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Many American atheists hide their unbelief due to social stigma in Christian culture

By [Leonardo Blair](#), Senior Features Reporter

[The Christian Post](#) (15.06.2023) - In [Psalm 14](#) of the Bible, the revered King David of Israel condemns people who don't believe in God as fools who are "corrupt" and "have done abominable works."

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," he declares in Scripture. "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."

Now, many American atheists say that, despite their growing numbers in society, they often choose to hide their unbelief due to fear of social stigma, a recent [study](#) published by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln suggests.

Dena Abbott, assistant professor of counseling psychology at the university, conducted a yearlong study of 600 atheists nationwide divided equally between rural-residing participants and "woman-identified" participants.

Abbott said in a statement released this week that female atheists frequently reported being seen as "sexually immoral," while atheists living in rural areas that tend to be more conservative struggle to find secular mental healthcare providers to help them cope with being in the minority.

"Atheists living in small towns — which tend to be more religious and politically conservative — often reported experiencing a heightened sense of danger because of their non-belief," Abbott explained. "Rural atheists talked about a fear of violence more than urban atheists did."

While there were few reports of hate crimes against atheists, Abbott said one participant in the study reported getting death threats at a local restaurant for writing a secular opinion in a community newspaper.

According to a 2021 [Pew Research Center](#) report, 29% of U.S. adults identify as "nones" — people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular" — while 63% identify as Christian.

The nation's share of religious "nones" at the time was 6% higher in 2021 than it was five years earlier, and 10% higher than it was a decade ago, added Pew.

A Pew analysis published last September also [predicted](#) that if the pace at which Christians abandon their faith before age 30 were to accelerate beyond its current pace,

without any "brakes" in the trend, then the United States could no longer be a majority Christian nation by as early as 2045.

In the September 2022 study, Pew highlighted four hypothetical scenarios out of several possibilities to demonstrate how the U.S. religious landscape might change over the next half-century. The impact of younger Christian adults abandoning their faith without limitation was modeled in one of those scenarios.

"By 2055, the unaffiliated would make up the largest group (46%), ahead of Christians (43%). In 2070, 52% of Americans would be unaffiliated, while a little more than a third (35%) would be Christian," stated the Pew report from last September.

Photo: Empty church in this undated photo. Unsplash

Anti-cult pro-Russia and pro-China activist assaulted a Scientology church and a synagogue

The interesting story of Randi Nord opens a window on the American and international ramifications of bigotry

by Massimo Introvigne

[Bitter Winter](#) (10.05.2023) - On May 3, 2023, Royal Oak, Michigan, 44th District Magistrate Donald Chisholm [charged a woman called Randi Nord](#) with ethnic intimidation and vandalism. Royal Oak is a suburb of Detroit, and is where Nord defaced a synagogue by painting a Nazi swastika on its wall. She also painted swastikas on a baby stroller and a car belonging to Jewish families, and was arrested on May 1 with the cooperation of the FBI.

Randi Nord is a woman with a very interesting story. According to [media reports](#), she is the founder of [Geopolitics Alert Independent World News](#). The pompously named media outlet deals often with Yemen and publishes anti-Israeli and pro-Venezuelan articles. Nord has also echoed [Russian positions](#) on issues such as Internet governance, and routinely republished [Chinese propaganda](#) on various subjects. She even claims that Cuba's medicine is so advanced that they have developed a [cancer vaccine](#).

Nord is also an anti-cult activist. Her website published an article (since taken down) calling Falun Gong [a "Scientology-like cult"](#) and accusing it of having invented the organ harvesting narrative for its own anti-Chinese purposes.

[She also attacked](#) "the criminal and cult-like aspects" of Scientology, although just to be ecumenical she added that, "Most Christian mega-churches are not that far off from the Church of Scientology—they are companies in the business of ripping people off based on fear. The mega-churches are just a little less cult-y."

The problem with Randi Nord is that she does not limit herself to writing. She also acts upon her bigotry. Before assaulting the synagogue, in March 2023 she [was involved in an arson attack](#) against the Church of Scientology of Farmington Hills, another suburb of Detroit. [According to Chief Jeff King](#) of Farmington Hills police, Nord “was charged with two different felonies and given bond that included a tether” for the anti-Scientology attack. She had cut her tether since.

And there is more. She painted together with a swastika the word “Azov” on the wall of the Royal Oak synagogue. The immediate interpretation of the media was that [she wanted to glorify Ukraine’s Azov Battalion](#), often referred to as “neo-Nazi” (although, as [readers of Bitter Winter know](#), its story is much more complicated). This looked strange, given Nord’s political inclinations.

Eventually, she confessed to the police that it was the other way around. She hoped that her crimes would be attributed to pro-Ukrainian activists, and wanted to generate anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian feelings. According to the Royal Oaks detective who [received her confession](#), “She said she planned to do as many hate crimes as possible and blame them on AZOV [Battalion].”

When she tried to set fire to the Church of Scientology in Farmington Hills, she had just [returned from Serbia](#), where she spent two years. What she did there is unknown, but certainly the country hosts very active pro-Russian ([and anti-cult](#)) organizations.

Nord deleted her Twitter account in 2022. She opened [a new one in May 2022](#), with no posts but an old Soviet poster “Visit the USSR.”

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Photo: The Woodward Avenue Shul was defaced April 28 – [The Detroit Jewish News Credit](#)
