



# STATE OF THEOLOGY ANALYTICAL REPORT

MAY 2018



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# 1. INTRODUCTION



## 1.1. PROJECT CONTEXT

Ligonier have developed a rigorous and highly respected State of Theology survey in the USA, which biennially (in 2014 and 2016) identifies the nature and levels of beliefs relating to Christian, and specifically evangelical, doctrines.

Following this series of successful research and dissemination exercises in the USA, Ligonier commissioned research agency ComRes to carry out a similar survey in the UK, to gather responses to comparable questions for comparison across both countries.

This will help Ligonier to invest in the UK church's understanding of its audiences, so that church leaders can plan for mission with a greater awareness of the nature of theological engagement among both the general public and also among practising Christians, particularly those who subscribe to evangelical doctrines.

The UK survey will also serve as an important springboard for Ligonier's operations this side of the Atlantic.

## 1.2. PROJECT AIMS

The aim of the State of Theology research is to identify insights, based on robust data, which will help to:

- Serve the local church by enabling a comparison between what they, and others, believe;
- Compare theological views nationally and among Christians with those of Ligonier's support base, in order to measure the impact of Ligonier Ministries on opinion;
- Promote Ligonier's own communications.

## 1.3. METHODS AND SAMPLING

ComRes delivered a nationally representative sample of 2,133 adults aged 18+ in the United Kingdom, with an additional sample of 520 adults aged 18+ in the United Kingdom who are practising Christians. The latter group is defined as those who:

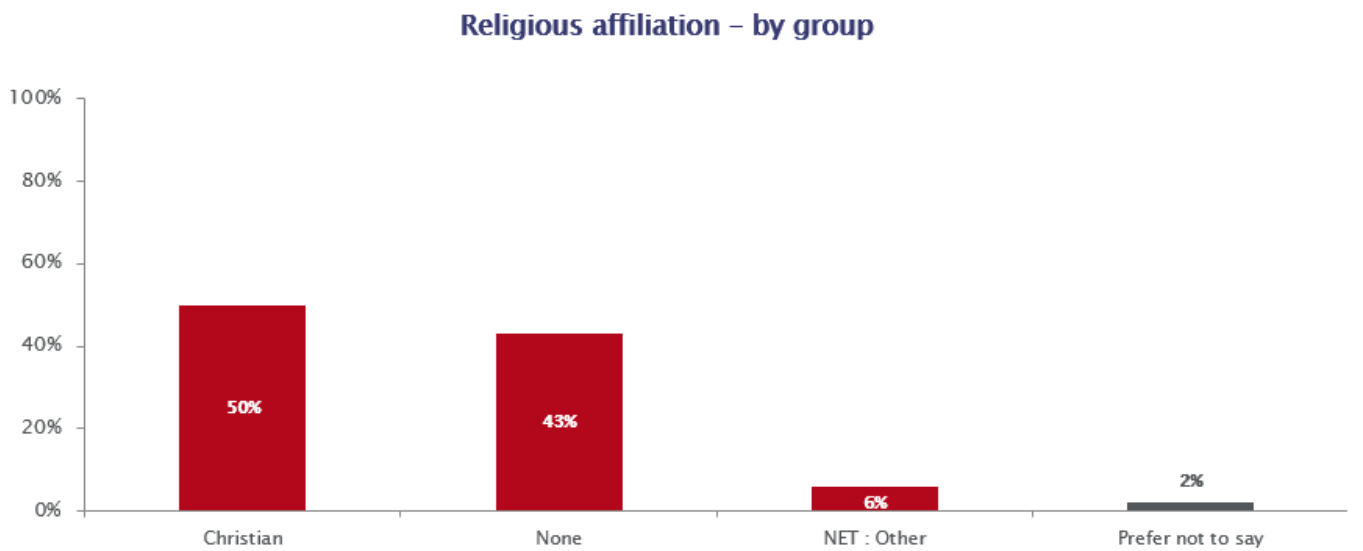
- Pray at least weekly;
- Read/listen to the Bible at least weekly;
- Attend church at least monthly.

Fieldwork was carried out between 27<sup>th</sup> April – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

## 2. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND PRACTICE

## 2.1. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

When asked which of the following religious groups they consider themselves a member of, UK adults are most likely to say Christian (50%), closely followed by none (43%).

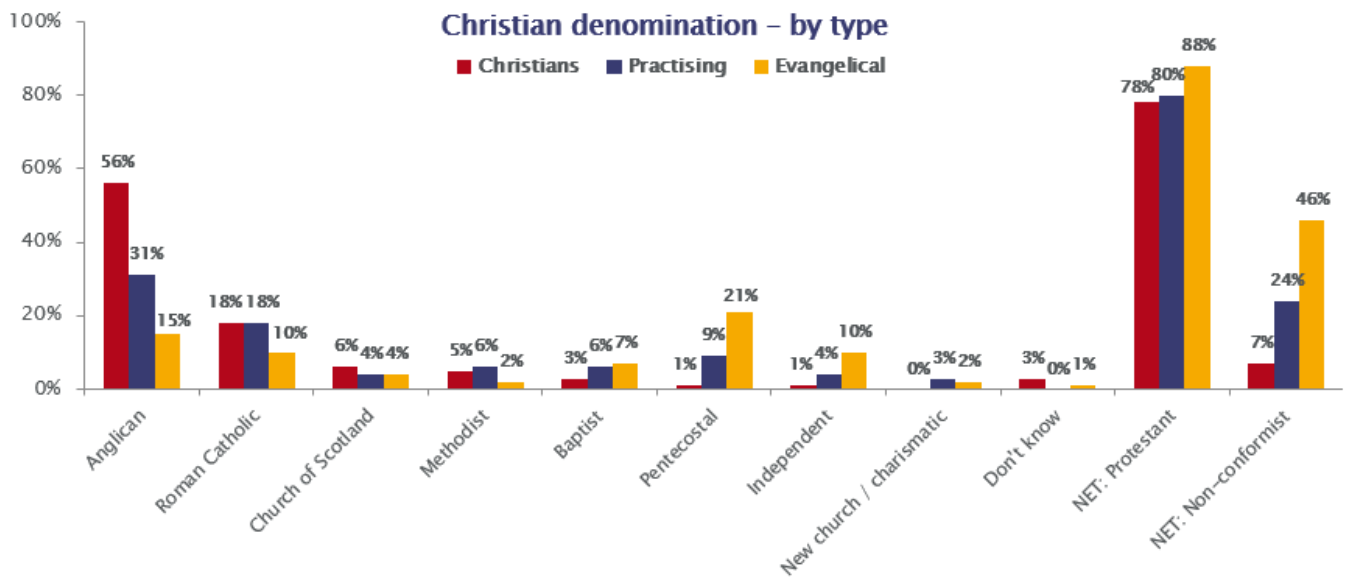


*Q. To which of the following religious groups do you consider yourself a member of? Base: all respondents (n= 2,133)*

## 2.2. CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION

Overall, eight in ten Christian adults in the UK (78%) identify as Protestant, and one in five (18%) identify as Roman Catholic.

Over half of adults describe themselves as Christian (56%), but this proportion drops considerably among practising Christians (31%) and Evangelicals (15%). Evangelicals are notably more likely to describe their denomination as Pentecostal than practising Christians more generally (21% vs. 9%). Overall, Evangelicals are more likely to affiliate with a Non-conformist tradition than practising Christians more generally (88% vs. 46%).

