AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

Principal Investigators - Barry A. Kosmin & Ariela Keysar

Religious, Spiritual and Secular:
The emergence of three distinct worldviews among American college students

A Report based on the ARIS 2013 National College Student Survey

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Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

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Highlights

- College-age Americans are divided among not two but three distinct worldviews: Religious, Secular, and Spiritual.
    - Each of the three worldviews is attached to a distinct outlook on theological, philosophical, scientific, public-policy, and political issues.

- Gender gaps are noticeable within the Secular (with more males) and Spiritual (with more females) groups, while the Religious group attracts males and females more evenly.

- Each of the group has a distinct religious identification make-up:
    - The Religious group is overwhelmingly Christian of various denominations.
    - The Secular group overwhelmingly distance themselves from religion; 70% profess no religion (Nones) and 11% refuse to answer.
    - The Spiritual group is varied in its religious make-up: one-third are Nones and 17% identify with Eastern religions, Judaism, and New Religious Movements.

- Many college-age students seem to have a worldview different from the one in which they were raised:
    - The Religious group attended religious services regularly (91% monthly or more often) in childhood.
    - The Secular group is almost evenly divided; 49% were raised in actively religious homes, and 51% attended infrequently in their early years.
    - The Spiritual group seems to lie midway between the Secular and Religious populations; two-thirds were raised in religious homes.

- Patterns of belief in God are remarkably different in the three worldviews:
    - The Religious group mirrors the general American adult population with 70% firm believers and only 2% saying they don't believe in God or don't know where there is a God and don't believe there is any way to find out.
    - At the other spectrum are Secular students, of whom 77% either don't believe in God or don't know if there is a God.

- Spiritual students exhibit an array of preferences: 27% believe in a higher power (but not in a personal God); 24% are firm believers; 21% believe in God (while having doubts); 12% don't know if God exists and only 5% don't believe in God.

- Opinions on scientific and philosophical issues differ widely.
When asked separately, "*Do you believe in miracles?*" and "*Do you believe in reason/rationalism?*"

  - A strong majority of Religious students believes in miracles and a smaller majority believes in reason and rationalism.
  - The Secular are as committed to reason (83%) as the Religious are to belief in miracles (84%). Only 13% of Seculars believe in miracles.
  - The Spiritual are between the two other worldviews.

- Similarly, the results show considerable divisions by worldview with regard to belief in Creationism/Intelligent Design and Evolution/Darwinism:
  - A majority of Religious students believe in Creationism/Intelligent Design. Another majority believes in Evolution/Darwinism. Presumably this reflects the split between conservative and liberal religious believers, with some small group believing in both theories.
  - The Secular group overwhelmingly endorses Evolution (93%) and rejects Creationism (only 5% 'yes').
  - The Spiritual group believes strongly in Evolution but a significant minority (26%) believes in Creationism or Intelligent Design.

- On public policy issues the Spiritual and Secular groups hold similar worldviews, with Secular students consistently more liberal and the Religious more conservative. The pattern is similar for all issues raised: women's reproductive rights, same sex marriages, gay adoptions, gun control, and belief in assisted suicide.

- Spiritual students seem to distance themselves from religious institutions. When asked "*Do you agree or disagree: Religious institutions and clergy are entitled to their tax breaks?*" only 29% of them agree, compared with 58% of Religious students and 16% of Secular.

- Finally, the political orientations of the worldviews are quite distinct*:*
  - Religious students are the most likely to regard themselves "conservative" (34%) compared with 11% of Spiritual and 4% of Secular.
  - Secular students are also the most likely to view themselves as "liberal" (44%) compared with 35% of Spiritual and 17% of Religious.
  - Secular students are also the most likely to describe themselves as "progressive" (20%) compared with 12% of Spiritual and only 5% of Religious.
  - Interestingly, the "libertarian" option attracted almost the same share of students in each group.
  - The Religious are the most likely to consider themselves "moderate."

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young adult Americans have been identified as the population most responsible for recent changes in the nation's religious identification and patterns of religiosity. Disaffiliation from religion is increasing (Kosmin & Keysar, 2009a). Categories and classifications are being redefined among a generation where personal choice is privileged over ascribed identity. In order to better understand this trend the ARIS 2013 College Student Survey focuses on a particular segment of the millennial generation who are currently students in higher education. This report also provides a unique opportunity for an investigation into the phenomenon of the growing number of Americans who say they are "secular" as well as those who say they are "spiritual but not religious." Who are the secular and spiritual identifiers? How are they different from religious people in their opinions and beliefs? What does this mean for the future of American religion? These questions have been much debated recently by religionists and sociologists of religion (Wuthnow, 1998; Marler & Haddaway, 2002; Heelas & Woodhead, 2004; Schlehofer et al., 2008; Smith, 2009; Ammerman, 2013). This large-scale quantitative study on a sample of young adults sheds new light on this debate.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study of Worldviews and Opinions of American College Students is based on an online national survey. The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC) conducted the survey during April-May 2013 from Trinity College. Utilizing student directories with open access to the public, the sample frame was stratified by census region and by type of academic institution, namely private (including sectarian) versus public. In all 38 colleges and universities nationwide were represented. Twelve of these institutions were located in the South, twelve were in the Northeast, eight were in the West and six were in the Midwest. Fourteen of these colleges and universities were private while the remaining twenty-four were public.[1]

A random sample of email addresses was taken from each university's list asking students for their participation in the survey. In addition, to assure diversity, the main random sample was supplemented with random samples drawn from lists of email addresses belonging to students with the top ten most common surnames for each of three minority groups (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians). Every email address was assigned a unique online link to the survey to avoid duplications. While the sample was not perfectly representative of all American college students, it captured the worldviews of a wide spectrum of American college students from a variety of regions, ethnic groups, and educational institutions. Indeed, the sample of students roughly matches the general student population in gender, year of study, and race and ethnicity.

The email messages sent to students were identical and stated that those who completed the survey would be entered into a sweepstake for the opportunity to win one of ten $50 gift cards. This was done to incentivize responses from recipients. One reminder email was sent to each non-respondent. Participants were assured that all information gathered in this study will be kept confidential and that the data will be reported only in the aggregate. Neither individual students nor institutions will be identified in any analysis or report.

Overall 1,873 American college students began the online survey, and 1,710 students answered at least half of the questionnaire, which took on average 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire covered a wide range of topics that allow researchers to study religious belief (for example, attitudes towards God and the Bible), belonging (identification with a religious group), and behavior (attendance in services). Rich information was also collected on students'

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[1] It is important to note that the project could survey only students whose emails were in the public domain, and who did not withhold their contact information from their college directory as permitted by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. In addition some state laws and institutional practices limit access to contact information and prevent a larger sample from being created. For example, the California Information Practice Act prohibits information from directories of state institution of universities from being "used, rented, distributed, or sold for commercial purposes," thereby reducing the number of emails collected from the state. Many institutions also operate limited public access to their directories even when there is no legal requirement to do so. Furthermore, there are myriad colleges and universities whose student directories cannot be found by web searches.

attitudes towards science, politics, economic and gender issues. In all, the survey comprised 44 questions and over 90 items. These tapped into many of the controversies and societal debates that are of concern to young people today.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

The sample consisted of 1,873 students attending four-year private (56%) and public colleges and universities (44%) in 27 states. The data set out below shows that the sample is diverse and largely representative of the current population of university students.

Majors

STEM	36%
Social & Behavioral sciences	30%
Arts & Humanities	29%
Undecided	5%
n = 1,826	100%

Year of Study

Freshman	17%
Sophomore	19%
Junior	21%
Senior	26%
Post-graduate	17%
n = 1,852	100%

Gender

Male	40.4%
Female	59.6%
n = 1,624	100%

Race/Ethnicity

White	72%
African American/Black	6%
Hispanic/Latino	7%
Asian	9%
Other	7%
n = 1,639	100%

Worldviews

Three distinct worldviews of almost equal size emerged among American students: religious, spiritual and secular. The three worldviews were based on respondents' answer to the question: *In general would you describe yourself more as a religious, spiritual or secular person? Select One.*

Religious	31.8%
Spiritual	32.4%
Secular	28.2%
Don't Know	7.7%
n = 1,718%	100%

4. COMPOSITION OF THE THREE WORLDVIEW GROUPS

Chart 1) Worldview by College Major

College Majors

- ■ STEM
- ■ Social and Behavioral Sciences
- ■ Arts and Humanities
- ■ Undecided

Religious: STEM 40%, Social and Behavioral Sciences 27%, Arts and Humanities 27%, Undecided 5%

Secular: STEM 38%, Social and Behavioral Sciences 29%, Arts and Humanities 30%, Undecided 3%

Spiritual: STEM 29%, Social and Behavioral Sciences 36%, Arts and Humanities 31%, Undecided 4%

There was very little differentiation between those holding Religious and Secular worldviews by college major or course of study. However, those with a Spiritual worldview were more likely to be majoring in the social and behavioral sciences and less likely to study Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM).

