

**BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEW POLL SHOWS BRITISH COLUMBIA LARGELY NON-RELIGIOUS,  
SUPPORTS SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT**

**29 April 2013 (Vancouver, BC)** – A new poll of British Columbians shows a large majority of the province is not religious.

The survey, conducted by Justason Marketing Intelligence for the BC Humanist Association, found that nearly two-thirds (64%) people in BC do not practice a religion or faith – a number that rises to 75% in the City of Vancouver. Further, 20% do not believe in, and 9% are unsure of, the existence of a “higher power.”

The results come one week before Statistics Canada releases the religion results of the 2011 National Household Survey. The BCHA is concerned that by asking what religion a person is “even if this person is not currently a practicing member of that group,” the Survey data will over report religious affiliation. Thirty-six percent of BC was recorded as non-religious in the 2001 Census.

“This gives us the opportunity to paint a picture of BC’s secular and non-religious community,” says Ian Bushfield, Executive Director of the BCHA, whose organization is working to build a community for the non-religious.

BC’s large non-religious population is also concerned about the separation of church and state. The poll shows that a majority of the province (59%) disagrees with comments made by BC Premier Christy Clark in February 2013 calling for the government to work closer with faith communities. Only 46% of BC Liberal voters support Clark’s comments.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of British Columbians are concerned that Canada’s federal government has gone too far mixing religion and politics. Recent concerns have been raised over \$20 million of federal funding that has gone to private Christian universities and the opening of the Office of Religious Freedoms.

When it comes to religion in schools, nearly three-quarters (73%) of British Columbians do not agree with public schools encouraging students to participate in a specific faith. The BCHA opposed the distribution of Gideon Bibles in Chilliwack and Abbotsford schools, which it considers to be a form of proselytizing.

“Teach, don’t preach” is the message that BCHA Executive Director Ian Bushfield thinks these results send to educators and legislators. “No religion should get special treatment in BC schools.”

The survey sampled 600 British Columbians 18 and over from April 15 to 23. Results are considered accurate +/- 4.0 percentage points, 19 times of out 20.

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Further results from the poll, including infographics are available at <http://bchumanist.ca>

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