

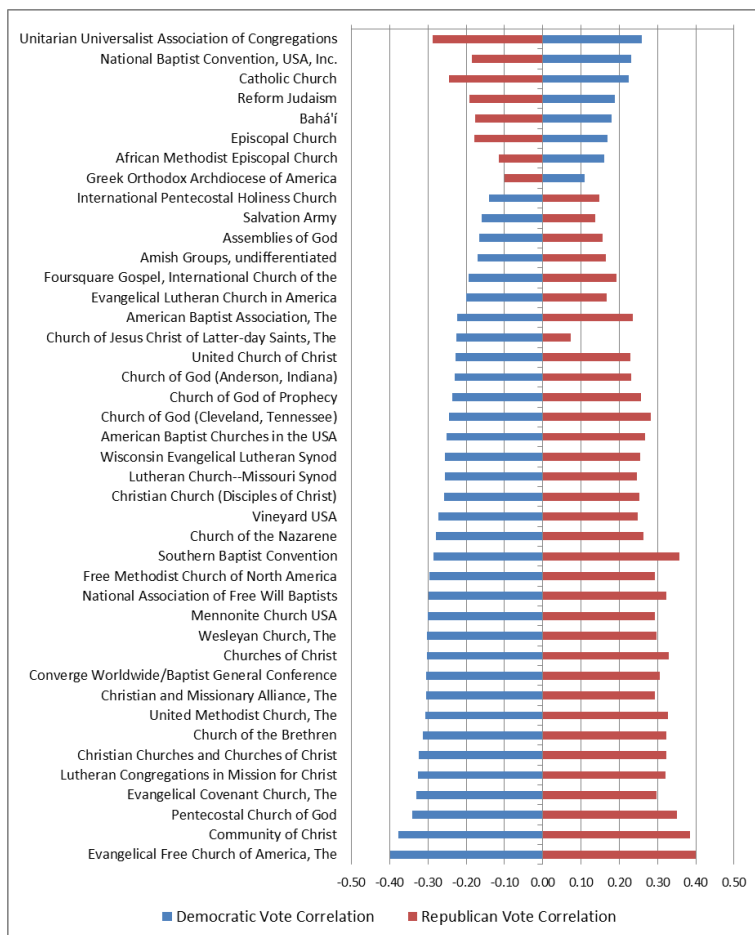
Religion Census Newsletter

February, 2017

Our 2010 US Religion Census (released in 2012) included information from 236 religious bodies. The participation of so many diverse religious groups provides a rich data source for valuable analysis. More than 6,500 visitors came to [our website](#) in January alone! Additionally, the Religion Census office was contacted directly for summary data by a national news organization. That organization wanted to use religious information in its coverage of the 2016 presidential election. Our website has such a study already, and it is time to update that part of the research.

Religious Groups and the 2016 Election

In 2013, a [presentation](#) was made at the annual meeting of the Religion Research Association, tying adherent data to other population indicators. Part of that study included a look at the correlation between religious adherents and 2012 election results.



Now that the 2016 election results have been reported, we have updated that analysis in light of the recent votes.

While we have adherent data by county for well over one hundred faith groups, only fifty-three of them cover at least 10% of American counties. ⁱ

For each of these groups, we correlated the ratio of adherents in each county with the proportion of Democratic and Republican votes reported by the [Politico](#) website. ⁱⁱ

Forty-one of these groups were significantly correlated at the .01 level, and one more at the .05 level. These are shown in this chart in descending order of correlation to the Democratic vote.

Positive correlations indicate that the higher the faith concentration, the

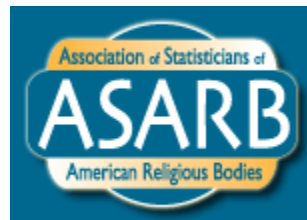
higher the percentage vote for the Democrat (blue) or Republican (red). These bars go to the right of the center line. Similarly, bars that extend left of the center line indicate that the higher the faith concentration, the lower the percentage vote for that political party.

While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) has the stereotypical negative correlation to Democratic votes, the Republican correlation is extremely small, though still positive. The votes for other candidates (especially Johnson and McMullin) in Utah were particularly strong, affecting the relative size of the Republican vote.

We always emphasize that correlation is not causation. For instance, the relatively strong positive correlation between United Methodists and Republican votes does not necessarily mean that United Methodists vote Republican. It simply indicates that this group is particularly strong in areas that tend to vote Republican.

It could be an interesting study to determine whether some of the mainline denominations, traditionally more liberal on social issues, are having difficulty attracting new members because the groups are concentrated in more conservative political areas. And another study could focus on whether conservative bodies concentrated in less conservative areas may also have trouble expanding into their neighborhoods.

Every decade the US Religion Census tries to include additional religious groups, making the US Religion Census increasingly accurate. The 236 groups that took part in 2010 are listed [online](#). If you know of other faith groups that would like to participate and be included in this census effort, please [send us](#) the group's contact information or contact person.



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Published by the [Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies](#), sponsor of the U.S. Religion Census

This newsletter is intended for the following audiences:

Groups that participated in the 2010 Religion Census. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Groups that are eligible to participate in the upcoming 2020 Religion. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Members of the sponsoring agency for the Religion Census, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

Those who requested to receive the newsletter through our website.

ⁱ We follow the standard practice of treating Louisiana parishes, independent cities in several states, the District of Columbia, and boroughs and census divisions in Alaska as counties.

ⁱⁱ For Alaska, precinct data from the state government site was compiled by county equivalent.