

## How the Religious Landscape Study (RLS) categorizes religion

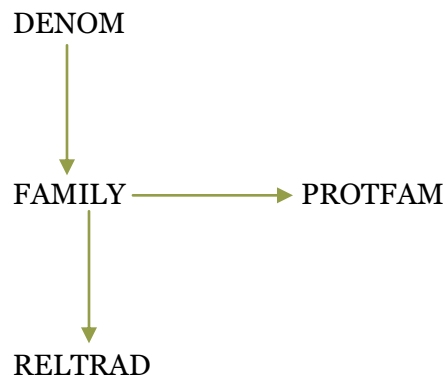
Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Study (RLS) includes a detailed set of branching questions about religious identity (refer to RELIG through QA4p in the [CAWI/CATI questionnaire](#)). Researchers take the most specific information respondents offer in these questions and categorize it into a single indicator of the respondent's denominational affiliation; this variable is called DENOM.

Denominations can be grouped into broader families of denominations, and so we also create a collapsed version of DENOM that we call FAMILY.

Families of denominations can, in turn, be collapsed into broader religious traditions. Thus, we create a collapsed version of FAMILY that we call RELTRAD.

Separately, Protestant denominational families can be combined into groups that cut across religious traditions. So in addition to RELTRAD, we create a variable called PROTFAM that provides a different way of collapsing FAMILY.

Displayed as a diagram, the process looks like this:



In the 2023-24 RLS, there are 298 codes in DENOM; most of them have very few respondents in them. In an effort to protect respondent confidentiality and avoid the possibility that individual respondents could be identified, the public dataset includes only a coarsened version of the DENOM variable, called DENOMREC2. Most categories in DENOMREC2 either include at least 50 respondents, or the categories themselves are broad/generic rather than specific, or both.

The list below provides details about how DENOMREC2 is nested within FAMILY, which in turn is nested within RELTRAD. (Note that not all categories in RELTRAD have subsets of families, and not all categories in FAMILY have subsets of denominations.)

For additional details about how Pew Research Center categorizes Protestant denominations into one of three broad traditions (evangelicalism, mainline Protestantism, or historically Black Protestantism), refer to “[Appendix B](#)” of our report “[Decline of Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Leveled Off](#).”

*IMPORTANT NOTE: Pew Research Center is releasing two versions of the dataset – a public-use file (PUF) and restricted-use file (RUF). The PUF is available to all users at [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org). The PUF will also be made available to all users via ICPSR. At a future date (estimated June 2025), we intend to make the RUF accessible via ICPSR with a data use agreement.*

*Both datasets (the PUF and the RUF) include information on all 36,908 of the survey’s respondents. But the PUF excludes information on several sensitive variables. Both the PUF and the RUF include RELTRAD. But only the RUF will include DENOMREC2, FAMILY and PROTfam.*

## EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT TRADITION

### **Baptist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Southern Baptist Convention

Independent Baptist (if not Black)

Other Baptist in the evangelical tradition<sup>1</sup>

### **Methodist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Global Methodist Church

Other Methodist in the evangelical tradition<sup>2</sup>

### **Nondenominational family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Nondenominational evangelical

Nondenominational fundamentalist

Nondenominational charismatic

Nondenominational interdenominational (if born-again/evangelical)

Other nondenominational in the evangelical tradition<sup>3</sup>

### **Lutheran family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Other Lutheran in the evangelical tradition<sup>4</sup>