Chart 2) Gender by Worldview

- ■ Religious
- ■ Secular
- ■ Spiritual
- ■ Don't know

Male: Religious 31%, Secular 37%, Spiritual 24%, Don't know 9%

Female: Religious 33%, Secular 22%, Spiritual 38%, Don't know 7%
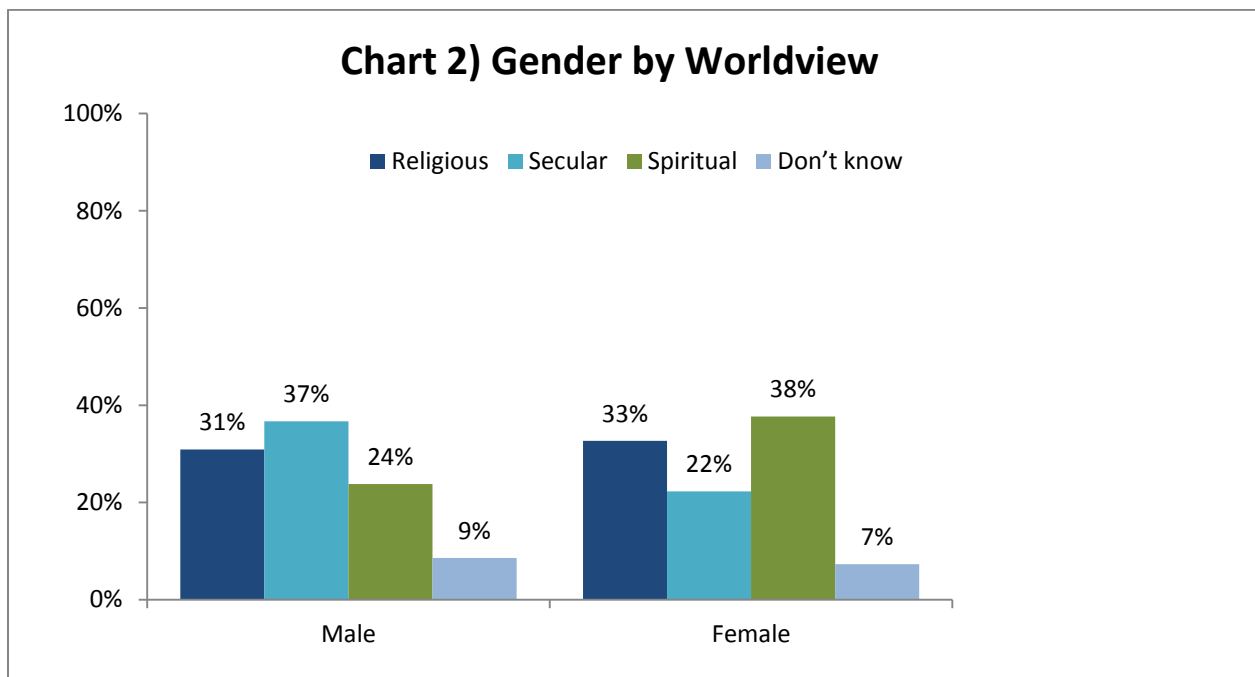
In self-described worldviews there were clear differences between males and females. A plurality of males (37%) was Secular while the plurality among females was Spiritual (38%). In contrast to the gender gap between the secular and spiritual worldview preferences the Religious worldview had a more even appeal, attracting around one-third of each sex.

Chart 3) Worldview by Race & Ethnic Group
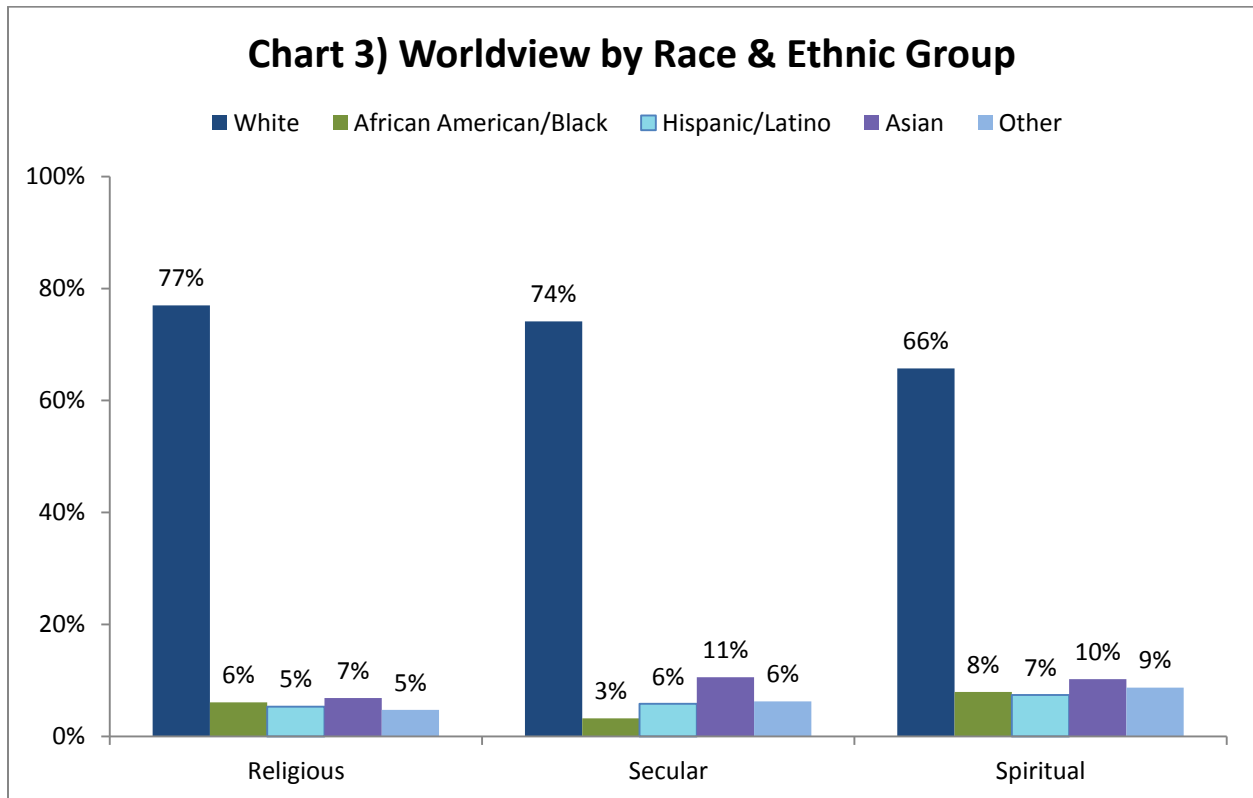
Respondents were asked to self-identify in terms of race and ethnicity. Chart 3 shows that the religious and secular worldviews have similar patterns with above average numbers of whites and fewer minorities. In contrast the Spiritual worldview attracts more minorities and so appears to be more "multi-cultural."

Religious Identification

Each respondent was asked the key ARIS open-ended question: *What is your religion, if any?* Table 1 provides the results in terms of 9 religious traditions. The distribution of the traditions across worldviews varied widely. As we might expect the Religious group was overwhelmingly comprised of Christians of various types. The Spiritual group was more varied in its make-up;

43% self-identified with a Christian tradition but its largest single component, almost one-third, was made up of Nones and it also contained a large fraction from minority religions (17%).

Table 1) Worldview by Religious Identification

	Religious	Secular	Spiritual	Don't know
Catholic	27.2%	4.4%	12.0%	19.2%
Mainline Christian	11.3%	1.5%	8.2%	8.5%
Conservative & Evangelical – Baptist, Protestant sects, Christian Generic, Pentecostal	31.8%	2.5%	21.9%	15.4%
Mormon/Latter Day Saints	8.1%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%
Jewish/Judaism	7.6%	4.8%	4.5%	6.9%
Eastern Religions	2.0%	3.5%	4.4%	2.3%
Muslims/Islam	1.7%	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%
New Religious Movements and Other Religions	0.7%	1.7%	6.5%	2.3%
Nones	0.7%	70.2%	31.9%	25.4%
Refused	4.6%	10.6%	9.1%	18.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The results for the students with a Secular worldview showed a distinctly different character to the other two worldviews with 81% (70% Nones and 11% Refusals) not identifying with a religion of any kind. These results belie the claim that the growing population of young Nones is composed of religious searchers or the "religiously unaffiliated." Over 99% of the students who self-identified as Nones rejected a Religious worldview and a clear majority opted for the Secular worldview.

The students' current religious identification obviously impacts and correlates with the worldview they embrace but for many this decision making process has its origins in their upbringing and background. Respondents were asked: *Did you attend services regularly as a child?* Table 2 shows the frequency of attendance at religious services in childhood. The patterns of attendance varied widely among the three groups. Among those with a Religious worldview it appears that 91% attended religious services monthly or more. Apparently early religious socialization has long-term influence. In contrast today's Secular students were almost equally divided between the 49% who were raised in actively religious homes and the remainder who were very infrequent attenders in their early years. On this behavioral variable, the Spiritual group seems to lie midway between the Secular and Religious populations since two-thirds were

raised in religious homes. Interestingly, the small minority who did not specify a worldview (Don't Knows) closely mirror the Spiritual pattern.

