Religious and Spiritual Demographics of Johnson City, TN

Religious Affiliation in Johnson City, TN 2010

- Evangelical Protestant: 43.20%
- Mainline Protestant: 41.70%
- Catholic: 1.60%
- Black Protestant: 0.60%
- Orthodox: 1.20%
- Other: 1.20%
- None: 3.20%

Grammich et al., 2012
“Nones” on the Rise?

- Diverse group, not uniformly secular
- 5% report attending worship services weekly
- 33% say religion is “at least somewhat important in their lives”
- 66% believe in God
  - Less than half say they are absolutely certain of God’s existence
- 42% neither religious nor spiritual
- Majority describe themselves either as a religious person (18%) or as spiritual but not religious (37%).
Ethical Considerations
Reasons for Lack of Research
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• Psychological sciences have a complicated history with issues of religiosity, spirituality, and atheism (e.g., Bergin, 1980).
  • Early advocates were outspoken atheist humanists
    • Supported placing barriers between clinical practice and religious beliefs (e.g., Ellis, 1971; Hoffer, 1951; Horney, 1965)
  • Albert Ellis believed extreme religiosity was “essentially emotional disturbance.” (Ellis, 1980)
  • Anti-religion viewpoints largely dominated early theoretical work.
• Psychological research on religious and spiritual beliefs started to gain traction within the mental health literature during the 1980s (Brewster et al., 2012).
Reasons for Lack of Research, cont.

- Atheists and other nonbelievers have subsequently have been largely ignored in counseling/therapy literature.
  - Scholars tend to focus their attention on topics that are politically correct and publishable, therefore ignoring topics that are likely to draw controversy. (Weinrach & Thomas, 1996)

- Social and political contexts in United States have made it controversial to study this group (D'Andrea & Sprenger, 2007).

- Helping professions tend to assume that everyone's belief system includes a god or some higher power (Linnenberg, 1997).
Reasons for Lack of Research, cont.

• Number of articles about atheism published since 2001 has increased steadily per year.
  • $N = 0$ in 2001
  • $N = 20$ in 2012

• The topics discussed in the atheism literature were narrow in scope
  • Comparisons of religious/spiritual (R/S) belief systems to atheism, or
  • Discussing bias against atheists.

• In addition, most of the articles found were nonempirical (58%)
  (Brewster et al., 2014)