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God is still doing reasonably well in the polls

A majority of Canadians continue to believe in God, according to the most recent national survey by University of Lethbridge sociologist Dr. Reginald Bibby (DLitt '18).

Bibby has been charting the God numbers through national surveys from the mid-1970s to December of this year.



“God is not faring all that badly in the polls,” says Bibby. “Some 60 per cent of Canadians continue to believe in God and only 15 per cent say they definitely don’t. Those numbers represent a decline in clear-cut believers since the mid-1970s, but show that belief in God is still widespread in Canada.”

Over the years, the surveys have provided interesting insights about Canadians’ spiritual beliefs. His first Project Canada survey in 1975 found that only two per cent of Canadians said they didn’t believe in God. That figure has now increased to 16 per cent. In 1975, agnostics comprised six per cent of survey respondents; in 2020, agnostics comprise 13 per cent.

Bibby’s surveys have been able to track various age cohorts, including Baby Boomers. As Boomers have aged, they and their aging parents have been less inclined to express decisive belief in God. About one in 10 have opted for atheism.

Belief in God is slightly higher in Saskatchewan and the Atlantic regions, as it is among women and people born outside of Canada. Levels of belief are slightly lower among younger adults and university graduates.

As would be expected, belief in God is considerably higher among the 75 per cent of Canadians who identify with religious groups than it is among the 25 per cent who say they have no religion.

“The God findings provide a further reminder of the reality of the growing diverse responses to religion in Canada,” says Bibby. “This religious polarization includes individuals who can be described as pro-religious, low religious and no religious.”

Bibby’s latest survey finds that 25 per cent of Canadians are pro-religious, 45 per cent are low religious and about 30 per cent are no religious.

“During this time of year when faith has traditionally been on the minds of many, more Canadians than in the past have said goodbye to the gods. But large numbers — in fact the majority — have not,” says Bibby.

Bibby has been monitoring social trends in Canada for the past 45 years and making his findings publicly available. One of his most recent religion books is *Resilient Gods: Being Pro-Religious, Low Religious, or No Religious in Canada*. This latest survey was conducted in partnership with Andrew Grenville and Maru/Blue Research using a representative online sample of 3,029 people.

See tables below.

This news release can be found online at [God doing well in the polls](#).

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Contact

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TABLES

Belief in God, 1985, 2000, 2020			
<i>"Do you believe that God exists?"</i>			
	1985	2000	2020
Yes, I definitely do	61%	49	32
Yes, I think so	23	32	27
No, I don't think so	10	13	26
No, I definitely do not	6	6	15
Total	100	100	100

Belief in God by Sex, Age, & Region: 2020	
<i>"Yes, I Definitely Do or Yes, I Think I Do" (%)</i>	
Canada	59
Women	62
Men	57
55-plus	68
35-54	57
18-34	51
Saskatchewan	79
Atlantic	68
Manitoba	63
Ontario	60
Quebec	56
BC	54
Alberta	54

Belief in God by Birthplace, Religion, & Education: 2020	
<i>"Yes, I Definitely Do" or "Yes, I Think I Do" (%)</i>	
Canada	59
Born outside Canada	67
Born in Canada	60
RC's: Outside Quebec	80
RC's: Quebec	64
Conservative Protestants	92
Other World Faiths	78
Mainline Protestants	72
No Religion	23
High school and less	64
Some post-secondary	59
Degree-plus	51

Belief in God, 1975 and 2020: The Details		
<i>"Which of the following comes closest to what you believe about God?"</i>		
	1975	2020
I know God exists, and I have no doubt about it	48%	26
While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	22	14
I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at other times	4	8
I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a higher power of some kind	17	21
I don't know whether there is a God, and I don't believe there is any way to find out	6	13
I don't believe in God	2	16
Other	1	2
Totals	100	100