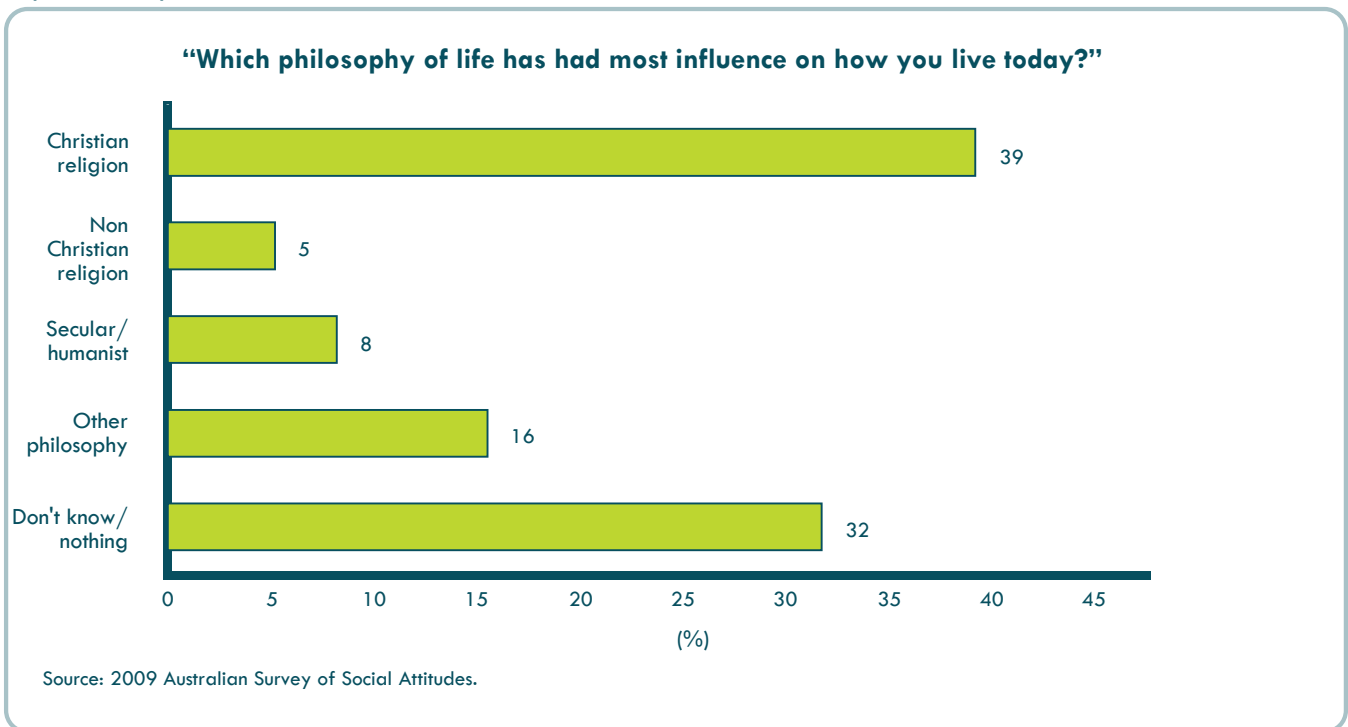


Philosophies of life

Australian Spirituality Fact Sheet 3

Diverse philosophies influences how Australians live

As part of the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes in 2009, some 1718 people across Australian communities were asked which philosophy of life had the most influence on how they lived today. The results show the largest group of people (39%) nominate the Christian religion as being the most influential in how they live today.

