

INSTITUTIONS: RELIGION

What is Religion?

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Emile Durkheim said,

“A religion is a unified system of beliefs
and practices relative to sacred things.”

Three Elements of Religion

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Beliefs that Some Things are Sacred
- Practices Centering on Things Considered Sacred
- A Moral Community Resulting from a Group's Beliefs and Practices

The Functionalist Perspective

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Questions about Ultimate Meaning
- Emotional Comfort
- Social Solidarity
- Guidelines for Everyday Life



The Functionalist Perspective

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Social Control
- Adaptation
- Support for the Government
- Social Change



Functional Equivalents of Religion

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Organizations Like Alcoholics Anonymous
- Psychotherapy
- Humanism
- Transcendental Meditation
- Political Parties



Dysfunctions of Religion

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Religion as Justification for Persecution
- War and Terrorism



Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Religious Symbols
- Rituals
- Beliefs
- Religious Experience
- Community



Conflict Perspective

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Marx's Opiate of the People
- Legitimization of Social Inequalities
 - Social Arrangements Represent God's Desires
 - Divine Rights of Kings
 - Pharaoh as God
 - Hindu Cast System



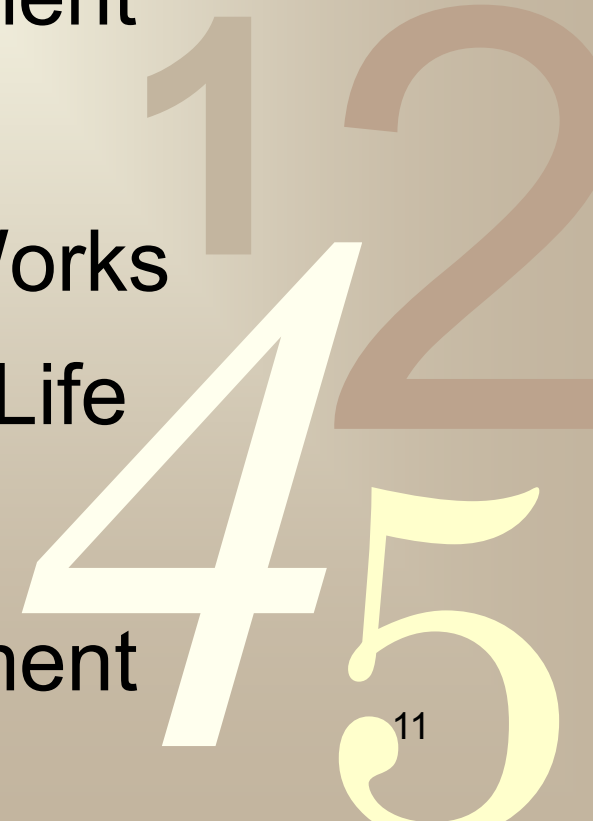
Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism - Weber