Table 2) Worldview by Frequency of Attendance at Religious Services in Childhood

	Yes, weekly	Yes, monthly	Yes, only on major holidays	No, never	Don't know	Total
Religious	82.1%	8.9%	5.7%	3.0%	0.4%	100.0%
Secular	37.2%	11.5%	22.6%	28.1%	0.6%	100.0%
Spiritual	55.1%	13.7%	15.0%	15.4%	0.7%	100.0%
Don't know	56.2%	13.1%	13.8%	15.4%	1.5%	100.0%

To summarize, our examination of the student population on a range of social characteristics and background variables - college major, gender, race, religious identification, and religious upbringing – suggests the three worldviews we identified attract different sorts of people and so have unique constituencies. Our task now is to examine whether these three worldviews actually translate into different sets of opinions and so to what extent they represent three distinct ways of viewing the world.

5. THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

Table 3) What do you believe about God? *Select One*

		Religious	Secular	Spiritual
A	I don't believe in God	1.1%	41.7%	5.4%
B	I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is any way to find out.	0.9%	35.2%	11.9%
C	I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a higher power.	1.5%	10.8%	27.0%
D	I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others.	2.3%	3.2%	9.3%
E	While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God.	24.6%	6.1%	20.7%
F	I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it.	69.0%	1.1%	23.8%
	Don't Know	0.6%	1.9%	1.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3 tests to what extent the students' worldviews correlate with their theological beliefs. The self-descriptions on worldview translate into very distinct patterns of theological belief. The findings suggest that the Religious and Secular groups were, as we might expect, highly polarized on the question of the existence and nature of the divine. The Religious were overwhelmingly theists with 94% believers, of whom the majority has no doubt about the existence of God. The Secular were equally adamant in the opposite direction. If we view option A as the atheist position and option B as the agnostic position then clearly 77% of those holding a Secular worldview are either atheists or agnostics. The Spiritual group is more diverse in its theological views. A plurality of 27% prefers Option C, which may be defined as a deist position; while 44% are believers (options E & F) and only 17% are either atheists or agnostics (options A & B).

Table 4) *Do you agree with the following statement?*
It is necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values

	Religious	Secular	Spiritual
Completely agree	9.4%	0.9%	1.5%
Mostly agree	24.4%	1.9%	9.0%
Mostly disagree	32.4%	5.3%	18.2%
Completely disagree	33.8%	91.9%	71.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The question posed in Table 4 asks about the social and behavioral relevance of belief in God. On this issue there was much more unanimity of opinion among the Secular group with 92% disagreeing with the statement. Among the Spiritual 92% also disagreed (mostly or completely) but less forcefully. In contrast, the Religious group exhibited a wider range of opinion. Perhaps surprisingly in light of the findings on belief in God (Table 3), a majority of the religious (66%) also disagreed with the assertion that belief in God is directly linked to moral behavior and good values.

Table 5) Which of the following statements BEST describes your personal view of the Bible as a guide to morality?

		Religious	Secular	Spiritual
A	The Bible is a perfect guide to morality and its teachings hold true today	42.3%	0.4%	10.9%
B	The Bible is not a perfect guide to morality as some of its teachings are not appropriate today, but it is still the best guide we have	31.1%	5.2%	15.9%
C	The Bible is not the best guide to morality today, there are better ways of knowing right from wrong	8.4%	58.9%	38.9%
D	None of these	15.6%	33.8%	30.0%
	Don't know	2.7%	1.7%	4.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

What then of 'divine command theory,' the relevance of revealed or sacred text as guide to morality? In this case the Religious group adopted a more homogeneous view with 73% believing it is a "perfect" or "best" arbiter of morality (Options A & B). Among the Secular a majority rejected Bible as a guide to morality (Option C) and one-third disagreed with all the options. Again the Spiritual group revealed its diversity of opinions. Around one-fourth (Options A & B) saw value in the Bible as guide while a plurality adopted Option C. As with Secular around one-third of the Spiritual favored Option D, none of the above; perhaps because none of the other three options offered a complete rejection or negation of the Bible as a guide to morality.

> The data in Tables 3-5 demonstrates that the three worldviews adopted by the students do indeed reflect differences in theology. This is perhaps why the terms – religious, secular and spiritual - have become accepted and increasingly used in public discourse. The Religious and Secular groups have both an internal consistency and clearly opposing views on metaphysical issues. The Spiritual group contains a wider spectrum of opinions, perhaps reflecting its more diverse socio-demographic composition and so it too emerges as a unique construct.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS

Having observed that the three worldviews translate into substantive theological differences we next turn to philosophical beliefs and scientific inclination. Chart 4 compares levels of positive response to two separate questions on belief in miracles and reason/rationalism. Traditionally, the Religious worldview has incorporated the supernatural and so belief in miracles while the Secular has privileged reason and rationalism. Of course it is possible to believe in both as many liberal religious traditions do.

Chart 4) Do you believe in Miracles...Reason/Rationalism?

■ Miracles   ■ Reason/Rationalism

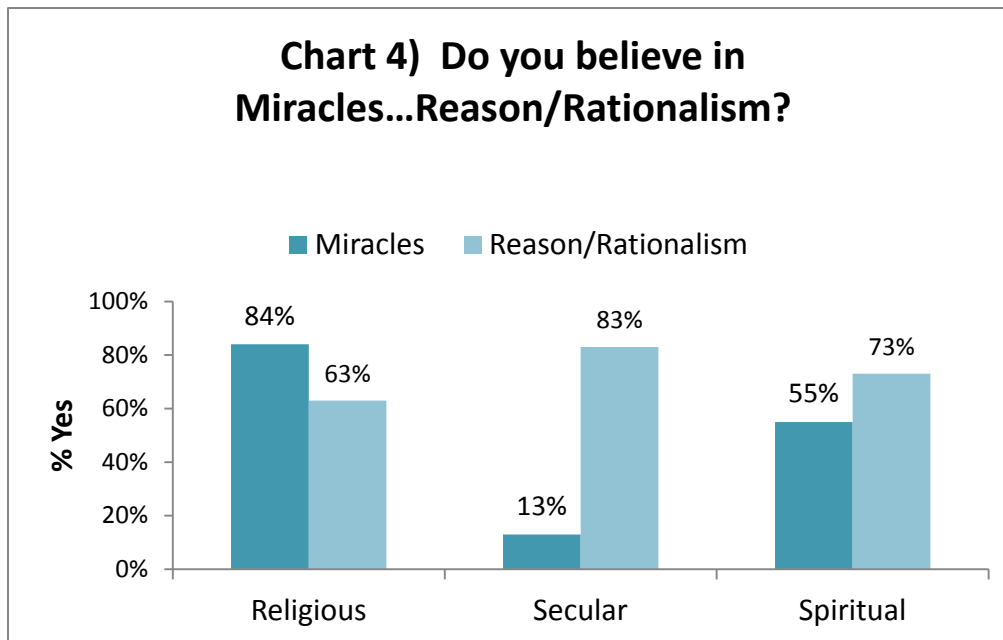| Worldview	Miracles	Reason/Rationalism
Religious	84%	63%
Secular	13%	83%
Spiritual	55%	73%

