

Survey: Americans Say Christians Complain Too Much

A growing number of Americans believe religious liberty is on the decline and that the nation's Christians face growing intolerance.

They also say American Christians complain too much.

Those are among the findings of a new study of views about religious liberty from LifeWay Research. Researchers surveyed 1,000 Americans in September 2013 and September 2015 and then compared the results.

Two-thirds (63 percent) say Christians face increasing intolerance, up from half (50 percent) in 2013.

A similar number (60 percent) say religious liberty is on the decline, up from just over half (54 percent) in 2013.

Forty-three percent say American Christians complain too much about how they are treated, up from 34 percent in 2013.

"More Americans worry the U.S. has a hostile environment for religious liberty," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research. "As this perception grows, some approve of it while others speak up against it."

Religious liberty has become an increasingly contentious issue in American culture—with disputes over birth control, same-sex wedding cakes, headscarves at work, and prisoner's beards.

The more recent LifeWay Research survey found faith plays a key role in how Americans view the state of religious liberty.

Two-thirds of Christians (64 percent) and those of other faiths (65 percent) say religious liberty is on the decline. Self-identified evangelicals (71 percent) and those who attend

worship at least once a week (70 percent) are most likely to agree.

Catholics (56 percent) and non-evangelicals (55 percent) are more skeptical. So are Nones (46 percent).

“Christians are particularly sensitive to what they see as intolerance towards their faith,” said Stetzer. “But they share a common concern with people of other faiths—that religious liberty in general is declining. And this perception is growing rapidly.”

Age also played a role in how Americans view the state of religious liberty.

Less than half (42 percent) of those 18 to 24 say religious liberty is on the decline. By contrast, 6 in 10 (62 percent) of those over 25 see a decline.

LifeWay Research also found non-Christians are less convinced that Christians face intolerance. Less than half of those from other faiths (43 percent) and Nones (48 percent) agree when asked if intolerance toward Christians has increased.

By contrast, most Christians (70 percent), self-identified evangelicals (82 percent) and Protestants (74 percent) see more intolerance. So do two-thirds (76 percent) of those who attend services once a week or more.