- Source of Profound Social Change
- Religion Held the Key to Modernization

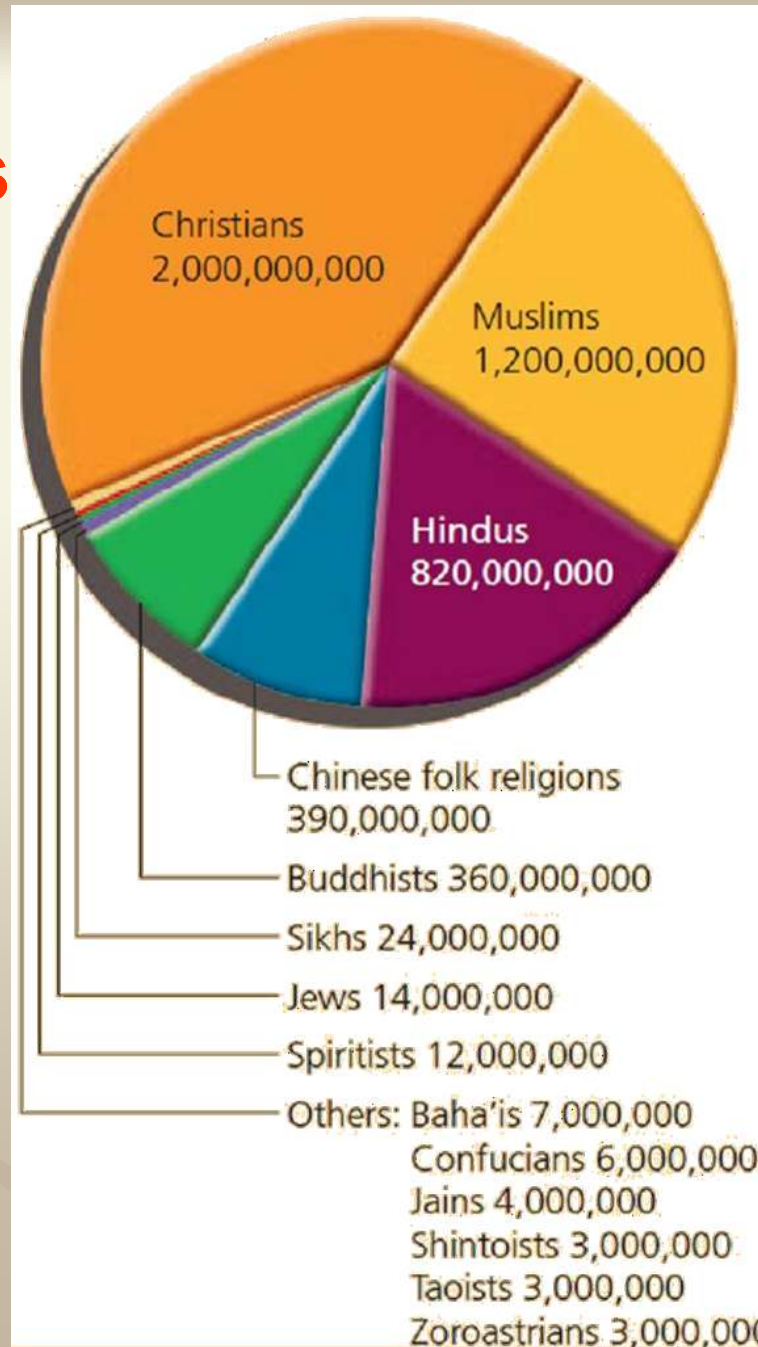
Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Accumulation of Capital
- Move to Thrift and Investment
- Predestination
- Salvation through Good Works
- Self-denying Approach to Life
- Luxury Seen as Sinful
- Investment and Reinvestment



The World's Major Religions



The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Judaism

- Originated 4,000 Years Ago
- Originated in Mesopotamia
- God's Chosen People Through Covenant with Abraham
- Fundamental Change in Religion to Monotheism
- Contemporary — Orthodox, Reform, Conservative

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Christianity

- Monotheistic
- Believe Jesus Christ is Messiah
- Born in Poverty to a Virgin
- At about 30 Jesus Began Teaching

