

Most faiths unfamiliar to Protestant clergy: Catholicism and Judaism most familiar

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Most Protestant ministers in a recent survey have expressed little familiarity with the key beliefs of a number of non-Protestant religious groups. The faith perspectives most likely to be “extremely familiar” to Protestant clergy were Catholicism (41 percent), Judaism (33 percent), Mormonism (21 percent), Jehovah’s Witnesses (21 percent) and Islam (21 percent).

The findings by Ellison Research, a marketing research company in Phoenix, were first reported in the September/October edition of *Facts & Trends*, a magazine published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. The survey was based on a sample of 700 Protestant ministers in 50 states and had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.6 percentage points.

When researchers combined the top two levels of familiarity stated by Protestant clergy, 85 percent said they were at least relatively familiar with the core tenets of the Catholic Church, followed by 80 percent for Judaism, 61 percent for Mormonism and 60 percent for Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Otherwise, only a minority of Protestant ministers expressed relative familiarity with other religions or religious movements: 47 percent with Islam, 43 percent with New Age beliefs, 31 percent with Satanism, 28 percent with Buddhism, 27 percent with Hinduism, 15 percent with Scientology, 13 percent with Wicca, 13 percent with Bahaism and 5 percent with Sikhism.