

The General Social Survey



Recent Changes in GSS Questions on Religion

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SUMMARY

Over the past three rounds of the GSS, coinciding with the shift from a primarily in-person interview to a multi-mode, web-based instrument, the GSS has been modifying the collection of Religion, Denomination, and Other (RDO), its primary means of assessing a respondent's religion, especially for determining denomination of Christian respondents. Changes to the questionnaire design in 2021 appear to have inflated the number of generic, non-categorizable Christians, while also substantially inflating the labor required to resolve ambiguous open-ended codes. Differential stimulus between the web and face-to-face (FTF) modes also heightened these differences, specifically for Protestant Christians. However, reordering the sequence for RDO, as well as providing a showcard for in-person cases, resolves many of these issues.

BACKGROUND

The General Social Survey (GSS) has been among the most influential sources of religious affiliation data in the US. Prior to 2021, it included the following items, whose full item text is available in Appendix A:

- RELIG, an identification with a major faith.
- RELGSPEC, an open-ended field for those who identified as "some other religion."
- IVQRELIG, CHRISTCH, and PROTCHRH are follow-up items after RELGSPEC which helped identify various non-Catholic Christians and direct them back into the Protestant question sequence. Notably, IVQRELIG was at interviewer's discretion based on the contents of RELGSPEC.
- DENOM, an identification for Protestant Christians of a specific mainline protestant denomination, or the option to provide an additional denomination via open-ended text, which in turn was coded into OTHER.

RELIG/DENOM/OTHER (RDO) form the backbone for identifying religious affiliation of respondents in the GSS, and have been extensively studied. The GSS is one of only a few national studies which attempt to fully catalogue American religious affiliation, and has been used as the springboard for studies of congregations. It is also important to emphasize that religious affiliation is not necessarily the same as individual belief; we are essentially asking people to identify their religious community, and code that community with its beliefs in RDO, rather than the individual and their beliefs and practices, which are individually captured by the attitudinal and behavioral items on religion in the GSS Replicating Core.

As part of the shift to a multi-mode design in 2021, in order to allow respondents to better self-identify without requiring open ends, as well as adapt to the web mode, the following changes were implemented:

- RELIG was expanded from 5 response options to 9, and had its question stem simplified from "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?" to "What is your religious preference?"
- IVQRELIG was simplified from 4 options to functionally 3, separating Eastern Orthodox/Non-Christian into Eastern Orthodox (incorporated into RELIG) and "Something else"; and splitting Inter/nondenominational to Interdenominational and Nondenominational.
- IVQRELIG was made required for all respondents who selected "Some other religion" regardless of text content.

In the 2024 GSS, two additional changes were made:

- RELGSPEC was moved to follow the IVQRELIG, CHRISTCHRH, PROTCHRH sequence, rather than RELIG. This change was first piloted in the 2022 GSS Next follow-on survey.

- NORELGSP was added as a follow-up for the “none” response option. This change was first included as part of the Religion module in 2021, but was not included in the GSS Core measure of religion in 2021 or 2022.

Each of these changes has prompted slight shifts in the measurement of RDO within the GSS. In this report, we will examine the consequences of the 2021 changes to RELIG, as well as the movement of RELGSPEC.

MODE SHIFT AND TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION 2012-2024

The shift from primarily face-to-face data collection in 2018 to multi-mode data collection in 2021 was one of necessity. Changes to the GSS were implemented quickly, and data gathered during a challenging time in American society. These changes combine two particular issues on the analysis of religion in the GSS, which we must address here: (1) to what extent are changes in the trends of religious affiliation due to changes in social behavior from COVID-19¹, and (2) to what extent are they the result of methodological shifts in how the GSS was collected, including both the mode shift and changes to question wording?

To assess this, we must examine the behavior of the RDO (and particularly the RELIG item) by mode. As the GSS weights are not designed for single-mode analysis at this time, we will present tables in this section unweighted, simply to be able to better and more consistently address trends. Please consult Table 1 in Appendix B for the weighted trends. Generally speaking, the trend remains the same as the weighted one – a major decline in 2021 and 2022, with an increase in 2024.

