



# THE BEREA PAGE

*“Examining . . . to see if these things are so” ~ Acts 17.11*

## About the Nones—Thinking Proactively

David Anguish

Recently, in the Wednesday evening Bible class I attend, I heard a member of our local church present an excellent overview of the case for Christianity and the need to keep emphasizing it. A benefit I received from the class was the introduction to some apologists whose work is new to me. One is J. Warner Wallace, a former atheist and cold-case homicide detective who “became a Christ-follower at the age of thirty-five after investigating the claims of the New Testament gospels using his skill set as a detective” (Warner’s website, “About” page, [here](#)). Wanting to explore his work more, I listened to a recent podcast, “Why the Case for Christianity Is More Important Than Ever” (May 7, 2025; [here](#)) in which he referenced a Pew Research survey, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape: (2015; [here](#)). His podcast title was the same as an October 2024 article (Wallace 2024; [here](#)) where he referenced a Public Religion Research Institute poll, “Religious Change in America” (2024; [here](#)). In both, he presents a different, more optimistic, perspective on Christianity’s shrinking numbers. The article begins:

Much has been written and discussed about the Public Religion Research Institute poll, Religious Change in America. According to the poll, “Around one-quarter of Americans (26%) identify as religiously unaffiliated in 2023, a 5 percentage point increase from 21% in 2013. Nearly one in five Americans (18%) left a religious tradition to become religiously unaffiliated, over one-third of whom were previously Catholic (35%) and mainline/non-evangelical Protestant (35%).” When statistics like these are released, it’s tempting to panic and respond without properly examining the trends. The devil is always in the details, however, and a careful analysis of the data ought to energize rather than discourage us (Wallace 2024).

Wallace doesn’t minimize the declining numbers of self-identifying Christians and the corresponding increase of other groups, notably the “nones.” But he contends that those numbers do not indicate that “our culture is becoming more and more *atheistic*.... It’s simply becoming less and less *Christian*.” In the podcast, he notes that, “during that same seven-year period [between Pew surveys] when Christianity dropped by 7.8%, atheism only rose by 1.5%. So it’s not as though all of those who jump out of their affiliation and no longer claim to be Christians are now claiming to be atheists” (Wallace 2025). As he writes in the 2024 article,

People are not nearly as resistant to the existence of God as the more liberal, atheistic media would like us to believe. In fact, 92.9% of the country rejects atheism and is open to the existence of God in one form or another. We are a country of theists, even though we might be divided on which form of theism (or deism) is true. That’s why the case for Christianity is more important than ever (Wallace 2024).

Wallace suggests that the nones are leaving because they have “rejected their experience *in the Church* rather than their *belief in Jesus*.” “That may simply be a reflection of the sad, non-evi-

dential nature of the Church ... Some of those who have left our ranks may never have heard anything about the evidence supporting the Christian worldview in all the years they were attending church with us” (Wallace 2024). His evidence for this contention is anecdotal, drawn from his experience in speaking around the country where he finds “most churches are still uninterested in making the case for Christianity, while more and more Christians want to know why Christianity is true. Those who believe in the existence of God, yet reject Christianity, can still be reached for Christ” (Wallace 2024). Elaborating in his podcast, he says, “if a church is ... a 2,000 member church and you host an apologetics event, you’ll be lucky to get 10% of the church to show up—200—because we are not yet a culture that embraces this form of intellectualism as a form of worship, even though the Bible commands us to do so” (Wallace 2025).

*Reflections.* I appreciate that Wallace uses the word “may” with reference to why the nones are leaving; their reasons are doubtless complicated and vary from person to person. Also, with Wallace, I do not want to minimize the reality that our culture is increasingly dominated by a secular, post-Christian worldview. I would add that both the circumstances in a local church, and the need for its leaders to take seriously the divine mandate to “declare the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20.27), makes it incumbent on us to not narrow our teaching and preaching emphasis to a few favorite, or even urgent, themes.

But, given the nature of the thought warfare we face (2 Cor 10.3–5), church leaders will do well to evaluate whether believers are being prepared with the “depth, precision, and intellectual rigor” (Kruger 2021, 20) necessary to respond to the people they encounter in a world where many not only acquiesce to the ideologies that oppose Christianity, but actively advocate for their dogmas (cf. Eph 4.11–12; 6.11; 1 Pet 3.15) (see my prior discussion of Kruger’s book, [here](#)).

But as we think about interacting with the world, let us not neglect those within our ranks who have “never heard anything about the evidence supporting the Christian worldview in all the years they were attending church with us” (Wallace 2024). Many who have questions will not give voice to them—a near certainty in an environment that leaves the impression that such questions are not to be asked—but their questions are nonetheless real. Equipping them so they will not “shrink back” (cf. Heb 10.39) calls for a proactive effort.

### Works Cited

- “America’s Changing Religious Landscape.” 2015. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/> May 12
- Kruger, Michael J. 2021. *Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College*. Crossway.
- “Religious Change in America.” 2024. *Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI)*. <https://prri.org/> March 27.
- Wallace, J. Warner. 2024. “Why the Case for Christianity Is More Important Than Ever” (article). *Cold Case Christianity*. <https://coldcasechristianity.com/category/writings/case-making-writings/> October 11.
- Wallace, J. Warner. 2025. “Why the Case for Christianity Is More Important Than Ever.” *Cold-Case Christianity*. <https://cold-casechristianity.com/category/podcasts/> Produced by J. Warner and Jimmy Wallace. May 7. Podcast, 27:59.

### Featured from [davidanguish.com](http://davidanguish.com)

From the Articles, Teaching and Edification page ([here](#)), “Unexpected Developments” — An example that shows the biggest problem with deciding right and wrong for ourselves (notes link [here](#))

*All Scripture quotations not otherwise designated are from the ESV. Italics in biblical quotations are added by the author. Permission is granted to reprint original materials with the credit line, “Reprinted from David Anguish, ‘The Berea Page,’ June 17, 2025.”*