

Mercer University & Faith in Public Life
2008 Torture Survey
Final Topline
August 14-22 2008
N=600

Hello, my name is _____, and I am calling from Opinion Access Corporation, a national public opinion research company. We're conducting a telephone opinion survey on behalf of a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. We are not selling anything, and your individual responses will be kept completely confidential. I'd like to ask a few questions of the YOUNGEST MALE, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home. [IF NO MALE, ASK: May I please speak with the YOUNGEST FEMALE, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?]

Q.S1. Are you a U.S. Citizen?

100	Yes
0	No
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

(IF NOT YES=US CITIZEN, THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

Q.S2 Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you think things have gotten off on the wrong track?

19	Right Direction
71	Wrong Track
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

Q.S3 Generally how would you say things are these days in your life -- would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

34	Very happy
48	Pretty happy
17	Not too happy
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

RACE What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian, or some other?

100	White
0	Black
0	Asian
0	Other or mixed race
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

(IF NOT WHITE (RACE ≠ 1), THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

RELIG What is your present religion if any – Are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Mormon, some other Christian or something else?

75 Protestant (include Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witness, Church of Christ, etc.)
0 Roman Catholic
0 Orthodox Christian
0 Jewish
0 Mormon
25 Other Christian or "just Christian"
0 Something else (Non-Christian religion)
0 No religion, not a believer, atheist, agnostic (VOL)
0 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

(IF NOT PROTESTANT OR OTHER CHRISTIAN (RELIG ≠ 1,6), THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

BORN Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?

100 Yes
0 No
0 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

(IF R IS NOT BORN-AGAIN OR EVANGELICAL (BORN ≠ 1) THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

[MAIN INTERVIEW]

ASK ALL:

Q.1 How closely are you following the 2008 presidential election? **[READ IN ORDER]**

36 Very closely
39 Fairly closely
15 Not too closely
9 Not at all closely
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

REGIST These days, many people are so busy they can't find time to register to vote, or move around so often they don't get a chance to re-register. Are you NOW registered to vote in your precinct or election district or haven't you been able to register so far?

86 Yes, registered
14 No, not registered
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '1' YES IN REGIST ASK:

REGICERT Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote, or is there a chance that your registration has lapsed because you moved or for some other reason?

99 Absolutely certain
1 Chance registration has lapsed
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

VOTE08 (IF REGICERT=1) Now, suppose the 2008 presidential election were being held TODAY. If you had to choose between [READ AND ROTATE]—who would you vote for?

14 Barack Obama, the Democrat
65 John McCain, the Republican
21 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

Q.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?

	General <u>Population</u> ¹
47 Approve	28
44 Disapprove	66
<u>9</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>
100	100

Q.3 How closely would you say you follow the news coverage about the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism?

38 Very closely
44 Fairly closely
12 Not too closely
5 Not at all closely
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

¹ Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Survey, August 2008

Q.4 Now I'm going to read you a pair of statements. Please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right **(RANDOMIZE)**.

		<u>General Population</u> ²
42	The best way to ensure peace is through military strength	28
	OR	
43	Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace	59
12	Neither/Both equally (VOL)	9
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>4</u>
100		100

Turning to another subject,

Q.5 Do you think the use of torture against suspected terrorists in order to gain important information can often be justified, sometimes be justified, rarely be justified, or never be justified?

		<u>General Population</u> ³
20	Often justified	17
37	Sometimes justified	31
16	Rarely justified	20
22	Never justified	30
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>
100		100

Q.5a When it comes to the issue of torture, which of the following MOST influences your thinking about whether or not it can be justified? Would you say **(READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS)**

28	Christian teachings and beliefs
14	Philosophy and reason
44	Life experiences and common sense (OR)
5	Advice of government leaders
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

² Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Religious Landscape Survey, 2007

³ Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Survey, February 2008

Q.6 Now I'm going to read you a few pairs of statements. Please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right.
(READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE OPTIONS)

a.

59 Torture is necessary in some cases because it provides us with vital information about our enemies

OR

34 Torture is never necessary because it does NOT provide us with reliable information about our enemies.

3 Neither/Both equally (VOL)

4 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

100

b.

39 In these dangerous times, it is justifiable for our government to use methods against our enemies that we would not want used on American soldiers.

OR

52 Even in these dangerous times, our government should follow unchanging principles like the Golden Rule. We should NEVER use methods against our enemies that we would not want used on American soldiers.

3 Neither/Both equally (VOL)

6 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

100

c.

51 Suspected terrorists are not entitled to legal protections because they operate outside of the law.

OR

41 Even suspected terrorists are entitled to legal protections because America is a nation based on law.

3 Neither/Both equally (VOL)

5 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

100

d.

51 America's first priority should be winning the war on terror, and that requires the use of torture in some cases.

OR

37 America's first calling is to be a moral light to other nations, and that requires that we never resort to torture.

6 Neither/Both equally (VOL)

6 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

100

- e.
- 56 Torture is acceptable because it might lead to the prevention of a major terrorist attack.
 - OR**
 - 37 Torture is never acceptable because every human life is sacred, and torture violates human dignity.
 - 3 Neither/Both equally (**VOL.**)
 - 4 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)
 - 100

Q.7 Just your best guess, do you think the U.S. (United States) government as a matter of policy is or is not using torture as part of the U.S. campaign against terrorism?

	General <u>Population</u> ⁴
53 Is using torture	56
32 Is NOT using torture	39
<u>15</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>5</u>
100	100

END OF INTERVIEW.

⁴ ABC News/Washington Post Survey, December 2005

About the Survey

This survey was commissioned by Mercer University and Faith in Public Life and conducted by Public Religion Research. Results for this survey were based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Opinion Access Corporation among a sample of 600 white evangelical Christian adults, age 18 years or older in the southeastern United States. This region includes the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. The survey was fielded from August 14-22, 2008.

The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 4.5% at the 95% confidence interval. In addition to sampling error surveys may also be subject to error or bias due to question wording, context and order effects.

The data was weighted using demographic weighting parameters derived from the Religious Landscape Survey. Conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life from May 8 – August 13, 2007, the Religious Landscape Survey is a national survey of 35,000 adults with detailed information on religious affiliation and identity.