendance by State

1	 Utah	51%
2	 Mississippi	47%
3	 Alabama	46%
3	 Louisiana	46%
5	 Arkansas	45%
6	 South Carolina	42%
6	 Tennessee	42%
8	 Kentucky	41%
9	 North Carolina	40%
10	 Georgia	39%
10	 Oklahoma	39%
10	 Texas	39%
13	 New Mexico	36%
14	 Delaware	35%
14	 Indiana	35%
14	 Missouri	35%
14	 Nebraska	35%

14	 Virginia	35%
19	 Idaho	34%
19	 West Virginia	34%
21	 Arizona	33%
21	 Kansas	33%
21	 Florida	32%
21	 Illinois	32%
21	 Iowa	32%
21	 Michigan	32%
21	 North Dakota	32%
21	 Ohio	32%
21	 Pennsylvania	32%
30	 Maryland	31%
30	 Minnesota	31%
30	 South Dakota	31%
33	 New Jersey	30%
34	 Wisconsin	29%

35	 California	28%
35	 Rhode Island	28%
35	 Wyoming	28%
38	 Montana	27%
38	 Nevada	27%
38	 New York	27%
41	 Alaska	26%
42	 Colorado	25%
42	 Connecticut	25%
42	 Hawaii	25%
45	 Oregon	24%
45	 Washington	24%
47	 District of Columbia	23%
48	 Massachusetts	22%
49	 Maine	20%
49	 New Hampshire	20%
51	 Vermont	17%

# Theological Spectrum

Protestant

Conservative

Revelation

Reason

Neo-Orthodox

Revelation

Reason

Liberal

Reason

Revelation

Catholic

Dogma

Revelation

Secularism

Reason

Revelation

Post Modernism

Reason

Revelation



# Core Beliefs of Evangelicalism

- We profess to believe at least three things:
  1. The **SUFFICIENCY** and **RELIABILITY** of the bible in matters of faith and practice.
  2. The **NECESSITY** of a personal faith in Jesus Christ in order for a person to be saved.
  3. The **URGENCY** of actively seeking the conversion of lost people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

# **“Seven Sisters” of Protestantism**

And who are the “Famed Seven Sisters”? Historians and sociologists have grouped these flocks under that label – the United Methodist Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Episcopal Church; United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church (USA); American Baptist Church; and the Disciples of Christ.

# “Seven Sisters” Membership 2016

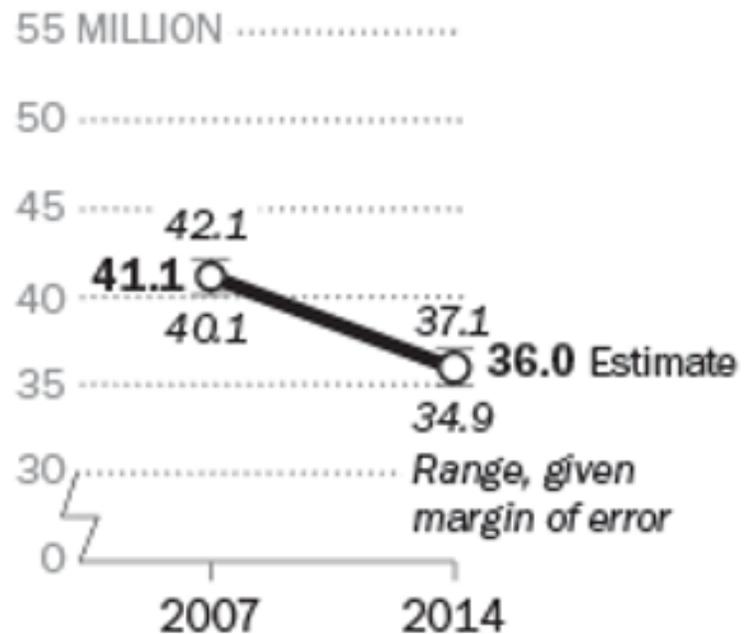
- [United Methodist Church](#) (UMC) - 7.0 million members
- [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) (ELCA) - 3.6 million members
- [Episcopal Church](#) - 1.9 million members
- [Presbyterian Church \(PCUSA\)](#) - 1.5 million
- [American Baptist Churches USA](#) - 1.2 million members in 2012.
- [United Church of Christ](#) (UCC)- 880,000 members
- [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#) - (500,000) as of 2014.