### **Presbyterian family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Presbyterian Church in America

Other Presbyterian in the evangelical tradition<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes Converge/Baptist General Conference/Swedish Baptist; Missionary Baptist/Baptist Missionary Association (if not Black); Venture Church Network/Conservative Baptist Association; Free Will Baptist; Full Gospel Baptist (if not Black); General Association of Regular Baptists/Regular Baptist; American Baptist Association; Primitive Baptist (if not Black); Reformed Baptist/Calvinist Baptist; Baptist General Association of Virginia; Baptist General Convention of Texas; North American Baptist; Pentecostal Baptist (if not Black); Separate Baptist/Separate Baptist in Christ; Baptist, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Baptist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>2</sup> Includes Congregational Methodist; Independent Methodist (if not Black); Primitive Methodist; Traditional Methodist; Methodist, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Methodist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>3</sup> Includes Association of Bridge Churches; Community church (if born-again/evangelical); Federated or union church (if born-again/evangelical); Nondenominational Cowboy Church (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Nondenominational electronic ministries; Nondenominational, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Nondenominational – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>4</sup> Includes Apostolic Lutheran Church of America/Old Apostolic Lutheran Church/Laestadianism; Church of the Lutheran Confession; Free Lutheran; Lutheran Brethren; Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ; North American Lutheran Church; Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS); Lutheran, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Lutheran – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>5</sup> Includes Associate Reformed Presbyterian; Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches; Cumberland Presbyterian; ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians; Evangelical Presbyterian; Independent Presbyterian; Orthodox Presbyterian; Reformed Presbyterian;

**Pentecostal family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Assemblies of God

Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)

Other Pentecostal in the evangelical tradition<sup>6</sup>

**Episcopalian family in the evangelical Protestant tradition<sup>7</sup>****Restorationist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Church of Christ/Churches of Christ

Other Restorationist in the evangelical tradition<sup>8</sup>

**Congregational family in the evangelical Protestant tradition<sup>9</sup>****Holiness family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Church of the Nazarene

Free Methodist Church

Other Holiness in the evangelical tradition<sup>10</sup>

**Reformed family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Christian Reformed Church

Other Reformed in the evangelical tradition<sup>11</sup>

---

Presbyterian, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Presbyterian – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>6</sup> Includes Apostolic (if not Black); Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ; Calvary/Calvary Chapel; Christian Assemblies; Christian City Church International; Church of God of Kentucky; Church of God of Prophecy; Electronic ministries (if not Black); Elim/Elim Fellowship; Evangelical Pentecostal; Foursquare; Free Will Pentecostal; Full Gospel Pentecostal (if not Black); Independent Pentecostal/Nondenominational Pentecostal (if not Black); La Luz del Mundo; Open Bible/Open Bible Churches; Pentecostal Church of God; Pentecostal Holiness; United Pentecostal/United Pentecostal Church International; Vineyard/Vineyard Churches; Pentecostal, not further specified (if not Black); Pentecostal – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not Black)

<sup>7</sup> Includes Anglican Church in North America; Evangelical Anglican/Evangelical Episcopalian; Independent Anglican; Reformed Episcopal Church; Episcopalian/Anglican, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Episcopalian/Anglican – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>8</sup> Includes Restorationist not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Restorationist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>9</sup> Includes Conservative Congregational Christian Conference; Evangelical Congregational; Independent Congregational; National Association of Congregational Christian Churches; Congregational, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Congregational – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>10</sup> Includes Apostolic Holiness Church (if not Black); Christian and Missionary Alliance/Alliance; Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)/Church of God Ministries; Church of God of the Union Assembly; Holiness Baptist (if not Black); Independent Holiness (if not Black); Missionary Church/Missionary Church USA; Salvation Army; Wesleyan/Wesleyan Church/Wesleyan Methodist Church/Wesleyan Holiness Church; Holiness, not further specified (if not Black); Holiness – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not Black)

<sup>11</sup> Includes Acts 29; Calvinist (if born-again/evangelical); Evangelical Reformed; Protestant Reformed Church/Protestant Reformed Churches in America; Reformed Church in the United States/German Reformed; United Reformed Churches in North America; Reformed, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Reformed – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical)

**Adventist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition**

Seventh-day Adventist

Other Adventist<sup>12</sup>**Anabaptist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition<sup>13</sup>****Pietist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition****Friends family in the evangelical Protestant tradition****Other evangelical/fundamentalist family in the evangelical Protestant tradition <sup>14</sup>****Other/Nonspecific family in the evangelical Protestant tradition<sup>15</sup>****MAINLINE PROTESTANT TRADITION****Baptist family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

American Baptist Churches USA

Other Baptist in the mainline tradition<sup>16</sup>**Methodist family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