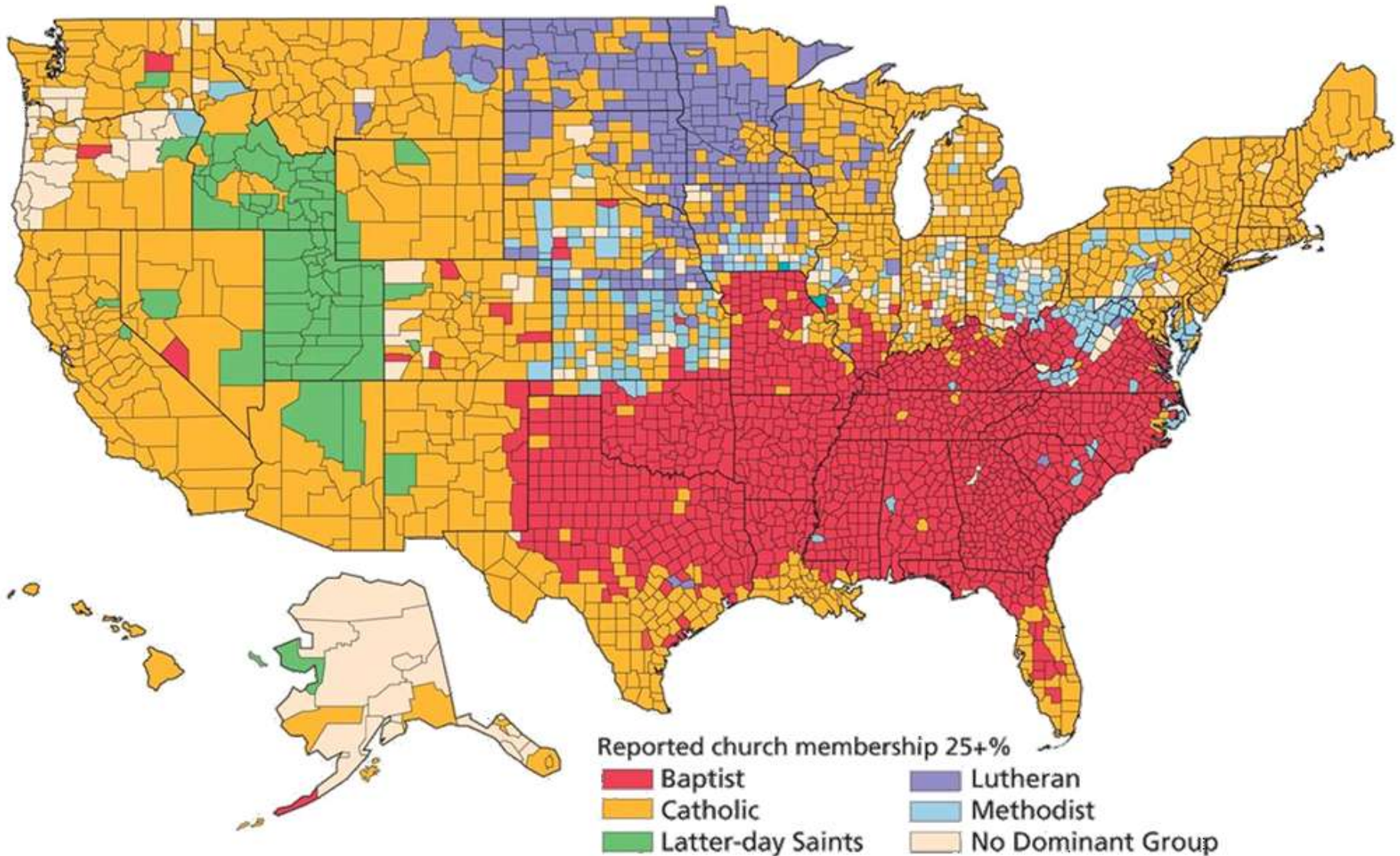
The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Christianity

- 12 Main Followers — Apostles
- Belief in Christ's Resurrection
- Split to Greek Orthodoxy in 11th Century, Reformation in 16th Century
- Currently about 2 Billion Adherents

Church Membership: Dominant Religion, by County



Source: Reprinted with permission from *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States: 2000*. (Nashville: Glenmary Research Center, 2002). © Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. All rights reserved.

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Islam

- World's Third Monotheistic Religion
- Founded by Muhammad (Born in Mecca)
- About Age 40 had Visions from God
- Visions and Teachings Written in Koran

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Islam

- Muhammad Founded a Theocracy in Median
- Two Main Branches — Sunni and Shiite
- Shiites More Conservative and Fundamentalist
- Consider Bible Sacred but Koran Final Word

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Hinduism

- No Specific Founder
- Chief Religion in India for 4,000 Years
- No Canonical Scripture
- Brahmanas, Bhagavad-Gita and Upanishads Expound Moral Virtues

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Hinduism

- People Make Sacrifices to gods
- Polytheistic — Many gods
- Central Belief is Karma — Spiritual Progress
- No Final Judgment — Reincarnation
- Spiritual Perfection Results in Nirvana