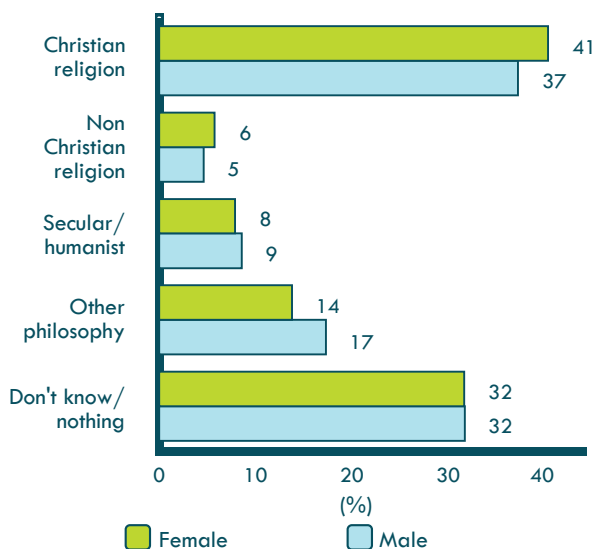


Christianity is most commonly acknowledged as having significant influence on people’s lives today, with four out of ten Australians claiming that a Christian life philosophy has the most influence on how they live. However another significant group of people, almost as large (32%), are unable to name an underlying life philosophy, either not knowing or having nothing come to mind. Those citing influence by non-Christian religions, including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim religions total 5%. Some 8% cite a secular/humanistic philosophy, while 16% of people subscribe to an ‘other philosophy’ as influential (including new age, nature/land philosophy and ‘some other’ philosophy).

INSIDE...

- Men and women have same influences
- Many young cite no influence
- Christian influence is education-neutral
- Australian born and less religious
- Religion for the non-religious

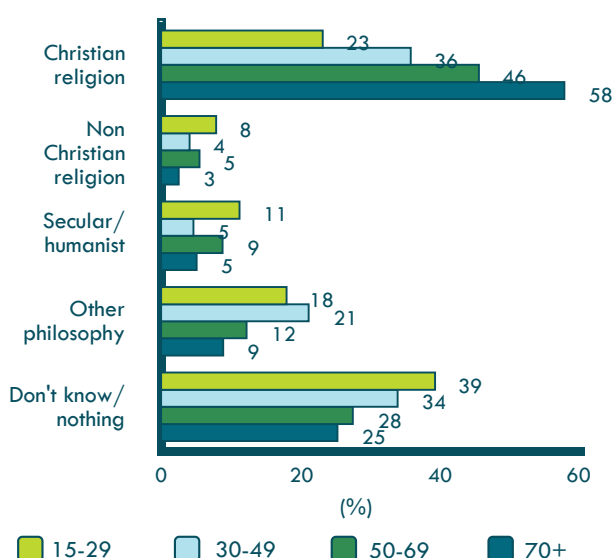
“Which philosophies of life has had the most influence on how you live today?”



Sex: Being male or female makes little to no difference to one's choice of influential philosophies of life.

The responses of men and women are statistically no different, with one exception. Slightly more men than women claim that some 'other philosophy' influences their lives (17% men vs 14% women).

Sex

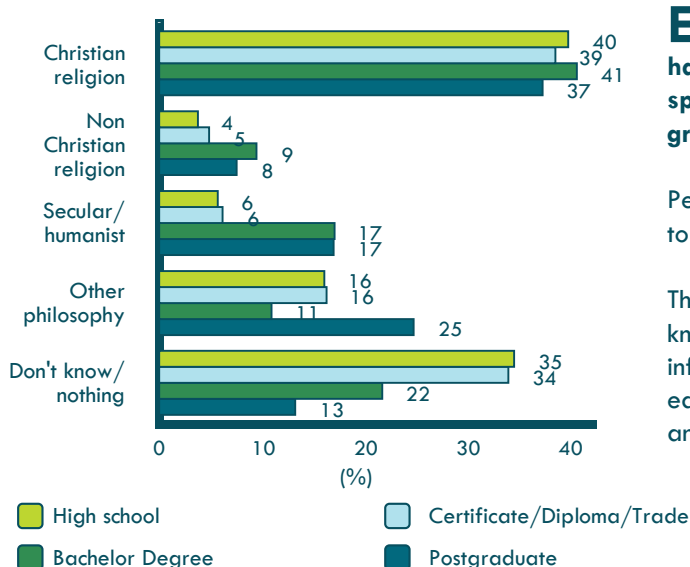


Age: The influence of the Christian religion is most often recognised by those aged 70+, with some 58% choosing it as what influences how they live, compared with only 23% of those aged 15-29.

