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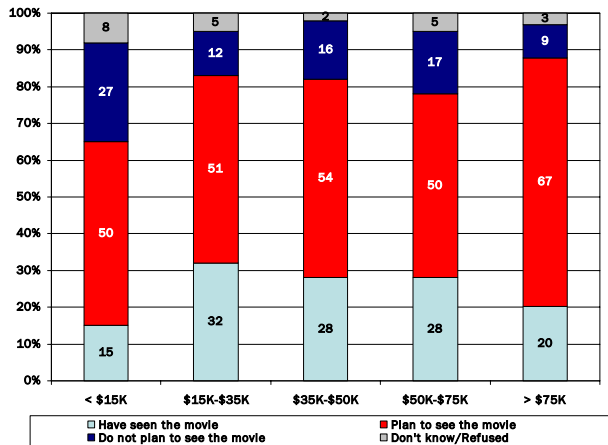
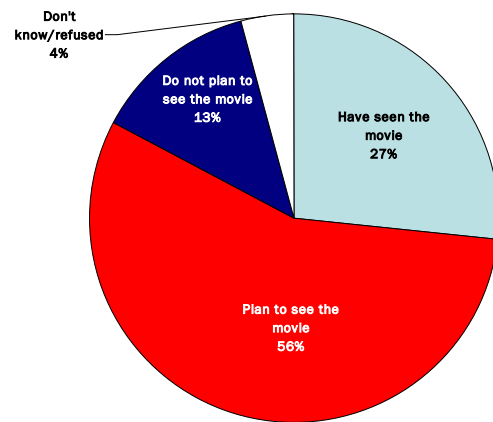
## The Passion of the Christ: Intentions and Attitudes Among Born Again Christians

*Nationwide Polls of Christians show just one in eight do not plan to see movie*

McLean, VA, March 10, 2004— If you haven't heard of Mel Gibson's controversial movie *The Passion of the Christ* by now, it's either because you don't have television, don't have eyes, or don't have ears. Since its opening on Ash Wednesday this year (February 25, 2004), the movie depicting the final days of Christ – and exploring the question of who was to blame for his death – has dominated not only the box office, but the prevalent spot in conversations in churches, around water coolers, and across family dinner tables. Self-identified Evangelical and Born Again Christians are, not surprisingly, proving no exception.

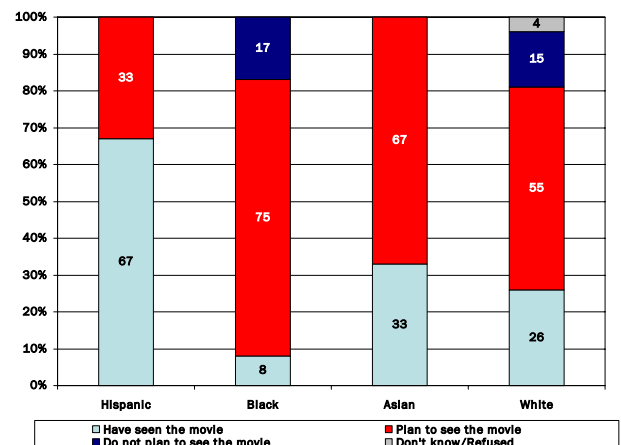
As part of a recent study conducted by Wilson Research Strategies, a survey and market research firm based in McLean, VA, it was found that the vast majority of Evangelical and Born-Again Christians nationally have either seen the movie or intend to see it. Only 13% of this group overall do not plan to see the movie. More than a quarter (27%) have already seen it, and more than half (56%) say they intend to see the movie. A few (4%) just don't know, or refused to answer.

In the first weekend of its opening, *Passion* grossed \$83.8 million nationally, and, as of today, its 12-day total earnings have totaled \$213.9 million. Interestingly, while many movies generate the bulk of their revenue on the weekends, *Passion* is holding strong during the week as well, with church congregations descending like hordes of locusts on movie theaters Monday through Friday.



