

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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CONTACT: PATRICK MURRAY
(732) 932-9384 ext. 243

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Thursday, August 26, 2004 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

NEW JERSEY GENERATIONS Part 5: RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

by Patrick Murray
with Elizabeth Williamson

This is the fifth of a special series of reports on *New Jersey Generations*, a joint project of the Eagleton Institute of Politics and Edward J. Bloustein School of Rutgers University, and the *Star-Ledger* of Newark. The series looks at generational differences in the political, social, and cultural life of the state. Stories will run in the paper and will be released on *The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* website concurrently. A chronology can be found on the background information page at the end of this report. The four generations we refer to are DotNets (18-27), GenerationX (28-39), Baby Boomers (40-58), and Matures (59+). Thumbnail sketches of each generation can also be found on the background information page as well.

Older Adults Look to their Churches, Temples and Mosques for Guidance. Younger Adults Look to the Stars

While older New Jerseyans tend to engage in more traditional displays of religious expression such as personal prayer and attendance at religious services, they are somewhat less likely than their younger neighbors to believe in paranormal manifestations of life beyond earth. A recent *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* that surveyed New Jersey's generations also found that women are more likely than men to become religious as they age.

Traditional Religious Practices

While similar percentages of all four generations surveyed claim some religious affiliation, older New Jerseyans distinguish themselves by their greater participation in standard religious activities, such as attending services and praying daily. About 3-in-10 New Jerseyans attend

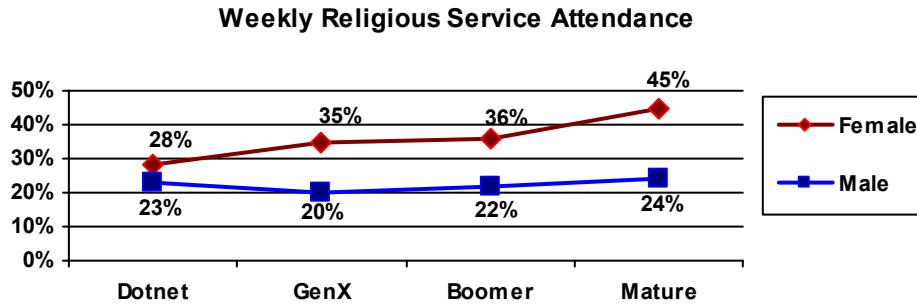
The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Acting Director: Patrick Murray x243 • Past Director: Cliff Zukin x247

Graduate Research Assistant: Robert Suls & Allison Kopicki

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551

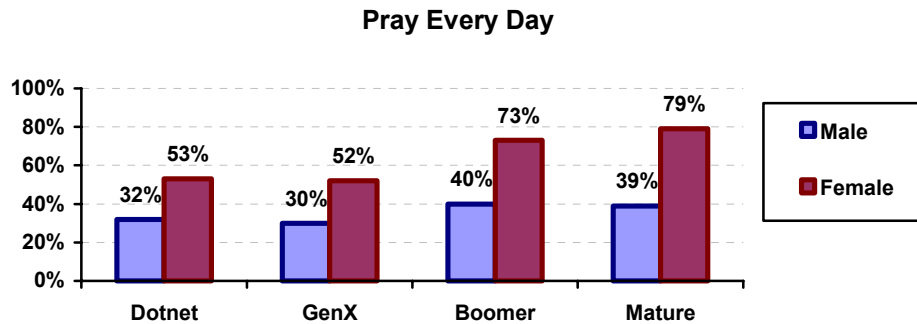


religious services at least once a week. This includes just over 1-in-4 of the Dotnet (26%), GenX (27%) and Boomer (29%) generations. Matures, however, are more likely than their younger neighbors to make a weekly visit to their church, temple or mosque – 37 percent of the oldest cohort report doing so.

These age cohort differences in religious attendance are driven mainly by behavior among New Jersey women as they get older. Young men and women start off with similar levels of traditional religious service attendance, but while attendance among males remains fairly stable across generations – hovering just below 1-in-4 for all four generations, weekly attendance increases for women – from 28 percent among Dotnets, to 35 percent for GenX and 36 percent for Boomers, to nearly half (45%) among Matures.