Table 1: Religious Affiliation 2012-2024 (unweighted)

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021	2022	2024
Protestant	46.6%	48.5%	48.5%	48.9%	40.2%	40.7%	43.0%
Catholic	22.6%	22.8%	22.8%	21.2%	20.9%	21.4%	19.9%
Jewish	1.4%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%	1.4%
None	19.7%	21.8%	21.8%	23.3%	28.4%	28.1%	26.8%
Other	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%	1.4%	2.6%	2.4%
Christian	6.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	3.1%	2.4%	2.1%
Inter/Nondenominational	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%
Other named religions	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.2%	3.6%	3.0%	4.2%

¹ There are other additional factors to consider for real change, such as increasing secularism, changes in spiritual and religious practice, and the shifting landscape of worship in fundamentalist traditions. However, for the years of 2021 and 2022 in particular, we are assuming these changes are subsumed into the effects of COVID-19, which exacerbated many problems with religious attendance and affiliation in the face of social distancing and closure of some places of worship. A different report, with longer time horizons and concerns, would not make this assumption.

Concerns on the question wording are very specifically related to the decline in Protestants. Prior to 2021, the wording for RELIG provided a list of 5 religions as part of the question stem, i.e. “What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?” This wording provided an implicit prompt for respondents without the use of a showcard, guiding them to choose Protestant or Catholic without first moving through the potentially more generic ‘Christian.’ After 2021, wordings were updated for the face-to-face (FTF) questionnaire to make it exactly the same as the web questionnaire (in terms of question wording), and both instruments dropped the list of examples. The web instrument displayed a list of response options on the screen, prompting with a list of religious options. However, no showcard was used in the face-to-face (FTF) mode. Combined with the changed question stem, without the examples, FTF respondents no longer receive a comparable stimulus to web respondents, without any examples of religious affiliation whatsoever. The concern is that the decline in Protestants (see Table B1 for overall trend, and Table 2 for FTF-specific trend) is partially due to the lack of prompting on “Protestant” as a response category specifically. However, the same decline should also appear in the other prompted religions (Jewish, Catholic), and we should see no changes in the unprompted religions. This lack of prompting should also lead to an increase in the Christian and Inter/nondenominational categories, as they are generally downstream of Protestants failing to identify as Protestants in the RDO framework. Additionally, we should not see similar changes on the web, which provides a consistent stimulus across all rounds of the GSS.

While the 2022 results look concerning, the 2024 results seem much more in line with the pre-2021 data for the FTF mode. There are substantial fluctuations across the years in both the Protestant and “Nones” categories, as well as the Christian category, although this is likely due to the RELGSP placement change. Changes in Jewish affiliation have declined at an even pace across 2016-2022 (approximately .2% per year), with a substantially increased decline in 2024. Crucially, we do not see a decline in Catholic affiliation or the Inter/nondenominational category, and see an increase in Other named religions across both 2022 and 2024.

For the web mode, the trend across all three years is substantially more stable in most categories (see Table 3). We see more fluctuation in Catholic affiliation and Protestant affiliation, as well as religious “Nones.” Jews, other named religions, and Inter/nondenominational categories appear fairly stable.

Table 2: Religious Affiliation 2016-2024, FTF only (unweighted)

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021	2022	2024
Protestant	47.4%	49.4%	49.4%	50.2%	n/a	45.4%	49.9%
Catholic	21.8%	22.1%	22.1%	20.4%	n/a	20.9%	20.0%
Jewish	1.3%	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%	n/a	1.3%	0.6%
None	19.9%	21.6%	21.6%	22.9%	n/a	24.3%	20.7%
Other	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%	n/a	2.4%	2.7%
Christian	6.1%	1.5%	1.5%	1.2%	n/a	2.8%	1.3%
Inter/Nondenominational	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	n/a	0.2%	0.3%
Other named religions	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	n/a	2.7%	4.6%

Table 3: Religious Affiliation 2016-2024, Web only (unweighted)

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021	2022	2024
Protestant	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	39.0%	36.1%	38.4%
Catholic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20.7%	21.4%	18.4%
Jewish	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%
None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	29.7%	32.7%	32.5%
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.5%	2.6%	2.2%
Christian	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.1%	1.9%	2.6%
Inter/Nondenominational	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%
Other named religions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.8%	3.4%	4.1%

Generally speaking, our expected results are mixed. Protestants do decline in the in-person mode for a single year and then rebound, while Catholics and Jews show similar patterns to the pre-2021 GSS, absent political shocks. The web mode is not the bastion of stability we would expect, but shows slight to substantial fluctuation across all categories. It remains difficult to disentangle the changes in prompting from the changes in actual religious affiliation given the social turmoil of the early 2020s.

