



Photo—Dan Barker

FFRF's Library Intern

Hannah O'Neill, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin Library School, is hard at work putting the Foundation's substantial freethought library collection in order. Hannah, a citizen of Ireland who has lived in the United States since infancy, is planning a career in special collections.



Photo—Dan Barker

FFRF's Legal Intern

David Dorn served as the Foundation's spring semester legal intern, doing lots of research on many state/church matters. Hard-working Foundation staff attorney Rebecca Kratz is pictured with him. Good luck to David, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Law School in May. He plans to specialize in union law and has found work at a Wisconsin union.

Studies Show Secularism Skyrocketing in U.S.

New ARIS Survey: Nones 15%

The third in the landmark American Religious Identification Survey series, released in March, reveals that 15% of U.S. Americans are "Nones" (have no religion)—a figure that has almost doubled in 18 years to 34,169,000 adult Americans.

Americans with no religious preference now outnumber all other major religious groups except Catholics (25.1%) and Baptists (15.8%)

Seventy percent of Nones are under 50: 29% are ages 18–29, and 41% are 30–49. A statistic that debunks "family

values" propaganda is ARIS' finding of little difference between the Nones and religious groups over marriage and divorce. The New England region, with 22% of "Nones" overall, has outstripped the Pacific Northwest (20%), closely followed by the West (19%).

"The most significant influence on American religious geography over time has been the increase in the Nones, or No Religion bloc . . . Moreover, the Nones increased in numbers and proportion in every state, Census Division and Region of the country from 1990 to 2008. No other religious bloc has kept such a pace in every

state," write the researchers.

Although only 1.6% of Americans call themselves atheists or agnostics, based on stated beliefs, 12% are atheists (believe in no God) or agnostic (unsure), while another 12% are deistic (believing in a high power but not a personal god).

In fact, "Less than 70% of Americans now believe in the traditional theological concept of a personal God" (even encompassing some self-identified but confused Christians).

Yet the number of "outright atheists" has nearly doubled since 2001, when the first ARIS survey was released, from 900,000 to 1.6 million. Meanwhile, the percentage of Americans defining themselves as Christian dropped from 86% in 1990 to 76% in 2008.

Baptist are down from 19.33% to 15.8%. Jews are down from 1.8% to 1.2%. Mormons are 1.4%, Muslims .6%.

Researchers Barry A. Kosmin (who will be speaking at FFRF's fall national convention) and Ariela Keyser, in their report, said "the challenge to Christianity in American society does not come from other world religions or new religious movements but rather from a rejection of all organized religions." Additionally, researchers concluded that "one in five adults does not identify with a religion." Fully 27% of Americans do not seek a religious funeral at their death and 30% of married respondents had nonreligious ceremonies.

The survey, which questioned 54,461 adults, is considered definitive. Read the report:

<http://b27.cc.trincoll.edu/weblogs/AmericanReligionSurvey-ARIS/>

30–40% of Young Reject Religion

New research released in May by Pew Forum on Faith in Public Life shows that young Americans are dramatically less likely to go to church or participate in organized religion. Harvard University Prof. Robert Putnam, who

conducted the research, found that the percentage of Nones (no religious affiliation) has skyrocketed to between 30% and 40% among younger Americans.

Putnam said Nones are not necessarily atheists, but view organized religion as a source of "intolerance and rigidity and doctrinaire political views." He predicted the move away from organized religion may have enormous consequences.

Americans Drift over Religion

According to a report issued on April 27 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, about half of Americans change their religious affiliation at least once, and most just gradually drift away from childhood faith.

Sixteen percent of U.S. adults identify themselves as unaffiliated in Pew's major 2007 survey of 35,000 Americans. Of these, only 7% were raised unaffiliated, which shows that many Americans end up leaving their religion for none, according to researchers.

About half who become unaffiliated cite criticisms that religious people are hypocritical, judgmental or insincere, and focus too much on rules, money and power. The researchers conclude that disenchantment with religious leaders and institutions is a greater reason for leaving religion than lack of religious belief.

University of Akron political scientist John Green classified most unaffiliated as "dissatisfied consumers." Four percent identify as atheist or agnostic, and a third say they haven't found the right religion.

"Faith in Flux: Changes in Religious Affiliation in the U.S.," based on interviews with 2800 people, found that nearly 6 in 10 former Catholics who are now unaffiliated have left the church because of dissatisfaction with Catholic teachings on abortion and gays, 5 in 10 disagree with church teachings on birth control, and 4 in 10 were unhappy with Catholic treatment of women.



Photo—Dan Barker

She's an "Atheist Honey"

This couple from Fort Riley, Kansas, attended the April 27 debate featuring FFRF's Dan Barker in Manhattan, Kansas. They have nicknamed their toddler, "Atheist Honey."