

# From Buddha to the Dalai Lama

Insight Meditation Community of Charlottesville

<https://imeditation.org>

# Week 8: Contemporary issues

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Link to extended readings and slides: <https://parusanalytics.com/fb2dl/week-eight.html>

21 October 2021

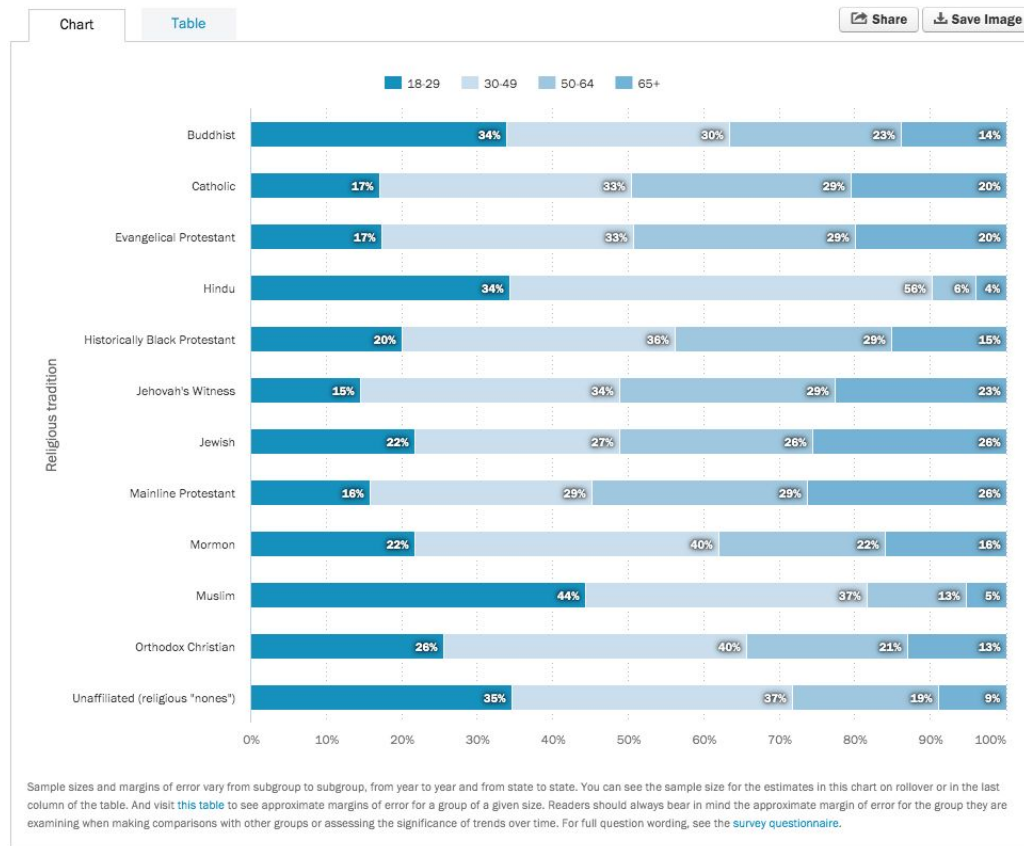
**TABLE 1. Median Age of Religious Groups**

	Median Age
<b>All Americans</b>	<b>47</b>
White evangelical Protestant	56
White Catholic	54
Since 2013, the list	53
White mainline (non-evangelical) Protestant	50
Black Protestant	50
Jehovah's Witness	49
Jewish	48
Latter-day Saint (Mormon)	47
Orthodox Christian	42
Hispanic Catholic	42
Hispanic Protestant	39
Unaffiliated	38
Buddhist	36
Hindu	36
Muslim	33

Source: PRRI 2020 American Values Atlas.