% Yes

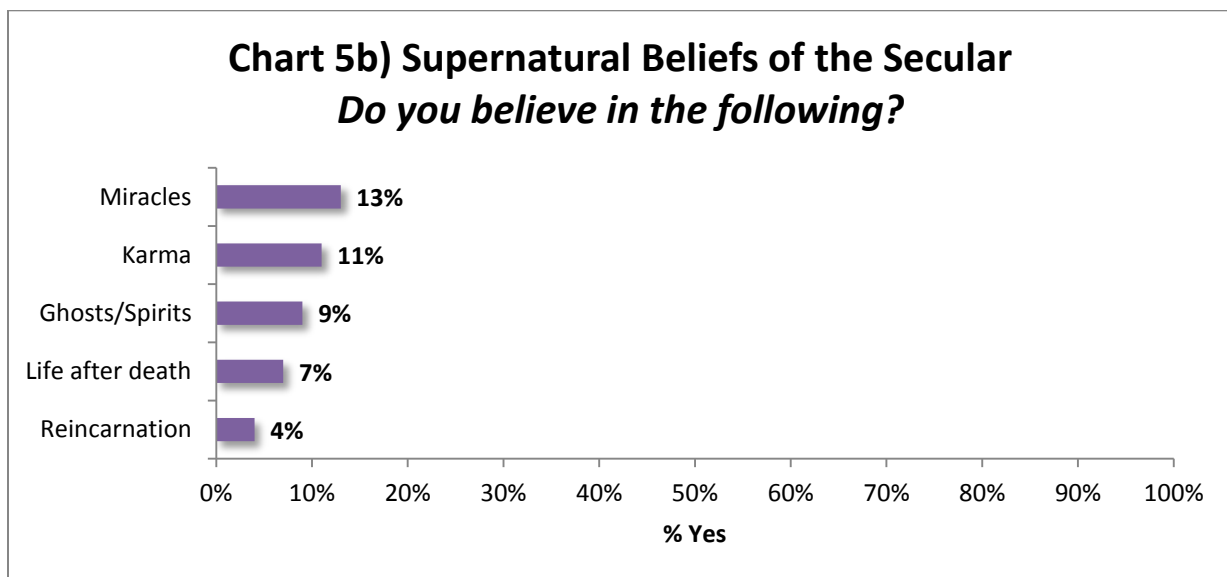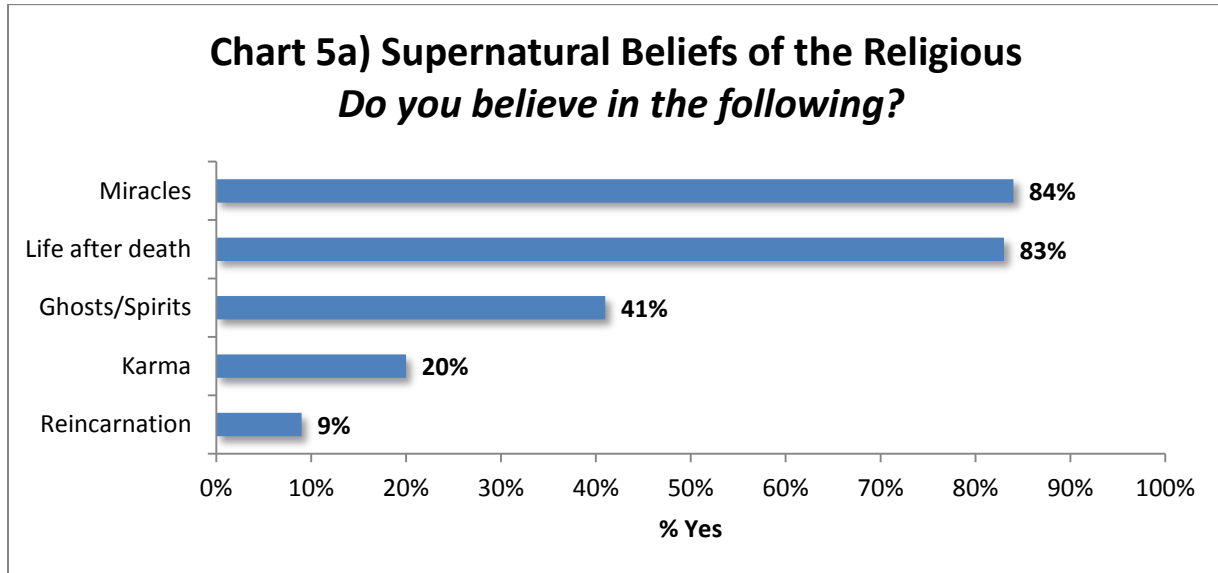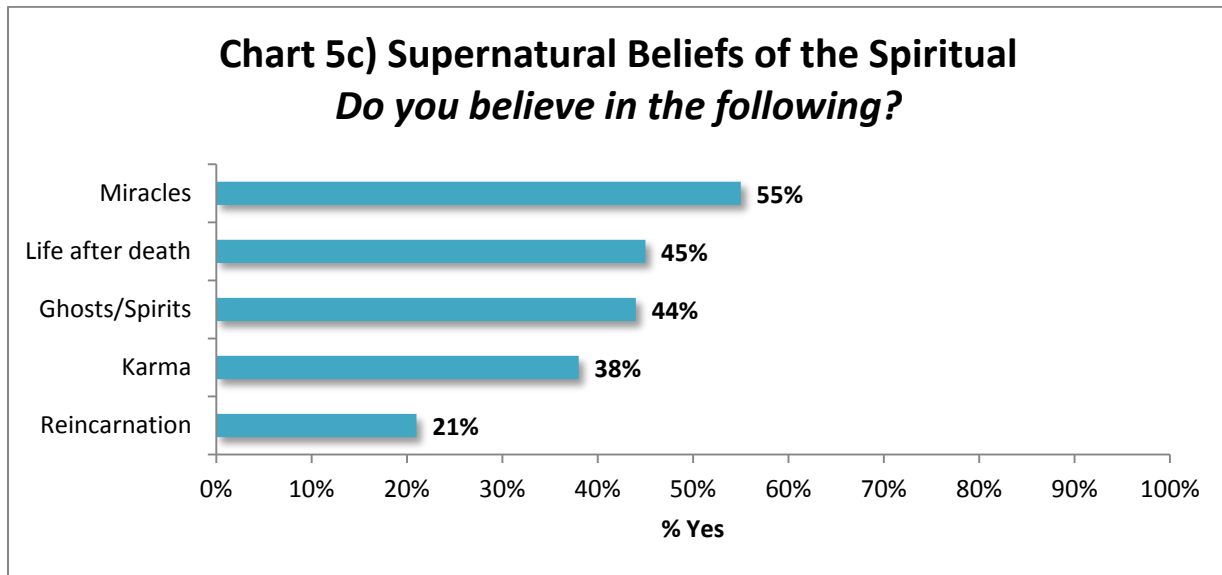Chart 4 shows the balance of the two beliefs among the three worldviews. It demonstrates that a majority of the Religious believes in miracles and a smaller, presumably differently composed majority believes in reason and rationalism. The Secular were as committed to reason (83%) as the Religious were to miracles (84%) . Only 13% of the Secular accepted the possibility of miracles. The Spiritual pattern was in between.

Charts 5a, 5b, 5c show attitudes relating to a range of supernatural beliefs in both the Western and Eastern religious traditions. The results on miracles (which are part of most religious traditions) discussed above are included to put the other beliefs in perspective. As expected the Religious had higher levels of belief, in particular in life after death. They exceeded the scores of the Secular on every item. The Secular were highly skeptical of all these beliefs. Those holding a Spiritual worldview were much more likely to embrace the Eastern beliefs of karma and reincarnation than the Religious group but both worldviews had similar large proportions of believers in ghosts and spirits (41/44%).

Chart 5a) Supernatural Beliefs of the Religious
Do you believe in the following?

Belief	% Yes
Miracles	84%
Life after death	83%
Ghosts/Spirits	41%
Karma	20%
Reincarnation	9%

% Yes

Chart 5b) Supernatural Beliefs of the Secular
Do you believe in the following?

Belief	% Yes
Miracles	13%
Karma	11%
Ghosts/Spirits	9%
Life after death	7%
Reincarnation	4%

% Yes

Chart 5c) Supernatural Beliefs of the Spiritual
Do you believe in the following?

Belief	% Yes
Miracles	55%
Life after death	45%
Ghosts/Spirits	44%
Karma	38%
Reincarnation	21%

% Yes

A positive correlation between esoteric beliefs and beliefs in alternative practices and therapies was a feature of worldviews among Indian scientists (Keysar & Kosmin 2008; Keysar, Kosmin & Gidwani, 2013). Since American students today are exposed to many New Age and alternative therapies we thought it worthwhile to explore whether the Indian pattern was replicated in the U.S. Students were offered a list of items shown in Charts 6a-c and asked: *In your opinion, is there any efficacy in the following practices?*

The results for the Religious worldview reflect the fact that most of the group was Christian and held traditional western views. A small minority believed in the efficacy of faith healing and homeopathy, which originated in Germany, but they were highly critical of practices regarded as "magic."

The Secular group, as could be anticipated, was highly skeptical of all the listed practices. Interestingly homeopathy and prayer were least rejected. The Spiritual group displayed a pattern somewhat similar to the Religious though at lower levels. Interestingly among this worldview homeopathy outscored faith healing. The Spiritual group also tended to have a few more people who embraced alternative therapies.

