



# Morality, Religion and Evolution

## A Comparison of New Zealand and the United States

[Omnibus Results – August 2007]



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# 1. Morality

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The biggest difference in the moral acceptability of issues tested between the United States and New Zealand was on the death penalty.

66% of the United States respondents considered the death penalty was morally acceptable compared to 42% of New Zealanders.

The next biggest difference was on having a baby outside of marriage. 74% of New Zealanders considered this morally acceptable compared to 54% of those in the United States.

New Zealanders appeared generally more relaxed on sexual issues – considering sex between unmarried man and woman (78% to 59%) and homosexual relations (60% to 47%) more morally acceptable.

55% of New Zealanders considered abortion morally acceptable compared to 40% of United States respondents.

United States respondents were more relaxed about gambling with 63% considering it morally acceptable compared to 49% of New Zealanders.

Views were most closely aligned on medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos (seen as morally acceptable by 65% of New Zealanders and 64% of United States respondents), polygamy (10%; 8%), cloning humans (9%; 11%) and married men and women having an affair (9%; 6%).

### MORALITY OF SOCIAL ISSUES - COMPARISON

*Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues. Regardless of whether or not you think it should be legal, for each one, please tell me whether you personally believe that in general it is morally acceptable or morally wrong. How about...?*

	MORALLY ACCEPTABLE		DIFFERENCE NZ MINUS USA
	NZ %	USA* %	
The death penalty	42	66	-24
Having a baby outside of marriage	74	54	+20
Sex between an unmarried man and woman	78	59	+19
Abortion	55	40	+15
Gambling	49	63	-14
Divorce	78	65	+13
Homosexual relations	60	47	+13
Cloning animals	27	36	-9
Buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur	50	58	-8
Suicide	21	16	+5
Doctor-assisted suicide	54	49	+5
Medical testing on animals	54	59	-5
Married men and women having an affair	9	6	+3
Polygamy, when one husband has more than one wife at the same time	10	8	+2
Cloning humans	9	11	-2
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos	65	64	+1

Base: All, n=750

\*NB: Data sourced from a Gallup Poll of 1003 United States adults aged 18 and over, conducted via telephone interviews from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

## 2. Religion

There are very marked differences in the extent of religious belief in the United States and New Zealand.

86% of United States respondents declared they believe in God compared to 56% of New Zealanders.

70% believe in the Devil compared to 26% of New Zealanders.

81% believe in Heaven compared to 48% of New Zealanders.

69% believe in Hell compared to 30% of New Zealanders.

	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS - SUMMARY							
	BELIEVE IN		NOT SURE ABOUT		DON'T BELIEVE IN		NO OPINION/ UNSURE/ REFUSED	
	NZ	USA	NZ	USA	NZ	USA	NZ	USA
God	56	86	20	8	22	6	2	-
The Devil	26	70	16	8	55	21	3	1
Heaven	48	81	21	8	29	11	2	-
Hell	30	69	18	8	50	22	2	1

Given an alternative framing, 78% of United States respondents declared they believed in God, 14% that they didn't believe in God but believed in a universal spirit or higher power and 7% that they didn't believe in either. 46% of New Zealanders believed in God, 31% declared they didn't believe in God but believed in a universal spirit or higher power and 19% didn't believe in either.

STATEMENTS ABOUT BELIEF IN GOD		
Which of the following statements comes closest to your belief about God?		
	NZ %	USA %
I believe in God	46	78
I don't believe in God, but I do believe in a universal spirit or higher power	31	14
I don't believe in either	19	7
Unsure/ No opinion/ Refused	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3. Evolution

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New Zealanders are much more likely to accept that evolution is how we got to where we are today.

75% of New Zealanders declare that evolution is definitely or probably true compared to 53% of United States respondents.

BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION		
	NZ %	USA %
Definitely true	26	18
Probably true	49	35
<b>TOTAL TRUE</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>53</b>
Probably false	8	16
Definitely false	12	28
<b>TOTAL FALSE</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>
No opinion/ Unsure	5	3

Given three options, 40% of New Zealanders plumped for the view that human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life, but God had no part in the process; 27% for the view that human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life and God guided this process and 24% for the literal creationist view that God created human beings in their present form exactly the way the Bible describes it.

The choices in the United States were very different with 53% plumping for the view that God created human beings in their present form exactly the way the Bible describes it, 31% that human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life and God guided this process and only 12% for the view that human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life, but God had no part in this process.

See table on following page ...

## VIEWS ON ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANS

*Which of the following statements comes closest to your views on the origin and development of human beings?*

	NZ %	USA %
Human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life and God guided this process	27	31
Human beings have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life, but God had no part in this process	40	12
God created human beings in their present form exactly the way the Bible describes it	24	53
Other/ No opinion/ Unsure	9	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## **4. Methodology**

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### **4.1 Morality methodology**

Results in this report are based upon questions asked in the UMR Research nation-wide omnibus survey. This is a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.

Fieldwork was conducted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at UMR Research's national interview facility in Auckland.

The margin of error for sample size of 750 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is  $\pm 3.6\%$ .

The questions are replicated from those in a Gallup poll conducted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. These results were based on telephone interviews of a randomly selected national sample of 1003 Americans 18 years of age and over.

The margin of error for sample size of 1003 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is  $\pm 3.0\%$ .

### **4.2 Religion methodology**

Results in this report are based upon questions asked in the UMR Research nation-wide omnibus survey. This is a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.

Fieldwork was conducted from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 at UMR Research's national interview facility in Auckland.

The margin of error for sample size of 750 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is  $\pm 3.6\%$ .

Results are compared with those from a US Gallup Poll conducted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. These results were based on telephone interviews of a randomly selected national sample of 1003 Americans 18 years of age and over.

The margin of error for sample size of 1003 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is  $\pm 3.0\%$ .

Note: Questions of a similar nature were not asked in the same survey.

## **4.3 Evolution methodology**

Results in this report are based upon questions asked in the UMR Research nation-wide omnibus survey. This is a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.

Fieldwork was conducted from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July and 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at UMR Research's national interview facility in Auckland.

The margin of error for sample size of 750 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is  $\pm 3.6\%$ .

Results are compared with those from a US Gallup Poll conducted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. These results were based on telephone interviews of a randomly selected national sample of 1003 Americans 18 years of age and over.

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