# Clergy Convictions about Biblical Inerrancy

What % of ordained clergy do not believe in the inerrancy of the bible?

- Baptists – 67%
- Lutherans – 77%
- Presbyterians – 82%
- Methodists – 87%
- Episcopalians – 95%

## Five Million Fewer Mainline Protestant Adults Than in 2007



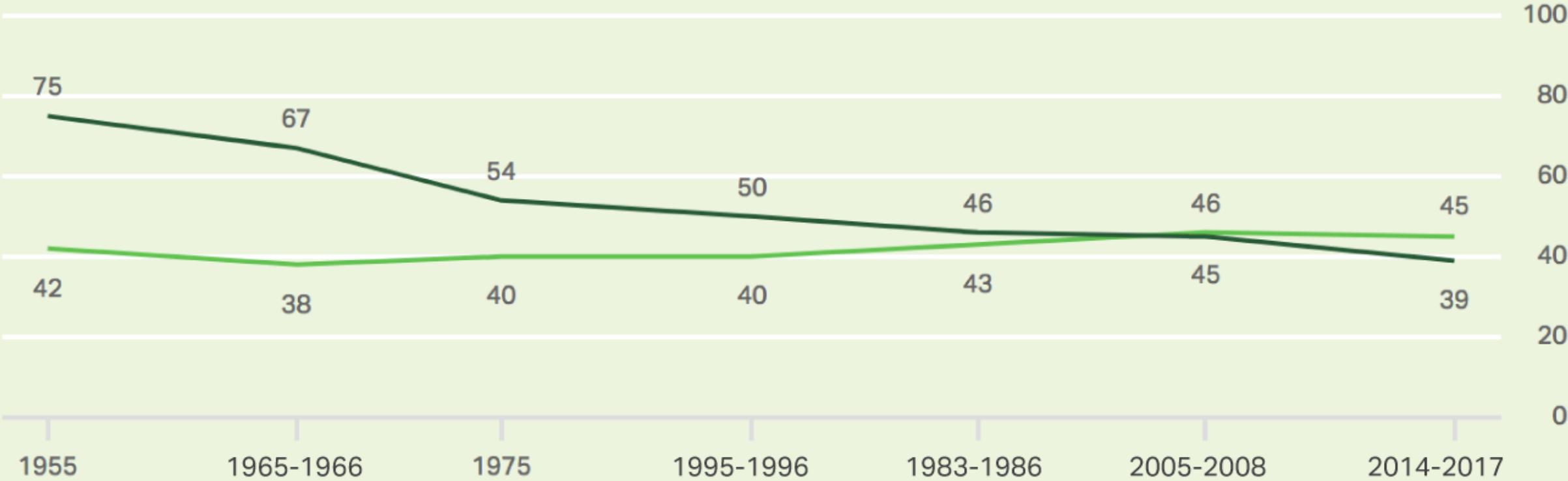
Source: 2014 Religious Landscape  
Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Trends in Weekly Church Attendance

% Attended church in past seven days

■ Protestants ■ Catholics



Note: Protestants for 2005-2008 and 2014-2017 are defined as Protestants + Christians (nonspecific)

## The Future of Mainline Protestants

The elephant in the room for mainline Protestants, however, is that their share of the American population has seen an unprecedented decline in the last 40 years. For instance, in the mid 1970's, 3 in 10 Americans identified as mainline. In fact, they were the largest religious group in the United States. Today, only one in ten Americans identify as mainline. This drop in adherents is surely linked to the rise in the religious 'nones'. While just 5% of respondents in 1972 said they had no faith, today it's closer to 22%. In 2017, Ed Stetzer [wrote](#) that if the current trend continues, mainline Protestants will disappear in 23 years. At the very least, the future of these denominations is not a rosy one.

