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Location: Lawrenceville, Georgia, United States

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Monday, July 14, 2008

Poll Shows Godly Results

Recent Poll Shows Christians Believe Religious Freedom is Crucial to Foreign Policy Issue

May 2008 poll commissioned by Open Doors shows presidential candidates must address religious liberty as key foreign policy topic

SANTA ANA, Calif., July 14 /Christian Newswire/ -- More than half of Christians in America believe religious freedom should be a high priority in crafting U.S. foreign policy, according to a recent Wilson Research Strategies survey commissioned by Open Doors USA.

"The persecution of Christians in the world today is on the rise, with an estimated 100 million suffering some sort of repression and even death for their faith," said Carl Moeller, president and chief executive officer of Open Doors USA, a Christian ministry that has served persecuted Christians around the world for more than 50 years. "Open Doors commissioned this study to try to understand what Christians in America feel about religious freedom. Clearly, it is a priority."

Fifty-four percent of U.S. Christians polled consider religious freedom an important issue in making U.S. foreign policy, according to the survey. This is an especially high priority with those who attend church most frequently (60 percent), compared with those Christians who never attend (40 percent).

The study shows that 96 percent of respondents believe strongly that religious freedom is a basic human right, and that more than eight in 10 believe it is a very important basic right. Those who feel most strongly about the issue are women who frequently attend church. Ninety-one percent believe it is a very important issue.

Respondents did not believe that direct intervention should form our religious freedom foreign policy. Instead, they favored the U.S. using more indirect policies, such as economic sanctions (20 percent) and diplomatic measures to pressure persecuting regimes rather than having the U.S. directly intervene.

"The findings of this study demonstrate that senators McCain and Obama must address the issue of religious freedom in their foreign policy positions if they are intent on winning the vote of faithful Christians," said Moeller.

Geographically, the weakest support for religious freedom as a basic human right is in New England, with only 76 percent of respondents ranking it as very important, compared with Mountain States, where 9 out of 10 say it is very important.

Among Christian groups, the strongest support came from Baptists, non denominational/independent churches, Lutherans and charismatics. The weakest group support came from Catholics, Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

Of special interest is the finding that 98 percent of frequent listeners to Christian radio believe strongly that religious freedom is a basic human right.

Wilson Research Strategies was commissioned to conduct a research study of 1,000 Christian adults nationwide. A sample of 1,000 has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The study was conducted by telephone May 27-29, 2008. This sampling represents 72 percent of the United States population, which is equal to roughly 150.5 million people who call themselves Christians. Christians in this study were defined as people who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that by believing that He died for their sins they have eternal life. All respondents were contacted via Random Digit Dialing methodology. The sample was stratified by key demographics, including age, gender and area in order to representatively measure the United States' Christian population at large.

An estimated 100 million Christians worldwide suffer interrogation, arrest and even death for their faith in Christ, with millions more facing discrimination and alienation. Open Doors supports and strengthens believers in the world's most difficult areas through Bible and Christian literature distribution, leadership training and assistance, Christian community development, prayer and presence ministry and advocacy on behalf of suffering believers. To partner with Open Doors USA, call toll free at 888-5-BIBLE-5 (888-524-2535) or go to their website at www.OpenDoorsUSA.org.

- Christian Newswire

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[The Night Watch - Main Site](#)
[The Night Watch Store](#)
[Night Watch Prayer Network](#)
[Night Watch World News](#)
[Night Watch Prophetic Network](#)
[Night Watch Miracle Network](#)

archives

[April 2006](#)
[May 2006](#)
[June 2006](#)
[July 2006](#)
[August 2006](#)

September 2006
October 2006
November 2006
December 2006
January 2007
February 2007
March 2007
April 2007
May 2007
August 2007
September 2007
October 2007
November 2007
December 2007
February 2008
March 2008
April 2008
May 2008
June 2008
July 2008

