

# Driver Outcomes in Baseline

List your six key drivers of change in the left column. In the right column, describe in 1-2 sentences what that driver looks like in the baseline.

YOUR DRIVERS		BASELINE <i>one to two sentences</i>
1	Losing Our Religion	The percent of Americans that identify as Christian falls below 50% for the first time since the country's founding. The religiously unaffiliated approach 40% of the population, accelerating a massive cultural change.
2	Culture War Blues	Topics like abortion and gender identity continue to spark conflict in schools and around elections. An increasing number of religious leaders will try to extricate themselves from these conflicts and encourage their members to do the same.
3	Prophets of Profit	Corporations will use the decline in external religious observance to consolidate meaning around themselves. This will be seen in advertising, rituals for employees, and products that take religious form/content without the doctrine.
4	Just the Good Parts	Big and small community service and civics groups will continue to form. This will be a source of meaning for a small part of the population, and will mean that most of the traditional work of churches (food pantries, community cleanups, etc) will continue to happen voluntarily.
5	Religious Weirding	Formerly fringe religious identifications and practices will continue to grow. We will see more members of "protest religions" like the Temple of Satan, new QAnon-style add-on quasi-religions, mixing and matching of appealing rituals, and people who are "really into" astrology.
6	Spiritual Machines	Technology's advance will be a small but growing part of religious observance. Increases in remote participation, online/app-only experiences and AI chatbots to reinforce/destroy/convert faith will become more common, with a declining group of holdouts viewing these as illegitimate.

# Summarize Baseline Future

Fill out the right column according to the instructions in the left column.

<b>FUTURE OF</b> <i>Add title of your project (including year). E.g. Future of Public Health in 2035</i>	<b>Future of US Religion in 2050</b>
<b>SCENARIO TITLE</b> <i>Fun/memorable name of your scenario</i>	<b>The Widening Gyre</b> <b>(Yes I'm going to try to make all of my scenario titles quotes from <a href="#">WB Yeats's "The Second Coming"</a> and not be overly pretentious)</b>
<b>THIS IS A WORLD IN WHICH...</b> <i>3-4 sentences that highlight the key elements of the scenario</i>  <i>HINT: This should be more than just a restating of the driver outcomes - what does the world look like when these drivers interact?</i>	<p>America is no longer a Christian-majority nation, with wide-ranging consequences. Courting conservative Christians is no longer a viable national electoral strategy, and many people have sorted themselves by moving or changing their religious status, with the culture war continuing to rage at the boundaries. Many other traditional religions will increase their membership, but a much larger group will be left to meet their spiritual needs in unconventional ways; America will, naturally, use the gap to sell products (spiritual wellness industry) and reinforce employee loyalty.</p>
<b>WHALE</b> <i>Can you identify the "whale" of the system that runs this scenario?</i>  <i>Hint: The Whale is the biggest influence on the system. Your world needs this ____ for the rest to happen</i>	 Definitely the decline in Christian identification is the whale (don't worry, no Jonah jokes). The gap it leaves behind is the tailwind for most of the other drivers, as people search for meaning on their own and groups in society try to either take advantage of this or mitigate the consequences.
<b>CLIENT PERSPECTIVE</b> <i>What's your immediate feeling on how your client will react to this scenario?</i>	<p>Frustration/confusion. Pew Research is used to studying religion in a tidy way - people belong to one or none. A future where many people engage in a number of different religious/spiritual practices, with huge diversity in self-identification, may require very different approaches to study.</p>