Considering revenue, WRS looked at movie viewing or intent to view by income. Those in the middle income ranges (\$15K - \$75K) are more likely to have already seen the movie than those in the income extremes (making either less than \$15K or more than \$75K). The most likely group planning to see the movie are also those in the wealthiest income group, with two thirds of those making more than \$75K annually reporting they plan to see the movie. For all income levels, half or more will see the movie. Not surprisingly, those most likely not to see the movie are of the lowest income group (27% of those earning less than \$15K).

Age does not appear to play a major role in determining who has already seen the movie, with no statistically significant differences in percentages across each strata. There are some differences in age, however, with respect to those who plan to see the movie, with younger groups more likely than older groups. Over half (55%) of those 25-34 and 62% of those 35-49 plan to see the movie. Slightly less than half (48%) of those in the 50-62 age group and 51% of those 63 years of age and older will see it.

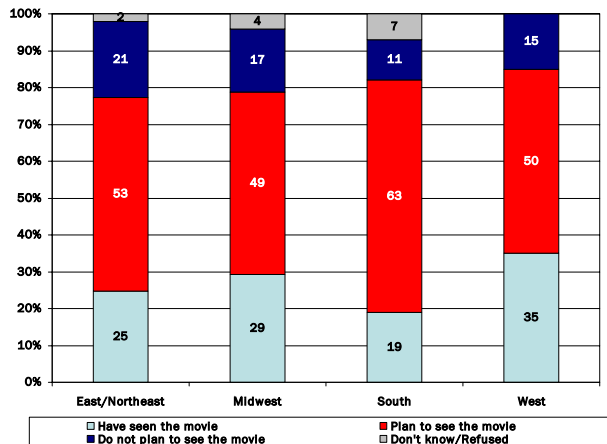


Hispanics are most likely to have already seen the movie (67%) compared to the other races by significant margins. Also, all Hispanics have either seen *Passion*, or will see it. Hispanics are also more than twice as likely as Asians (33%) to have already seen it, and two and a half times as likely as Whites (26%). African Americans are the least likely racial group to have seen the movie, with less than one in ten (8%) reporting having seen it.

This association is less likely to do with race than some other unmeasured factor, such as timing, as evidenced by the fact that three out of four blacks intend to see it. Clearly the Hispanic population was first out of the gate to the box office, as opposed to being more interested in *Passion* overall. Those in the Hispanic and Asian racial categories have either already seen the movie or plan to see it, with neither of these groups being apathetic (don't know) or without plans to see it.

Evangelical/Born Again Christians residing in the East or Northeast part of the country are most likely not to see the movie (21%), those in the South least likely not to see it (11%). More Westerners than any other group have already seen it (35%), but those in the South are most likely to plan to see it (63%).

*The Passion of the Christ*, however, while enjoying high interest among various religious groups – churches are renting out entire theaters for congregational viewing – and spending quite a bit of time being talked about, hasn't been as successful as other movies – specifically those in the science fiction, fantasy, or comic book realms, though the “buzz” may indicate otherwise. In 2002, *Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones* had a viewer ship drop of just 25% in its first two weeks, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003) dropped only 30%. *Spider-Man* in 2002 had the same viewer ship retention numbers as *Passion*, but earned more almost one and a half times in ticket sales in its first two weekends.



It remains to be seen exactly where *Passion* will wind up in movie-tracking history – already it is one of the top 50 films of all time – but Born Again and Evangelical Christians seem determined to push it into quite memorable status, as measured nationally by attendance and gross box office ticket sales, and in this survey by past viewing or future intent to do so.

*This data, collected by Wilson Research Strategies, is based on scientific polling. Telephone interviews were conducted with 300 self-identified Born Again and Evangelical Christians nationwide March 4, 2004. The margin of error for is +/- 5.6% at the 95% confidence level.*

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