And there also seems to be something about reaching age 40 that causes both men and women to pray a little bit more than they did in their younger days. Across the generations, just over half of all New Jersey adults (53%) pray at least once a day, 36 percent pray sometimes and 10 percent report they never pray. Rather than increasing gradually as the population ages, there appears to be a spike in daily prayer from the GenX to Boomer generations. On the whole, about 4-in-10 Dotnet (42%) and GenX (41%) adults pray every day. This increases to about 6-in-10 among Boomer (58%) and Mature (64%) New Jerseyans.

As with attendance at religious services, there are clear gender differences in who prays. However, unlike religious service attendance, men as well as women are likely to increase their personal entreaties to God when they reach 40. Among Dotnet and GenX women, just over half pray every day compared to 3-in-10 men in these age groups. Turning to the Boomer and Mature generations, prayer among women increases to approximately 3-in-4. Among older men the increase is not as large, but still jumps about 10 percentage points to 4-in-10 Boomer and Mature men who pray every day.



Some other expressions of religious devotion asked about in the poll provide a more mixed bag of results. For example, the generational differences among those who report watching a religious program on TV in the past month are slight, running from 23 percent of Dotnets up to 33 percent of Matures. However, it is worth noting that Mature women lead the way in watching religious TV. Fully 40 percent of this group say they have done so in the past month. In general, women in each generation are more likely than their male counterparts to report watching such programs.

The findings for listening to religious music are also similar. In all, about 3-in-10 New Jerseyans, regardless of age, have listened to religious music in the past month. Again women in each generation are somewhat more likely than similarly-aged men to have done this.

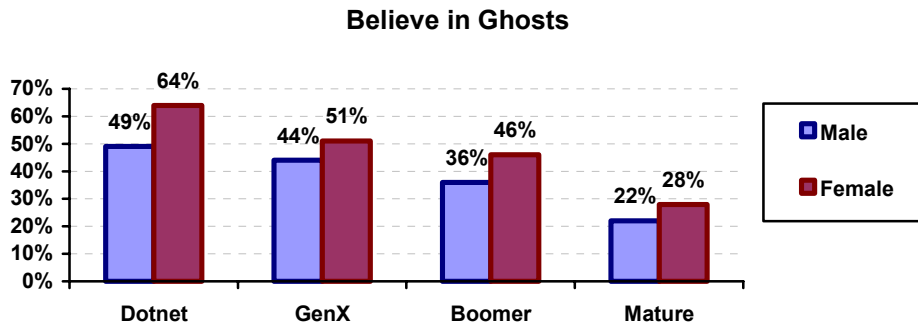
There is one area in religious devotion where the generational difference are turned upside down – that is among those who actively partake in religious discussion groups. In this case, Dotnets (28%) and Boomers (27%) are somewhat more likely than GenX (20%) and Matures (17%) to report attending a religious study group in the past month. Moreover, the gender differences within generation are much less pronounced for this activity than with any other traditional religious activity examined in the poll.

Belief in the Paranormal

The poll also asked New Jerseyans about their belief in six different supernatural phenomena. Overall, half or more of all adults believe in miracles (70%), ESP (55%) and Satan (50%). Fewer than half give credence to life on other planets (46%), ghosts (41%) and astrology (35%). Generationally, there are few age-related differences in the belief of miracles, the devil or astrology. The story is somewhat different for belief in extraterrestrial life, ghosts and ESP among the state's generations.

The belief in intelligent alien life stands at about half (47 to 52%) for adults in the three younger generations. However, this belief drops to only 36 percent among Matures.

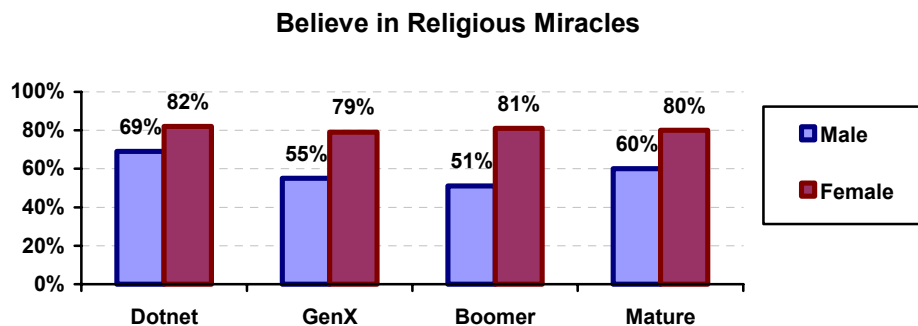
Dotnets are the most likely to believe in ghosts – with 57 percent accepting the existence of such apparitions. This drops slightly to just under half of GenX (48%) and Boomer (42%) adults. Only 1-in-4 Matures (26%) believes that spirits exist. Patrick Murray, acting director of the poll noted, “Apparently, New Jersey adults give up their belief in ghosts as they get closer to ‘giving up the ghost’ themselves.”