Ultimately, the lack of a showcard for the in-person mode may have affected the 2022 and 2024 rounds of the GSS, but it is difficult to fully control for the effect, given the overlapping changes from the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential difficulty of respondent in navigating the RDO code frame without the aid of the interviewer.

RELGSPEC LOCATION AND OPEN-ENDED CODING

One major concern for how the GSS collects religious information is that the Protestant denominations list (DENOM) represents the best single question that we have to help locate non-Catholic, non-Orthodox Christians in our current religious schema. Prior to the shift to web, slightly more than 1 in 5 GSS respondents would end up giving an open-ended response to RELIG (see Table 4 for the breakdown of RELGSPEC responses), and have to be recoded in some manner. In many cases, these respondents would later reach DENOM and provide additional information which helped assign a valid code. With the shift to the multi-mode GSS and the redesign exposing IVQRELIG to respondents, there was a concern that respondents would not be able to navigate this section as effectively, and reach DENOM. The evidence from 2021 and 2022 supports this concern, albeit in a slightly roundabout way.

In the 2021 and 2022 rounds of the GSS, we see the same approximate proportion of respondents, 1 in 5, contributing text through RELGSPEC, but a substantial increase in those respondents who are recoded to punch 11, generic Christian. These Christians represent a navigation and information failure, as we believed that they could be locatable within DENOM as long as they successfully reached DENOM. In particular, respondents were exposed to the item IVQRELIG for the first time on the GSS, as well as its follow-ups, CHRISTCH and PROTCHRH.

Table 4: Uses of Religion open-ends on the 2016-2024 GSS (counts, unweighted)

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021	2022	2022 follow-on	2024
RELIG responses	1,973	2,543	2,846	2,327	3,951	3,483	1,230	3,269
Initial RELIG 'Other' Responses	439	600	646	511	713	736	218	341
RELGSPEC responses	439	600	646	511	713	736	62	225
As % of RELIG	22.3%	23.6%	22.7%	22.0%	18.0%	21.1%	5.0%	6.9%
Count, RELGSPEC Protestant	242	353	490	390	540	537	14	53
As % of RELIG	12.2%	13.9%	17.2%	16.8%	13.7%	15.4%	1.1%	1.6%
Count, RELGSPEC generic Christian	120	126	39	28	117	112	19	48
As % of RELIG	6.0%	5.0%	1.4%	1.2%	3.0%	3.2%	1.5%	1.5%
Count, RELGSPEC all else	86	121	117	93	56	87	29	124
As % of RELIG	4.4%	4.8%	4.1%	4.0%	1.4%	2.5%	2.4%	3.8%

In 2021, 713 respondents responded “Some other religion” (Table 4, peach rows). Of this group, 520 identified themselves as Christian on IVQRELIG, 477 of which were assigned to a specific Christian denominations (91.7%), and 43 of whom were assigned to the generic Christian label. 219 respondents, meanwhile, identified themselves as some other category on IVQRELIG. Of this group, 63 were assigned to a specific Christian denomination (28.8%) and 72 were assigned to the generic Christian label (32.9%). More than half of IVQRELIG respondents who did not identify themselves as Christian (e.g., punches 2-4 on IVQRELIG) were later recategorized to some type of Christian. Of this group, only 15 respondents (11.1%) successfully navigated the whole IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH sequence. The same story repeats in 2022 – of the 736 respondents with “some other religion”, 544 identify themselves as Christian on IVQRELIG, and 99% of them are assigned to a Protestant denomination or the generic Christian label. Once again, more than half of respondents who did not identify themselves as Christian on IVQRELIG were later reclassified as some type of Christian (59.5%), and of this group, only 12 (6%) were appropriately screened by IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH.

