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Bible in American Life Report Released

The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture is pleased to announce that "The Bible in American Life" report is now available. An analysis of questions about the Bible we placed on the General Social Survey and the National Congregations Study III, this report focuses on the ways the Bible is used by ordinary Americans in everyday life, outside formal services.

Among its pertinent findings are:

- There is a 50/50 split among Americans who read *any form of scripture* in the past year and those who did not. Among those who did, women outnumber men, older people outnumber younger people, and Southerners exceed those from other regions of the country.
- Among those who read any form of scripture in the past year, 95% named the Bible as the scripture they read. All told, this means that 48% of Americans read the Bible at some point in the past year. Most of those people read at least monthly, and a substantial number-9% of all Americans-read the Bible daily.
- Despite the proliferation of Bible translations, the King James Version is the top choice-and by a wide margin-of Bible readers.
- The strongest correlation with Bible reading is race, with African Americans reading the Bible at considerably higher rates than others.
- Half of those who read the Bible in the past year also committed scripture to memory. About two-thirds of congregations in America hold events for children to memorize verses from the Bible.
- Among Bible readers, about half had a favorite book, verse, or story. Psalm 23, which begins, "The Lord is my shepherd..." was cited most often, followed by John 3:16.
- Bible readers consult scripture for personal prayer and devotion three times more than to learn about culture war issues such as abortion, homosexuality, war, or poverty.
- There are clear differences among Bible readers consulting scripture for specific reasons. Age, income, and education are key factors.

- Those reading the Bible frequently consult it on culture war issues more than two times the rate as those who read it less frequently.
- Less than half of those who read the Bible in the past year sought help in understanding it. Among those who did, clergy were their top source; the Internet was the least cited source.
- Among Bible readers, 31% read it on the Internet and 22% use e-devices.
- Bible reading differences among religious traditions followed predictably the historic divides between Protestants and Catholics, and between white conservative and white moderate/liberal Protestants. However, reading practices defy some stereotypes about certain groups.

The report can be accessed at the Center's website: www.raac.iupui.edu.

Call for Papers "The Bible in American Life Conference" Deadline now March 23, 2014

Please note that, because the *Bible in American Life Report* was released a week later than anticipated, the deadline for the Call for Papers for this summer's "The Bible in American Life Conference" (August 6-9) has been postponed until March 23. Information about the CFP is available as well on the Center's website.



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