

Spiritual Interest Survey Results at the University of Turin - 2012-2013

Method

90 students were surveyed at one university site in Turin during 2012-2013. These were done using questionnaires which were used to explain the gospel to the students. To spend 30 minutes filling out a questionnaire with a student was not unusual.

Observations

This university complex specialises in humanities and so the results reveal the artistic bias of such subjects. For example, from an arts viewpoint, science appears to be viewed quite sceptically – after all, isn't it another imposition of authority which may work for some people and may not for others. It was unusual for me, as a scientist, to discover such constant scepticism. Postmodern thinking was the strongest worldview held by the students.

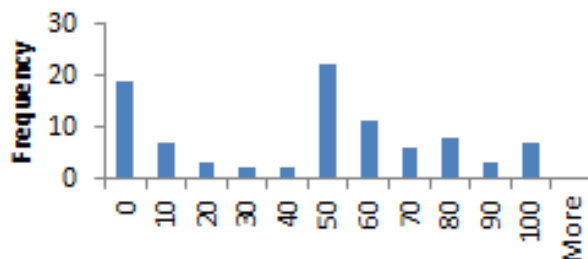
Results

The results are contained in the Appendix. The following is a summary of the results. The most common answer to “Does God exist?” is yes, God does exist – 42% say this with 27% saying no and the rest being unsure. However not many of these would say that Jesus was this God. Instead, in general, students prefer to think of Jesus as a good teacher (37%), perhaps even a prophet (19%). Only 13% would have him as God.

There was a variety of answers to what happens after death from the most popular answer nothing (31%), followed by a heaven/hell (22%), reincarnation (16%) and then a myriad of other options they liked or uncertainty followed.

The question, “if heaven exists, how likely are you to go there?” provided a variety of results:

Histogram



Most struggled to answer this question. A number answered 0 – seemingly feeling battered by the Catholic church and perhaps suffering under the weight of moral commands, feeling unable to satisfy them at all. A growing number, though, voted from 50% to even 100% capturing the idea that though we don't know, it'll probably be alright in the end.

As for the Bible, that is just an old book (40%). Whilst 22% will call it as the word of God, it is hard to know quite how to take these 22% because out of these 20 people that call the Bible the word of God, only 8 of them believe it says Jesus is God, 7 thinking he was just a good teacher and 5 thinking he was only a prophet. These are people brought up in the Catholic church who are responding this way. Is this a sign of just how peripheral a figure Jesus is in Catholic thinking?

Appendix: Tables from Questionnaires

Does God exist?

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
No	24	26.7%
I don't know	27	30.0%
Yes	38	42.2%
#N/A	1	1.1%
Grand Total	90	100.0%

What exists after death?

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Reincarnation	14	15.6%
Nothing	28	31.1%
I don't know	11	12.2%
Heaven/hell	20	22.2%
Other	17	18.9%
Grand Total	90	100.0%

Who was Jesus?

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Prophet	17	18.9%
Good teacher	33	36.7%
God	12	13.3%
I don't know	10	11.1%
Other	15	16.7%
N/A	3	3.3%
Grand Total	90	100.0%

What do you think of the Bible?

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Just an old book	36	40.0%
The word of God	20	22.2%
A book that doesn't interest me	3	3.3%
Other	28	31.1%
N/A	3	3.3%
Grand Total	90	100.0%

If there was a heaven, in percentage terms, how likely do you think you'd be to go there?

Histogram

