

Adults Hold Mix of Traditional, Nontraditional Evangelical Beliefs

A mixture of orthodox evangelical beliefs and unorthodox views are held by U.S. adults, according to a LifeWay Research report released Oct. 23.

Strong majorities affirm the traditional evangelical positions that “There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit” (70 percent), that “God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake” (69 percent), and that “Jesus Christ’s death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin” (63 percent).

At the same time, a significant number of U.S. adults affirm views typically deemed unorthodox by evangelicals, including “Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature” (66 percent) and that “Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth” (60 percent).

U.S. adults were less strongly affirming of typical evangelical positions on a number of social issues. For example:

- 52 percent asserted that “abortion is a sin,” while 38 percent disagreed and 10 percent were not sure.
- 51 percent said that “sex outside of marriage is sinful,” while 42 percent disagreed and 8 percent were unsure.
- 44 percent said “the Bible’s condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn’t apply today,” while 41 percent disagreed and 15 percent were unsure.
- 39 percent agreed that “gender identity is a matter of choice,” while 51 percent disagreed and 11 percent were unsure.

“When the majority of Americans believe religious belief is more personal opinion than objective truth, then we expect to see contradictory beliefs and beliefs that change over time,” Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, said in a [press release](#) announcing the report.

The LifeWay Research survey was commissioned by Ligonier Ministries, a Christian organization based in Orlando that was founded by R.C. Sproul in 1971.

The survey's margin of error is plus/minus 1.9 percent.

The full report is available [here](#).