

Pew: Obama's Real Legacy Will Be Religious Apathy

Eight years ago, he promised us hope and change, but according to a new report from Pew Research, America got mostly the latter from President Barack Obama.

The wide-ranging report, titled "How America Changed During Barack Obama's Presidency," looks at many different aspects of American society, culture and politics. But one area of grave concern to Christians is the impact his presidency appears to have had on religion in the country.

When Obama took office on Jan. 20, 2009, roughly 16 percent of Americans, regardless of age or social background, identified as "religious nones"—those who have absolutely no religious beliefs whatsoever—formerly referred to as atheists. Now, their number has climbed to 23 percent.

This is what the report had to say about it:

When it comes to the nation's religious identity, the biggest trend during Obama's presidency is the rise of those who claim no religion at all. Those who self-identify as atheists or agnostics, as well as those who say their religion is "nothing in particular," now make up nearly a quarter of the U.S. adult population, up from 16 percent in 2007.

Christians, meanwhile, have fallen from 78 percent to 71 percent of the U.S. adult population, owing mainly to modest declines in the share of adults who identify with mainline Protestantism and Catholicism. The share of Americans identifying with evangelical Protestantism, historically black Protestant denominations and other smaller Christian groups, by contrast, has remained fairly stable.

Due largely to the growth of those who don't identify with any religion, the shares of Americans who say they believe in God, consider religion to be very important in their lives, say they pray daily and say they attend religious services at least monthly have all ticked downward in recent years. At the same time, the large majority of Americans who do identify with a faith are, on average, as religiously observant as they were a few years ago, and by some measures even more so.

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