

New Survey from the American Beliefs Study Explores Alarming “Jesus Without Church” Paradox

Data from ACS Technologies highlights growing personal belief alongside distrust in organized religion

Florence, SC, November 3, 2025—ACS Technologies, a 45-year leader in church management software, market expertise, and data analysis is investigating contradictory trends in its ground-breaking [American Beliefs Study: Religious Preferences and Practices](#), which surveyed over 15,000 Americans on Christian preferences, affiliations, values, and beliefs. In the latest findings, many respondents said their personal relationship with Jesus was deepening, yet they paradoxically did not see regular church attendance or participation as essential, challenging traditional church structures and organized religion.

The questionnaire was originally conducted in 2012-2013 and then repeated in 2016-2017, 2020-2021, and 2024-2025. Its significant polling sample size and decades-long timespan have established the American Beliefs Study as a recognized leader in understanding American religious practices and preferences. ACST Catholic, a business of ACS Technologies, specifically examined feedback from the subset of 3,100 self-identified Catholics in the larger cross-denominational study.

“The encouraging news from our latest survey is that core Catholic beliefs—such as the Resurrection and the divinity and humanity of Jesus—have grown,” said Terry Poplava, General Manager of ACST Catholic. “However, there is a troubling trend toward individualism in which respondents more strongly agreed that belief in Jesus does not require attending Mass. Given that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith, and the Catechism clearly communicates our need to live in community, we should be very concerned by this response.”

Nearly half of Catholic respondents reported irregular Mass attendance, giving reasons that have consistently appeared in each wave of the study: (1) religion is too focused on money, (2) they have fallen out of the habit since COVID-19, (3) religious people are too judgmental, (4) they do not trust religious leaders, and (5) they do not trust organized religion.

Every few years, as the American Beliefs Study is reissued, ACST Catholic provides parish leaders with actionable insights to better align ministries with the evolving needs and priorities of their communities. Previous reports have highlighted trends such as the [Epidemic of Loneliness](#) and the importance respondents place on “warm and friendly encounters” when seeking a parish.

“Recent data clearly show what people are seeking in a parish,” said Poplava. “Authentic community and meaningful relationships are even more important to people than quality sermons or sacramental celebrations. Our parishes have an opportunity to respond to this need and foster the real connections people are longing for.”

All reports in the [American Beliefs Study series](#) are available for free.

For more information on the latest findings, to download ACST Catholic’s analysis [Faith in Flux](#), and to access the full press kit, visit <https://www.acstechnologies.com/acst-catholic/presskit-abs-paradox/>.

Terry Poplava is available for comment. To request an interview, contact Carrie Kline at carrie.kline@missionadvancementpartners.com.

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About ACST Catholic

ACST Catholic, a business of ACS Technologies, is devoted to serving and equipping Catholic parishes and dioceses with the tools to engage, inspire, and accompany their communities and form missionary disciples. By harnessing technology as a tool for connection and growth, we amplify ministry impact and foster more meaningful experiences that can lead to intentional discipleship.

About ACS Technologies

ACS Technologies, founded in 1978, is the leading provider of comprehensive church ministry tools, support, and expertise to nearly 50,000 churches, schools, dioceses, and denominational offices. As the parent company of ACST Catholic, ACS Technologies is committed to creating personalized ministry environments that enable churches to make God-honoring decisions. Based in Florence, SC, ACS Technologies remains a privately held, independent Christian family-led company with team members across the U.S.