

PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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Ministry Affirmation: Mission Motivation

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

Ligonier Ministries, an evangelical Christian group, surveys adult Americans every two years, capturing their views on theological issues. After reviewing Americans' convictions about God, the Bible, salvation, and humanity/ethics, they came to the following conclusion:

*These results convey the ongoing need for the church to be engaged in apologetics, helping unbelievers by providing a well-reasoned defense of the Christian faith, and helping believers by strengthening their clarity and conviction regarding why they believe what they do. Additionally, the people of God must continue to obey the Great Commission by communicating the whole counsel of God in biblical evangelism and discipleship. The need is great...**



That statement would fit if it were placed on our Web site as the mission of *FaithSearch* International. That is what we do! *FaithSearch* ministry is totally relevant to today's needs in America, and likely around the world.

Let me summarize some of the results of the survey. I have placed some biblical references throughout the discussion which indicate what the Bible teaches about each subject. Get out your Bible, look up those references, and use this article as a "laboratory" to strengthen your own worldview—and to articulate it to others—in these areas.



Everyone has a worldview. Not all worldviews lead to God.

Throughout the article I have also placed pictures of relevant resources available at *FaithSearch*. Request a **FREE** copy of any or all of them for your personal spiritual growth and to advocate for the truth of the Christian faith in your network of influence. Send your request **before December 31, 2023**, to info@faithsearch.org or call our office, 952-401-4501 (Tuesday-Thursday, 9 am-4 pm).

Note: The book *Surprised by Faith* (SBF, on right) and our flagship event *Discovery* (on left, available on DVD and as a free course on the free Bible Learning Center (see www.FaithSearchLearning.org) are the best detailed sources for God, the Bible, and salvation.



About God

Surprisingly, according to the Ligonier study, 70% of American adults (AA) believe there is one true God who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11). However, confusion on this matter becomes evident when 59% of them said

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IN THE NEWS

Rescued Dignity

"Scooter," a Chinese crested dog, has "backward hind legs, a sparse quiff of white hair, and a permanently droopy tongue." His leg deformities require him to use a special doggy wheelchair. One observer commented, "In the cutest way possible, he kind of reminds me of a hairy hippopotamus." Nevertheless, the seven-year-old who was rescued from euthanasia at an Arizona shelter, has become a world title holder.

On June 23, in competition at Petaluma, California, he was declared the "**World's Ugliest Dog!**" Scooter wears the title with pride, as his owner wrote in her pet's competition bio: "**He has no idea that he is any different from any other dog.**" Surely there is an important lesson here for us humans.



Like "Scooter," the Ugly Duckling was despised and rejected until his true identity was made known (public domain).

Would we not change our perspective if we could get inside the unborn, the handicapped, and the lowly in our society – and see as they see?

And God created man in His own image... male and female He created them... And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:27, 31).

Source: *World Magazine*, July 29, 2023, page 22

Self and Selfie

An Indian government food inspector dropped his cell phone in a reservoir in May, while taking a selfie. When divers couldn't retrieve it, he ordered that the 500,000-gal-



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the Holy Spirit is only a “force” but not a personal being. (The personal attributes of intellect, will, and emotion are identified with the Holy Spirit: 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:30).

Furthermore, 53% of AA said Jesus is not eternal (cf. Hebrews 13:8), saying He was the first and greatest creation by God (cf. John 1:1-3), and He was a great teacher but not God (cf. John 10:30-33; Luke 22:70). Finally, 52% think God learns and adapts over time to different circumstances (yet Malachi 3:6).



Without Excuse: The Evidence for God (brochure); Why I Believe in God (DVD)

About the Bible

Christians should be encouraged to learn that 62% of AA in the survey said the Bible is the highest authority for what they believe (Matthew 4:4), and 51% said it is 100% accurate in all that it teaches (John 17:17). However, confusion sets in again when 53% said the Bible contains accounts of ancient myths and is not literally true (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12), and 40% said modern science has disproven the Bible (cf. Isaiah 45:9, 12; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:18-20). (See page 1: *Surprised by Faith; Discovery* (DVD).)

