

Protestant Churchgoer Views On Perception of Christians

A SURVEY OF 1,008 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway research

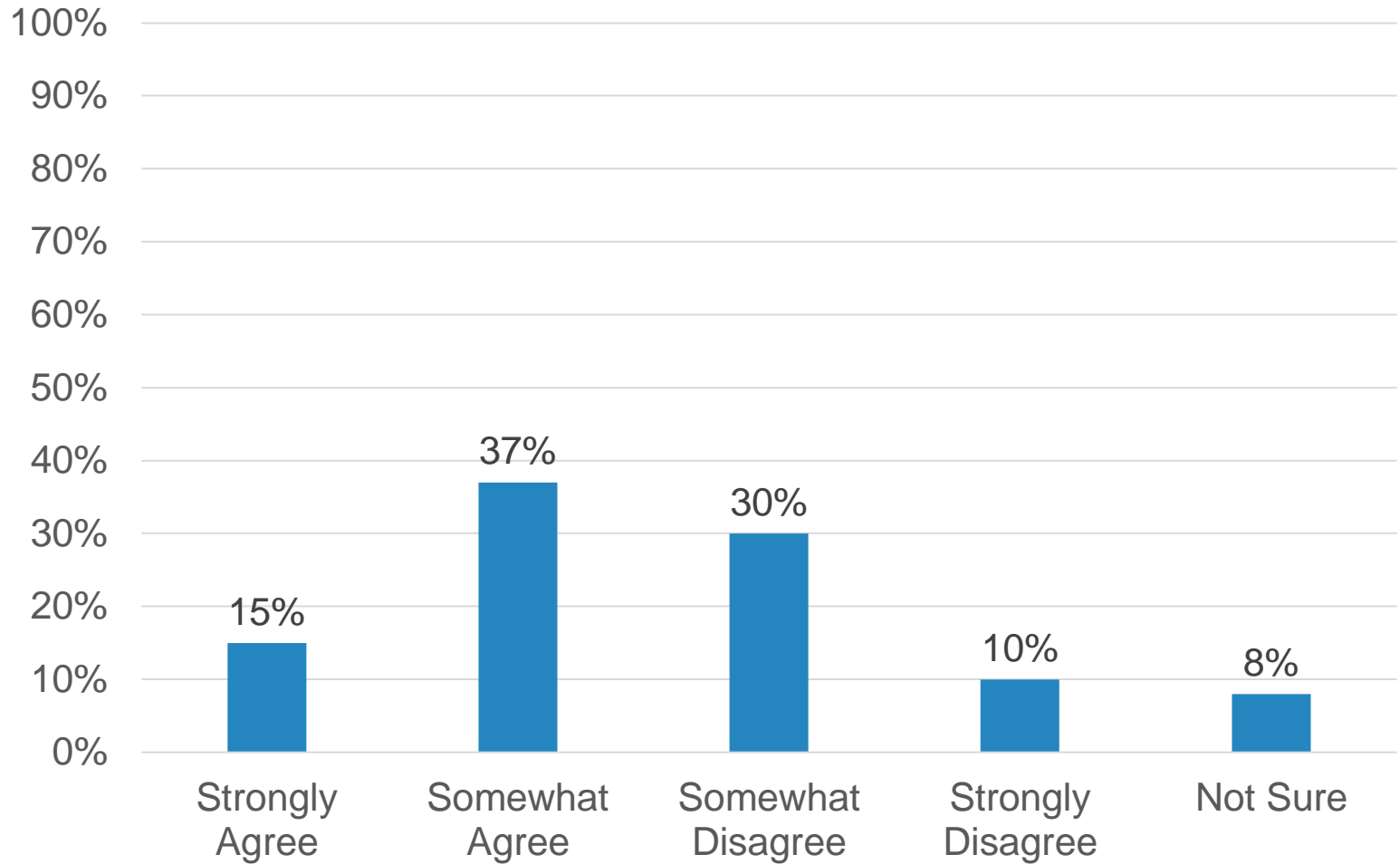
Methodology

- The online survey of 1,008 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted September 19-29, 2023, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,008 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

