

Articles, images, and TV-reports from Newswire are free to use for the press.

People in Trøndelag and Northern Norway Least Religious

By Kristin Cock 03.06.2019 07:00

Reads the Bible: There is a considerable correlation between where in the country you live, and how Christian you are.

A fresh poll about religion in Norway suggests that people in Trøndelag and Northern Norway are less religious than the rest of the country.

While one in three people in the south and west of Norway believe in the Creation, less than one in five from Trøndelag and Northern Norway believe the same. This becomes apparent in a national survey conducted by the analytics group YouGove for the Nordic Bible Museum.

- People in the south, in the so-called Bible belt, have seemingly always been the most Christian, and in the west. It is in any case interesting that the differences are so substantial, says Rune Arnhoff, who runs the Nordic Bible Museum in Oslo.

A grand total of 32 percent of the population in the south and west, and 23 percent in Oslo and Akershus believe in the Creation narrative. This world view is only accepted by 19 percent of the population in Trøndelag and Northern Norway.

Tough conditions

- An old saying tells us that "there are no atheists in foxholes". This means that in challenging circumstances, most people turn to God. While it's true that there have been tough conditions along the coasts of Southern Norway and Western Norway, the same can be said for Northern Norway as well. So, this doesn't really explain why geography has such a significant influence on people's faith, says Arnhoff.

He argues that the answer first and foremost lies in well-imbedded traditions. It is hard to find another explanation, he says.

Also when it comes to biblical miracles, people in Trøndelag and Northern Norway are more skeptical. When questioned about whether they believe in the narrative of Noah's Ark, people in Trøndelag and Northern Norway are the least faithful.

Atheists in the east

Despite the fact that people in the northern regions are the least faithful, it is the residents of Eastern Norway who most often describe themselves as non-Christians. A staggering 44 percent of the population in Oslo/Akershus identifies as atheists, agnostics, or humanists. In

Southern Norway and Western Norway, the corresponding figures are 32 and 31 percent, while 34 percent in Trøndelag and Northern Norway fall into these categories.

- This could suggest that they have a less active connection to Christianity further north. They don't believe as much as people in other places in the country, but on the contrary don't have a need or wish to distance themselves either. Although that is just a theory, Arnhoff emphasizes.

At the same time, there are more people who identify with Christian beliefs in the countryside. Almost every other Norwegian that lives in non-urban areas reports that he or she identifies with Christianity. Every third person in the cities calls themselves Christian.

A Christian majority

The survey also shows that about every other Norwegian identifies with one of the major religions, or as religious. 37 percent of the participants answer Christianity, three percent Islam, two percent Buddhism, and one percent Judaism on questions about which religion they identify with. Eight percent answer that they are religious, but that they do not belong to any specific religion, and 17 percent state that they are atheists.

Which of the following worldviews do you identify with the most?

Christian: 37%

Muslim: 3%:

Buddhist: 2%

Jewish: 1%

Hindu: 1%

Religious: 8%

Agnostic: 9%

Humanist: 8%

Ateist: 17%

The remaining participants had other answers, or chose not to answer.

(Source: YouGov)

Contact person:

- Rune Arnhoff, Nordic Bible Museum, tel: 913 94 354

Newswire is a commission-funded news agency. Articles, pictures, and videos are free to use in the press. This article is written for the Nordic Bible Museum.