

Theos: Poverty and Justice Survey – Feb 08

METHODOLOGY NOTE:

ComRes interviewed 1008 GB adults by telephone between 1st and 3rd February 2008. Data were weighted to be representative demographically of all GB adults. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

HEADLINES:

- The most notable finding of this survey is the difference between the Christians compared to the atheists and agnostics. While the Christians are most aware that the Bible deals with Poverty and Justice the atheists and agnostics demonstrate that this is their greatest concern in the world today.
- It is interesting to note that while 39% of atheists and 31% of agnostics are concerned about 'the extent of poverty and injustice in the world' they are the groups who are least aware of the extent to which the Bible teaches about these issues.
- Respondents are divided on what concerns them most in today's world. 'The breakdown of traditional family structures' was the greatest concern with 29% of respondents stating this was their greatest concern. This was closely followed by 'The extent of poverty and injustice in the world' (28%) then 'International terrorism' (24%) and 'Climate change' (18%).
- While Christians, both who attend church and who do not, were most concerned about 'The breakdown of traditional family structures' (40% and 31% respectively). All other belief groups chose 'The extent of poverty and injustice in the world' as their greatest concern.
- 'The breakdown of traditional family structures' was of concern to 37% of people in the age group 55-64 but only 17% of those aged 18-24.
- The statement 'You must defend those who are helpless and have no hope. Be fair and give justice to the poor and homeless' was only recognised to be from the Bible by 13% of people. Over a quarter (28%) did not know where this statement was from. 27% of people think that this statement is from a speech by Bob Geldof.
- About one in five (21%) of Christians who regularly attend church thought this statement was from the Bible, compared to just one in ten of atheists and agnostics (9% and 10% respectively). Indicating that despite their strong concern for justice and poverty they are unaware of the Biblical content on the subject.
- Over half (56%) of people disagree with the statement 'The Bible is untrue' and 29% of people think that the 'Bible is untrue'. Of this 68% of atheists agree that 'the Bible is untrue' compared to 87% of church attending Christians who disagree that the 'Bible is untrue'.

- The statement 'the Bible champions the cause of the poor and marginalised' divided opinion between those who agreed and disagreed, both 42%. Across the age groups there is a trend that more people agree in higher age groups. Ranging from 18-24 year olds, just 30% agree up to 52% of over 65s.
- While 65% of Christians who attend church regularly agree that 'The Bible champions the cause of the poor and marginalised' less than half this number of atheists and agnostics agree (28% and 33% respectively).
- Once again opinion is divided over the statement 'The Bible is a great piece of literature but it's not relevant to today's modern world'; 47% agree and 46% disagree. 75% of church going Christians disagree compared to over half of agnostics and atheists (58% and 57% respectively) who agree that the Bible is not relevant to today's modern world.
- For the fourth statement tested 'The Bible challenges me about what I think and how I should live'; 43% of people agree and just over half, 51%, disagree. Of Christians who attend church regularly, 85% say the Bible challenges them about what they think and how they should live, compared to just 16% of atheists and 17% of agnostics.
- Looking at the subjects that people felt the Bible offers most teaching on 'Poverty and Justice' came top, far above the rest, with 52% of people thinking the Bible offers most teaching on this. This compares with 11% who chose 'Hell', 10% 'Adultery' and 2% 'Homosexuality'. There were 25% of people who stated they didn't know or none of these.
- While over half of all people consider the Bible to offer most teaching on 'Poverty and Justice' compared to the other areas covered this figure drops to 34% of atheists, with a further 29% saying they don't know. However 60% of church going Christians would say that the Bible has the most teaching on 'Poverty and Justice'.