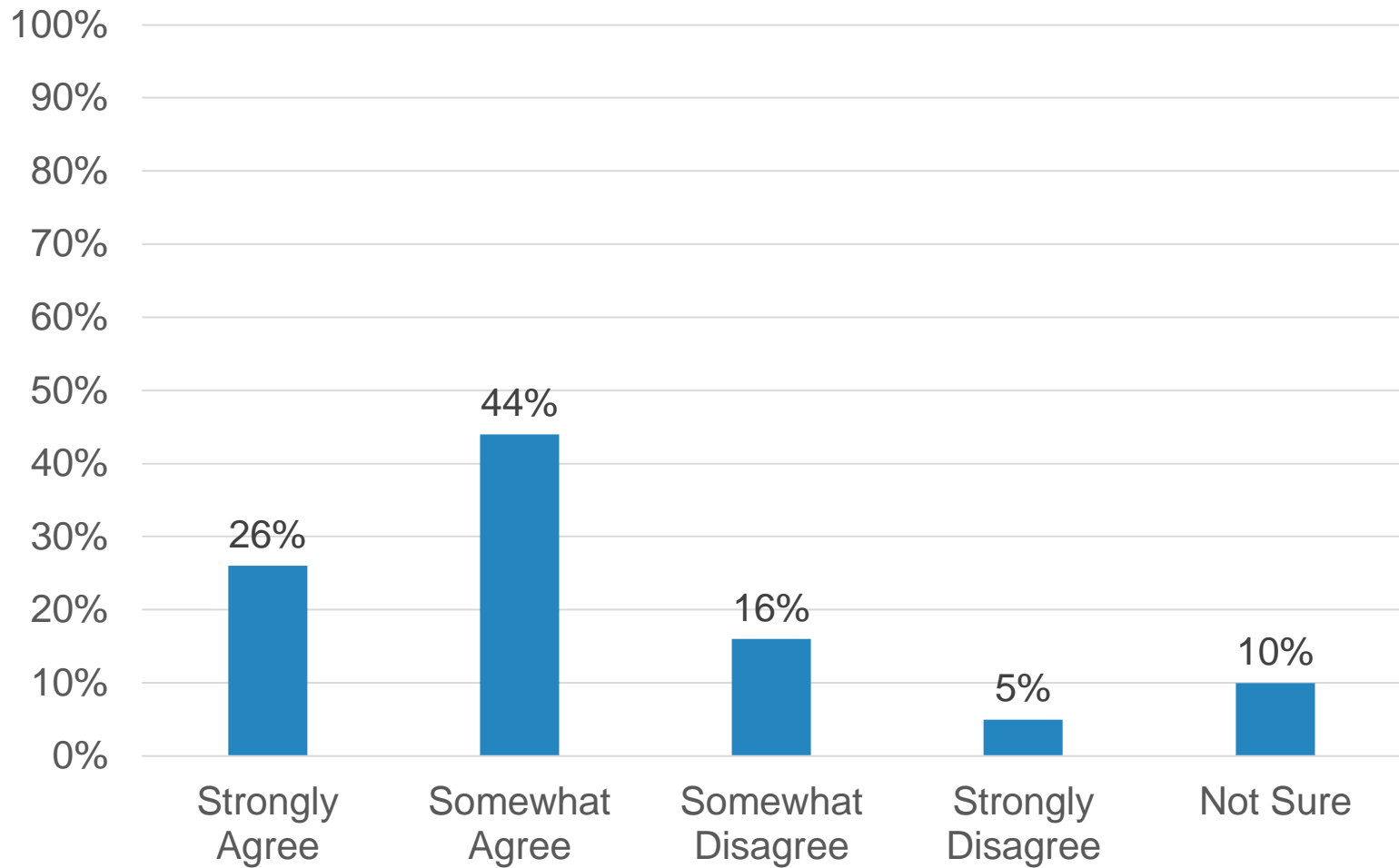
53% agree that most Americans have a positive perception of Christians



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Q: "Most Americans have a positive perception of Christians." n=1,008