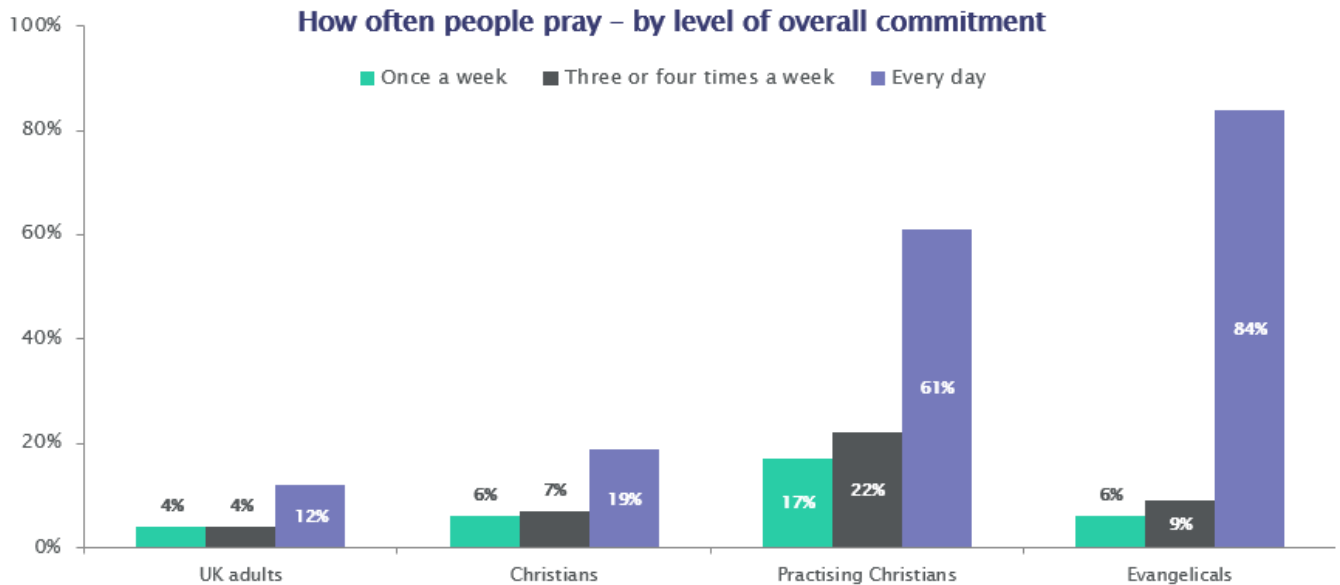


Q. What is your Christian denomination? Base: all Christian respondents (n= 1,048)

## 2.3. PRAYER

Over three in five practising Christians (61%) pray every day; a figure that rises to almost nine in ten (84%) among Evangelicals specifically.

UK adults are most likely to report that they pray (40%) and that they go to church (36%). Despite the fact that only 4% of UK adults report that they pray every week, as many as one in ten (12%) report that they pray every day.



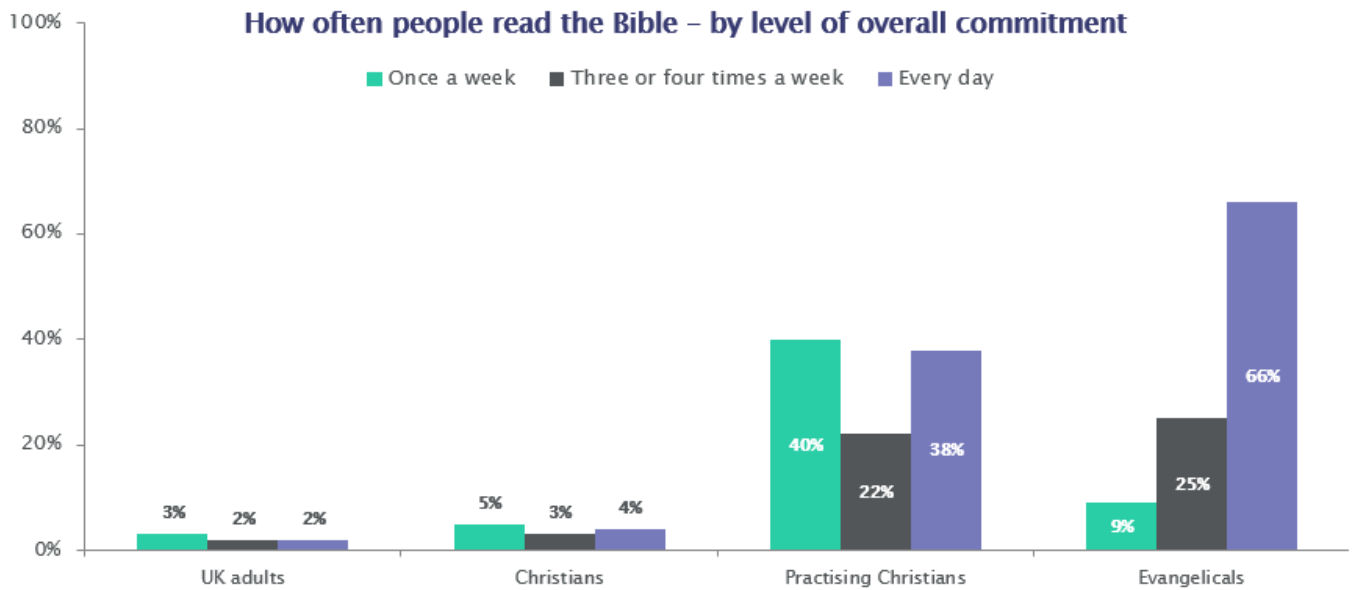
*Q. Roughly how often, if at all, do you do each of the following? Pray. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n=520); Base: all Christian respondents (n= 1,048).*



## 2.4. BIBLE

Three in five practising Christians (60%) read the Bible several times a week; a figure that rises to nine in ten (91%) among Evangelicals specifically. Practising Christians are considerably more likely to read or listen to the Bible only once a week compared to Evangelicals (40% vs. 9%).

By way of contrast, only a quarter of UK adults (23%) ever read the Bible, and this drops to 3% for those who pray every day.

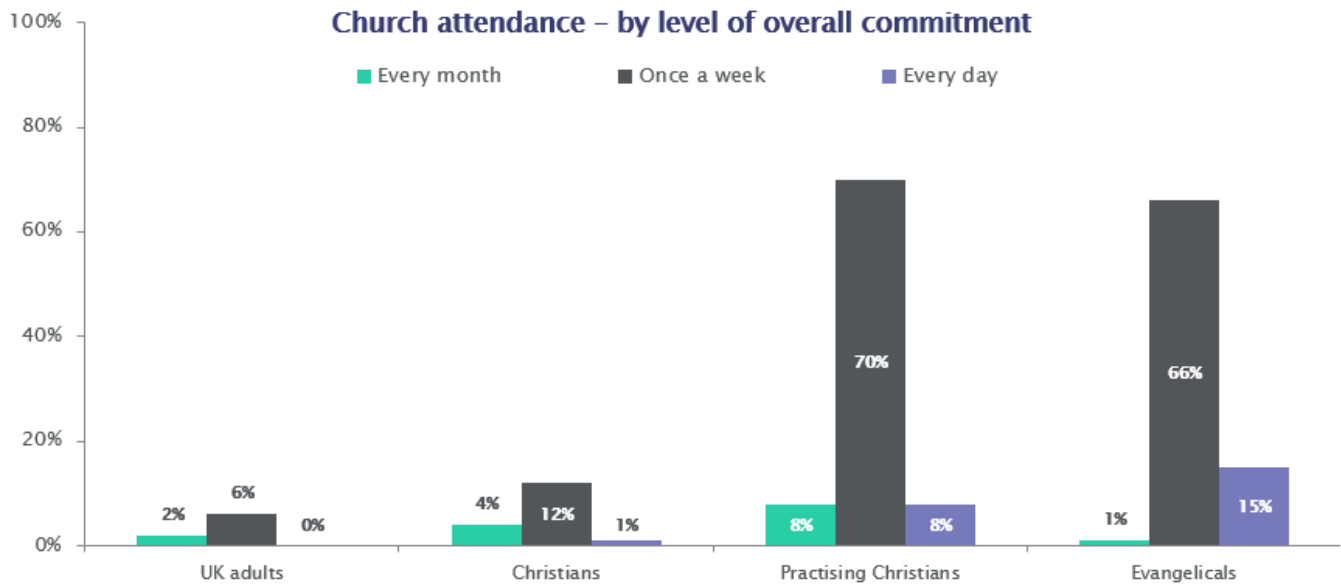


*Q. Roughly how often, if at all, do you do each of the following? Read/listen to the Bible. Base: all Evangelicals (n= 132); all practising Christians (n= 520); Base: all Christian respondents (n= 1,048).*