Given the apparent difficulty of specifically IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH, and the distortion of generic Christian respondents relative to 2016 and 2018 (Table 4, blue rows), the GSS introduced an experiment in the 2022 GSS Next follow-on study which aimed to ease the navigation of IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH and increase the likelihood of a Christian respondent seeing TMPDENOM, and successfully selecting a protestant denomination. While the traditional version of RDO utilized RELGSPEC-IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH, collecting open-ended responses from all respondents regardless of their Protestant affiliation, the experimental

version interspersed RELGSPEC within IVQRELIG-CHRISTCH-PROTCHRH, only collecting the open-ended response as respondents move away from Protestant affiliation and towards other Religious categories.

As Table 4 shows, this results in substantially fewer open-ended responses in the follow-on, from approximately 1 in 5 respondents to 1 in 20. It also shifts open-ends away from Protestant and Christian responses to non-Christian responses. In the years prior to the multi-mode shift, the open-ends tended to resolve to some type of Christian response about 80% of the time, and in 2021 and 2022, between 88% and 92% of the time. With this experimental version, just over half (53%) resolve to Christians of some type. This change also successfully reduced the proportion of generic Christians to be in line with 2016 and 2018, rather than the substantially higher rates we had seen in 2021 and 2022's baseline data collection. Given this, the experimental version was adopted for the 2024 GSS.

DISCUSSION

Over the past 6 years, the General Social Survey has, out of necessity, introduced a variety of changes to the Religion questions, including rewording and modifying the RDO sequence, the backbone of religious identification for the GSS. These changes have both introduced, and partially resolved, clear measurement shifts within RDO, especially compared to the trends before the shift to multi-mode data collection. However, these changes are happening with a backdrop of a time of great social upheaval, as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic fallout in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and substantial changes in federal policy throughout the 2020s.

As such, we have a responsibility to accurately measure religious affiliation within the GSS, not just to allow respondents to express their own identities within the survey, but also to allow researchers to accurately understand and classify respondents within standard religious frameworks. Prior to 2024, shifts in Protestant identification, as well as generic Christian identification, made this process of expression and classification more difficult. The changes to RDO were necessary to allow for these two priorities, and have minimized the consequences of survey formatting and design, relative to the backdrop of societal change, which must remain the driving force of changes in trends within the GSS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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APPENDIX A: RDO SEQUENCE