Amongst the older age groups (> 49 years) larger proportions nominate Christianity and much smaller proportions say they don't know or nothing comes to mind. However within the 30-49 age group, the proportions are much more equal (36% Christian and 34% uncertain). In the case of 15-29's, this trend is reversed with only 23% Christian and a larger 39% not knowing.

Younger persons are also more represented amongst the 'other philosophies' (21% of 30-49's and 18% of 15-29's).

Age



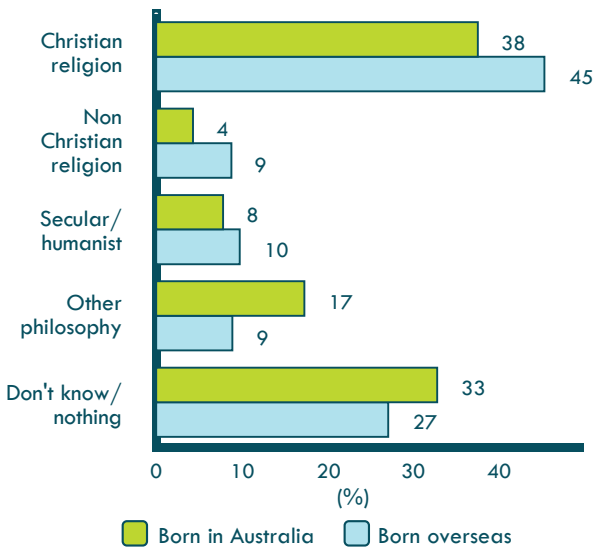
Education: Persons who nominate Christianity as having the most influence on their lives are fairly evenly spread across the educational groups (37-41% in each group).

People with a postgraduate level of education are more likely to affirm an 'other philosophy' (25% vs 16% overall).

Those with lower levels of education are more likely to say 'don't know/nothing' when asked what philosophy has had the most influence on their life's decisions (34-35% of non-tertiary-educated people compared with 22% of university graduates; and 13% of postgraduates).

Education

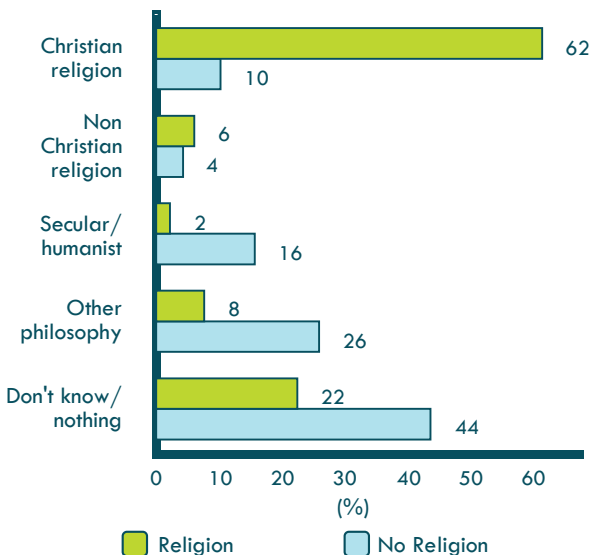
“Which philosophies of life has had the most influence on how you live today?”



Ethnicity: People born overseas are more likely than those Australian-born to choose both Christian and non-Christian religions as influential on their life today.

There is no significant difference between those born overseas and those born in Australia with regard to the influence of a secular/humanist philosophy. However, a greater percentage of those born in Australia claim an influence from ‘other philosophies’ (such as new age, nature/ land and other), compared with those born overseas (17% vs 9%).

