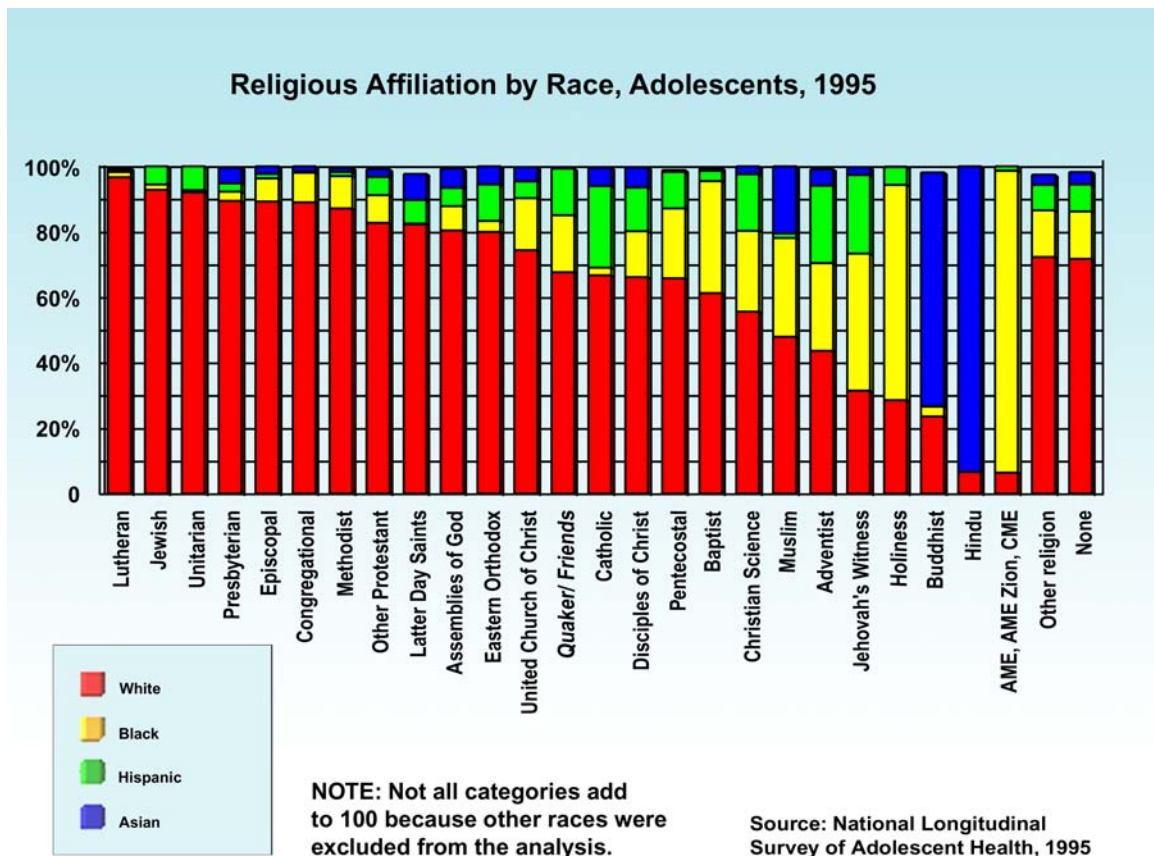


Religious Affiliation by Race

When looking at religious affiliations in the United States, the largest concentrations of Asian youth are found in the Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic faiths. The Catholic, Jehovah’s Witness, and Adventist traditions have relatively higher concentrations of Hispanic youth. The African Methodist, Holiness, Jehovah’s Witness, Baptist, and Muslim communities have relatively higher concentrations of Black youth.

According to the 1995 National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, white adolescents— a numerical majority—dominate most denominations and traditions, except the Islamic, Adventist, Jehovah’s Witness, Holiness, Buddhist, Hindu, and African Methodist communities.



Measured alternatively as the percent of racial groups in different religious traditions, 47.7 percent of African-American youth are Baptist; 55.7 percent of Hispanic youth are Catholic; 35.5 percent of Asian youth are Catholic, while another 11 percent are Buddhist. White adolescents are 22.7 percent Catholic, 20.3 percent Baptist, 7.1 percent Methodist, with the remainder distributed among many different traditions, each claiming less than 5 percent of the total.

This preliminary analysis is designed to provide baseline information that will aid in the development of a comprehensive survey of adolescents for the National Study of Youth and Religion, a four-year research project being conducted at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill under the direction of Dr. Christian Smith. Funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., this project is designed to enhance our understanding of the religious and spiritual lives of American adolescents.

Mapping of data was completed by Christian Smith, Melinda Lundquist Denton and Mark Regnerus. Christian Smith is Professor and Associate Chair of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Melinda Lundquist Denton is a Ph.D. graduate student in sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mark Regnerus is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Social Research at Calvin College at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health is a nationally representative school-based study of adolescents focusing on the social context of healthy behavior. Eighty eligible high schools—both public and private—were drawn from a national sampling frame of high schools. The recruitment rate of the originally sampled high schools was over 70 percent. The Add Health survey was administered in school, from the Fall of 1994 to the Spring of 1995, to all students grades 7 to 12 present on the survey date, and was completed by over 90,000 students. Note that by design, Add Health data do not include school drop-outs and home-schooled youth.