## 2.5. CHURCH

A clear majority of both practising Christians and Evangelicals attend church once a week (70% and 66% respectively). However, only 12% of those who identify as Christian attend church every week. A slightly greater proportion of Evangelicals attend church several times a week than practising Christians (33% vs. 22%).

While 36% of UK adults report that they go to church, only 6% go to church every week; a figure that drops to just 2% in the case of UK adults who go every month.



*Q. Roughly how often, if at all, do you do each of the following? Go to church. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); Base: all Christian respondents (n= 1,048).*

## 2.6. EVANGELICALS

For the purposes of this study, we define Evangelicals as respondents from within the practising Christian sample who strongly agreed with the following four statements:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe;
- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour;
- Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin;
- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

### 3. THEOLOGY PROPER

### 3.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- **UK adults** are more likely to disagree than agree with all statements about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; most notably in the case of the three statements on Christology.
- **Self-identified Christians** are highly divided on most questions, particularly in the case of the three statements on Christology. However, a clear majority of this group agree that there is one true God in three persons, and that the Holy Spirit is a force but not a personal being. Similarly, a clear minority in this group disagree that the Holy Spirit can tell them to do something forbidden in the Bible.
- Compared to UK adults more generally, **self-identified Christians** are less likely to strongly disagree with statements, and more likely to tend to agree with them. This could suggest an overall sympathy with the subject matter, and perhaps residual awareness of fundamental Christian doctrines even among those who are not currently practising their faith.
- Across all of these statements, a significant minority of **UK adults** answer that they don't know, indicating low levels of comprehension or low sense of relevance. The same is true of **self-identifying Christians**, with only one exception: the statement about God as a perfect being.
- **Practising Christians** and **Evangelicals** are highly likely to agree with all statements about God and Jesus Christ; the only statements where there is more division are the three statements on the subject of the Holy Spirit, and that of Jesus being the first and greatest of God's creation.
- The fact that **Evangelicals** are more likely to both strongly agree and strongly disagree with statements than practising Christians may suggest that this group are generally more aware of some of the theological propositions presented in this survey, and have been encouraged to see many of these core doctrines as essential to their understanding of faith.

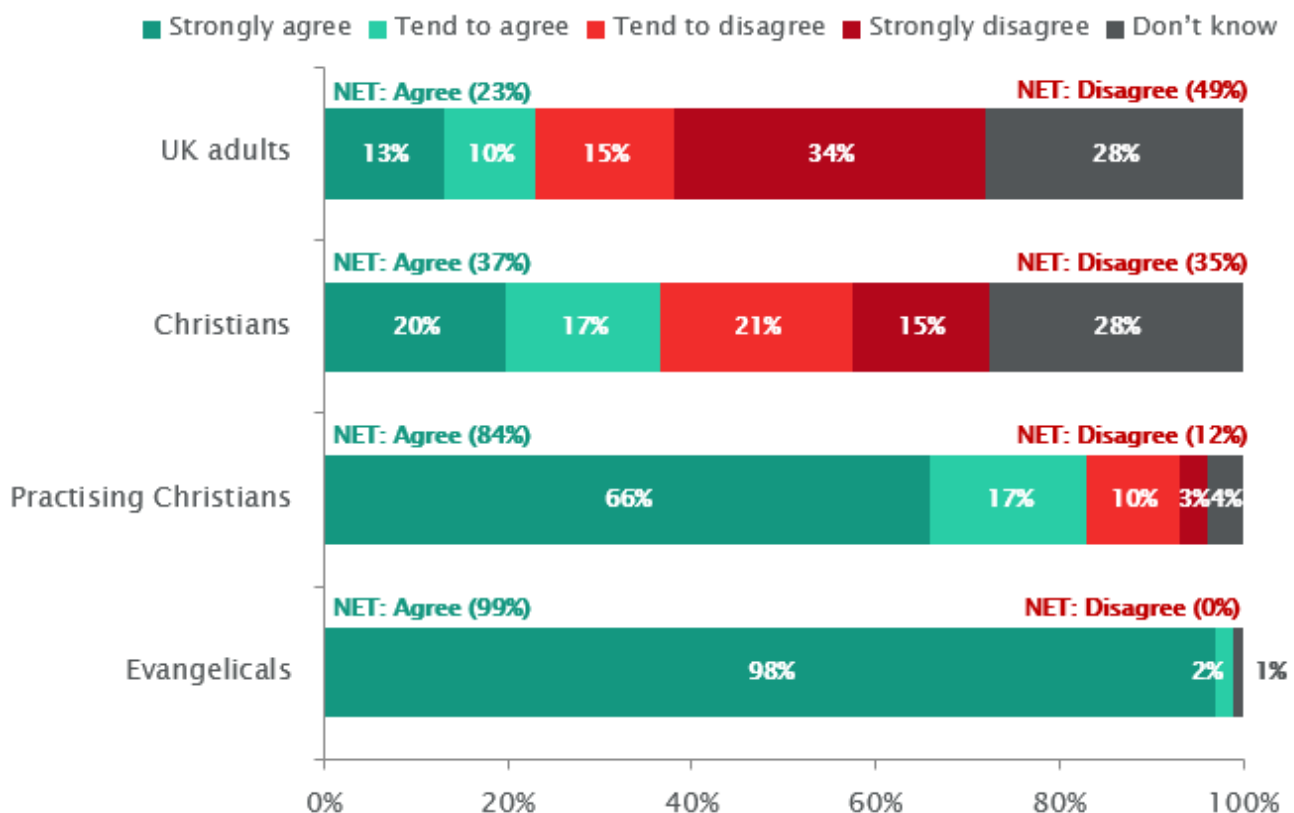
## 3.2. GOD

### God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake

Half of UK adults (49%) disagree with this statement, yet a significant minority of UK adults (23%) agree that God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake. Three in ten (28%) report that they don't know, suggesting low levels of comprehension or a sense that the question is somehow inapplicable to them. Those that identify as Christians are evenly split between those who agree and disagree that God is a perfect being (37% agree vs. 35% disagree). The proportion of self-identifying Christians who say that they don't know to what extent they agree or disagree with this statement is closely aligned with that of UK adults generally (28% vs. 28%).

