

## GENERAL SYNOD

### **“Talking Jesus” – research on public perceptions of Jesus, Christians and evangelism in England**

1. What do people in this nation know and believe about Jesus? What do they really think of us, his followers? Do those outside our churches know a practising Christian? Have they ever had a conversation about Jesus? If they have how did that conversation impact them? How do people come to faith in Jesus and begin to follow him for themselves? Answers to these questions will shape our evangelism strategy and help us understand those outside our churches better.
2. MPA partnered with the Evangelical Alliance and HOPE to ask these questions to aid the churches in England with their common task of evangelism. The research was conducted by BARNAs Group who used ComRes as a polling agent in the UK. BARNAs Global is a leading research international research and resource organisation focused on the intersection of faith and culture. ComRes is a market research consultancy operating in the UK and internationally.
3. A sample of 1,000 English adults completed a ten minute on-line survey. They were carefully selected as a representative sample of the English population by age, ethnicity, socio-economic grade and geographic area. The initial findings were shared with a group of denominational leaders at a Summit in Windermere in March 2015. As a result further research was commissioned, funded from across the denominations, to complete a poll of 2,545 English adults with an additional over sample of 1,592 practising Christians.
4. The accompanying booklet is a short summary of the larger research project. Of course, like all surveys, the results raise new questions which must be addressed in further research. But the findings presented to Synod are statistically robust and thus not to be dismissed lightly.
5. Some headline findings:
  - 43% of the population believe Jesus rose from the dead
  - 40% of the population don't know Jesus was a real historical figure
  - 67% of the population know a practising Christian
  - 66% of practising Christians have talked about Jesus to a non-Christian in the past month
6. Many of the research findings reinforce what many in the church knew anecdotally. Other findings help us to develop a fuller and more nuanced picture of the culture within which our vocation to mission and evangelism is lived out. A few findings have been greeted with disbelief. But we cannot simply dismiss research which does

not bear out our preconceptions. All poll data must be treated with a degree of caution – but it is vital to gather data that is as robust as possible if our missional engagement with the cultures around us is to be effective.

7. The findings of the “Talking Jesus” research project will be presented to Synod, and time for questions and discussion will follow. Synod is invited, in particular, to help us think through the practical implications for mission strategies at diocesan, parish and national levels. More information can be found at [www.talkingjesus.org](http://www.talkingjesus.org)

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