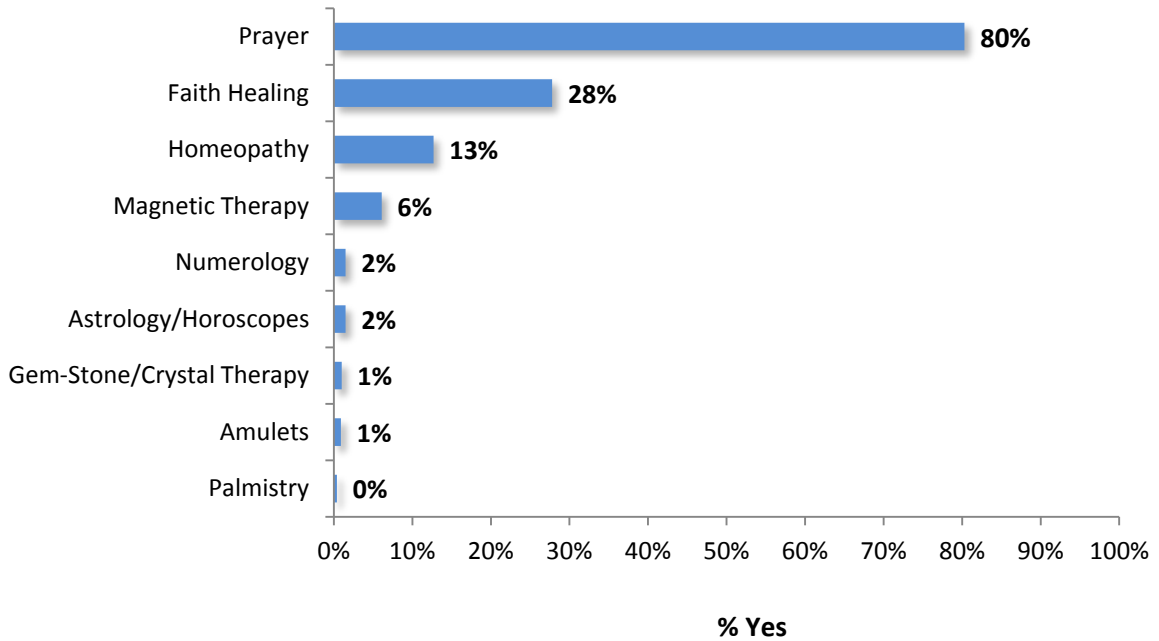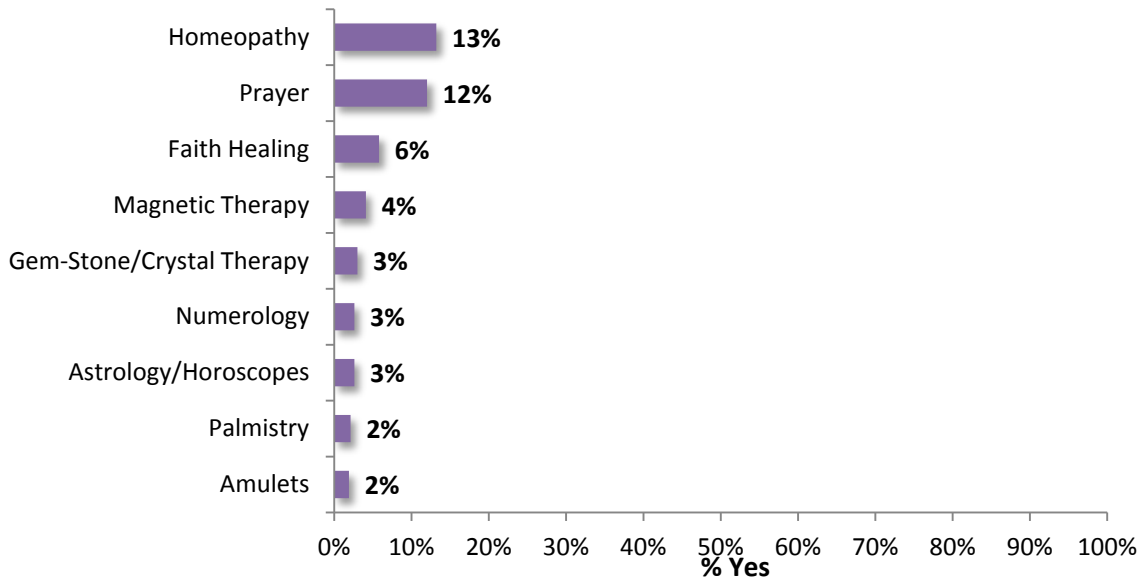# Chart 6a) Efficacy of Alternative Practices/Therapies by Religious Worldview

Practice	% Yes
Prayer	80%
Faith Healing	28%
Homeopathy	13%
Magnetic Therapy	6%
Numerology	2%
Astrology/Horoscopes	2%
Gem-Stone/Crystal Therapy	1%
Amulets	1%
Palmistry	0%

% Yes

Chart 6b) Efficacy of Alternative Practices/Therapies by Secular Worldview

Practice	% Yes
Homeopathy	13%
Prayer	12%
Faith Healing	6%
Magnetic Therapy	4%
Gem-Stone/Crystal Therapy	3%
Numerology	3%
Astrology/Horoscopes	3%
Palmistry	2%
Amulets	2%

% Yes

Chart 6c Efficacy of Alternative Practices/Therapies by Spiritual Worldview

Practice/Therapy	% Yes
Prayer	43%
Homeopathy	27%
Faith Healing	20%
Astrology/Horoscopes	9%
Magnetic Therapy	9%
Gem-Stone/Crystal Therapy	6%
Numerology	6%
Palmistry	6%
Amulets	5%

The current generation of students has come of age in an era when scientific theories have been the topic of political debate between religious and secular opinion and between conservative and liberal thinkers (Miller & Pennock, 2008). The educational curriculum in high school biology has become an arena of political controversy in recent years because fundamentalist Christians have campaigned against the teaching of evolution, which contradicts biblical accounts of creation (Blackburn, 2008). They wish to replace evolution with Creationism or Intelligent Design or at least offer them as alternative scientific theories.
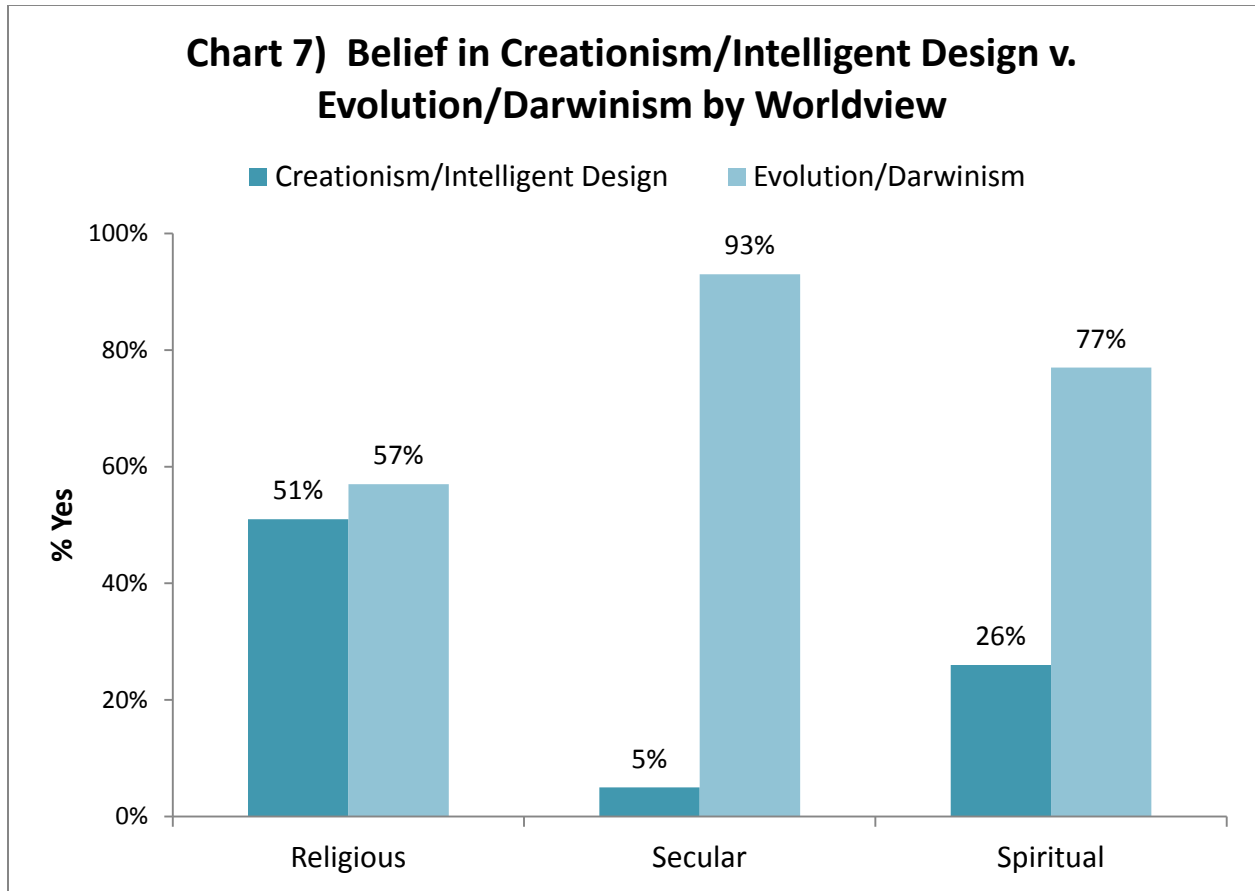
Chart 7) Belief in Creationism/Intelligent Design v. Evolution/Darwinism by Worldview

■ Creationism/Intelligent Design ■ Evolution/Darwinism

% Yes

	Religious	Secular	Spiritual
Creationism/Intelligent Design	51%	5%	26%
Evolution/Darwinism	57%	93%	77%

Chart 7 compares the answers to the two questions: *Do you believe in Creationism/Intelligent Design? – Do you believe in Evolution/Darwinism?* The results show considerable divisions by worldview. The Secular group is clearly of one opinion on this matter. It overwhelmingly endorses Evolution and rejects Creationism. The Spiritual group favors Evolution but a significant minority (26%) believes in Creationism or Intelligent Design. The results for Religious group show the split between conservative and liberal religious believers. What is noteworthy is that the statistics reveal there are some students with a religious worldview who seem to believe in both theories.