2024 Sequence	2018 Sequence																																																								
<p>For both 2024 and 2018, text in grey boxes includes skip and display logic programmed into the GSS. Text rendered in ALL CAPS is interviewer instruction, and was not read aloud to the respondent.</p> <p>Other versions of the RDO sequence are available on the GSS Website, under Questionnaires.</p>																																																									
<p>RELIG: Categorical (Single)</p> <p>What is your religious preference?</p> <p>Categories:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 150px;">{protestant}</td><td>Protestant</td></tr> <tr><td>{catholic}</td><td>Catholic</td></tr> <tr><td>{easter}</td><td>Eastern Orthodox, such as Greek or Russian Orthodox</td></tr> <tr><td>{jewish}</td><td>Jewish</td></tr> <tr><td>{buddhist}</td><td>Buddhist</td></tr> <tr><td>{hindu}</td><td>Hindu</td></tr> <tr><td>{muslim}</td><td>Muslim, Islam, Sufi, Sunni, or Shia</td></tr> <tr><td>{other_specify}</td><td>Some other religion</td></tr> <tr><td>{none}</td><td>No religion</td></tr> <tr><td>{dontknow}</td><td>Don't know</td></tr> <tr><td>{refused}</td><td>REFUSED</td></tr> <tr><td>{noanswer}</td><td>NA</td></tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>If RELIG.ContainsAny({none}) Then</p> </div> <p>NORELGSP: Categorical (Single)</p> <p>Do you consider yourself to be atheist, agnostic, something else, or nothing in particular?</p> <p>Categories:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 150px;">{atheist}</td><td>Atheist</td></tr> <tr><td>{agnostic}</td><td>Agnostic</td></tr> <tr><td>{smthngelse}</td><td>Something else</td></tr> <tr><td>{notinpart}</td><td>Nothing in particular</td></tr> <tr><td>{dontknow}</td><td>Don't know</td></tr> <tr><td>{refused}</td><td>REFUSED</td></tr> <tr><td>{noanswer}</td><td>NA</td></tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Goto Relig16 End If</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>If RELIG.ContainsAny({other_specify, refused,noanswer}) Then</p> </div> <p>IVQRELIG: Categorical (Single)</p>	{protestant}	Protestant	{catholic}	Catholic	{easter}	Eastern Orthodox, such as Greek or Russian Orthodox	{jewish}	Jewish	{buddhist}	Buddhist	{hindu}	Hindu	{muslim}	Muslim, Islam, Sufi, Sunni, or Shia	{other_specify}	Some other religion	{none}	No religion	{dontknow}	Don't know	{refused}	REFUSED	{noanswer}	NA	{atheist}	Atheist	{agnostic}	Agnostic	{smthngelse}	Something else	{notinpart}	Nothing in particular	{dontknow}	Don't know	{refused}	REFUSED	{noanswer}	NA	<p>RELIG: Categorical (Single)</p> <p>What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?</p> <p>Categories:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 150px;">{protestant}</td><td>Protestant</td></tr> <tr><td>{catholic}</td><td>Catholic</td></tr> <tr><td>{jewish}</td><td>Jewish</td></tr> <tr><td>{none}</td><td>None</td></tr> <tr><td>{other_specify}</td><td>OTHER (SPECIFY RELIGION AND/OR CHURCH DENOMINATION)</td></tr> <tr><td>{dontknow}</td><td>DON'T KNOW</td></tr> <tr><td>{refused}</td><td>REFUSED</td></tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>If RELIG.ContainsAny({none}) Then Goto Relig16 If RELIG.ContainsAny({other_specify}) Then</p> </div> <p>RELGSPEC: Text</p> <p>SPECIFY OTHER RELIGION:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>End If If RELIG.ContainsAny({other_specify, refused}) Then</p> </div> <p>IVQRELIG: Categorical (Single)</p> <p>IF YOU HAVE ENTERED 'CHRISTIAN' OR SOME OTHER RELIGION THAT YOU THINK MAY BE A CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION OTHER THAN EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES (E.G. GREEK, RUSSIAN, SERBIAN, ARMENIAN ORTHODOX), SELECT CHRISTIAN. IF EASTERN ORTHODOX OR NOT CHRISTIAN, SELECT EASTERN ORTHODOX/NOT CHRISTIAN. IF 'INTER' OR 'NON-DENOMINATIONAL', SELECT INTER/NON-DENIMINATIONAL.</p> <p>Categories:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td style="width: 150px;">{christian}</td><td>CHRISTIAN</td></tr> <tr><td>{eastern_orthodoxnonchristian}</td><td>EASTERN ORTHODOX/NON-CHRISTIAN</td></tr> </table>	{protestant}	Protestant	{catholic}	Catholic	{jewish}	Jewish	{none}	None	{other_specify}	OTHER (SPECIFY RELIGION AND/OR CHURCH DENOMINATION)	{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW	{refused}	REFUSED	{christian}	CHRISTIAN	{eastern_orthodoxnonchristian}	EASTERN ORTHODOX/NON-CHRISTIAN
{protestant}	Protestant																																																								
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{refused}	REFUSED																																																								
{christian}	CHRISTIAN																																																								
{eastern_orthodoxnonchristian}	EASTERN ORTHODOX/NON-CHRISTIAN																																																								

Is your religious preference any of the following?

Categories:

{christian}	Christian
{interdenominational}	Interdenominational
{nondenominational}	Non-denominational
{nopref}	Something else
{dontknow}	Don't know
{refused}	REFUSED
{noanswer}	NA

If IVQRELIG = {christian} Then
Goto LabelTMPDENOM
Elseif IVQRELIG = {interdenominational} Then
Goto LabelCHRISTCH
Elseif IVQRELIG.ContainsAny({nondenominational})
Then
Goto LabelCHRISTCH
Elseif IVQRELIG = {nopref} Then

RELGSPEC: Text

What is your religious preference?