The vast majority of practising Christians (84%) agree that God is a perfect being, as do almost all Evangelicals (99%). Going further, Evangelicals are considerably more likely than practising Christians to strongly agree with this statement (98% vs. 66%). Similarly, Christians identifying as nonconformists are more likely than their Protestant and Roman Catholic counterparts to agree that God is a perfect being (91% vs. 85% and 82% respectively).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



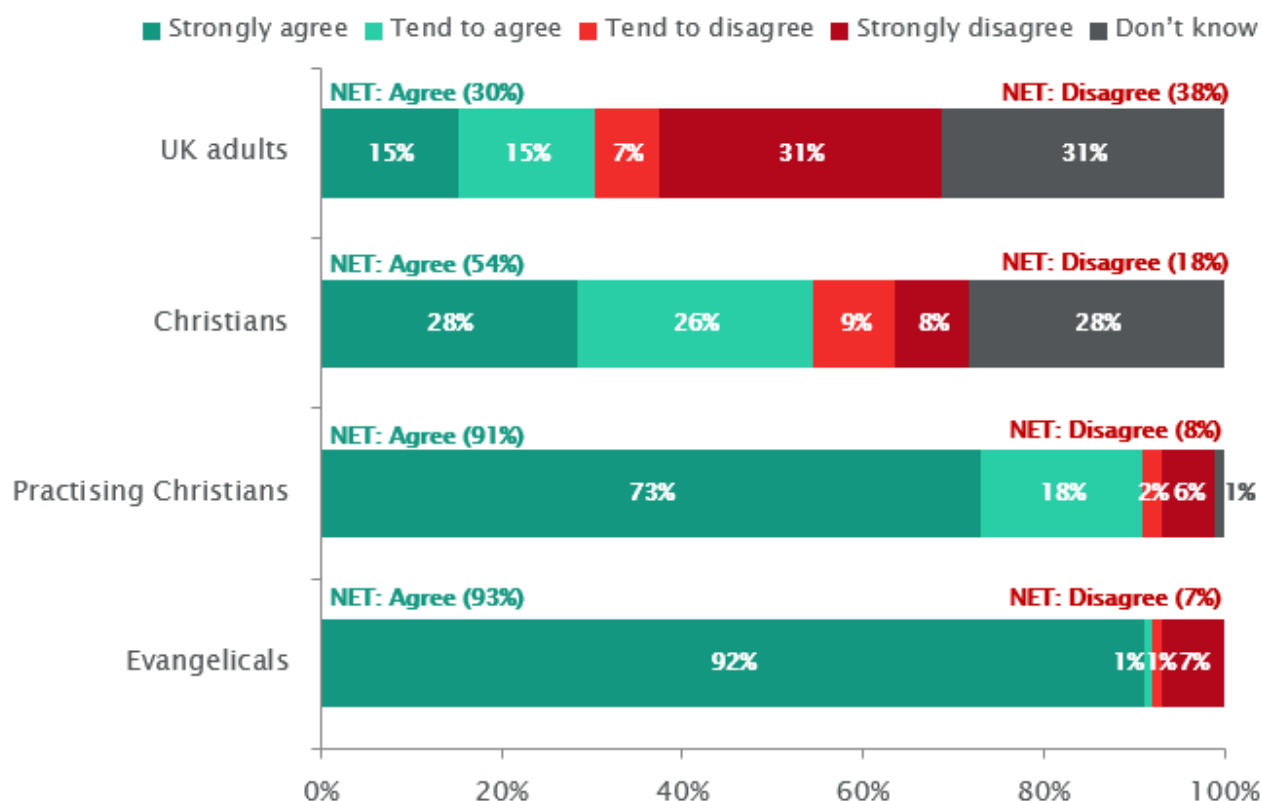
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.  
Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit

Three in ten UK adults (30%) agree that there is one true God in three persons, though two in five (38%) disagree with this statement, and a similar proportion answer that they don't know (31%). In contrast, over half of those identifying as Christians (54%) agree that there is one true God in three persons.

When it comes to practising Christians, nine in ten (91%) agree that there is one true God in three persons. A similar proportion of Evangelicals (93%) agree with the statement, though Evangelicals are considerably more likely to strongly agree than practising Christians (92% and 73% respectively). Roman Catholics are more likely than Protestants and Nonconformists to agree that there is one true God in three persons (97% Roman Catholics vs. 89% Protestants, 81% Nonconformists).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

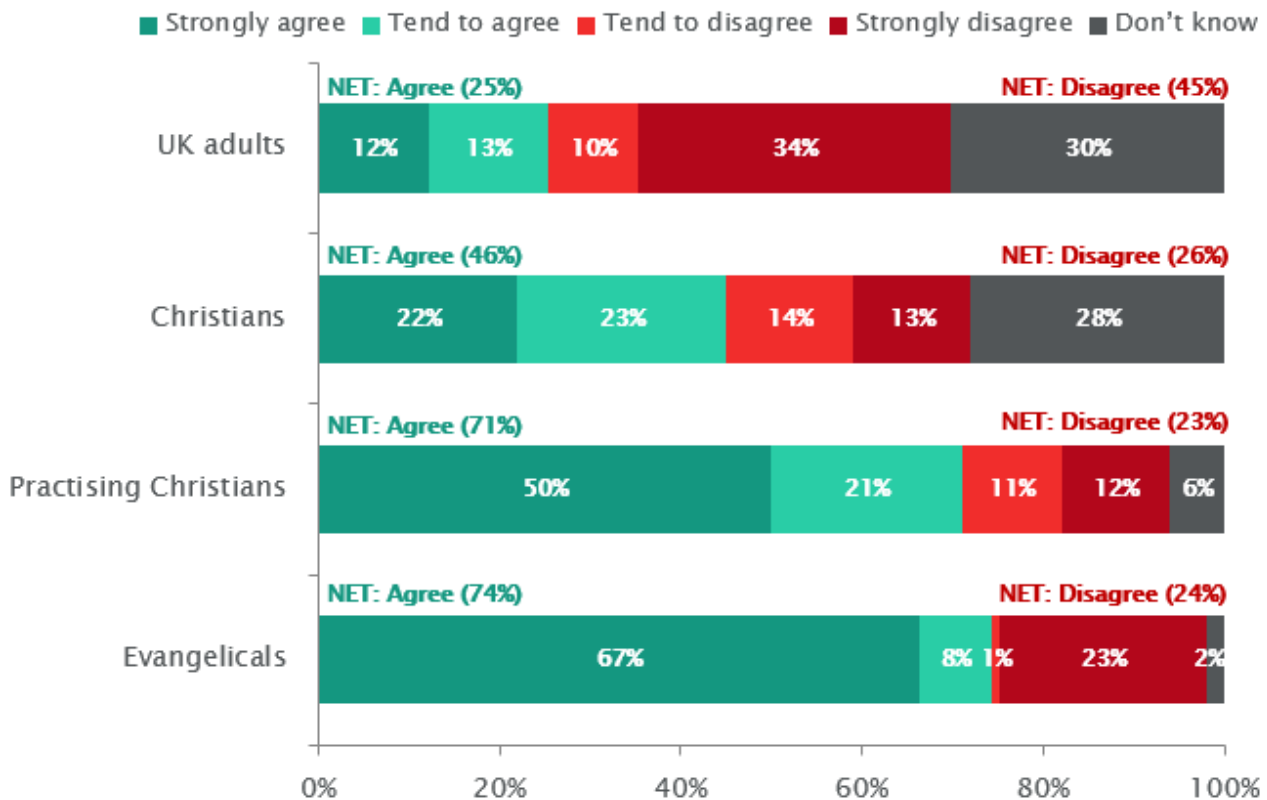
### 3.3. CHRISTOLOGY

#### Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God

Almost half of UK adults (45%) disagree that Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God, though three in ten (30%) answered that they don't know. Among those who identify as Christian, close to half (46%) agree that Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God, but again three in ten (28%) answer that they don't know. In both cases, this again suggests low levels of comprehension or a sense that the question is somehow inapplicable to them.