## Age distribution by religious group

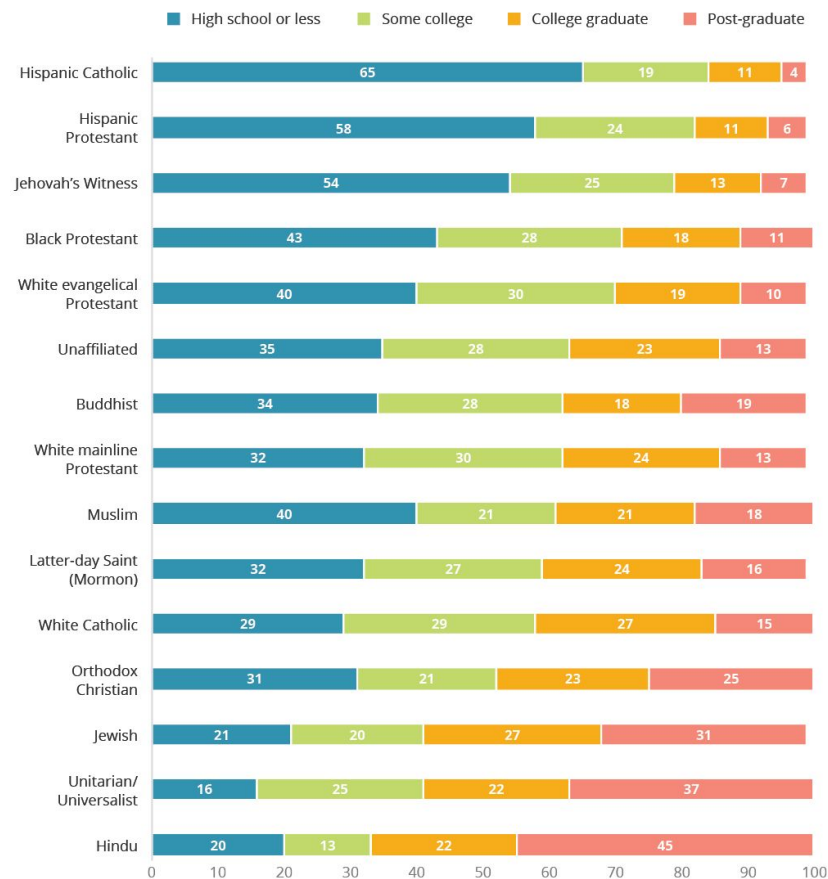
% of adults who are ages...



Source: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/age-distribution/>

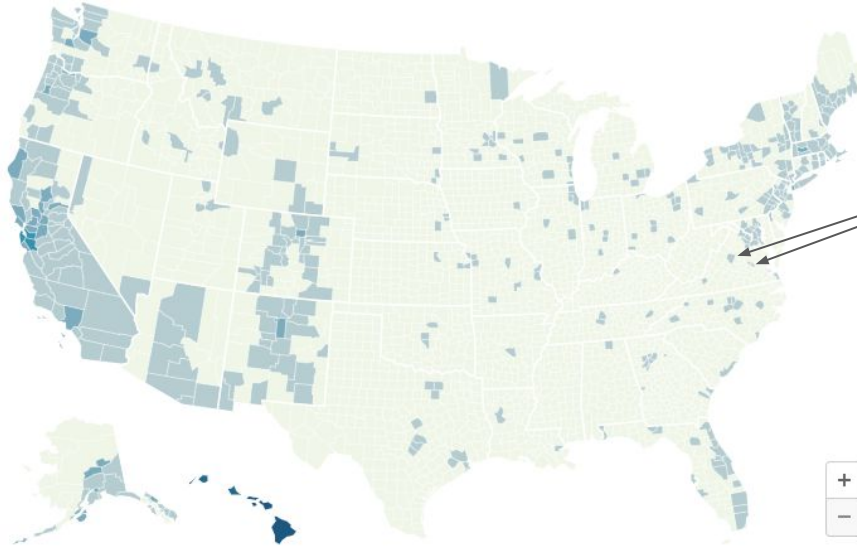
**FIGURE 5. Educational Attainment, by Religious Affiliation**

Percent who are



Source: PRRI 2020 American Values Atlas.

## Buddhist Identity, by County



You are here [mostly]:  
1% for:  
Albemarle County  
Henrico County  
Richmond City

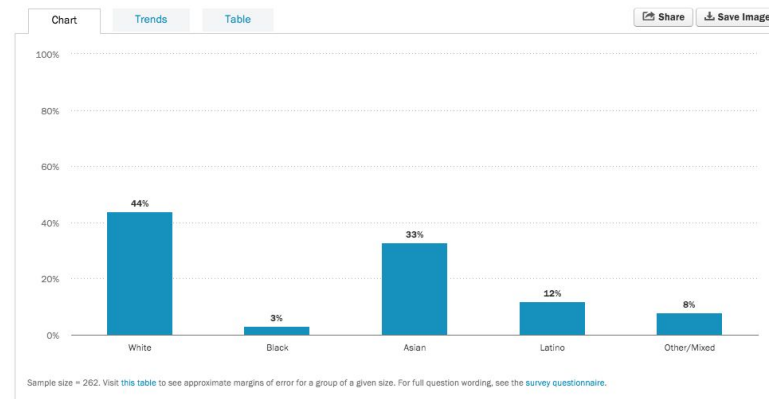
Source: [PRRI 2020 Census of American Religion](#). • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

