

FORAGING Faith

MHS students stray away from organized religion to find their own path to faith

Thom Carter | Staff Writer

An increasing number of people are choosing to disregard organized religion. According to *TIME*, 16.1 percent of the United States' population consider themselves non-affiliated with any belief.

Senior Jimena Esparza is one student who said that she believes in God, but doesn't associate herself with any specific religion. When others ask what she considers herself, Esparza said that she simply tells them "nothing."

"I don't believe in defining what you are," Esparza said. "[Doing so] just separates everyone." The 12.1 percent Esparza is a part of is growing rapidly. According to *TIME*, their numbers have more than doubled since 1990. Esparza said she thinks that the growth directly correlates to a more accepting culture that has begun to appreciate diversity.

"I think that we've seen [acceptance] a lot and not just in religion, but also in gay rights and anti-discrimination concerning different ethnicities," Esparza said.

Sophomore Chris McMillan said he is an atheist and rejects the belief of any god. According to him, he's always questioned religion and its core beliefs and said he doesn't see a logical argument in what they preach.

The increase in the non-denominational population is, according to McMillan, a result of scientific research and a better understanding of the world around us. He said society has naturally progressed away from religion. McMillan said that now, sharing the fact that you may be a non-believer isn't as frowned upon as it once was, another element that, according to him, has contributed to the growth.

"Now that people are more comfortable with saying that [they are non-denominational], I think that we don't have to go back to [the past]," McMillan said.

Sophomore Ian Cossman said he considers himself

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