United Methodist Church

Other Methodist in the mainline tradition<sup>17</sup>**Nondenominational family in the mainline Protestant tradition**


---

<sup>12</sup> Includes Advent Christian/Advent Christian Church; Church of God (Seventh Day); Grace Communion International/Worldwide Church of God; United Church of God

<sup>13</sup> Includes Alliance of Mennonite Evangelical Congregations; Amish; Brethren, not further specified (if born-again/evangelical); Brethren in Christ; Church of God in Christ, Mennonite; Covenant Brethren; Grace Brethren; Mennonite, not further specified; Mennonite Brethren; Old Order Mennonite; United Brethren in Christ/United Brethren; Other Anabaptist (if born-again/evangelical)

<sup>14</sup> Includes Bible Church/Gospel Church/Missionary Church; Born-again/Bible believer, etc.; Charismatic/Spirit-filled, etc.; Evangelical; Fundamentalist; Plymouth Brethren

<sup>15</sup> Includes Electronic ministries (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Home church (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Just a Christian (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Just a Protestant (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Mixed Protestants (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Protestant – no particular denomination (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Sabbath keeper (if not Black); Gave name and/or location of congregation (if born-again/evangelical and not Black); Other/Not interpretable/Refused (if born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>16</sup> Includes Cooperative Baptist Fellowship/Baptist Alliance; Liberal Baptist/Moderate Baptist/Progressive Baptist; Baptist, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Baptist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>17</sup> Includes Methodist, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Methodist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black)

Nondenominational – interdenominational (if not born-again/evangelical)  
 Other nondenominational in the mainline tradition<sup>18</sup>

### **Lutheran family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)  
 Other Lutheran in the mainline tradition<sup>19</sup>

### **Presbyterian family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
 Other Presbyterian in the mainline tradition<sup>20</sup>

### **Episcopalian family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

Episcopal Church  
 Other Episcopalian in the mainline tradition<sup>21</sup>

### **Restorationist family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

Disciples of Christ  
 Other Restorationist in the mainline tradition<sup>22</sup>

### **Congregational family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

United Church of Christ  
 Other Congregational in the mainline tradition<sup>23</sup>

### **Reformed family in the mainline Protestant tradition<sup>24</sup>**

### **Anabaptist family in the mainline Protestant tradition<sup>25</sup>**

---

<sup>18</sup> Includes Community Church (if not born-again/evangelical); Federated or union church (if not born-again/evangelical); Liberal nondenominational; Nondenominational Cowboy Church (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Nondenominational, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Nondenominational – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>19</sup> Includes American Lutheran Church (ALC)/Lutheran Church in America (LCA); Lutheran, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Lutheran – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>20</sup> Includes Presbyterian, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Presbyterian – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>21</sup> Includes Anglican/Anglican Church/Church of England; Episcopalian/Anglican, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Episcopalian/Anglican – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>22</sup> Includes Restorationist not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Restorationist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>23</sup> Includes Liberal Congregational/Progressive Congregational; Congregational, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Congregational – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>24</sup> Includes Reformed Church in America; Calvinist (if not born-again/evangelical); Reformed, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Reformed – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical)

<sup>25</sup> Includes Brethren, not further specified (if not born-again/evangelical); Church of the Brethren; Moravian Church; Other Anabaptist (if not born-again/evangelical)

## **Friends family in the mainline Protestant tradition**

## **Other/Nonspecific family in the mainline Protestant tradition<sup>26</sup>**

# **HISTORICALLY BLACK PROTESTANT TRADITION**

## **Baptist family in the historically Black Protestant tradition**

National Baptist Convention, USA

National Baptist Convention of America

Progressive National Baptist Convention

Independent Baptist (if Black)

Other Baptist in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>27</sup>

## **Methodist family in the historically Black Protestant tradition**

African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME)

Other Methodist in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>28</sup>

## **Nondenominational family in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>29</sup>**

## **Pentecostal family in the historically Black Protestant tradition**

Church of God in Christ (COGIC)

Other Pentecostal in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>30</sup>