69% agree that people's perceptions of Christians in the U.S. are getting worse

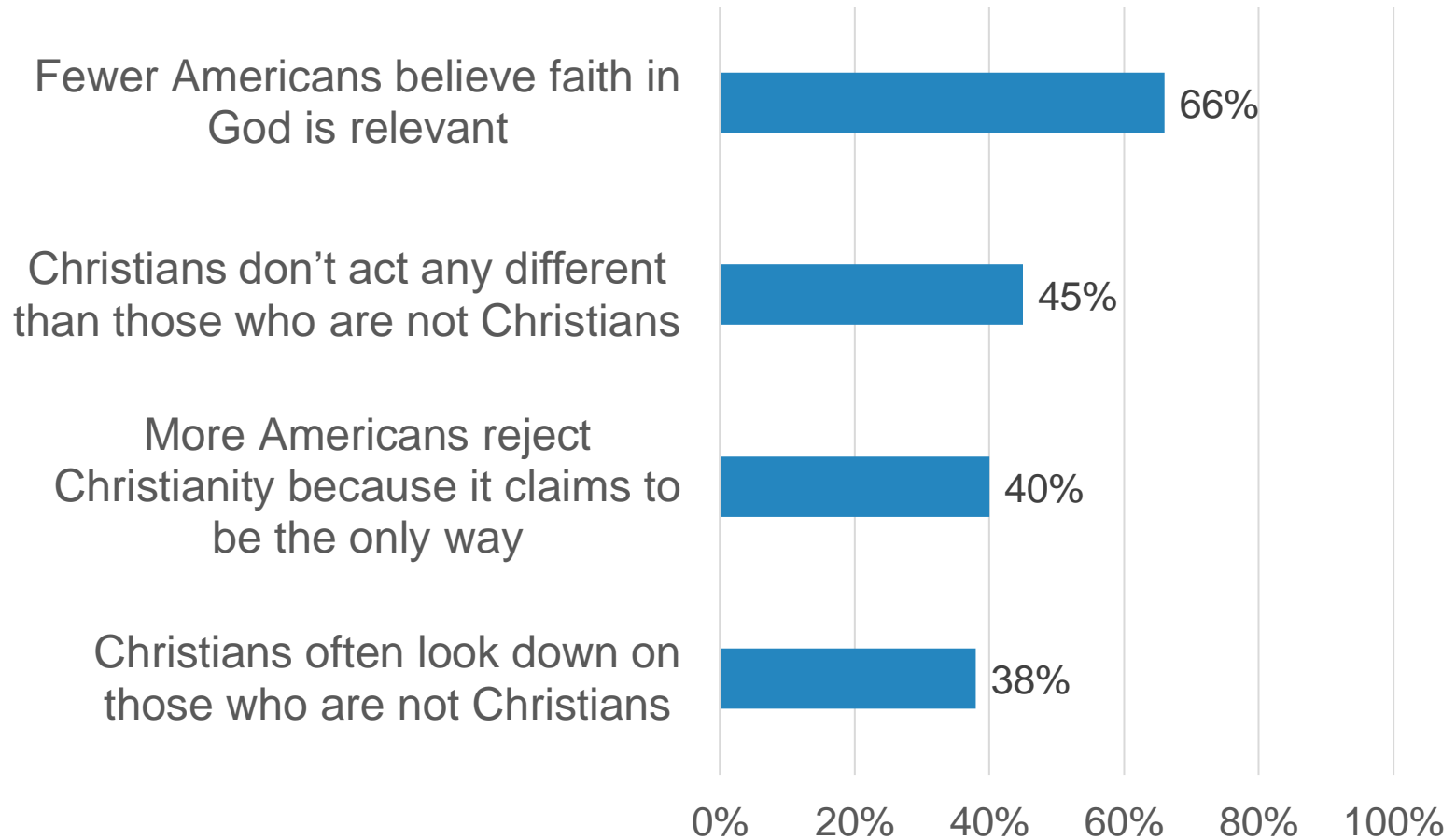


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Q: "People's perceptions of Christians in the U.S. are getting worse." n=1,008

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Among Those Who Say Perception of Christians Are Getting Worse