The majority of practising Christians and Evangelicals report that they agree with this statement (71% and 74%), with Evangelicals by far the most likely to strongly agree with this statement (67% vs. 38% Roman Catholics, 50% practising Christians overall). This is notable because the statement in question is a key tenet of Arianism, and may suggest that church-based teaching relating to the Trinity is not easily available or understood.

#### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

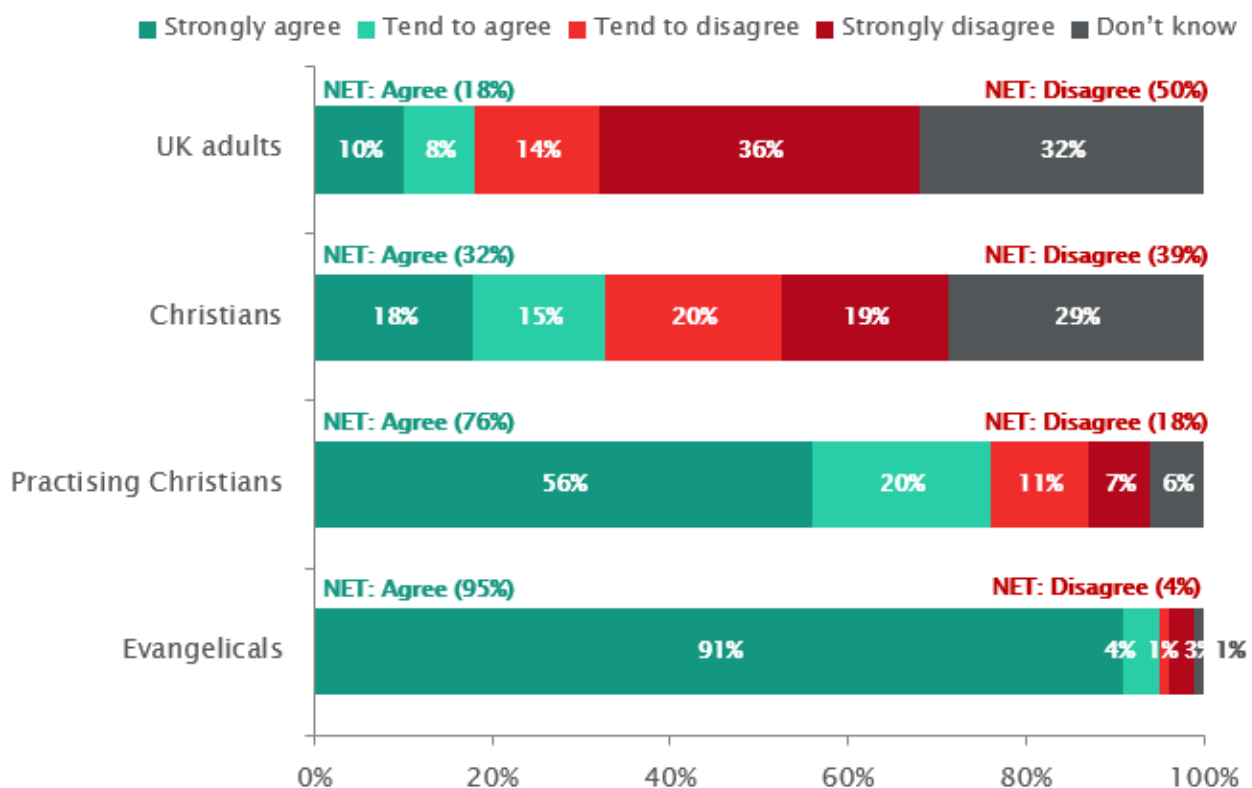


## Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned

Half of UK adults (50%) disagree that Jesus is the only person who never sinned, though once again a third (32%) answered that they do not know. Those who identify as Christian are considerably more divided on this statement (32% agree, 39% disagree, 29% don't know).

While both practising Christians and Evangelicals are considerably more likely to agree with this statement (76% and 95% respectively), Evangelicals are notably more likely to strongly agree with this than practising Christians (91% vs. 56%). In stark contrast, only 56% of Roman Catholics agree with this statement, presumably because of the doctrine of Immaculate Conception which purports that Mary, mother of Jesus is sinless.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



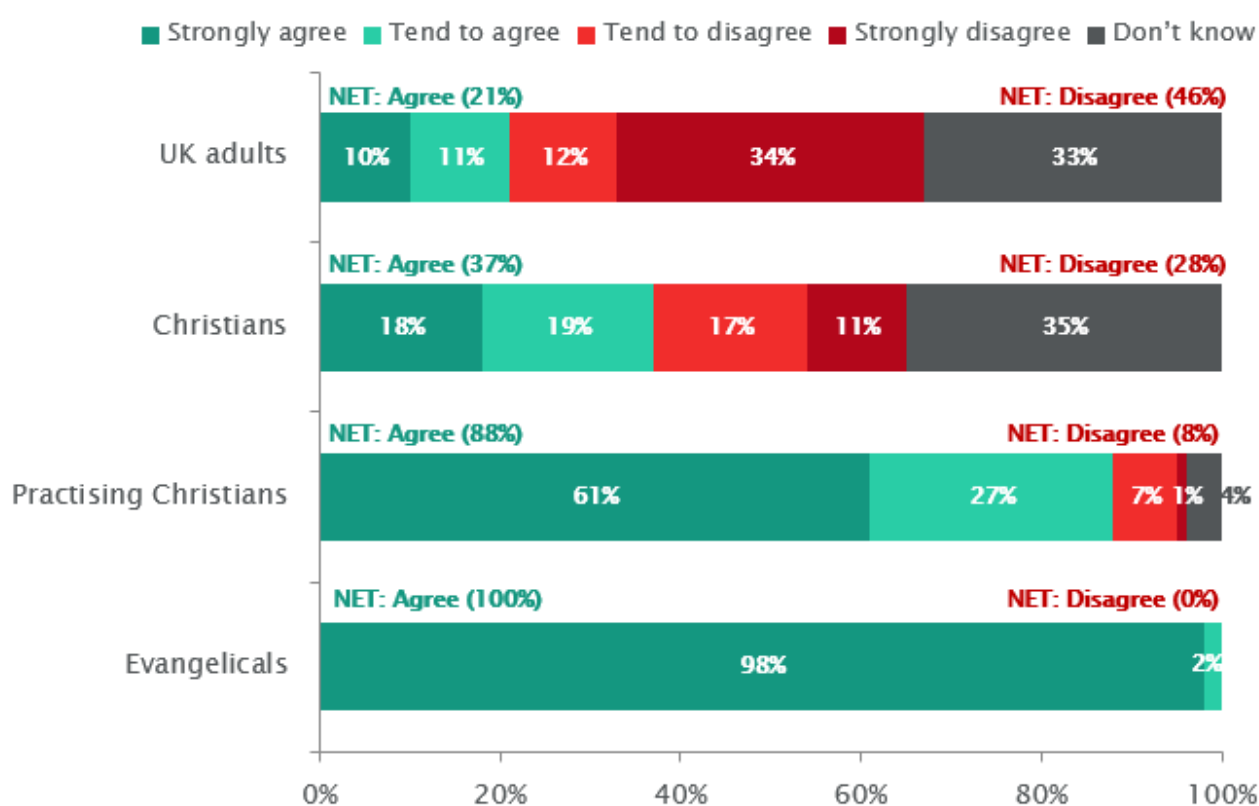
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned.  
Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred.

Close to half of UK adults (46%) disagree that the physical resurrection of Jesus actually happened, though yet again a third (33%) answered that they do not know. Likewise, those who identify as Christian are considerably more divided on this statement (37% agree, 28% disagree, 35% don't know).

