Faith in Our Nation

**Question:**

[I’m going to read you some pairs of statements. As I read each pair, tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right]...The strength of American society is based on the religious faith of its people, [or] Our society would be strong even if most Americans did not have a religious faith.


**Question:**

...[D]o you think [the increase in influence] is a good thing or bad thing?


**Question:**

How close [does] the following statement come to your own view about religion in America today—very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all?...Our society would do well even if many Americans were to abandon their religious faith.

**Source:** Survey by Public Agenda Foundation/Pew Charitable Trusts, November 4-25, 2000.

**Question:**

All in all, do you think a person can be a good American if he or she does not have religious faith?

God and Country

**Question:** How close does the following statement come to your own views about religion in America today— one of the most important reasons our political system is successful is the principle of separation of church and state?

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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**Question:** Which one of the following three statements comes closer to your view?

- The United States is a Biblical nation, defined by the Judeo-Christian tradition. [16%]
- The United States is a Christian nation. [29%]
- The United States is a secular nation in which religious belief, or lack of it, isn't a defining characteristic. [45%]
- Don't know [10%]


**Question:** ...I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you yourself have in each one—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little..

- The military [79%]
- The presidency [58%]
- The Supreme Court [50%]
- The church or organized religion [45%]
- Public schools [38%]
- Congress [29%]
- Big business [20%]

**How High a Wall?**

**Question:** How close do you consider the United States a Christian nation, or not?

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**Question:** Thinking about the issue of separation of church and state in this country today, in general, do you think the government should avoid promoting religion in any way, or not?

- Yes, should avoid [54%]
- No, should not avoid [36%]
- Don't know [10%]


**Question:** Would you rather see religious and spiritual values have greater influence in politics and public life than they do now, less influence, or about the same influence as they do now?

- Greater [44%]
- Same [33%]
- Less [21%]
- Don't know/Refused [2%]

Source: Survey by Washington Post/Harry J. Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University, August 2-September 1, 2002.

Note: Question wording varied slightly in some years.