Ethnicity

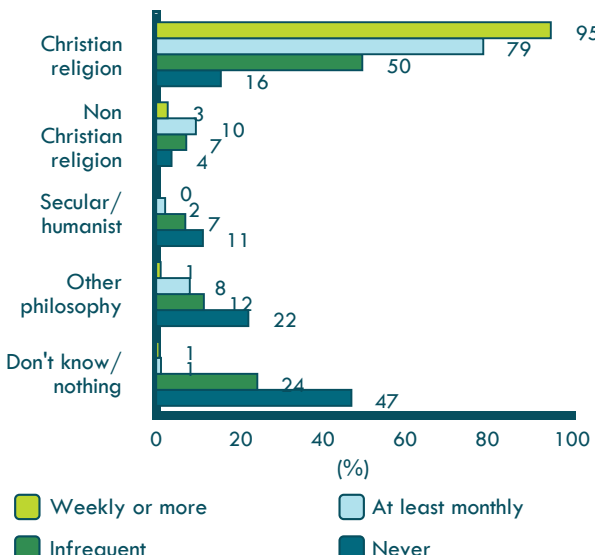


Religion: Most people who say they have a religion identify the Christian religion as what has had most influence (62%). Some 10% of those with ‘no religion’ also identify Christianity as influential.

Amongst non-religious persons, higher proportions subscribe to ‘other philosophies’ (26%) and secular/humanist philosophy (16%), than do religious persons (8% and 2% respectively).

Nearly half of those with no religion (44%) and nearly a quarter of religious persons (22%) express uncertainty about which philosophy they find most influential in their lives.

Religion



Attendance: Being a church attender is strongly related to the belief that Christianity has an influence on one’s life. As the frequency of church attendance declines, so does the proportion who acknowledge the impact of the Christian religion on their life; from 95% of those who attend weekly or more often; 79% of those who go at least monthly; down to 50% of infrequent attenders and 16% of non-attenders.

Less frequent church attendance levels correspond to higher levels of affiliation with other philosophies. Nearly half (47%) of non-attenders are unable to identify a philosophy of life that has an influence on how they live.

Attendance

AUSTRALIAN SPIRITUALITY RESOURCES from NCLS Research

Available online
www.ncls.org.au/spirituality

Fact Sheets:

- **Something beyond this life**
explores whether Australians believe in a spiritual dimension to life
- **Just believe or question**
examines the degree of critical reflection in religious faith and spiritual beliefs of Australians
- **Philosophies of life**
identifies which philosophies of life have most influence on how Australians live today
- **Guided by faith**
examines the saliency of religious faith or spirituality in shaping life's decisions, such as career, relationships and lifestyle
- **Jesus' resurrection**
reviews Australian beliefs about whether Jesus resurrection was an actual historical event

Each Fact Sheet presents the overall results for Australia and then compares different groups including: sex, age, education, ethnicity, 'having religion' and church attendance.

Data source:

The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is an ongoing survey designed to monitor changes in society across a range of countries. In 2009 the ISSP was undertaken in Australia by the Australian National University via the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA).

The survey included a standard component on religion, as well as customised questions regarding religion and spirituality which were commissioned by a consortium that included NCLS Research.

The sample comprised 1718 adults across Australia.

Evans, A. (2009) [computer file], The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, Australian Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University, Canberra.

COMMUNITY SPIRITUALITY link to the 2011 NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

Find out about the spiritual beliefs of people who connect with your church but don't attend regularly.

A new addition to the 2011 NCLS and beyond is a survey of local church contacts. Churches can survey people they have contact with, whether through a play group, soup kitchen, or someone they are related to.

It's an effective way to find out about the beliefs, faith practices and spirituality of those connected with your church, as well as what they think of your activities. This will help your church build stronger connections and serve the community more effectively.

For more details
see www.2011ncls.org.au.



NEW

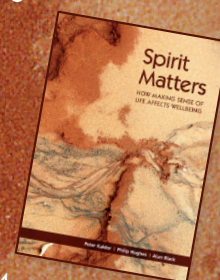
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