

“BIBLE MINDED” CITIES

Weylan Deaver

Recently the Barna Group published a graphic (you can view at <http://cities.barna.org/americas-most-and-least-bible-minded-cities/>). The chart ranked ninety-six American cities, according to the percent of population who were "Bible-minded." The results were based on 42,855 interviews conducted from 2005 through 2012.

What does it mean to be "Bible-minded"? Well, for purposes of the survey, two criteria were used. First, in a typical week, you actually read from the Bible. Second, you strongly believe the principles taught in the Bible are accurate. That's it. So, if you believe the Bible is right, and you read it in a typical week, you are considered "Bible-minded" for purposes of the survey.

We'll not take time to recount all the results, but mention here a few. For example, according to the results, the most "Bible-minded" city in America is Knoxville, Tennessee (statistically tied with Shreveport, Louisiana and Chattanooga, Tennessee). In those cities, 52% of the population are "Bible-minded."

Whether or not that is encouraging depends on one's perspective. It is good that over half a city claims to believe the Bible, and reads it regularly. However, it also means that 48% of the population either does not believe the Bible is true, or does not read it (or both). In other words, per the survey, 48 out of 100 people you meet in Knoxville are either disinterested in or opposed to the Bible. And that's in the most "Bible-minded" place in the country!

Interestingly, Dallas/Fort Worth ranks at #27 (with 38% "Bible-minded"), and that is the best in Texas. The Metroplex is trailed by San Antonio at #33 (with 36% "Bible-minded"), Houston at #39 (with 32% "Bible-minded"), Austin at #48 (with 29% "Bible-minded"), and El Paso at #80 (with 23% "Bible-minded").

We live in the so-called "Bible Belt" of America. Yet, according to the survey, 62 out of every 100 people in the Metroplex are not "Bible-minded." Thus, 62 out of 100 in DFW are disengaged from the Bible. And the rest of Texas fares even worse.

If that's the encouraging news, what were the survey's least "Bible-minded" cities? The worst, ranking #96, is the combination of Providence, Rhode Island and New Bedford, Massachusetts, where only 9% are "Bible-minded." Nine percent. That means 91 people out of 100 have nothing to do with the Bible.

Other bottom-ranking cities on the list of 96 are Chicago (#76), New York City (#85), Las Vegas (#86), San Francisco (#90), Boston (#91). In all those places, fewer than 25% are "Bible-minded."

Hartford/New Haven, Connecticut ranks #92 out of 96. In those cities, 84 out of 100 people are out of touch with the Bible. Connecticut is where the Sandy Hook elementary school massacre occurred in December.

What can we conclude? If the statistically best cities still have 48% of their populations disengaged from the Bible, then (1) the culture has drifted far from its spiritual roots, and (2) the devil has cultivated a great resistance to God's word. We cannot accurately call America Christian. The best we can claim is that we are Christians in America. And that is a thing it is getting harder and harder to be.

"Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you, And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18, ASV).