# Quote – George Gallup – The People's Religion – pg 21

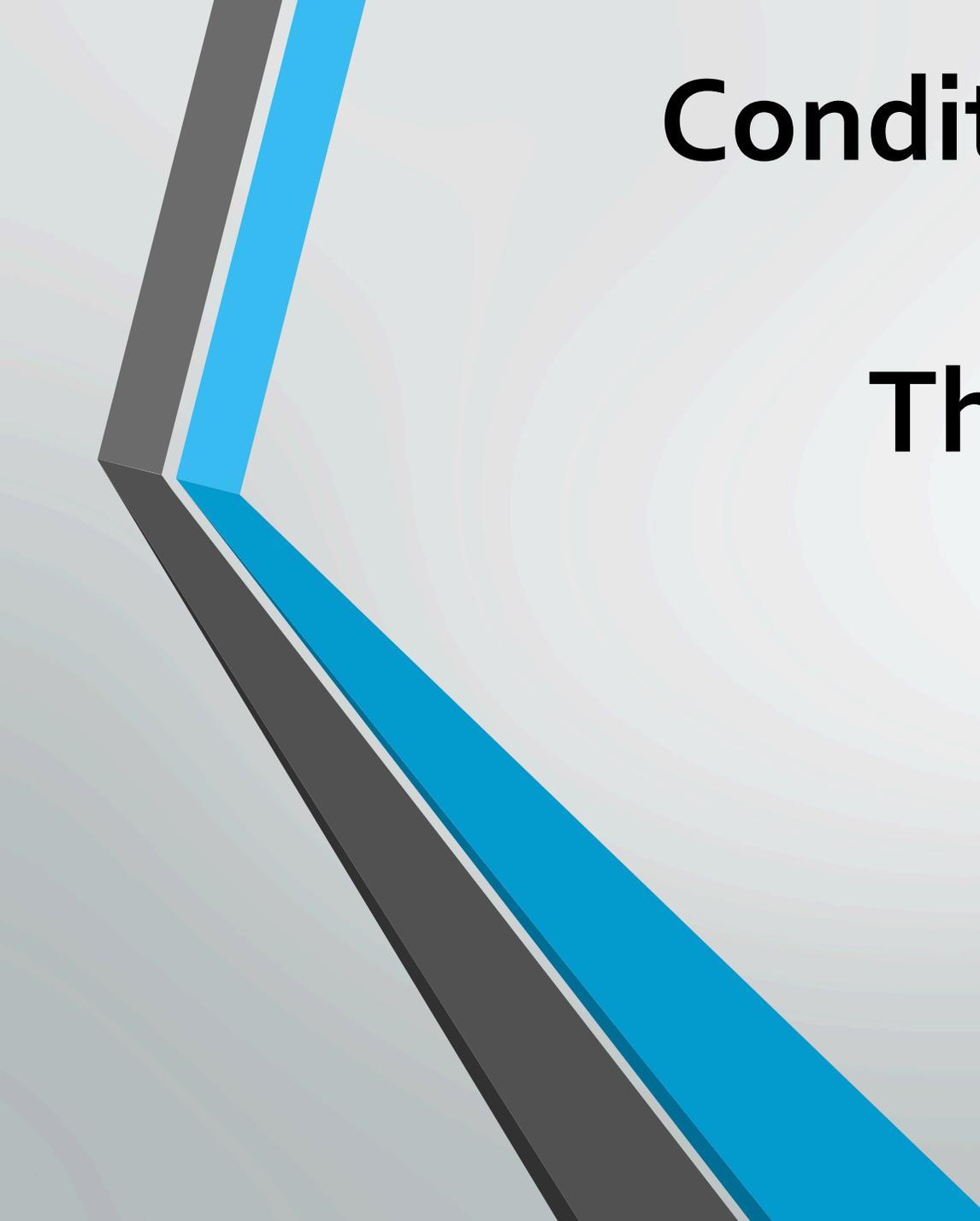
- *"At the same time, American religious life is characterized by a series of **gaps**. First, there is an **"ethics gap"** between Americans' expressed beliefs and the state of the society they shape. While religion is highly popular in America, it is to a large extent superficial; it does not change people's lives to the degree one would expect from their level of professed faith. Related to this is a **"knowledge gap"** between Americans' stated faith and the lack of the most basic knowledge about that faith. Finally, there is a **gap between "believers" and "belongers,"** with millions of Americans who are nominal Christians or Jews failing to participate in the congregational lives of their denominations." Copyright, 1989.*
- *Broad Conclusion – The norm of the average Christian is a "compartmentalized" faith.*

# The Current Age - Definitions

- America's fastest growing religious affiliation is no religion at all. The non-religious are the single largest religious identification among younger voters in the US.

# The Mega Question

- How is God at work in this very confusing and complex situation?



# **Condition of the American Church - Part II The Remnant Concept**