In stark contrast, every Evangelical respondent (100%) agrees that the physical resurrection of Jesus actually happened, with 98% strongly agreeing with this. It is notable then that only three in five practising Christians (61%) strongly agree that the physical resurrection of Jesus actually happened, though this number rises to 74% among practising Christians in Northern Ireland.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

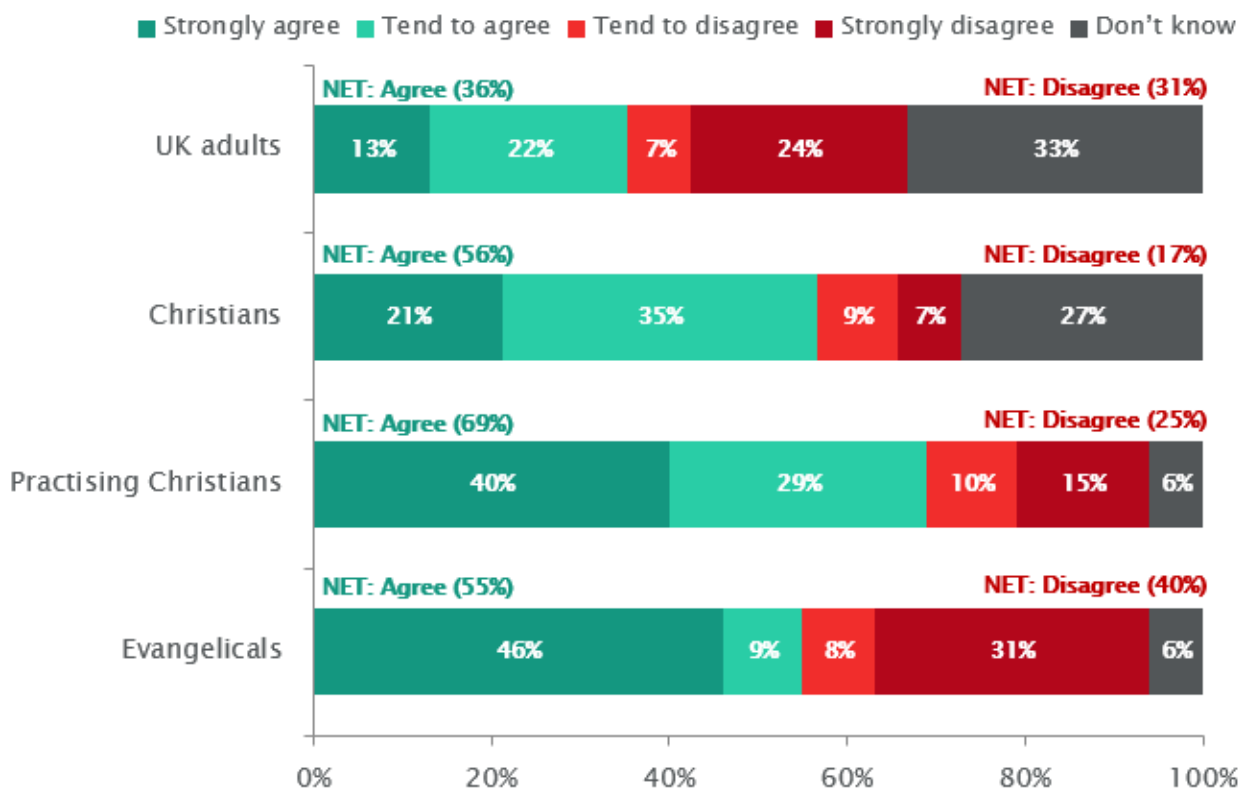
### 3.4. PNEUMATOLOGY

#### The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being

UK adults are divided on the question of whether the Holy Spirit is a force rather than a personal being (36% agree, 31% disagree, 33% don't know). However, over half of those that identify as Christian (56%) agree with the statement.

The proportion of those who agree with this statement is even greater among practising Christians (69%). This is notable insofar as the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the Trinity. Given this, it is significant that 79% of Roman Catholics agree that the Holy Spirit is not a personal being, whereas only 55% of Evangelicals responded in this way. It is possible that the words "force" and "personal being" are not readily recognised by Christian respondents who may not have heard the nature of the Holy Spirit discussed in such terms in their local church or Bible study guides.

#### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

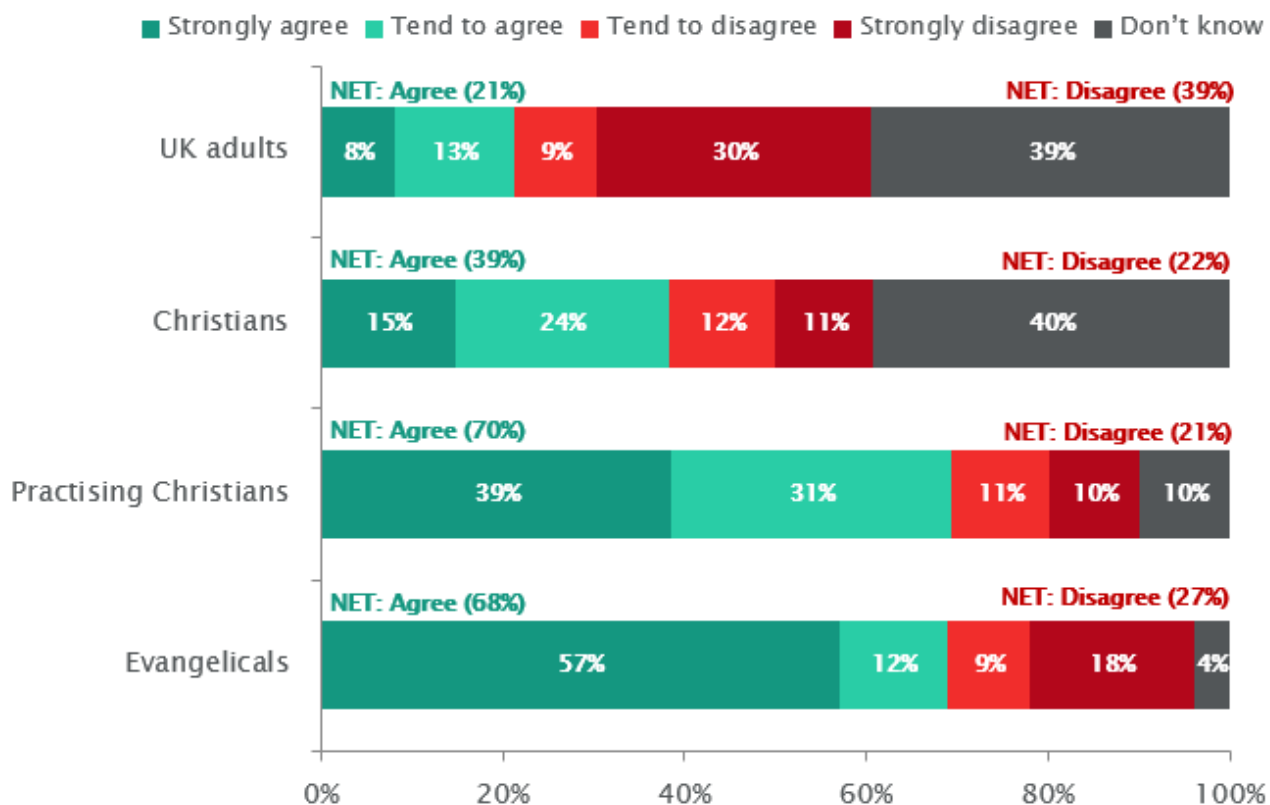
## The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ

Two in five UK adults (39%) and self-identified Christians (40%) report that they do not know whether the Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth before a person has faith in Jesus Christ, indicating low levels of comprehension or a low sense of relevance.