About Salvation

Once again, here we have mixed responses from AA. On one hand, 60% said only those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior receive the free gift of eternal life (Acts 4:12; John 14:6), and 64% agreed that Jesus' death on the cross is the only sacrifice which can remove the penalty of our sin (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 5:8-9). On the other hand, 67% believe that God accepts all religions (cf. Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:5), and 60% think religious belief is a matter of personal opinion and not about objective truth (1 Timothy 1:15; 2 Peter 1:21-22; John 16:12-15).



Discovering the Truth about Jesus the Christ (brochure); Discover the Reality of Knowing God; Becoming New in Christ (worksheets).

About Humanity and Morality

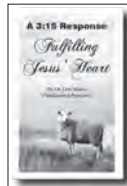
There is not a lot of correct thinking among AA in this area. It is a hopeful sign that 53% believe abortion is a sin (see Genesis 9:6; Psalm 139:13-16). However, 70% think everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God (yet Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3), 46% said the Bible's teaching on homosexual behavior no longer applies today (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1:26-27), and 42% that gender identity is a matter of choice (in spite of Genesis 1:27).

Reaching Our “Jerusalem”


FaithSearch has a mission to “extend the Gospel with evidence to all peoples everywhere.” Indeed, we have an active ministry among Russian-speaking people; have reached thousands in India and the Philippines; and Adrian has reached thousands in many countries through his Gospel illusion ministry.

It is short-sighted, however, to think that international ministry can be sustained without reaching our own “Jerusalem” (America). Christian people in the U.S. have contributed more prayer, finances, and missionaries to reach the world with the saving Gospel of Jesus than those from any other country in the history of humankind. However, this survey reveals there is a steady decline of Christian and biblical convictions in America. *FaithSearch* ministry helps to restrain this slide, having recorded over **73,000 known commitments to follow Christ; over one million people hearing** our many Good News in-person presentations; and **multiple millions hearing and reading** the Gospel through our use of print, video, and online media.

My appeal is that we pray for a renewed conviction regarding the salvation of our own countrymen. I refer you to read the apostle Paul's compassion regarding the salvation of his own people, the Jews: “*For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh...if somehow I might...save some of them*” (Romans 9:3; 11:14).



A 3:15 Response: Fulfilling Jesus' Heart (brochure)

Please join us in this high calling as we partner together with the power of the Holy Spirit going before us (John 16:8)! 

Source: “The State of Theology, US 2022.” The State of Theology survey, by Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research, has been conducted every two years since 2014. <https://thestateoftheology.com>, accessed 21 September 2023.


IN THE NEWS

Self and Selfie

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lon reservoir be pumped dry. They eventually found the phone, but it was too waterlogged to operate. He then found himself in “deep water.” He was suspended from his job and fined, since the water was intended to irrigate farmland during the hot summer in Chhattisgarh state.

He would have fared much better had he heeded the example of Jesus, referred to by the apostle Paul:


Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4). 

Source: *World Magazine*, July 15, 2023, p. 22

A Whole Country Gets Younger

On June 28, all South Koreans got younger! Was it the result of a Nobel Prize scientific discovery?

No, the country decided to jettison a traditional age custom that counted infants as a year old at the time of birth.

Furthermore, the old system had them turn a year older on January 1 rather than on their actual birthdate. **A child born on New Year's eve would have been considered two years old the very next day!** Surveys indicate that 86% of adults plan to use the new standard international system of age reckoning. As a result, nearly all South Koreans will be younger by at least a year. Seoul resident, Choi Hyun-ji, 27, said, “It's just great to feel like [you're] getting younger.” 



The gift of a “free” year.

Source: *World Magazine*, August 12, 2023, page 23

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