

Global Unbelievers

✖ **April 15, 2009** – From bloggers announcing evangelical collapses to *national magazines* declaring “The End of Christian America,” much has been made in recent weeks about the spiritual decline of the United States. And judging by the surge of church-centric stories last week among secular media outlets, Christianity is suffering a global deterioration as well.

In Canada, a new nationwide survey revealed a nosedive in the number of people who believe in God. According to pollster Ipsos Reid, 71 percent of Canadians currently believe in God, compared to 84 percent in 2000. Interestingly enough, the sharpest decline was among men (63 percent compared to 86 percent nine years ago) and both middle-agers and seniors. Overall, a mere 21 percent of the Canadian population believes in the existence of heaven and hell.

“One wants to say that faith is constant,” remarked Ipsos vice president John Wright. “But I think it is transient for the majority of people.”

It’s a surprisingly different story, however, in the lands down under. Similar surveys in Australia and New Zealand, both of which have been known as “post-Christian” cultures, reveal a continuing belief in biblical truths. In New Zealand, a Massey University study found only 20 percent of people say they’ve been born again, while a mere 41 percent believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God Television New Zealand reported. Yet among Australians who aren’t born again, a full 45 percent still believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and only one out of 10 believes He didn’t exist, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

“We are staggered,” said John Dickson, a church historian who co-directed the study for the Centre for Public Christianity

in Sydney, according the *Sydney Morning Herald*. “We thought the survey would show the profound scepticism of Australians. Instead it shows there is a base-level assumption among the Australian public that accepts the Jesus story even if it has no relevance to their lives.”