

BELIEFS OF "CHRISTIANS" VARY WIDELY

A new survey conducted by The Barna Group reveals that a majority of those Americans who call themselves Christians believe that Satan "is not a living being, but a symbol of evil." Four out of ten (40%) said they "strongly agree" with the statement and 19 percent said they "agree somewhat." Also, 58 percent of Americans who call themselves Christians said they either "strongly agree" or "agree somewhat" that the Holy Spirit is "a symbol of God's power or presence, but not a living entity."

Barna also pointed out that American Christians who can be described as "born again" have a variety of different beliefs about Satan and the Holy Spirit. For the purpose of the study, Christians were seen as "born again" if they understood that salvation is solely the result of confession of sin and a belief in God's grace received through Jesus Christ. Among this group, only about 30 percent believe that Satan is just a symbol of evil or that the Holy Spirit is not a living entity.

The study also revealed that:

- Twenty-two percent of self-described Christians believe either somewhat or strongly that Jesus sinned while on earth.
- Seventy-three percent of self-described Christians believe either somewhat or strongly that the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches.
- Sixty-four percent of self-described Christians believe either somewhat or strongly that a person can be under the influence of spiritual forces, such as demons or evil spirits.

The research was based on 1,871 phone interviews conducted in 2008. To view the complete report, go to www.barna.org.