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Buddhism

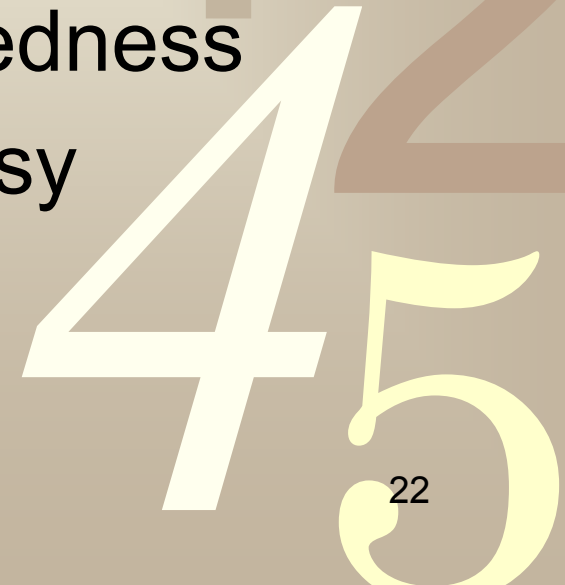
- Siddhartha Gautama Founded in about 600 BC
- Four Noble Truths
 - Existence is Suffering
 - Origin of Suffering is Desire
 - Suffering Ceases when Desire Ceases
 - Follow “Noble Eightfold Path” to End Desire

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Buddhism—Eightfold Path

- Right Belief
- Right Resolve
- Right Speech
- Right Conduct
- Right Occupation or Living
- Right Effort
- Right-Mindedness
- Right Ecstasy



The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Confucianism

- K'ung Fu-tsu Born in China 551 BC
- Public Official Distressed by Corruption in Government
- Urged Social Reform
- Developed System of Morality Based on Peace, Justice, Universal Order

The World's Major Religions

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Confucianism

- Teaching Written in the *Analects*
- Basic Moral Principle — Jen
- Loyalty and Morality above Self-Interest
- Confucian Golden Rule
- Taught the “Middle Way”
- Originally Atheistic, Gods Added along the Way

Types of Religious Groups

- Cults
 - Begin with Charismatic Leader
 - Most Popular Religions Started this Way
 - Most Cults Fail
- Sects
 - Loosely Organized and Fairly Small
 - Emphasize Personal Salvation

Religious Groups: From Hostility to Acceptance

THE GROUP EMPHASIZES

The more that a group has these emphases, the less it is accepted

1. The need to reject society
(the culture is a threat to true religion)
2. That it is rejected by society
(the group feels hostility)
3. Hostility toward other religions
4. Hostility from other religions
5. Personal salvation
6. Emotional expression of religious beliefs
7. Revelation (God speaks directly to people)
8. God's direct intervention in people's lives
(such as providing guidance or healing)
9. A duty to spread the message (evangelism)
10. A literal interpretation of scripture
11. A literal heaven and hell
12. That a conversion experience is necessary

Cult

Sect

Church

Ecclesia

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP

The more that a group has these characteristics, the more the group is accepted

1. The organization is large
2. The organization is wealthy
3. The members are well to do ("worldly success")
4. The clergy are required to have years of formal training

Less acceptance

More acceptance

Note: Any religious organization can be placed somewhere on this continuum, based on its having "more" or "less" of these characteristics and emphases. The varying proportions of the rectangles are intended to represent the group's relative characteristics and emphases.

Types of Religious Groups

- Churches

- Highly Bureaucratized
- National and International
- Relationship with God Less Intense

- Ecclesia

- State Religions
- Part of Cultural Identification

- Variations in Patterns

When Religion and Culture Conflict

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Members Reject Dominant Culture
- Members Reject Specific Elements of a Culture
- Society Rejects Religious Group