Two other scientifically based debates have taken on a political coloring: the potential dangers arising from global warming and genetically modified food. Conservative opinion has tended to deny or downplay the dangers of global warming but support the agricultural industry's adoption of GM crops. In contrast liberal opinion has highlighted the threats arising from both global warming and GM food.

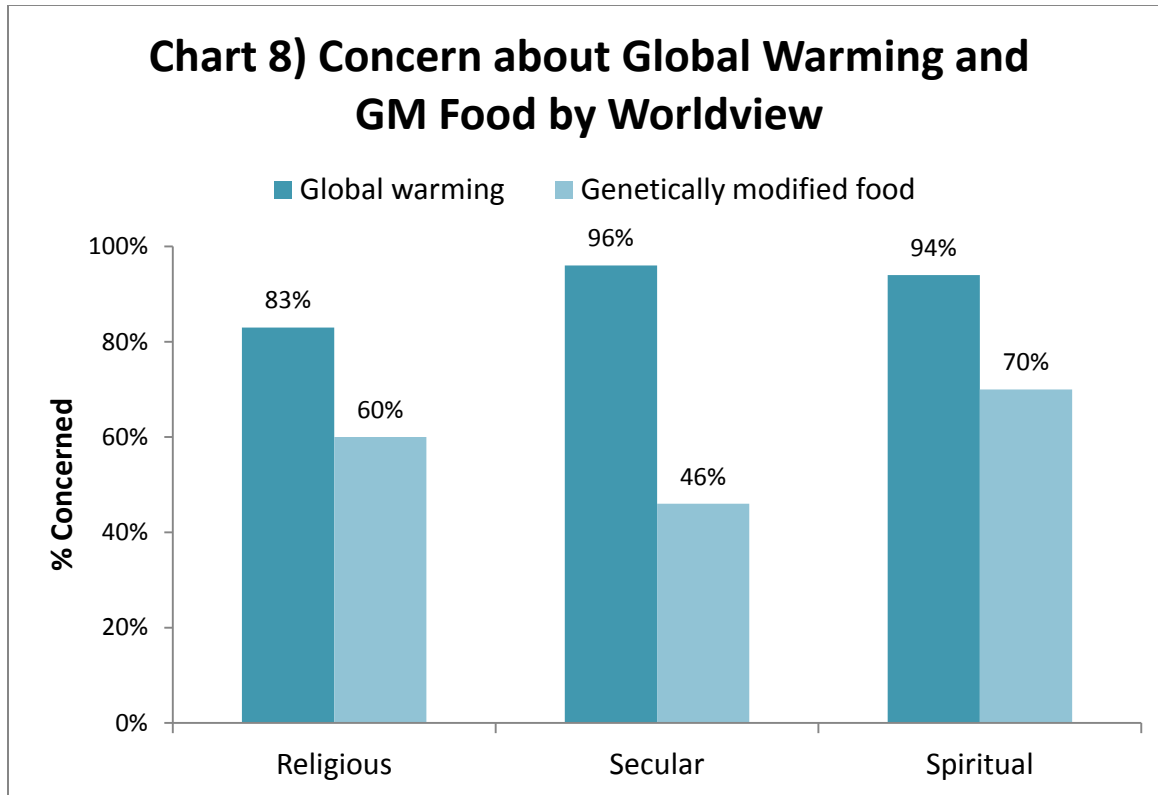## Chart 8) Concern about Global Warming and GM Food by Worldview

Chart 8 provides the results for two questions: *In your opinion, are the following statements true or untrue – Global warming is a myth – Genetically modified food is dangerous to our health.* The findings show that most of the students have been convinced that global warming is not a myth, though some members of the Religious group were not persuaded. The Spiritual group was most worried by genetically modified food as were a majority of the Religious. The Secular group showed lower levels of anxiety about this scientific practice.

The three worldviews produced different patterns of responses as regards scientific and philosophical beliefs and issues in the debates between naturalism and supernaturalism and between science and religion. Those identified with the Secular worldview seemed to have more unanimity of opinion and cohesion in their support of science and naturalism. The Religious group was not as cohesive as the Secular group but as expected endorsed positions traditionally held by Religious groups such as supernatural phenomena and prayer. The Spiritual group seemed more open to supernatural and alternative ideas and showed more suspicion of science than the Secular while not adopting traditional religious positions. It is noteworthy that 40% of Religious students are STEM majors.

7. PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Many of today's most hotly debated public policy issues are "culture war" issues. These are often depicted as battles between conservatives and liberals but at heart often they involve clashes of ideology and philosophy that can be traced to different worldviews. These controversial issues involve bio-medical ethics, gender and women's issues and the status of homosexuals.
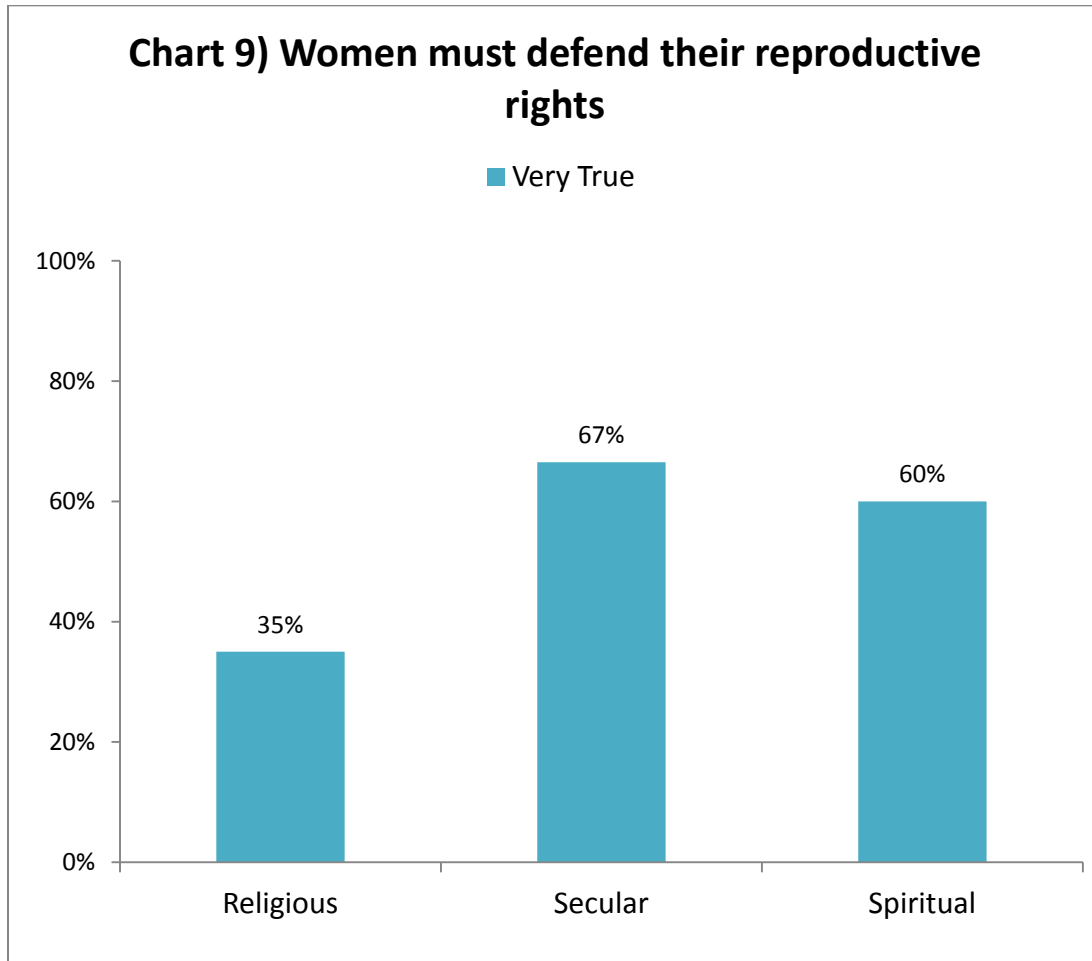
Chart 9) Women must defend their reproductive rights