Among Evangelicals and practising Christians, a similar proportion agree that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ (70% vs. 68%). However, Evangelicals are more likely to strongly agree with this statement (57% Evangelical vs. 39% practising Christians). Equally, they are also more likely to disagree (27% vs 21%).

Practising Christians from Northern Ireland and Wales are considerably less likely than those from other UK regions to agree that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ (58% and 59% respectively).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



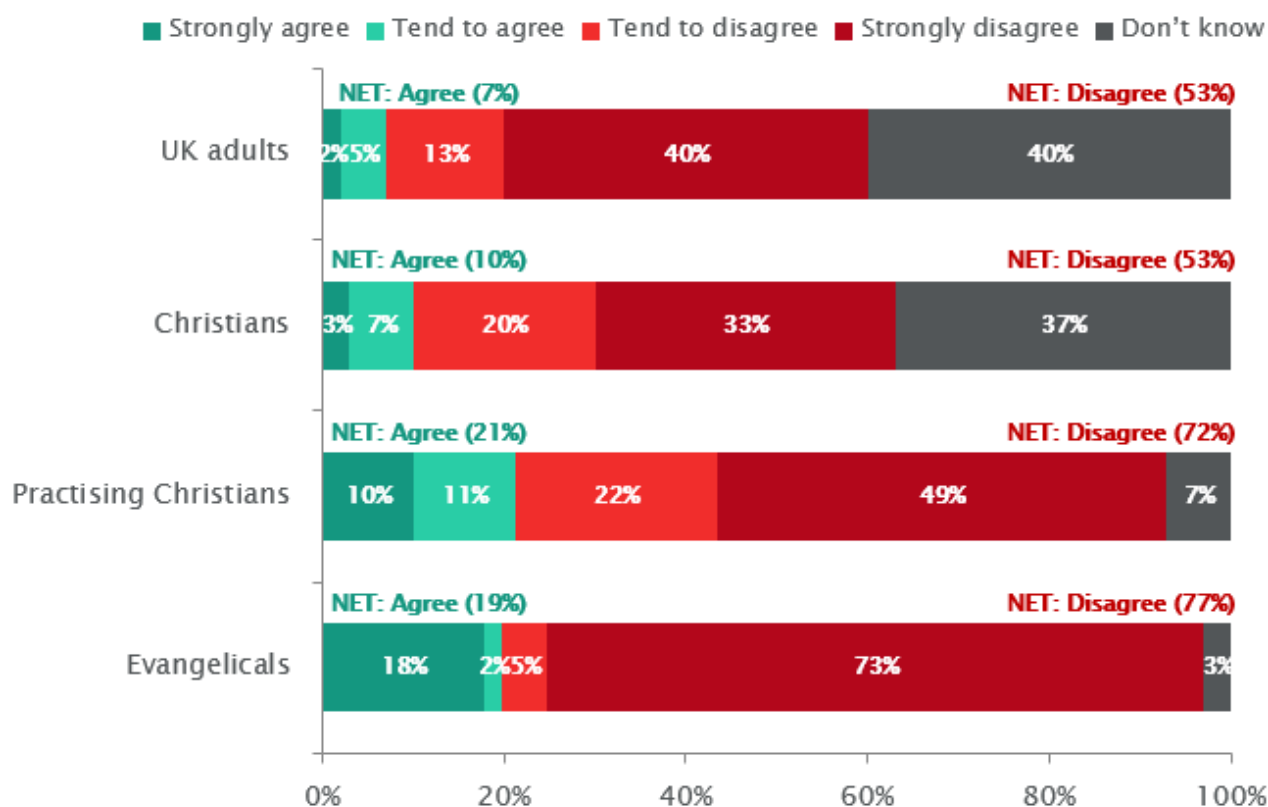
*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## The Holy Spirit can tell me to do something which is forbidden in the Bible

Over half of both UK adults (53%) and self-identified Christians (53%) report that they disagree that the Holy Spirit can tell them to do something which is forbidden in the Bible. However, once again, around two in five (40% UK adults, 37% Christians) answer that they don't know, indicating low levels of comprehension or a low sense of relevance.

Similar proportions of Evangelicals and practising Christians disagree that the Holy Spirit can tell them to do something which is forbidden in the Bible (77% and 72% respectively). However, Evangelicals are considerably more likely to strongly disagree than practising Christians (73% and 49% respectively). It is notable that, among practising Christians, those aged 18–34 and 35–44 are considerably more likely to agree with this statement than their older counterparts (18–34 34%, 35–44 35%, 45–64 15% and 65+ 3% respectively).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Holy Spirit can tell me to do something which is forbidden in the Bible. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## 4. SOTERIOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY

## 4.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- A high proportion of **UK adults** and **self-identifying Christians** answer that they don't know to most of the statements, likely indicating that they don't understand a statement or that they don't find it relevant to them. However, the proportion of those answering "don't know" is notably lower in the case of the opening two statements about sin, presumably because both groups found the statements to be either more relevant or more provocative. Similarly, both groups were less likely to respond "don't know" in the case of the statement about encouraging non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour.
- **UK adults** and **self-identifying Christians** respond similarly on statements relating to sin, blessing, Hell, and convincing non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour. However, self-identifying Christians are rather more divided than UK adults overall when it comes to all statements about the role of Jesus Christ in relation to salvation, righteousness, and judgement.
- A majority of **Evangelicals** strongly agree with almost all statements tested in this section, particularly in relation to statements about Jesus Christ's role in salvation. The only exceptions to this rule relate to the question of whether most people are good by nature, and whether God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life, both of which receive a more divided response from Evangelicals.
- **Practising Christians** respond similarly to Evangelicals (albeit more hesitantly and less consistently) on all statements but one; namely that of whether most people are good by nature.
- It is notable that only three quarters of **practising Christians** (74%) agree that only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.
- This section contains three of the four **Evangelical belief statements** that were used to construct the Evangelical group used in this survey. It is notable that a high proportion of the **UK public** and **self-identifying Christians** either disagree or respond "don't know" to these statements, as well as **practising Christians** responding more hesitantly to evangelicals.