In the area of extrasensory perception, it is Boomers who give ESP the greatest credence. Belief in ESP grows from 46 percent of Dotnets and 53 percent of GenXers to 62 percent of Boomers, before dropping back down to 53 percent of Matures. Of course, it was the Boomers who popularized ESP in the 1960s and 70s.

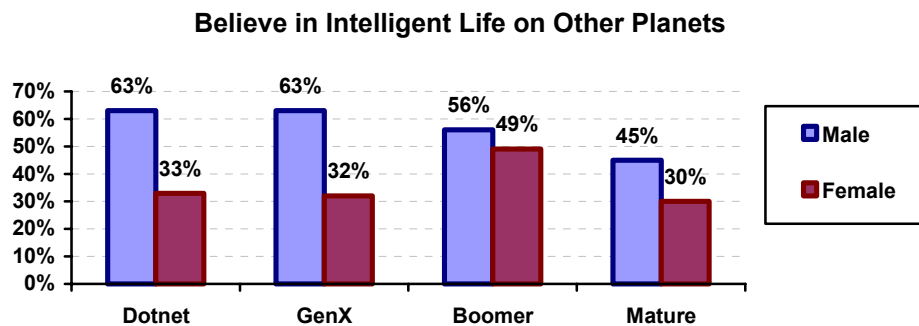
– Age, gender and the paranormal –

There are also some interesting gender differences in paranormal beliefs. About 8-in-10 women of all ages believe in miracles, while among men the level of belief ranges from 69 percent of Dotnets, down to 55 percent of GenX and 51 percent of Boomers, and then back up to 60 percent for Matures.



On the other hand, women are much less likely than men to believe in intelligent life on other planets. Just over 6-in-10 Dotnet (63%) and GenX (63%) men are ready for a close encounter of the third kind, along with 56 percent of Boomer males and 45 percent of Mature males. On the other hand, only 1-in-3 Dotnet (33%), Genx (32%) and Mature (30%) women believe in intelligent life beyond the stars.

Boomer women buck this trend as nearly half (49%) believe in alien life forms, but this is still somewhat lower than for Boomer men. It's unclear from the survey why women register a lower belief on this one paranormal phenomenon while they have higher levels on others. Murray speculated, "Considering the wide gulf between men and women on this belief, perhaps women simply can't imagine that there is intelligent life anywhere in the universe."



Background Information on the *New Jersey Generations Study*

The Cast of Characters

Ours is a story of four New Jersey generations and their attitudes and behaviors across seven areas of political, social and economic life. Here are four primary actors – generations or age cohorts – in the drama.

- **Matures**, born before 1946, are about 1.6 million strong in the state today. Almost all were born before the explosion of the first nuclear weapon. Driven by duty and sculpted by sacrifice, this generation was forged by the experiences of the Depression and World War II, even though many experienced them indirectly through their parents while growing up. What is left in our definition of “Matures” is the last remnant of the WWII generation, along with the following cohort, often called the “Silent Generation,” who took their cues in working hard for a better life and upholding the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- **Baby Boomers**, born between 1946 and 1964 constitute the largest age cohort — about 2.3 million. This group was parented by prosperity, sharing a presumption of entitlement to their world view. Shaping political experiences were the Civil Rights movement, Viet Nam, and Watergate, not to mention rock music, drugs and the sexual revolution. The Boomer cohort has always been big enough to force the culture to adapt to them. For years they have dictated politics and culture by their sheer numbers in a market-driven economy, and policy to the degree they have had a coherent outlook.
- **Generation X**, or GenXers, born between 1964 and 1976 also number about 1.6 million. This group’s formative experiences were framed by familial and financial insecurity. They grew up amidst rising rates of divorce and recession. Where the sexual revolution of the Boomers brought free expression and experimentation, the threat of AIDS brought Xers fear and caution. During adolescence and early adulthood, their political world view was shaped by, well, pretty much nothing. The biggest external disruption was the Persian Gulf War, which ended quickly and without many American casualties, with computer-aimed smart bombs falling on targets like a video arcade game. Described as “slackers,” and scorned for a world view that begins and ends with themselves, even their moniker is about something that never happened.
- **DotNets**, are the new kids in town. Born after 1976, they are the 1 million young adults now between 18 and 27 years of age. They go by many labels — Millennials, Generation NeXt, Generation Y. We call them DotNets because we think one of their defining characteristics will be having come of age along with the Internet. Information has always been virtually costless and universally available to them; technology cheap and easily mastered; community as much a digital place of common interest as a shared physical space. As of now, we know little about DotNets, except that they don’t vote. This is our first look at this cohort in New Jersey.

