

Pew Research Takes Issue With ‘Evangelical’ Stats, Opens a Whole New Can of Worms

If nothing else, the 2016 presidential election has exposed the fact that “evangelical” may not mean what everyone thought it meant for the past four decades.

But Pew Research has taken issue with the idea that their polling has contributed to a skewed perception of who is an evangelical, how many there are, and more importantly, how they are voting—if they’re voting at all. So, in a recent report meant to support the numbers they’ve been reporting, the pollster tossed out some data that shows what “evangelical Christians” believe.

In doing so, they instead reinforced their critics’ point.

It’s likely Pew was attempting to show that an overwhelming majority of those who self-describe as “evangelical” do, in fact, attend church regularly, believe their faith is very important to them, believe the Bible is the literal Word of God and share their faith regularly with others. Sadly, they left out whether or not those “evangelicals” believe Jesus Christ died for their sins and that they are saved through faith alone in His grace.

Even more unfortunately, that’s almost irrelevant to a discussion of Pew’s numbers. They found:

- only 68 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican attend church weekly, compared to 60 percent of evangelicals who vote Democrat;
- only 93 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican believe in God with absolute certainty, compared to just 88 percent of evangelicals who vote Democrat;

- only 88 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican believe their faith is “very important” to them, compared to 85 percent who vote Democrat;
- only 60 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican share their faith with others, compared to just 57 percent of evangelicals who vote Democrat; and
- only 61 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican believe the Bible is the literal Word of God, compared to 56 percent of evangelicals who vote Democrat.

That means 32 percent of GOP-voting evangelicals don’t go to church every week, 12 percent don’t think their faith is very important, 40 percent don’t share their faith with others, and 39 percent don’t even believe the Bible is the literal Word of God. And the numbers are even worse for those who vote for Democrats.

But with that bit of information, perhaps it’s easier to understand this next set of statistics:

- 21 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican believe abortion should be legal in all or most circumstances;
- 26 percent of evangelicals who vote Republican believe homosexuality should be accepted by society; and
- 14 percent prefer a larger government that provides more services.

Again, the numbers are even worse among evangelicals who vote Democrat.

So, with all of this data in our hands, should we really be all that surprised with how the past several elections have turned out?