- Buddhist Americans make up 1% of the U.S. population as of 2020.
- Buddhist Americans are primarily concentrated in Hawaii and the West Coast, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area. The 10 highest concentrations of Buddhist Americans in counties with more than 10,000 residents are:

Source: <https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion/>

## Racial and ethnic composition among Buddhists

% of Buddhists who identify as...

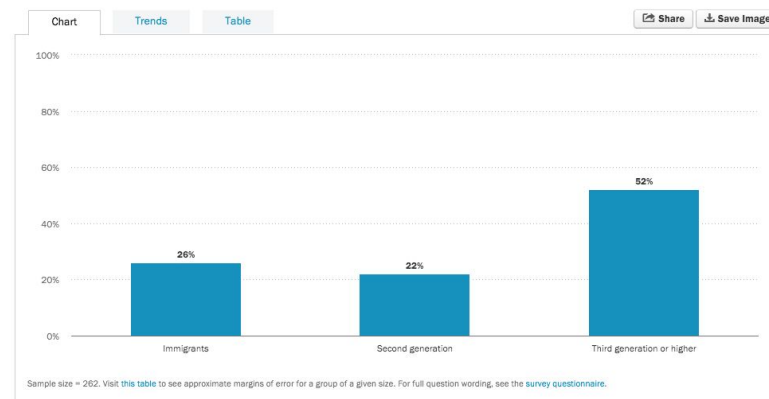


COMPARE: [RACE/ETHNICITY BY RELIGIOUS GROUP](#)

LEARN MORE: [RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION, WHITE](#)