■ Very True

- Religious: 35%
- Secular: 67%
- Spiritual: 60%

Chart 9 reports the "very true" responses to the item*: In your opinion, are the following statements true or untrue? - Women must defend their reproductive rights. The results for the worldviews showed that the Secular were slightly more likely to take this "liberal" stance than were the Spiritual. What is noteworthy is that the Secular was the only group with a majority of men so this was very much an ideological rather than personal response. As one might expect from a group with a two-thirds majority (67%) of Catholics, Evangelical Christians and Mormons (Table 1) only a minority of those with a Religious worldview were keen defenders of women's reproductive rights.
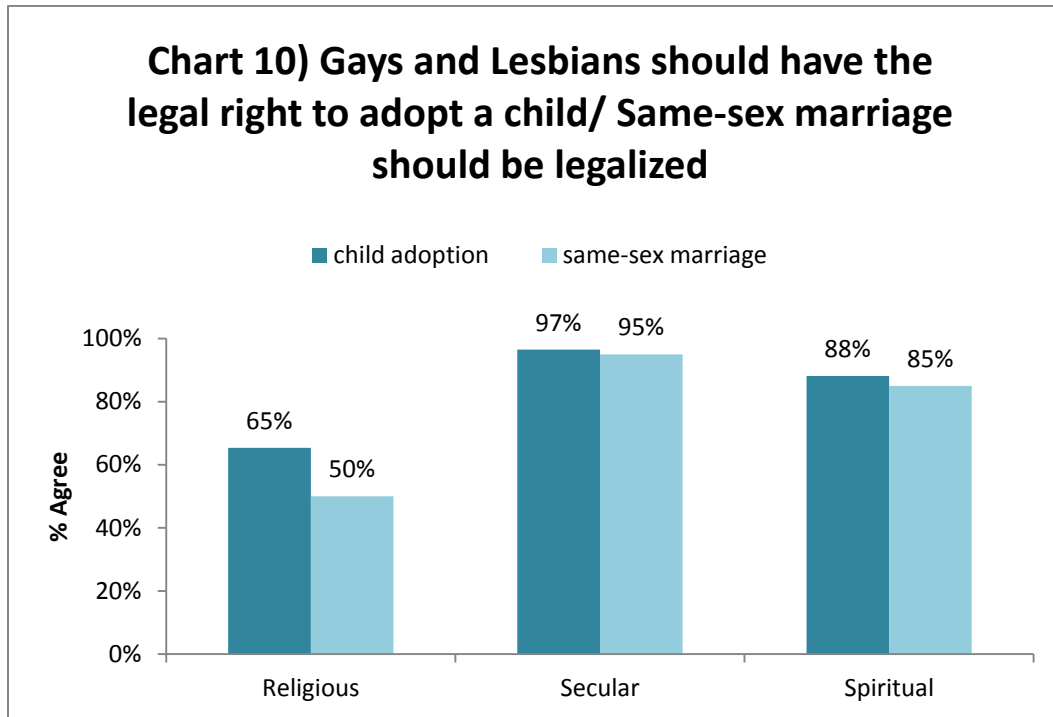
Chart 10) Gays and Lesbians should have the legal right to adopt a child/ Same-sex marriage should be legalized

■ child adoption   ■ same-sex marriage

Chart 10 reports attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights**.** The actual questions were: *Do you believe same-sex marriage should be legalized nationally? Do you agree or gays and lesbians should have the legal right to adopt a child*?

The same rank order of agreement operates for "gay issues" as for women's reproductive rights with again the Spiritual closer to the secular position. However, the Religious group, and in fact the whole sample, seem more liberal on these issues.

Another moral issue that contradicts traditional religious teachings is assisted suicide, which is legal in the states of Oregon and Washington. Chart 11 reports agreement to the question: *Do you believe assisted suicide for the terminally ill should be legalized?*

Chart 11) Belief in Assisted Suicide by Worldview

% Yes

- Religious: 25%
- Secular: 71%
- Spiritual: 49%
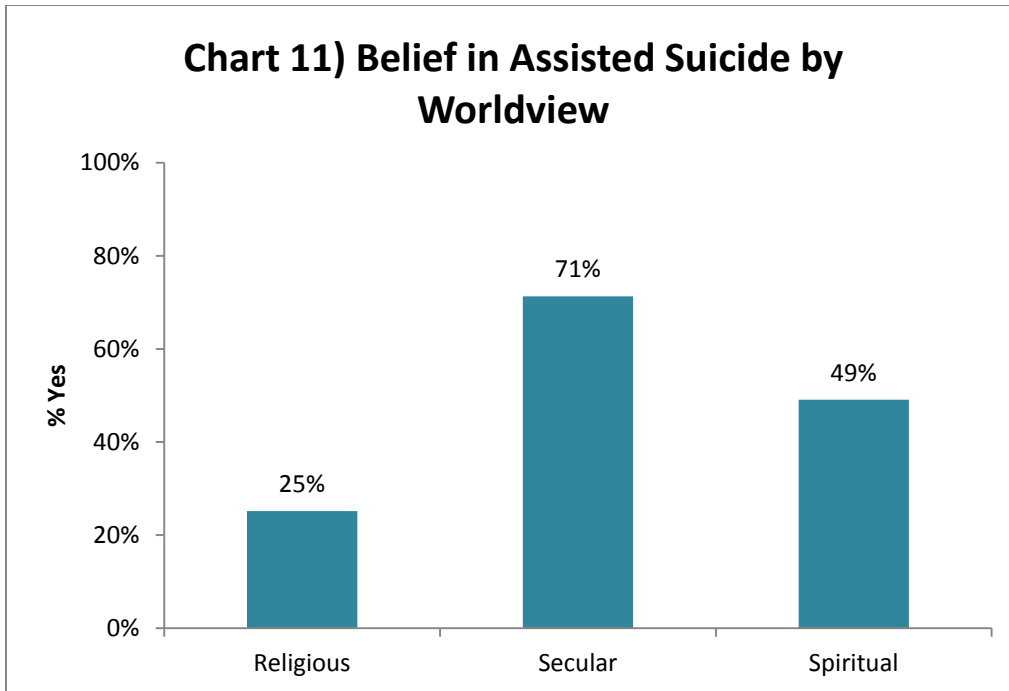
The spread between the scores in Chart 11 is wider than on the earlier issues. The Secular and Religious very strongly disagree. The Spiritual are more distanced from the Secular viewpoint and the group is almost equally split.
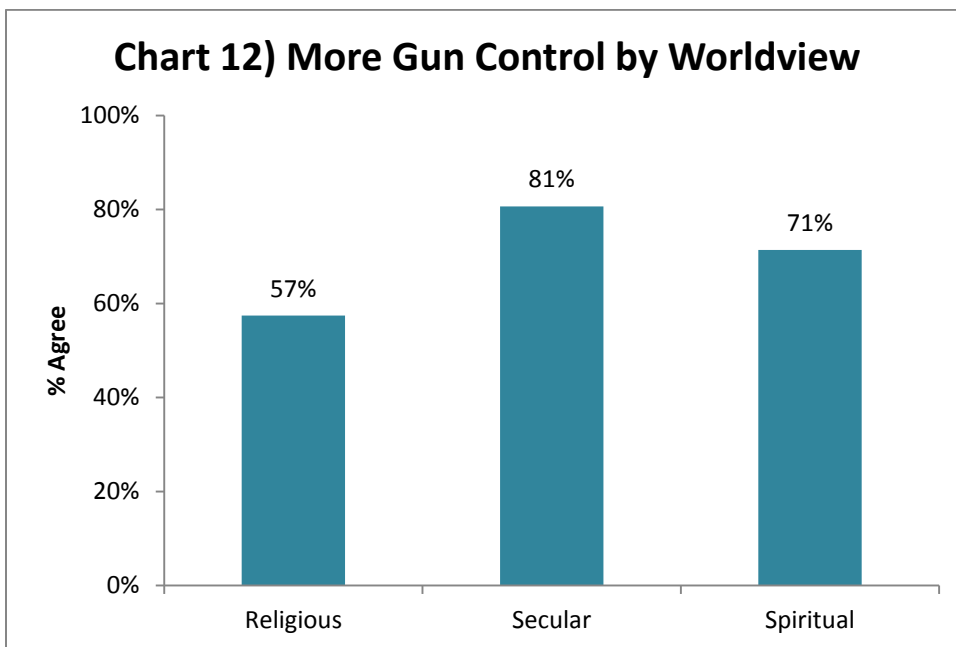
Chart 12) More Gun Control by Worldview

% Agree

- Religious: 57%
- Secular: 81%
- Spiritual: 71%

Chart 12 deals with a constitutional item agreement to the statement: *The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns.* A majority of each group of students agrees with the proposition but the Secular are more in favor of this liberal policy.