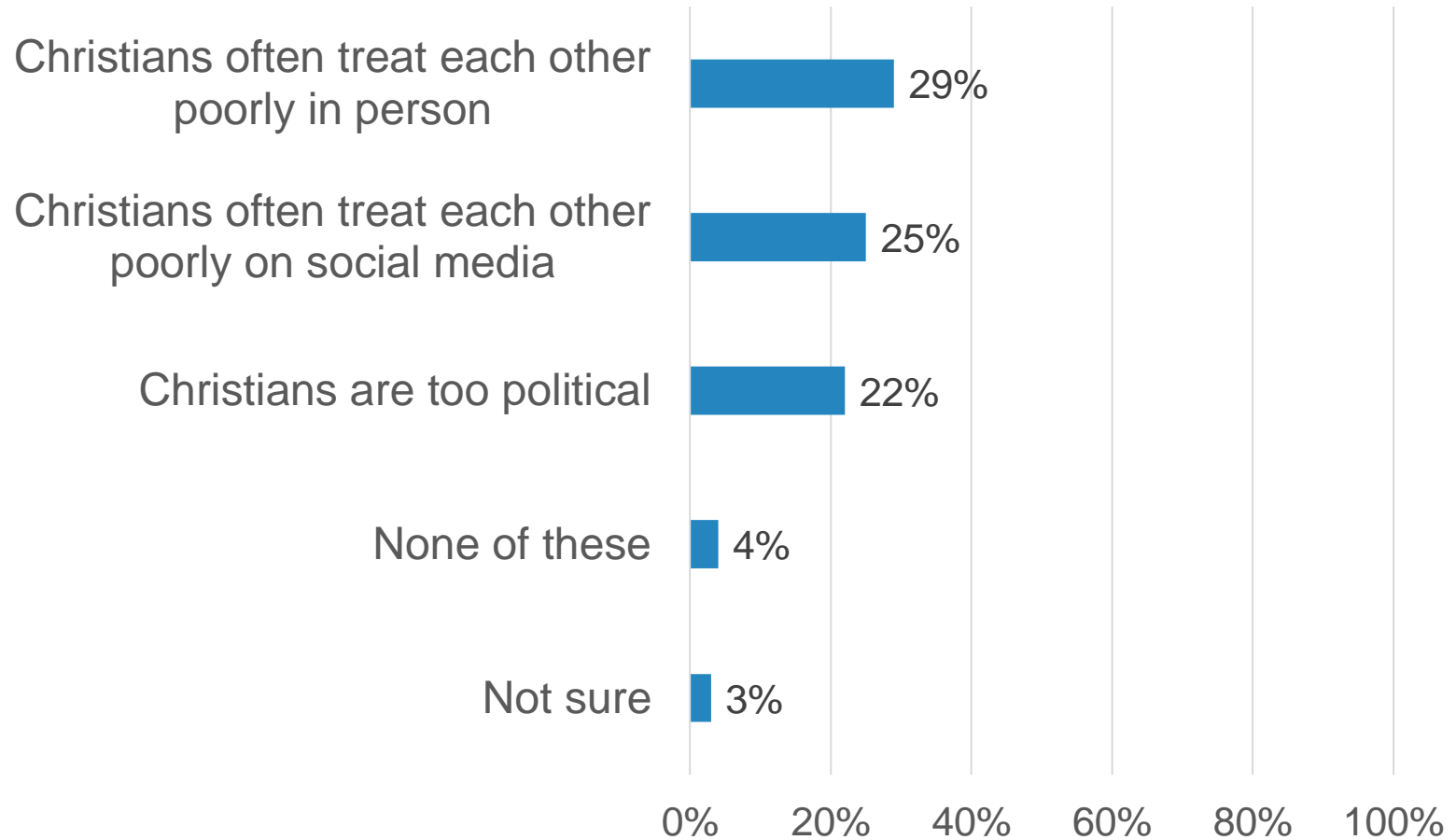


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Q: “Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.? (Select all that apply)” n=704

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Among Those Who Say Perception of Christians Are Getting Worse



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Q: “Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.? (Select all that apply)” n=704

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Denomination

Worship Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among denomination, worship service attendance, and evangelical beliefs.

DENOMINATION	WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Baptist	1 to 3 times a month	Yes
Methodist	4 or more times a month	No
Lutheran	Not sure	
Presbyterian/Reformed		
Christian/Church of Christ		
Non-denominational		

“Most Americans have a positive perception of Christians.”

- Males are more likely to Agree than females (56% v. 49%)
- Those age 65+ (46%) are more likely to Disagree than those 35-49 (36%) and 50-64 (38%)
- African Americans (66%) and Hispanics (65%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (48%) and Other Ethnicities (44%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (61%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (46%) or a Graduate Degree (44%)
- Baptists (57%) and Christian/Church of Christ (61%) are more likely to Agree than Non-denominational (45%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (43%) are more likely to Disagree than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (36%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those with evangelical beliefs (57% v. 49%)

“People’s perceptions of Christians in the U.S. are getting worse.”

- Those age 35-49 (25%) are more likely to Disagree than those 65+ (17%)
- Other Ethnicities are the most likely to Agree (84%)
- Whites (71%) are more likely to Agree than African Americans (60%) and Hispanics (61%)
- Baptists (73%) and Non-denominational (73%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (61%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (72%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (65%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (77% v. 61%)

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Christians often treat each other poorly on social media

- Those in the South (28%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (20%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (16%)

Christians often treat each other poorly in person

- Those with some college (32%) or a Graduate Degree (40%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (20%)

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

More Americans reject Christianity because it claims to be the only way

- Those age 35-49 are the least likely to select (26%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (44%) are more likely to select than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (34%)

Fewer Americans believe faith in God is relevant

- Those age 50-64 (75%) and 65+ (68%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (50%)
- Whites (70%) and Other Ethnicities (68%) are more likely to select than African Americans (49%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (70%) are more likely to select than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (60%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (71% v. 59%)

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Christians often look down on those who are not Christians

- Those age 18-34 (50%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (34%) and 65+ (33%)
- African American (47%) are more likely to select than Whites (34%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (48%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (34%) or with some college (36%)
- Those who attend a worship service 1 to 3 times a month (46%) are more likely to select than those who attend 4 or more times a month (32%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (45% v. 32%)

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Christians don't act any different than those who are not Christians

- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (49%) or a Graduate Degree (56%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (36%)
- Baptists (45%), Christian/Church of Christ (44%), and Non-denominational (54%) are more likely to select than Methodists (8%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (48% v. 40%)

“Which, if any, of the following do you believe contribute to a worsening perception of Christians in the U.S.?”

Christians are too political

- Other Ethnicities (35%) are more likely to select than Whites (21%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (15%)
- Those who attend a worship service 1 to 3 times a month (27%) are more likely to select than those who attend 4 or more times a month (19%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (29% v. 17%)

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