Goto LabelRELITEN
End If
LabelCHRISTCH:

CHRISTCH: Categorical (Single)

Would that be a Christian church?

Categories:

{yes}	Yes
{no}	No
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

If CHRISTCH <> {yes} Then

RELGSPEC: Text

What is your religious preference?

Goto LabelRELITEN
End If

PROTCHRH: Categorical (Single)

Would you consider that a Protestant church?

Categories:

{yes}	Yes
{no}	No
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

If PROTCHRH <> {yes} Then

{internondenominational}	INTER/NON-DENOMINATIONAL
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

If IVQRELIG = {christian} Then Goto LabelTMPDENOM
If IVQRELIG = {eastern_orthodoxnonchristian} Then
Goto LabelRELITEN

CHRISTCH: Categorical (Single)

Would that be a Christian church?

Categories:

{yes}	Yes
{no}	No
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

If CHRISTCH <> {yes} Then Goto LabelRELITEN

PROTCHRH: Categorical (Single)

Would you consider that a Protestant church?

Categories:

{yes}	Yes
{no}	No
{not_sure}	Not Sure
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

If PROTCHRH.ContainsAny({not_sure}) Then

PROTSPEC: Text

SPECIFY OTHER RELIGION:

End If
Elseif RELIG.ContainsAny({protestant}) Then
Goto LabelTMPDENOM
Else
Goto LabelJEW
End If
LabelTMPDENOM:

TMPDENOM: Categorical (Single)

What specific denomination is that, if any?
(PROBE FOR COMPLETE NAME OF DENOMINATION)

{yes}	Yes
{no}	No
{not_sure}	Not sure
{dontknow}	Don't know
{refused}	REFUSED
{noanswer}	NA

```
If PROTCHRH = {yes} Then
Goto LabelTMPDENOM
Else
```

RELGSPEC: Text

What is your religious preference?

```
Goto LabelRELITEN
End If
Elseif RELIG.ContainsAny({protestant}) Then
Goto LabelTMPDENOM
Elseif RELIG = {jewish} Then
Goto LabelJEW
End If
```

TMPDENOM: Categorical (Single)

What specific denomination is that, if any?

Categories:

{baptist}	Baptist
{methodist}	Methodist
{lutheran}	Lutheran
{presbyterian}	Presbyterian
{episcopal_church}	Episcopal church
{other_specify}	Other
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}	No denomination or non-denominational church
{dummy1}	
{dummy2}	
{dummy3}	
{dntknow}	Don't know
{refused}	
{noanswer}	NA

```
If TMPDENOM = {baptist} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{american_baptist_association,american_baptist_churches_in_the_usa,national_baptist_convention_of_america,national_baptist_convention_usa_inc,southern_baptis
```