Religion in the US

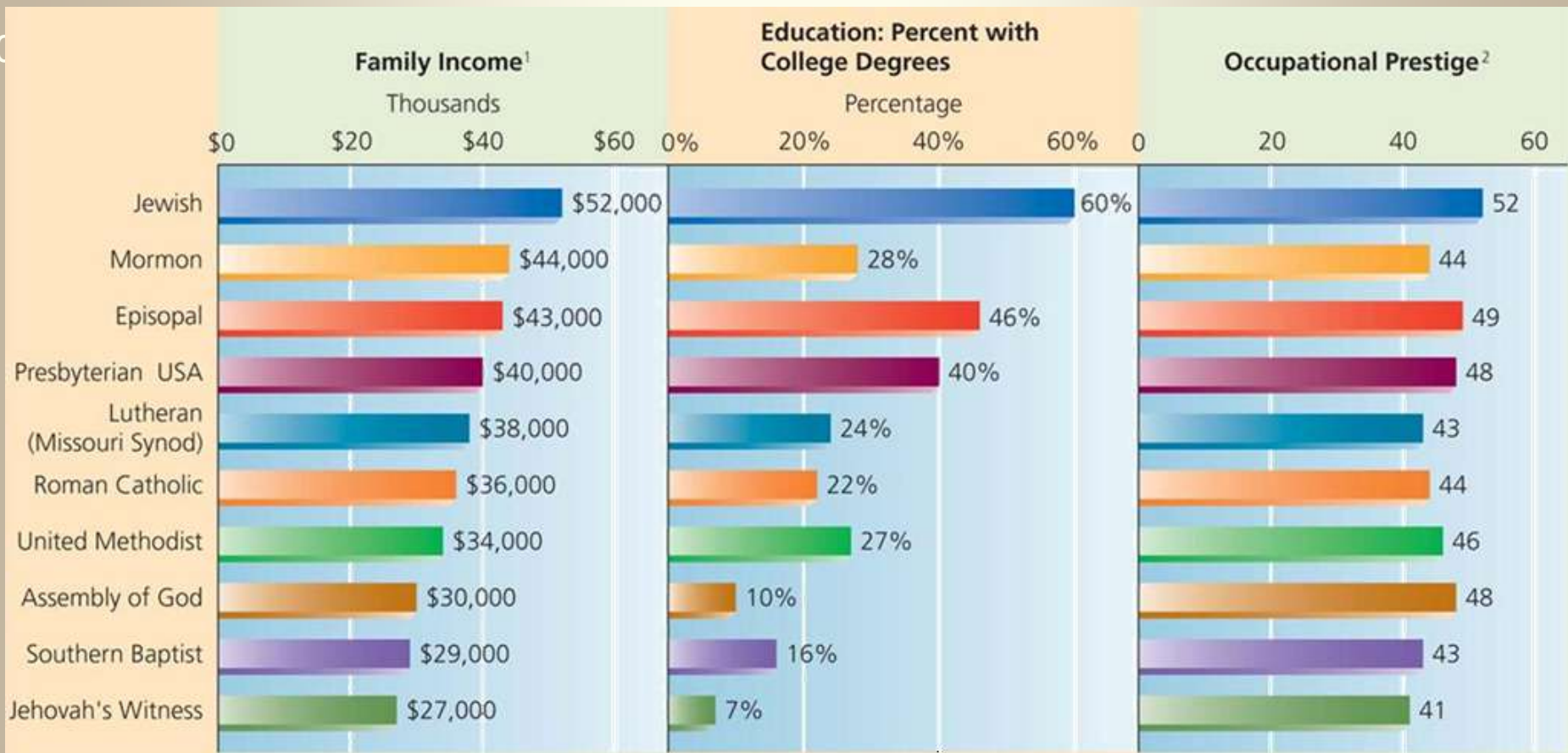
0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Characteristics of Members

- Social Class



Social Class and Religious Affiliation



¹Inflation since the income data were reported is approximately 24 percent.

²Higher numbers mean that more of the group's members work at occupations that have higher prestige, generally those that require more education and pay more. For more information on occupational prestige, see Table 10.2 on page 265.

Source: By the author. Based on Smith and Faris 2005.