The Study Design

The survey questionnaire was designed by students in Professor Cliff Zukin's graduate class in Survey Research offered at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy in the spring, 2004 semester. Zukin was, until recently, director of the Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll. He was assisted by Patrick Murray, now the Poll's Acting Director. Rob Suls served as the project manager. Other graduate students working on the project were: Lauren Arnold, Marci Berger, Mary Ellen Cook, Tara Cullen, Allison Kopicki, Nick Martyniak, Angie McGuire, Sharon Pinnelas, Regina Podhorn, Rochelle Rudnick and Elizabeth Williamson.

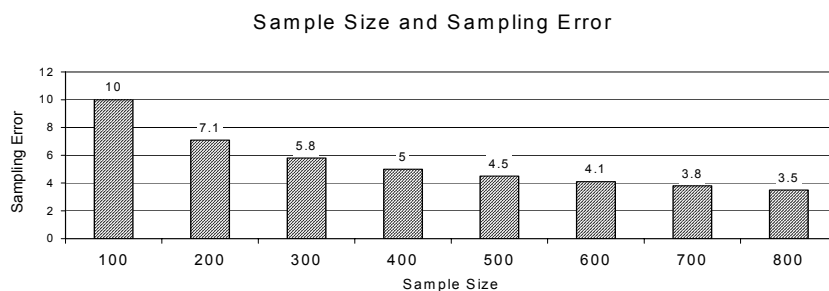
Six general topic areas were identified for study. All data will be released by Eagleton; most will also be the subject of stories in the Star-Ledger. Here is the schedule of releases and stories:

	<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Star-Ledger Story</i>	<i>Eagleton Release</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Politics and Government	Politically disconnected youth	Politically disconnected youth plus further partisan realignment	8/22
	Family & Leisure Time	The impact of "women's liberation"	Importance of family; how leisure time is spent	8/23
3	Money & Personal Finance	Materialistic youth	Money and employment concerns	8/24
4	Sex & Relationships	Children out of wedlock	Sexual practices, what's import in a relationship, what children should be taught; views of marriage	8/25
5	Religion & Spirituality	Ghosts, astrology and ESP	Variety of religious & para-normal beliefs and practices	8/26
6	Race & Immigration	<i>n/a</i>	Diversity & tolerance; views of societal change; race relations	8/27

The survey was conducted by telephone with a random sample of 819 New Jersey adults. The sample was stratified to include approximately equal numbers of residents (approximately 200 each) in each of four pre-defined generations, and the final results were weighted to represent the population as a whole. Interviewing took place between March 17 and 31, 2004. The sampling error associated with the generational sample sizes is ± 7 percentage points. Thus if we found that 50 percent of our *sample* of Baby Boomers agree with a particular statement, we would be pretty confident (95 percent sure) that the true value in the underlying *population* from which the sample was drawn is somewhere between 43 and 57 percent (50 ± 7).

