

Zogby Survey Finds Religious Leaders and Members at Odds

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In contrast to many national religious leaders who are lobbying for increases in immigration, a new Zogby poll of likely voters who belong to the same religious communities finds strong support for reducing overall immigration. Moreover, members strongly disagree with their leaders' contention that more immigrant workers need to be allowed into the country. Also, most parishioners and congregants prefer more enforcement to cause illegal workers to go home, rather than legalization of illegal immigrants, which most religious leaders prefer. The survey of Catholic, mainline Protestant, born-again Protestant, and Jewish voters used neutral language and was one of the largest polls on immigration ever done.

The full results are at <http://www.cis.org/ReligionAndImmigrationPoll>. Among the findings:

Most members of religious denominations do not feel that illegal immigration is caused by limits on legal immigration, as many religious leaders do; instead, members feel it's due to a lack of enforcement.

- Catholics: Just 11 percent said illegal immigration was caused by not letting in enough legal immigrants; 78 percent said it was caused by inadequate enforcement efforts.
- Mainline Protestants: 18 percent said not enough legal immigration; 78 percent said inadequate enforcement.
- Born-Again Protestants: 9 percent said not enough legal immigration; 85 percent said inadequate enforcement.
- Jews: 21 percent said not enough legal immigration; 60 percent said inadequate enforcement.

Unlike religious leaders who argue that more unskilled immigrant workers are needed, most members think there are plenty of Americans to do such work.

- Catholics: 12 percent said legal immigration should be increased to fill such jobs; 69 percent said there are

plenty of Americans available to do such jobs, employers just need to pay more.

- Mainline Protestants: 10 percent said increase immigration; 73 percent said plenty of Americans are available.
- Born-Again Protestants: 7 percent said increase immigration; 75 percent said plenty of Americans are available.
- Jews: 16 percent said increase immigration; 61 percent said plenty of Americans available.

When asked to choose between enforcement that would cause illegal immigrants to go home over time or a conditional pathway to citizenship, most members choose enforcement.

- Catholics: 64 percent support enforcement to encourage illegals to go home; 23 percent support conditional legalization.
- Mainline Protestants: 64 percent support enforcement; 24 percent support legalization.
- Born-Again Protestants: 76 percent support enforcement; 12 percent support legalization.
- Jews: 43 percent support enforcement; 40 percent support legalization.

In contrast to many religious leaders, most members think immigration is too high.

- Catholics: 69 percent said immigration is too high; 4 percent said too low; 14 percent just right.
- Mainline Protestants: 72 percent said too high; 2 percent said too low; 11 percent just right.
- Born-Again Protestants: 78 percent too high; 3 percent said too low; 9 percent just right.
- Jews: 50 percent said it is too high; 5 percent said too low; 22 percent just right.

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specific day it should be observed.

Second, the reviewer's suggestion that I combine the first two chapters into one: I thought of that and tried to do it, but it did not work for me. Chapter 1 makes the point that in the time of Jesus, "curing" and "healing" were virtually one and the same. If a culture assumes that all sickness is a divine punishment and ostracizes the sick as "polluted," the only "healing" possible (convincing the sick and the community that the divine punishment has been lifted and they can live again in hope) is to "cure" the sickness. You cannot be "forgiven" of whatever caused God's displeasure apart from being "physically" cured. This was the thrust of Jesus' healing ministry: to "cure" sickness and to "heal" the person through forgiveness.

The second chapter makes clear that the link between "curing" and "healing" no longer exists in our scientific era. We can be "cured" of our physical problem (like the war veteran whose wounds have been sutured) but not healed of our depression; or we can be healed of our depression even while we are missing a limb. Faith-based caregivers can help patients realize that when no cure is possible, peace and hope for the future is still possible. Or, that even if one's physical problem has been solved, your challenges as a total human being may not be. That's what we call "whole-person care."

Rasmussen believes that Adventist hospitals do this pretty well. I agree, but believe we could do better. I have also found that while most non-SDA employees are devoted Christians and committed to the Adventist health-care mission, they are not always clear about how we understand the healing ministry of Jesus.

On issue three, the Sabbath, Rasmussen picks up my concern that caregivers rest but overlooks my point that the caregiver (Christian, not simply Adventist) most in danger of ignoring her rest is the one who most cares about her patients. I wanted all faith-based caregivers to understand that God's command to rest does not disappear because we are engaged in self-denying caregiving (though, admittedly, there are emergencies when we need to stretch ourselves to the limit).

I hope these comments clarify my intentions in the book. I can only hope that everyone who reads my book will give it as careful a review as has Ms. Rasmussen.

—James Londis

Discussion

Most major denominations agree that illegal immigrants must be treated humanely. But the leadership often goes much further and takes the position that illegal immigration is caused, at least in part, by not letting in enough legal immigrants. They then call for increases in the number of workers and family members allowed into the country. For example, early this year, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) issued a resolution stating that, "Due to the limited number of visas, millions have entered the United States without proper documentation." The NAE then calls for increases in the number of immigrant workers allowed in. The Catholic Church states that the law must be reformed so that more "laborers from other countries can enter the country legally." The Episcopal Church adopted a resolution in July of this year stating that, "Immigrants are filling the jobs that go unwanted and unfilled by U.S. citizens." The resolution makes clear more immigrant workers need to be allowed in legally. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in November 2009 adopted a document that states illegal immigrants do jobs that "citizens often will not do" and that legal immigration should be increased to meet, "the annual need for foreign workers." A Commission of the Union for Reform Judaism argues that limits on immigration contribute to illegal immigration, and calls for legislation that "increases the number of visas allowing unskilled laborers to work in the U.S."

Most parishioners believe that enforcing the law and improving the wages and working conditions of unskilled workers to attract more Americans is the best way to deal with illegal immigration. The huge divide between leaders and members means that if there is a full-blown immigration debate next year it will be all the more contentious, with Jewish and Christian leaders on one side of the issue, their members on the other, and elected officials in the middle.

Methodology

Zogby International was commissioned by the Center for Immigration Studies to conduct an online survey of 42,026 adults. Zogby used its online panel, which is representative of the US population. Zogby International weighted the data slightly to more accurately reflect the U.S. population. Zogby conducted the survey from November 13–30, 2009. The margin of error for the three Christian groups is +/- 1.1 percent and +/- 2.4 percent for likely Jewish voters. ■