Religion in the US

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Characteristics of Members

- Social Class
- Race and Ethnicity



Religion in the US

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

Characteristics of Religious Groups

- Diversity
- Pluralism and Freedom
- Competition and Recruitment
- Commitment

Religion in the US

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

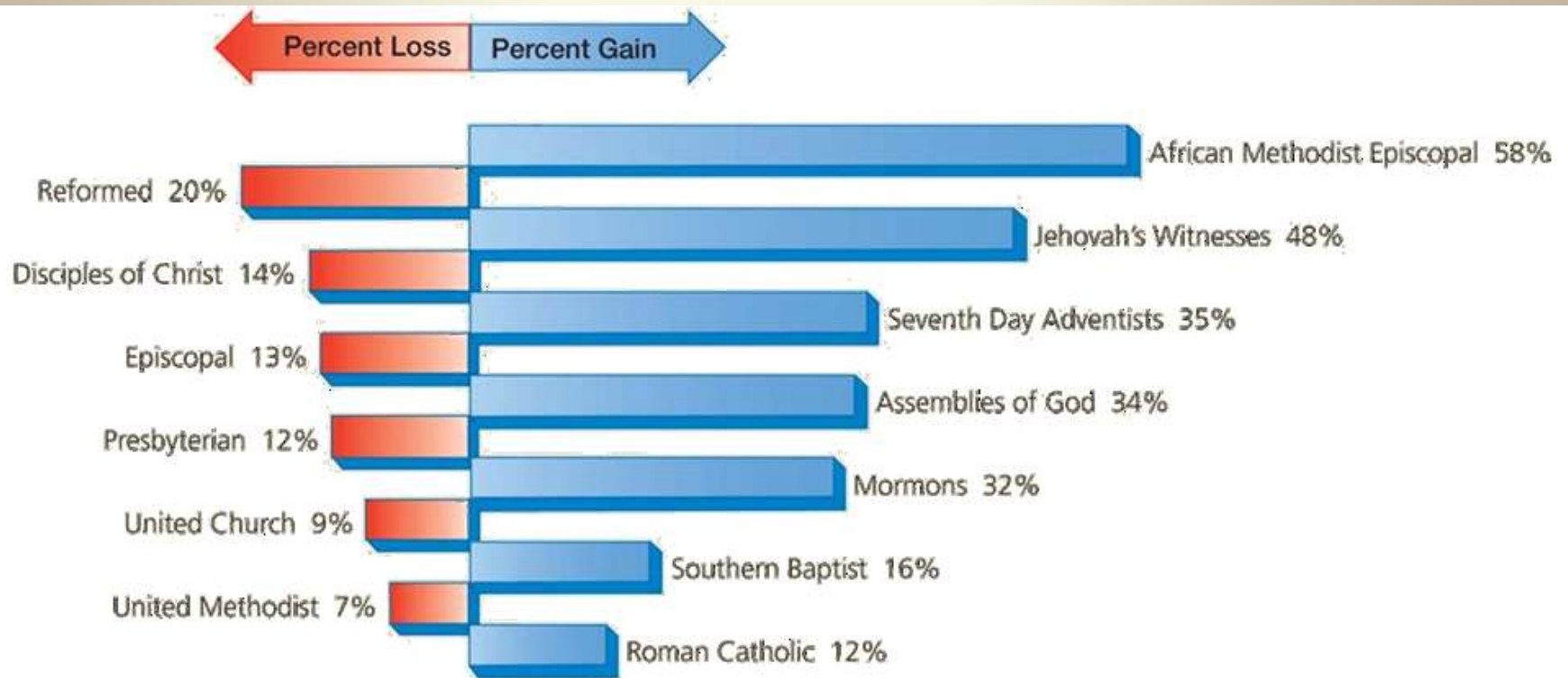
Characteristics of Religious Groups

- Toleration
- Fundamentalist Revival
- The Electronic Church
- The Internet and Religion



US Churches: Gains & Losses in Ten Years

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011



Note: Mergers are excluded. Inconsistent reporting and classifications make it difficult to compare membership over time, making these totals only approximate.

Secularization of Religion and Culture

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- The Secularization of Religion
- The Secularization of Culture



The Future of Religion

0011 0010 1010 1101 0001 0100 1011

- Religion Thrives
- People Will Always Ponder Purpose
- Science Cannot Tell Us About...
 - The Existence of God
 - The Purpose of Life
 - An Afterlife
 - Morality