

Robert Jones, religion researcher, wins a Grawemeyer award

Jones received the honor for his book *The End of White Christian America*.

by [Christian Century staff](#) in the [January 2, 2019](#) issue



Robert P. Jones. Photo courtesy of Grawemeyer Awards.

Robert P. Jones, founder and CEO of Public Religion Research Institute, won the 2019 Grawemeyer Award in religion for his book *The End of White Christian America*.

[The award](#) honors “creative and significant insights into the relationship between human beings and the divine.” It is given annually by the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the University of Louisville and includes \$100,000.

In the book, Jones cited data showing that in 2016—the year the book was published—white Christians were less than half of the U.S. population. He connected this fact to how Donald Trump as presidential candidate “cast himself as the last chance for Republicans and conservative white Christians to step back from the cliff, to preserve their power and way of life.”

[Research by PRRI released in 2017](#) with responses from 101,000 people in 50 states detailed changes in the religious landscape such as increased racial and ethnic diversity in most U.S. Christian denominations.

“This report provides solid evidence of a new, second wave of white Christian decline that is occurring among white evangelical Protestants just over the last decade,” Jones said in a statement when the study was released. “Prior to 2008, white evangelical Protestants seemed to be exempt from the waves of demographic change and disaffiliation that were eroding the membership bases of white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. We now see that these waves simply crested later for white evangelical Protestants.”

Tyler Mayfield, faculty director of the Grawemeyer Award, noted that Jones examines trends among mainline Protestants as well. “He also offers an appropriate critique of how mainline Protestants have failed to address racism even though they have been a public voice for racial justice,” Mayfield said.

A version of this article, which was edited December 27, appears in the print edition under the title “People: Robert P. Jones.”