Chart 13) Tax Breaks for Religious Institutions and Clergy by Worldview

Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree

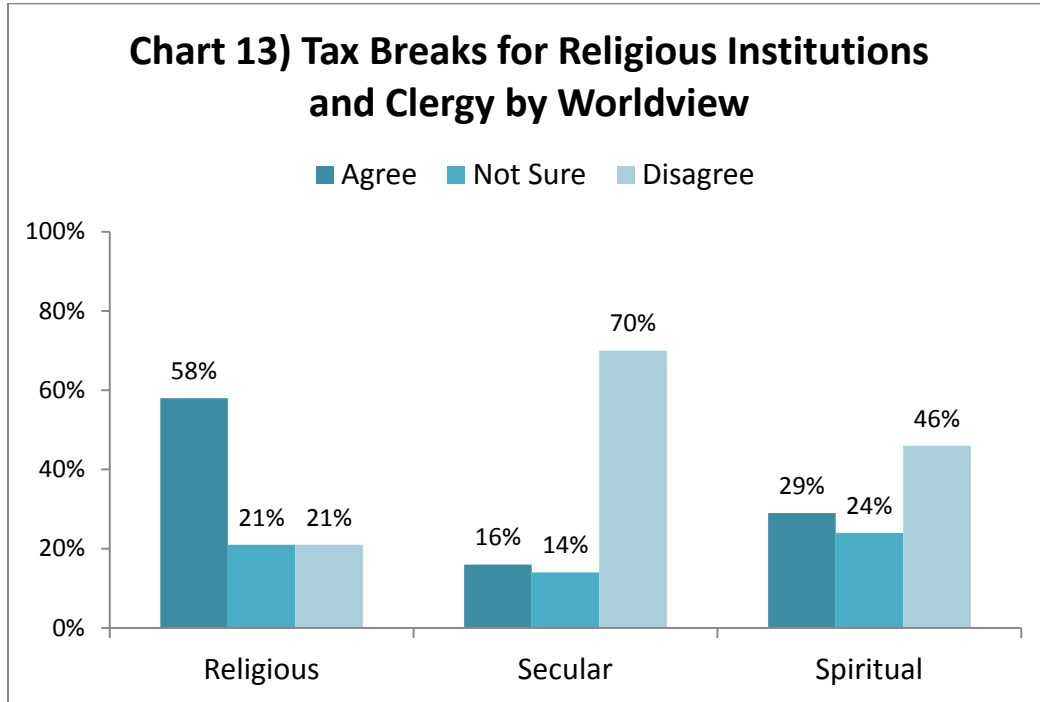| Worldview	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
Religious	58%	21%	21%
Secular	16%	14%	70%
Spiritual	29%	24%	46%

Chart 13 deals with a church-state constitutional controversy: In this case the actual item was framed from a conservative or religious point of view. : *Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?- Religious institutions and clergy are entitled to their tax breaks.* Here the opposing views of the Religious and Secular groups are not surprising except we should note that the Secular opinion is harder. The Spiritual result is noteworthy because it reveals this group's distancing from and lack of support for organized religion.

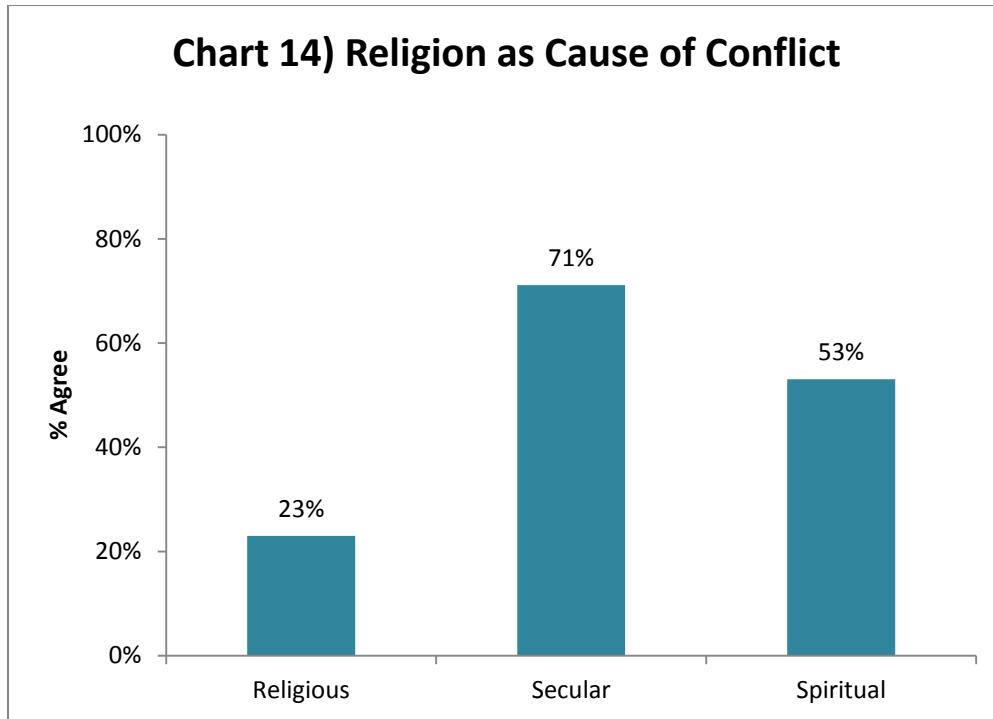## Chart 14) Religion as Cause of Conflict

Chart 14 reports agreement to the statement: *Looking around the world, religions bring more conflict than peace.* This is obviously a point of disagreement between those holding a Religious and those holding a Secular worldview. Again a majority of the Spiritual group takes a position critical of religion.

> The three worldviews produced different patterns of responses as regards public policy issues. The Religious and Secular worldviews closely correlate to conservative and liberal political positions on these issues. Those holding to a Spiritual worldview tend towards more liberal than conservative positions especially where organized religion is a factor.

8. POLITICS

Many of the questions and issues under investigation in the survey had political overtones and the pattern of responses of the three worldview groups suggested that they had different political allegiances.

Table 6) Political Party Preference by Worldview

	Religious	Secular	Spiritual
Republican	38.8%	4.9%	13.3%
Democrat	28.4%	57.2%	44.8%
Independent	22.1%	25.1%	30.8%
Other	6.2%	8.2%	6.7%
Don't know	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6 shows the pattern of political party affiliation. The Religious worldview, perhaps unsurprisingly, had a plurality of Republicans whereas Secular had a clear majority of Democrats The Secular group was noticeable for its alienation from the Republican Party. Again as the public policy results suggested, the Spiritual group was more politically diverse and contained significant proportions of Independents and some Republicans.

Table 7) Political View by Worldview

	Religious	Secular	Spiritual
Conservative	34.1%	3.9%	11.0%
Libertarian	5.4%	6.5%	7.7%
Moderate	22.1%	10.9%	16.7%
Liberal	17.4%	44.0%	34.9%
Progressive	4.7%	20.2%	12.2%
Other	2.7%	4.1%	4.3%
Don't Know	13.6%	10.3%	13.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 reports on a question that offered the students a wider choice of political views than the party preference question. Again clear differences emerged according to worldview. A majority of the Religious group were either conservatives or moderates (56%) while the majority of the

Secular group were either liberals or Progressives (64%) with conservatives and libertarians accounting for 10% and moderates for 11%. The Spiritual tended to the political left (47% liberal and progressive) but had significant numbers with other political views. One interesting point is that the small libertarian contingent was spread across all three worldviews.

9. CONCLUSION

College-age Americans are divided among not two but three distinct worldviews: Religious, Secular, and Spiritual. This appears a durable triad, in contrast to the prevailing view that spirituality is just a way station between religiosity and secularity. Each of the three worldviews is attached to a distinct outlook on theological, philosophical, scientific, public-policy, and political issues. These three worldviews are real constructs, or "brands," each with a measure of internal consistency and cohesion. Because of their distinctness, it would not seem to be a simple or routine matter to drift from one worldview to another. Nevertheless, we also find that many college-age students have a worldview different from the one in which they were raised (Table 2). Their identities may continue to evolve as they pass through adulthood.

The rise of the Nones as a religious identification category was a major finding of the ARIS 2001 and 2008 surveys. Two-thirds of the students who self-identified as Nones in this sample preferred the Secular worldview and the remainder chose the Spiritual (Table 1). Hardly any chose the Religious option. This finding is a challenge to the notion that the Nones are just "religiously unaffiliated" (Pew, 2007) or religious searchers who have not yet found a religious home (Stark, 2008). This survey clearly revealed that today's students with a Secular worldview, who are mainly Nones, are not traditional theists (Table 3).

The Spiritual category does not appear to be simply a middle ground between the Religious and Secular categories. The Spiritual identifiers appear to embrace ambiguity and reject dogma. They are closer to the Religious on many metaphysical issues but closer to the Secular on public policy and social issues. Their political liberalism along with their mysticism is part of the reason they differentiate themselves from the Religious worldview. Another factor in creating separate worldviews is alienation from organized religion due to the politicization of religion and its association with conservative politics in recent decades (Fisher & Hout, 2006; Kosmin & Navarro-Rivera, 2012). This political development appears to have reinforced the "Spiritual not religious" and the Secular identifications among young people.

Looking ahead, utilization of cluster analysis should reveal the mechanisms that are creating the three worldviews and illustrate how they unfold in the contemporary United States.

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The Authors

Dr. Barry A. Kosmin is Research Professor in the Public Policy & Law Program at Trinity College and Founding Director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture. A sociologist, Dr. Kosmin has been a principal investigator of the American Religious Identification Survey series since its inception in 1990 as well as national social surveys in Europe, Africa and Asia. His publications on the ARIS include the books *One Nation under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society*, 1993 and *Religion in a Free Market: Religious and Non-Religious Americans*, 2006.

Dr. Ariela Keysar, a demographer, is Associate Professor, Public Policy & Law Program at Trinity College and the Associate Director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture. She is a principal investigator of the American Religious Identification Survey 2008 and the Worldviews and Opinions of Scientists-India 2007-08. Dr. Keysar was the Study Director of the American Religious Identification Survey 2001. She is the co-author, *Religion in a Free Market: Religious and Non-Religious Americans*, Paramount Market Publications, Ithaca, N.Y., 2006.

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