Categories:	
{baptist}	BAPTIST
{methodist}	METHODIST
{lutheran}	LUTHERAN
{presbyterian}	PRESBYTERIAN
{episcopal_church}	EPISCOPAL CHURCH
{other_specify}	OTHER (SPECIFY)
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}	NO DENOMINATION GIVEN OR NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
{dontknow}	DON'T KNOW
{refused}	REFUSED

```
DENOM.Categories = {}
If TMPDENOM = {baptist} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{american_baptist_association,american_baptist_churches_in_the_usa,national_baptist_convention_of_america,national_baptist_convention_usa_inc,southern_baptist_convention,other_baptist_churches,baptist_don_t_know_which}
End If
If TMPDENOM = {methodist} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{african_methodist_episcopal_church,african_methodist_episcopal_zion_church,united_methodist_church,other_methodist_churches,methodist_don_t_know_which}
End If
If TMPDENOM = {lutheran} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{american_lutheran_church,lutheran_church_in_america,lutheran_church__missouri_synod,wisconsin_evangelical_lutheran_synod,other_lutheran_churches,evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america,lutheran_don_t_know_which}
End If
If TMPDENOM = {presbyterian} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states,united_presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states_of_ame,other_presbyterian_churches,presbyterian_church_usa,presbyterian_don_t_know_which}
End If
If TMPDENOM = {episcopal_church} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{episcopal_church}
```

```

t_convention,other_baptist_churches,baptist_don_t_kn
ow_which}
End If

If TMPDENOM = {methodist} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{african_methodist_episcopal_church,african_methodist
_episcopal_zion_church,united_methodist_church,other
_methodist_churches,methodist_don_t_know_which}
End If

If TMPDENOM = {lutheran} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{american_lutheran_church,lutheran_church_in_america,
lutheran_church__missouri_synod,wisconsin_evangelical_lutheran_synod,
other_lutheran_churches,evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america,
lutheran_don_t_know_which}
End If

If TMPDENOM = {presbyterian} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states,united_presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states_of_ame,
other_presbyterian_churches,presbyterian_church_usa,presbyterian_don_t_know_which}
End If

If TMPDENOM = {episcopal_church} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{episcopal_church}
End If

If TMPDENOM = {other_specify} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{other_specify}
End If

If TMPDENOM =
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}
End If

```

```

End If
If TMPDENOM = {other_specify} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{other_specify}
End If
If TMPDENOM =
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church} Then
DENOM.Categories = DENOM.Categories +
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}
End If
If TMPDENOM = {episcopal_church} Then
DENOM.Response = {episcopal_church}
Elseif TMPDENOM = {other_specify} Then
DENOM.Response = {other_specify}
Elseif TMPDENOM =
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church} Then
DENOM.Response =
{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}
Elseif TMPDENOM = {refused} Then
DENOM.Response = {refused}
Elseif TMPDENOM = {dontknow} Then
DENOM.Response = {dontknow}
Else

```

DENOM: Categorical (Single)

What specific denomination is that, if any?
(PROBE FOR COMPLETE NAME OF DENOMINATION)

Categories:	
{american_baptist_association}	American Baptist Association
{american_baptist_churches_in_the_usa}	American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A
{national_baptist_convention_of_america}	National Baptist Convention of America
{national_baptist_convention_usa_inc}	National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc
{southern_baptist_convention}	Southern Baptist Convention

	{other_baptist_churches}	Other Baptist Churches
<p>If TMPDENOM = {episcopal_church} Then DENOM.Response = {episcopal_church} Elseif TMPDENOM = {other_specify} Then DENOM.Response = {other_specify} Elseif TMPDENOM = {no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church} Then DENOM.Response = {no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church} Elseif TMPDENOM = {refused} Then DENOM.Response = {refused} Elseif TMPDENOM = {dontknow} Then DENOM.Response = {dontknow} Else</p>	{baptist_don_t_know_which}	Baptist, Don't know which
	{african_methodist_episcopal_church}	African Methodist Episcopal Church
	{african_methodist_episcopal_zion_church}	African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
	{united_methodist_church}	United Methodist Church
	{other_methodist_churches}	Other Methodist Churches
	{methodist_don_t_know_which}	Methodist, Don't know which
	{american_lutheran_church}	American Lutheran Church
	{lutheran_church_in_america}	Lutheran Church in America
	{lutheran_church__missouri_synod}	Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod
	{wisconsin_evangelical_lutheran_synod}	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
	{other_lutheran_churches}	Other Lutheran Churches
	{evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america}	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
	{lutheran_don_t_know_which}	Lutheran, Don't know which
	{presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states}	Presbyterian Church in the United States
	{united_presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states_of_ame}	United Presbyterian Church in the United
<p>DENOM: Categorical (Single) What specific denomination is that, if any?</p>		
<p>Categories: {american_baptist_association} American Baptist Association {american_baptist_churches_in_the_usa} American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A {national_baptist_convention_of_america} National Baptist Convention of America {national_baptist_convention_usa_inc} National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc {southern_baptist_convention} Southern Baptist Convention {other_baptist_churches} Other Baptist Churches {baptist_don_t_know_which} Baptist, Don't know which {african_methodist_episcopal_church} African Methodist</p>		

