



PENN
SCHOEN
BERLAND

Religious Independents Poll

Methodology

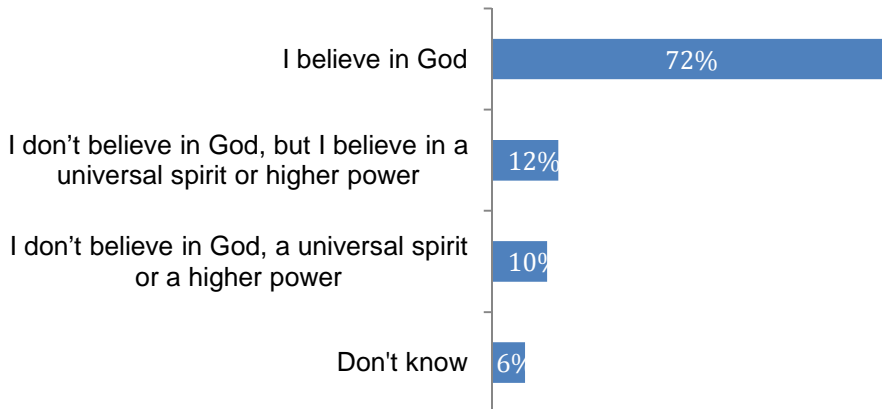
This data is based on the complete data set (**314 cases**) collected between August 19-20, 2008. The **MOE (Margin of Error)** is **+/- 5.53%** and is greater when looking at sub-groups.

Detailed Findings

A total of 314 people were asked about their belief in God which equates to 72% believe in God (called "Traditional Believers" in this research), 12% don't believe in God, but believe in a universal spirit or higher power (called "Religious Independents" in this research) and 10% don't believe in God, a universal spirit or higher power. (6% prefer not to say.)

The aim of the PSB poll was to flesh out the differences between Traditional Believers and Religious Independents.

Belief in God



Respondents were asked a battery of questions relating to their beliefs about God, spirituality, and the afterlife and important distinctions arise between Traditional Believers and Religious Independents. In general, Traditional Believers are more spiritual, with 75% who say “there are angels on earth right now” and 53% who say they’ve “had a spiritual or mystical life experience that defies simple scientific explanation.”

Religious Independents, however, are more rooted in this world than Traditional Believers, with 54% who say “after death, there is only what people remember of you.”

You will now see a series of statements regarding spiritual and religious beliefs. For each, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement.

% Agree	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
After death, there is either heaven or hell	51	67	21
After death, people return to earth in another form	23	21	51
After death, there is only what people remember of you	44	37	54
There are angels on earth right now	60	75	45
I have had a spiritual or mystical life experience that defies simple scientific explanation	44	53	33

You will now see a series of statements regarding spiritual and religious beliefs. For each, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement.

% Strongly disagree	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
After death, there is either heaven or hell	17	7	22
After death, people return to earth in another form	34	34	11
After death, there is only what people remember of you	25	32	8
There are angels on earth right now	15	4	27
I have had a spiritual or mystical life experience that defies simple scientific explanation	30	20	53

You will now see a series of statements regarding spiritual and religious beliefs. For each, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement.

% Disagree	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
After death, there is either heaven or hell	29	18	49
After death, people return to earth in another form	53	56	25
After death, there is only what people remember of you	41	49	31
There are angels on earth right now	24	12	37
I have had a spiritual or mystical life experience that defies simple scientific explanation	47	39	65

Religious Independents show that they are more interested in social justice than crosses and tablets, with 83% who say that it is more important to be ethical than devout. Only 64% of Traditional Believers agree with this.

Which of the following statements is closer to your view?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
My highest obligation in life is to be ethical	69	64	83
My highest obligation in life is to be devout	17	22	7
Don't know	14	14	10

Similarly, 72% of Religious Independents say that “living a good spiritual life depends mostly on how you act” compared with only 59% of Traditional Believers.

Which of the following statements is closer to your view?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Living a good spiritual life depends mostly on how you act	64	59	72
Living a good spiritual life depends mostly on what you believe	28	36	12
Don't know	8	6	16

Also, Religious Independents feel they were rejected by the Church, not the other way around; 46% of this group says “Christianity stands for exclusion” and only 25% says it “stands for inclusion.”

Which of the following statements is closer to your view?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Christianity stands for inclusion	50	63	25
Christianity stands for exclusion	20	10	46
Don't know	29	28	29

Traditional Believers feel they have a community of people who share their belief system, though they are also more interested in expanding this community. Religious Independents feel they have less of a community but are also less interested in finding one.

Do you feel you have a community of people who share your belief system?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Yes	71	75	43
No	14	11	34
Don't know	15	14	23



Do you wish you had a bigger or stronger community of people who share your belief system?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Yes	53	54	45
No	25	22	47
Don't know	22	24	8

There are also interesting demographic differences among Religious Independents and Traditional Believers. In general, Religious Independents are affluent, liberal, and well-educated.

For statistical purposes only, please indicate which of the following categories best represents your total household income for 2007.			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Less than \$20,000	9	10	16
\$20,000-\$34,999	13	13	7
\$35,000-\$49,999	16	16	9
\$50,000-\$74,999	28	26	28
\$75,000-\$99,999	13	13	20
\$100,000-\$149,999	11	13	5
150,000 or more	5	3	10
Don't know/Refused	6	6	6

In general, do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Liberal	24	18	50
Moderate	38	37	28
Conservative	29	35	17
Don't know/refused	9	10	6

What is the last grade in school you completed?			
	All	Traditional Believers	Religious Independents
Grade school	0	0	0
Some high school	1	1	2
High school graduate	12	12	10
Some college	32	35	30
College graduate	34	33	34
Graduate school	14	11	15
Technical school	6	7	6
Don't know	1	0	3