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP146-5) August 26, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from March 17 to March 31 with a scientifically selected random sample of 819 New Jersey adults. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error is ± 3.4 percent for the full sample at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to be less likely to agree with a statement, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50 ± 3.4) had all New Jersey residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for different generational groups, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The margin of error for any of the four generations is ± 7.1 percent. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“[INTRO: Now I’d like to ask you some questions about religion and spiritual matters.] Do you consider yourself to be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, some other religion, atheist or agnostic?”
[RS1]

	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Protestant</u>	<u>Jewish</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Atheist/ Agnostic</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	43%	33%	5%	1%	4%	4%	7%	4%	101%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>										
--Dot-Net	44	21	4	2	5	6	12	5	99	(203)
--Gen X	38	34	4	1	3	8	7	5	100	(204)
--Boomer	44	33	6	--	4	2	7	4	100	(206)
--Mature	44	40	6	--	3	1	4	2	100	(206)

“Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services...more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom or never? [RS2]

	<u>More than once a week</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>A few times a month</u>	<u>A few times a year</u>	<u>Seldom or Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	9%	21%	17%	24%	28%	1%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>								
--Dot-Net	8	18	15	25	34	1	101	(203)
--Gen X	5	22	15	27	31	1	101	(204)
--Boomer	10	19	23	22	25	1	100	(206)
--Mature	12	25	12	24	25	2	100	(206)

“Please just tell me if you have or have not done each of the following in the last month. [RANDOMIZE LIST] (A) Listened to religious music on CD, radio, or tape? (B) Had your palm read? (C) Watched religious TV programs? (D) Attended religious discussions or study groups?” [RS3A-D]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Listened to religious music	31%	69%	--	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	28	72	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	28	72	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	34	66	--	100	(206)
--Mature	32	67	1	100	(206)
Had palm read	1%	98%	--	99%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	3	96	1	100	(203)
--Gen X	1	98	1	100	(204)
--Boomer	1	99	--	100	(206)
--Mature	1	98	1	100	(206)
Watched religious TV programs	28%	71%	1%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	23	77	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	24	74	1	99	(204)
--Boomer	29	70	1	100	(206)
--Mature	33	67	1	101	(206)
Attended religious discussions or study groups	23%	77%	--	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	28	72	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	20	80	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	27	73	--	100	(206)
--Mature	17	82	1	100	(206)

About how often do you pray, if at all—daily, weekly, occasionally, rarely or never? [RS4]

	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	53%	10%	17%	9%	10%	1%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>								
--All Adults								
--Dot-Net	42	10	25	11	12	--	101	(203)
--Gen X	41	12	20	14	12	--	99	(204)
--Boomer	58	11	16	5	10	--	100	(206)
--Mature	64	6	12	8	7	3	100	(206)

“Just a quick “yes or no” now. Do you believe in the existence of: [RANDOMIZE LIST] (A) the devil or Satan; (B) religious miracles; (C) ghosts, as spirits of dead people who can come back in certain places and situations; (D) astrology, in that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives; (E) ESP, or extra sensory perception; (F) intelligent life on other planets.” [RS5A-F]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Devil or Satan	50%	47%	3%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	54	41	4	99	(203)
--Gen X	45	51	4	100	(204)
--Boomer	56	42	1	99	(206)
--Mature	44	54	2	100	(206)
Religious miracles	70%	27%	3%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	75	24	1	100	(203)
--Gen X	67	29	4	100	(204)
--Boomer	67	31	2	100	(206)
--Mature	72	23	5	100	(206)
Ghosts	41%	54%	4%	99%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	57	39	4	100	(203)
--Gen X	48	47	5	100	(204)
--Boomer	42	56	2	100	(206)
--Mature	26	68	7	101	(206)
Astrology	35%	60%	6%	101%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	43	53	3	99	(203)
--Gen X	31	64	5	100	(204)
--Boomer	35	60	4	99	(206)
--Mature	32	58	10	100	(206)
ESP	55%	39%	6%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	46	44	10	100	(203)
--Gen X	53	44	3	100	(204)
--Boomer	62	34	4	100	(206)
--Mature	53	38	9	100	(206)
Intelligent life on other planets	46%	45%	9%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>					
--Dot-Net	49	45	6	100	(203)
--Gen X	47	47	5	99	(204)
--Boomer	52	41	7	100	(206)
--Mature	36	46	18	100	(206)

“I’m going to read you some statements to find out how you feel about various issues. For each one, please just tell me if you agree or disagree. [READ ITEM] Women should be able to serve as pastors, ministers, priests, or rabbis.” [FL8E]

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004					
--All Adults	81%	15%	4%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>					
--Dot-Net	84	11	6	101	(203)
--Gen X	87	10	3	100	(204)
--Boomer	80	16	4	100	(206)
--Mature	74	22	4	100	(206)