<p>{african_methodist_episcopal_zion_church}</p> <p>{united_methodist_church}</p> <p>{other_methodist_churches}</p> <p>{methodist_don_t_know_which}</p> <p>{american_lutheran_church}</p> <p>{lutheran_church_in_america}</p> <p>{lutheran_church__missouri_synod}</p> <p>{wisconsin_evangelical_lutheran_synod}</p> <p>{other_lutheran_churches}</p> <p>{evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america}</p> <p>{lutheran_don_t_know_which}</p> <p>{presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states}</p> <p>{united_presbyterian_church_in_the_united_states_of_ame}</p>	<p>Episcopal Church African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church United Methodist Church Other Methodist Churches Methodist, Don't know which American Lutheran Church in America Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Other Lutheran Churches Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Lutheran, Don't know which Presbyterian Church in the United States United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America</p>	<p>{other_presbyterian_churches}</p> <p>{presbyterian_church_usa}</p> <p>{presbyterian_don_t_know_which}</p> <p>{episcopal_church}</p> <p>{other_specify}</p> <p>{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}</p> <p>{dontknow}</p> <p>{refused}</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>End If If DENOM.ContainsAny({other_baptist_churches,other_methodist_churches,other_lutheran_churches,other_presbyterian_churches,presbyterian_church_usa,evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america,other_specify}) Then If DENOM.ContainsAny({presbyterian_church_usa,evangelical_lutheran_church_of_america}) Then OTHSPEC.Label.Inserts["othdemtxt"] = othdemtxt.Label Else OTHSPEC.Label.Inserts["othdemtxt"] = "" End If</p> </div> <p>OTHSPEC: Text</p> <p>{othdemtxt} SPECIFY OTHER PROTESTANT DENOMINATION.</p>	<p>States of America Other Presbyterian Churches Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Presbyterian, Don't know which EPISCOPAL CHURCH OTHER (SPECIFY) NO DENOMINATION GIVEN OR NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH DON'T KNOW REFUSED</p>
--	---	---	--

<p>{other_presbyterian_churches}</p> <p>{presbyterian_church_usa}</p> <p>{presbyterian_don_t_know_which}</p> <p>{episcopal_church}</p> <p>{other_specify}</p> <p>{no_denomination_given_or_nondenominational_church}</p> <p>{dummy1}</p> <p>{dummy2}</p> <p>{dummy3}</p> <p>{dntknow}</p> <p>{refused}</p> <p>{noanswer}</p>	<p>Other Presbyteri an Churches</p> <p>Presbyteri an Church (U.S.A.)</p> <p>Presbyteri an, Don't know which</p> <p>Episcopal Church</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p> <p>No denominat ion given or non- denominat ional</p> <p>Don't know</p> <p>NA</p>	
<p>End If</p>		
<pre> If DENOM.ContainsAny({other_baptist_churches,other_m ethodist_churches,other_lutheran_churches,other_pres byterian_churches,presbyterian_church_usa,evangelica l_lutheran_church_of_america,other_specify}) Then If DENOM.ContainsAny({presbyterian_church_usa,evang elical_lutheran_church_of_america}) Then OTHSPEC.Label.Inserts["othdemtxt"] = othdemtxt.Label Else OTHSPEC.Label.Inserts["othdemtxt"] = othspectxt.Label End If </pre>		
<p>OTHSPEC: Text</p> <p>{othdemtxt}</p>		
<p>End If</p>		

APPENDIX B: WEIGHTED TRENDS

Table B1: Religious Affiliation 2016-2024 (weighted, WTSSNRPS)

	2016	2018	2021	2022	2024
Protestant	45.2%	45.4%	37.1%	39.9%	41.4%
Catholic	24.6%	23.5%	22.0%	22.8%	22.0%
Jewish	2.5%	2.1%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%
None	22.5%	23.6%	29.3%	27.4%	25.6%
Other	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%	2.7%	1.9%
Christian	1.4%	1.0%	3.5%	2.4%	1.9%
Inter/Nondenominational	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Other named religions	3.0%	2.9%	4.8%	3.2%	5.2%