

Religious Landscape

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It's another day in paradise, and another week of rain and plenty of flooding. Every day is a moment of reflection on what's really important in life: serving the Lord and broadening the borders of the kingdom.

In that effort, we want to direct our attention to a Pew Research report concerning the 2014 Religious Landscape Study: you can find the full report at the PewCenterResearch.com website. Nevertheless, our attention is directed at the Oklahoman's view of the research.

There's a lot said about the reason associated with a "decline in Christian population" being experienced in our society. "Whatever the possible reasons, Christianity declined in America while the religiously unaffiliated rose sharply."

Reports such as this bring in a barrage of questions, i.e, "How is Christianity being defined?" "Who makes up the 'Christian' contingency being surveyed?" As well as, "Why shouldn't Oklahomans express little surprise by the decline in Christian population?" (Especially since individuals, and households, are responsible for any decline in the state.) That may seem a bit harsh, but when you break it down, if there is a decline, who else would be responsible? And, such being the case, individuals and households are well aware that the decline is a result of, as was aptly put, "a general apathy towards the things of God."

One of the areas of interest is the definition given to the "religiously unaffiliated:" they are described as — "those who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular'." I wonder what percentage makes up the "nothing in particular"? It was aptly stated that "Just because people are not affiliated doesn't mean that they're not searching for something." Agnostic is one of those "cop-out" terms. By-and-large, the "agnostic" may try to avoid being viewed as an atheist, but yet they live the life of an atheist.

When Elijah was on Mount Carmel, he didn't tell the children of Israel, "pick from one of the three sides," rather, "Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, "How long go ye limping between the two sides?" (1 Kings 18:21). Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matthew 12:30), and again, "for he that is not against you is for you" (Luke 9:50). There doesn't seem to be a middle ground.

Remember the words of the Psalmist, who said, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; There is none that doeth good” (Psalms 14:1). That my friend, is the crux of the matter. ret