## **Holiness family in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>31</sup>**

<sup>26</sup> Includes Electronic ministries (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Ex-vangelical; Home church (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Just a Christian (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Just a Protestant (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Liberal Christian; Mar Thoma; Metropolitan Community Church; Mixed Protestants (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Protestant – no particular denomination (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Gave name and/or location of congregation (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black); Other/Not interpretable/Refused (if not born-again/evangelical and not Black)

<sup>27</sup> Includes Black Baptist; Full Gospel Baptist (if Black); Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Association; Missionary Baptist/Baptist Missionary Association (if Black); Pentecostal Baptist (if Black); Primitive Baptist (if Black); Baptist, not further specified (if Black); Baptist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black)

<sup>28</sup> Includes African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion); Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Independent Methodist (if Black); Methodist, not further specified (if Black); Methodist – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black)

<sup>29</sup> Includes Black nondenominational; Nondenominational Cowboy Church (if Black); Nondenominational, not further specified (if Black); Nondenominational – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black)

<sup>30</sup> Includes Apostolic (if Black); Church of God by Faith; Church of Pentecost/Church of Pentecost USA; Electronic ministries (if Black); Full Gospel Pentecostal (if Black); Independent Pentecostal/Nondenominational Pentecostal (if Black); Pentecostal Assemblies of the World; Redeemed Christian Church of God; Pentecostal, not further specified (if Black); Pentecostal – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black)

<sup>31</sup> Includes Apostolic Holiness Church (if Black); Church of the Living God International; Holiness Baptist (if Black); Independent Holiness (if Black); Holiness, not further specified (if Black); Holiness – Other/Refused/Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black)

**Other/Nonspecific family in the historically Black Protestant tradition<sup>32</sup>****CATHOLIC****CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMON)****ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN****JEHOVAH'S WITNESS****OTHER CHRISTIAN****Metaphysical family<sup>33</sup>****Others in the "other Christian" tradition<sup>34</sup>****JEWISH****MUSLIM****BUDDHIST**

---

<sup>32</sup> Includes Electronic ministries (if Black); Home church (if Black); Just a Christian (if Black); Just a Protestant (if Black); Mixed Protestants (if Black); Protestant – no particular denomination (if Black); Sabbath keeper (if Black); Gave name and/or location of congregation (if Black); Other/Not interpretable/Refused (if Black)

<sup>33</sup> Includes Christian Science; Religious Science; Spiritualist; Unity Church; Metaphysical; New Thought

<sup>34</sup> Includes Hebrew Israelite; Messianic Jews; New Apostolic Church; Mixed Christians; Mixed Christians and non-Christians; Gnostic Christian; The Way; Iglesia ni Cristo; Ex Catholic; Catholic but not in communion with Rome; Mormon but not LDS



## HINDU

## OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS<sup>35</sup>

### SOMETHING ELSE (“OTHER FAITHS”)

#### **Unitarians and other liberal faiths**

Unitarian

“Spiritual but not religious”

Others in the “Unitarians and other liberal faiths” family<sup>36</sup>

#### **New Age**

Pagan or Wiccan

Others in the New Age family<sup>37</sup>

#### **Native American Religions**

## RELIGIOUSLY UNAFFILIATED

### **Atheist**

### **Agnostic**

### **Nothing in particular**

## DON’T KNOW/REFUSED – NO INFORMATION ON RELIGION

---

<sup>35</sup> Includes Bahai; Santeria; Shinto; Tao; Rastafarian; Sikh; Zoroastrianism; Jain; Shamanism; Animism; Mixed non-Christians; African Traditional Religion; Voodoo

<sup>36</sup> Includes humanist; deist; liberal faith; nihilist; eclectic/a bit of everything; existentialism; free thinker; Universal Life Church; ethics/morality

<sup>37</sup> Includes “New Age”; Asatru; Druid; Scientology; Theosophy; Pantheist; Transcendental Meditation; Eckankar; Satanism; ancient aliens; alchemist/esoteric; polytheist; Tenrikyo; follower of Meher Baba/Sai Baba; hermeticism