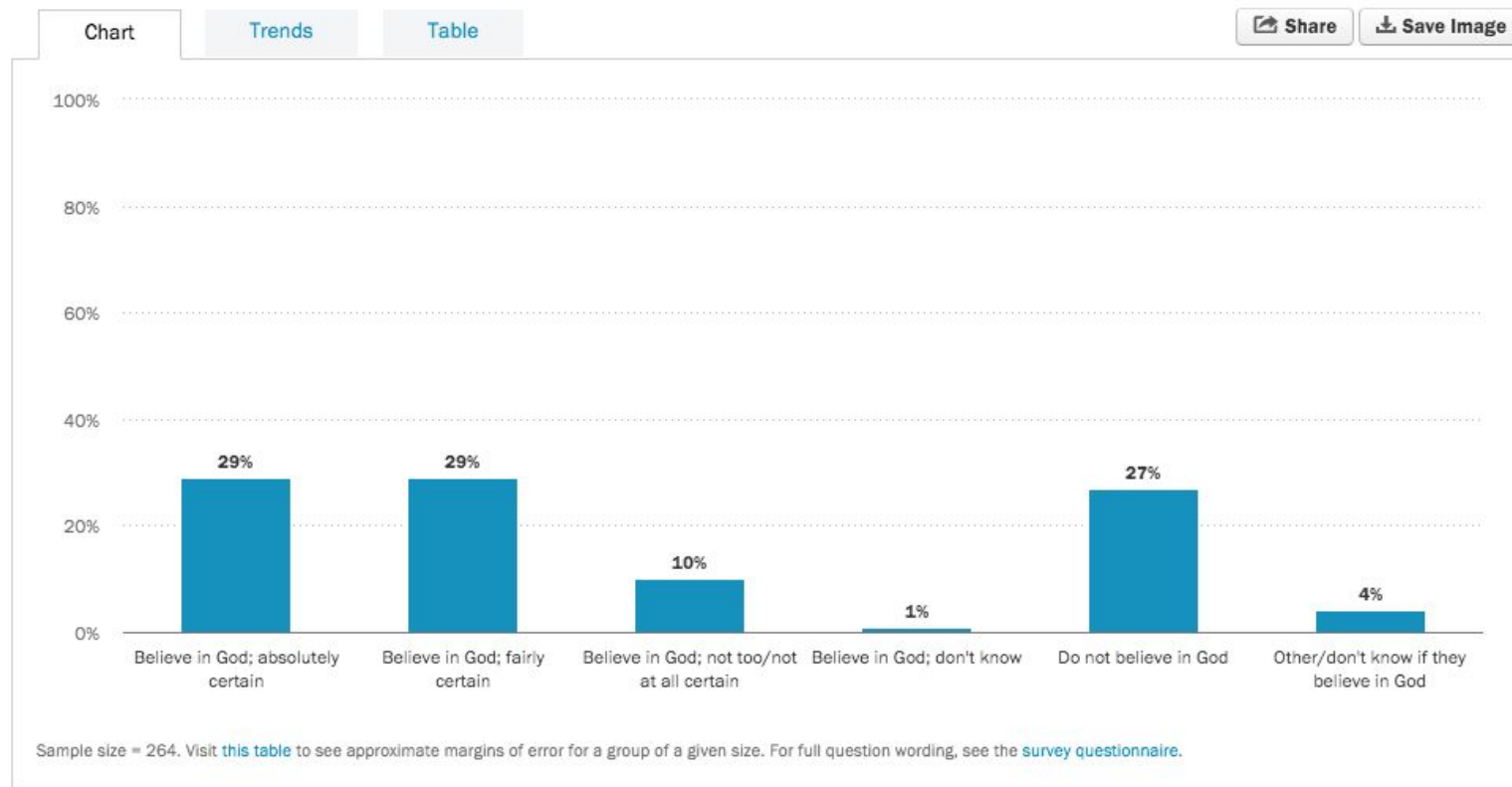
## Immigrant status among Buddhists

% of Buddhists who are...



## Belief in God among Buddhists

% of Buddhists who say they...



COMPARE: BELIEF IN GOD BY RELIGIOUS GROUP



## Belief in God by religious group (2014)

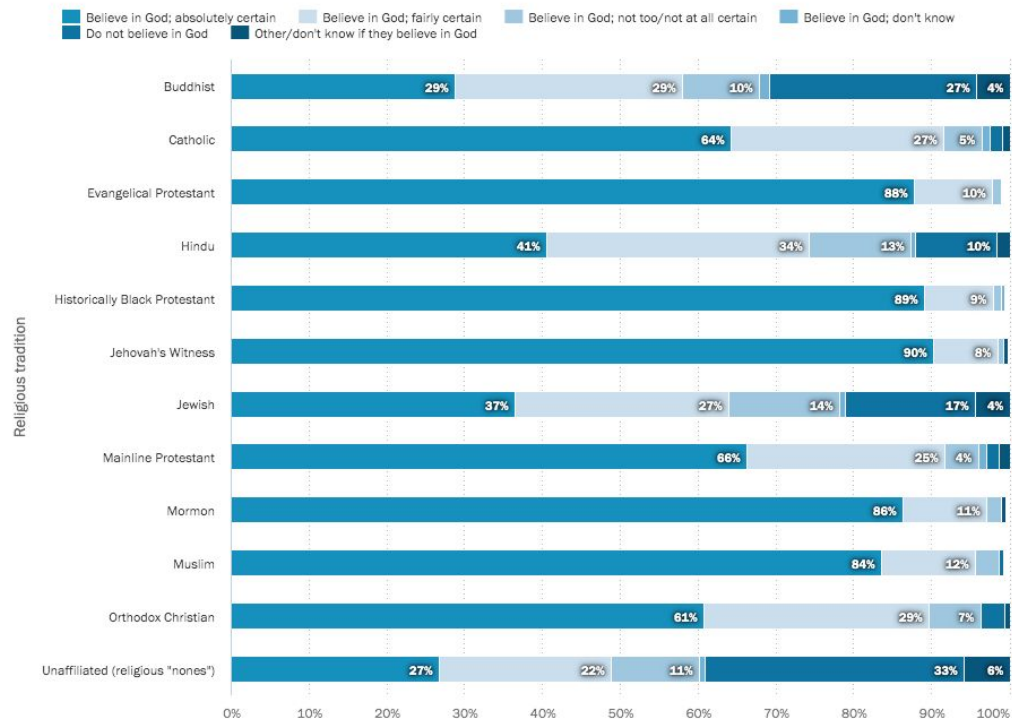
% of adults who say they...

Chart

Table

Share

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Sample sizes and margins of error vary from subgroup to subgroup, from year to year and from state to state. You can see the sample size for the estimates in this chart on rollover or in the last column of the table. And visit [this table](#) to see approximate margins of error for a group of a given size. Readers should always bear in mind the approximate margin of error for the group they are examining when making comparisons with other groups or assessing the significance of trends over time. For full question wording, see the [survey questionnaire](#).



## FOOD ASSISTANCE



## EDUCATION



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



## CONSCIENTIOUS COMPASSION



Tackling Global Hunger at Its  
Roots

## BGR NEWS



Take Buddhist Action  
to Feed the Hungry



BGR Provides  
Emergency Grants in  
Sri Lanka, Haiti, and  
Myanmar



Nourishing and  
Educating Girls in  
Lima, Peru



## SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM

**Being With Dying** – Professional Training Program for Clinicians to learn essential tools for taking care of the dying with skill and compassion.

**Chaplaincy** – Visionary two-year program to serve individuals, communities, the environment, and the world.

**Socially Engaged Buddhist Training** – A year-long training program for those who wish to train in Engaged Buddhism.

**G.R.A.C.E.** – Training to allow compassion and resilience to emerge in the process of interacting with others.

**Nomads Clinic** – Annual month-long pilgrimage to Nepal providing medical and humanitarian aid.

**Prison Outreach Project** – Teaching meditation as a means of ending the cycle of addiction and violence.

**Street Ministry Project** - Bearing Witness Street Retreats and Service Projects. Meditation and meals included.

## NEUROSCIENCE

**Varela Symposium** – (Formerly "Zen Brain") Core faculty of neuroscientists, philosophers, and contemplatives explore timely topics at personal and global levels.

Source: <https://www.upaya.org/programs/>

# McMindfulness Debate

Tricycle Fall-2021: <https://tricycle.org/magazine/mcmindfulness-debate/>

Origin in 2013: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/beyond-mcmindfulness\\_b\\_3519289](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/beyond-mcmindfulness_b_3519289)

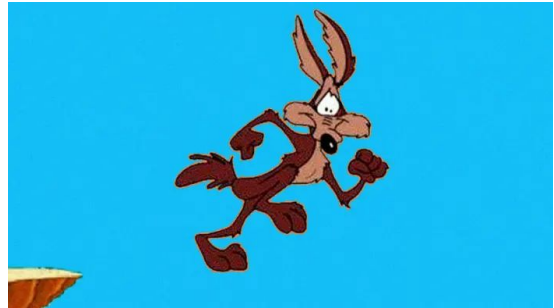
Ronald E. Purser. McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality

# Insight Teacher Crisis

In 40 years, IMS and Spirit Rock have trained, for the entire United States, roughly the same number of teachers and "community dharma leaders" as there are Christian pastors and other professionals (e.g. Christian education) in Albemarle County, Virginia.

As Ann Gleig points out, a disproportionate number of those teaching are Boomers, who are now slowing down but generally do not give up control

This is clearly unsustainable: it is Wile E. Coyote twenty feet past the edge of a cliff and afraid to look down



# Solutions to the teacher crisis - 1

## **Yoga model**

Drop most or all of the religious and ethical aspects and move to being a very popular and decentralized self-help movement: this is essentially the McMindfulness model

## **Electronic sangha**

Create sanghas from social media and apps: Gleig's book discusses in detail how the initial effort to do this failed, but with the vast experience gained during COVID, some newer models might work now

# Solutions to the teacher crisis - 2

## **House church/sangha-led/Quaker model**

Small self-organized groups with peer guidance rather than certified/ordained teachers; dharma comes from podcasts and other media, as well as participation in retreats and other events

## **Secular Buddhism**

Drop the religious aspects but retain the ethics, resulting in something closer to a classical philosophical school such as Stoicism. Also tends to be more self-directed

# Solutions to the teacher crisis - 3

## **Divinity school/certification model**

Large scale—thousands of students in a multi-million-dollar operation—training using state-of-the-art communications media and advertising but still with individual remote mentoring. The most conspicuous Insight-oriented program costs about \$8000 for a two-year course, but comparable two-year training at the Harvard Divinity School would be \$35,000.



# Solutions to the teacher crisis - 4

## **Theosophy model**

Entire approach largely dies out in a generation or two following the deaths of the charismatic founders. Christian Science movement followed a similar path around the same time, albeit with a slower decline due to wide institutionalization. Not a "solution" per se...

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theosophy>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Science)