## 4.2. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SIN

### Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature

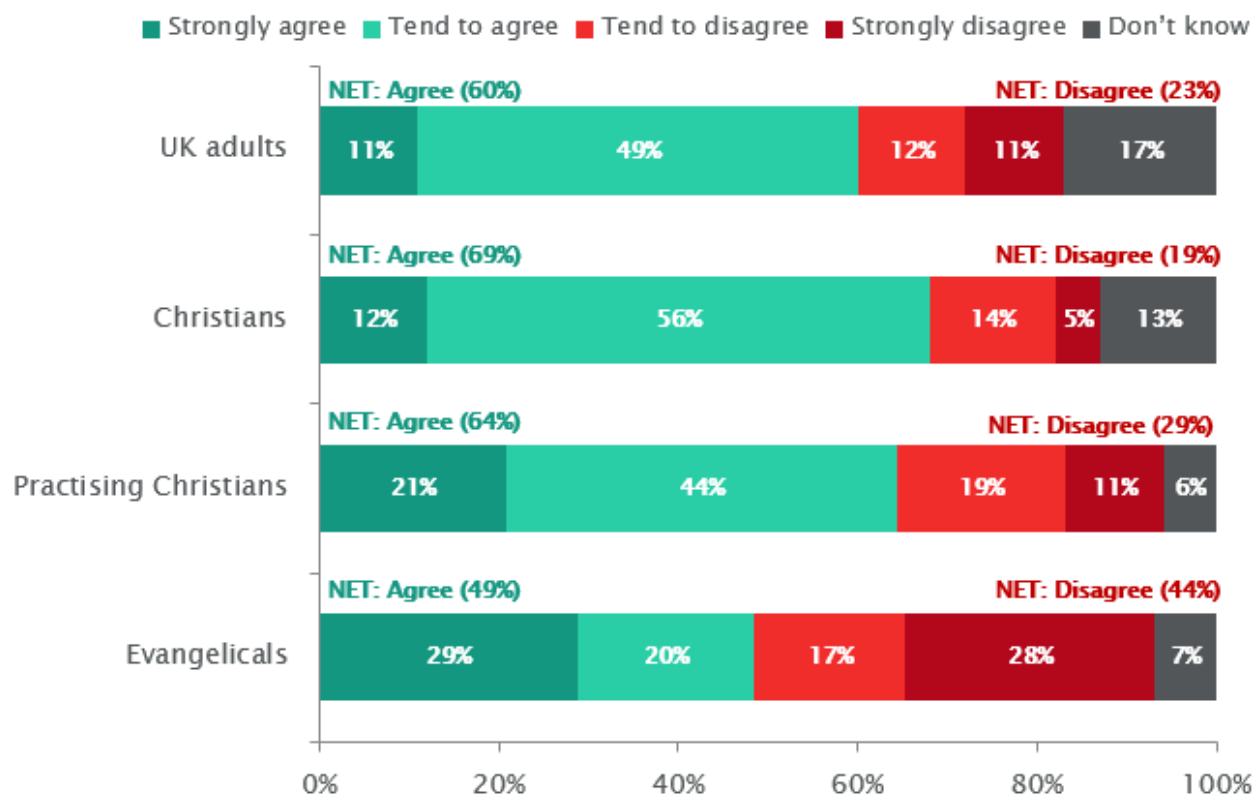
A majority of UK adults agree that everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature (60%), though the vast proportion of respondents only tend to agree with this statement (49%). Among UK adults, those aged 55+ are more likely by 27 percentage points to agree that most people are good by nature (18–34 45%, 35–54 59%, 55+ 72%). Notably, those identifying as Christian are more likely by 9 percentage points to agree that most people are good by nature than UK adults (69% vs. 60%). Both UK adults and self-identifying Christians are notably less likely to answer that they don't know to this question in comparison to others in the survey (17% UK adults, 13% Christians). This indicates that the statement evoked particularly strong opinions in respondents, or that they felt the question was more relevant to them.

Almost two thirds of practising Christians (64%) agree that most people are good by nature – a similar proportion to UK adults (60%) and Christians (69%). Evangelicals alone are highly divided on this question: despite the fact that they are more likely than any other group tested to disagree with this statement (44%), they are also more likely to strongly agree with it (29% Evangelicals vs. 21% practising Christians, 12% Christians). This may reflect an emphasis on teaching 'the image of God' in many churches as an encouragement to reflect the likeness of God and to see it in others, either as well as or instead of strict doctrines of original sin.

In addition, it is striking that over four in five Roman Catholics (83%) agree that everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature; a considerably higher proportion than Protestants (60%) and Nonconformists (46%). With regard to other demographic factors, among practising Christians, men are significantly more likely than women to agree that most people are good by nature (72% vs. 57%).



## Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

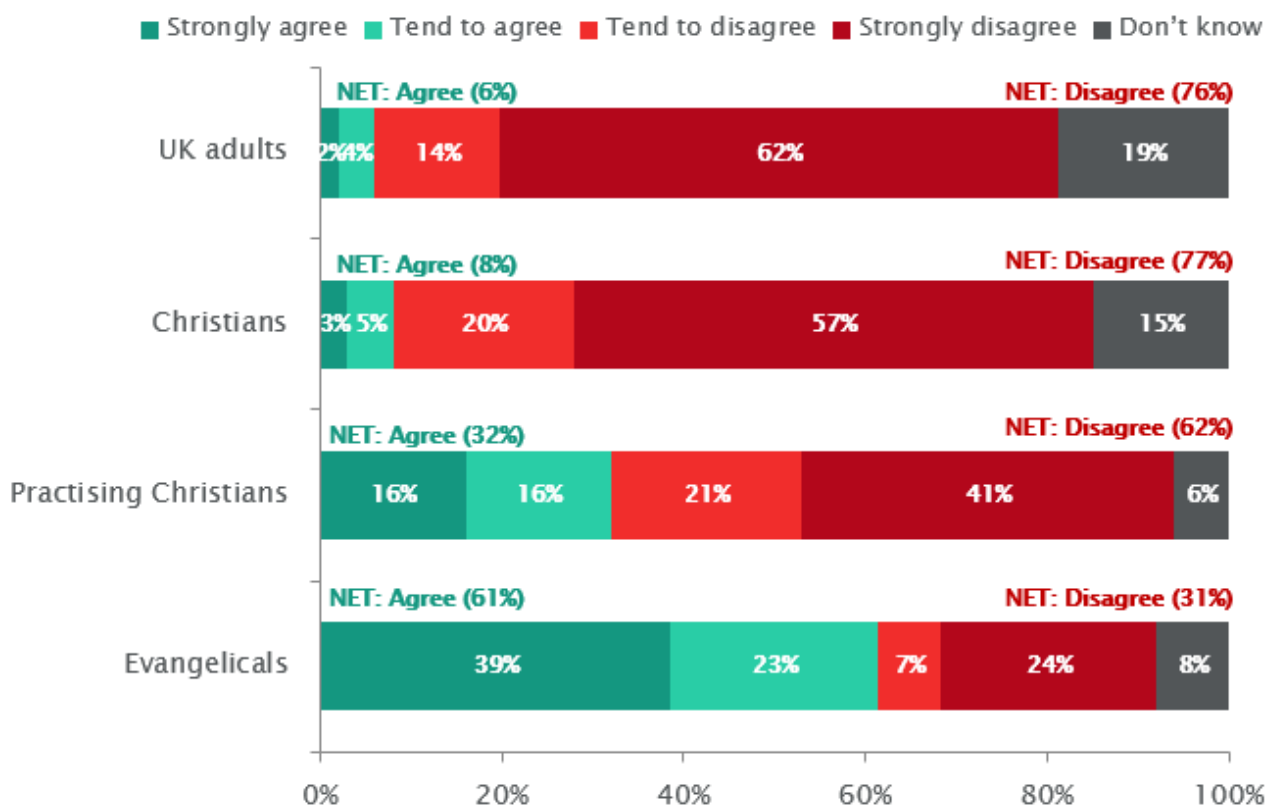
## Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation

This statement provoked a highly critical response from UK adults: three quarters of this group (76%) disagree that even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation, with three in five (62%) strongly disagreeing with this. Self-identified Christians answered very similarly to UK adults on this statement (77% disagree, 57% strongly disagree). As with the previous question, both groups are notably less likely to answer that they don't know to this question than they are elsewhere in the survey (19% UK adults, 15% Christians), indicating that the statement evokes particularly strong opinions or that it is perceived to be more relevant to them.

Practising Christians are more divided on this subject (32% agree, 62% disagree), though they are also considerably more likely to strongly disagree (41%) than on other statements in the survey. Six out of ten Evangelicals (61%) agree that the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation: a notably higher proportion than the other three groups. In stark contrast, only 13% of Roman Catholics agree with this statement.

It is striking that practising Christians between the ages of 18–34 are far more likely than their older counterparts to agree that the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation (18–34 48%, 35–44 31%, 45–64 24%, 65+ 25%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



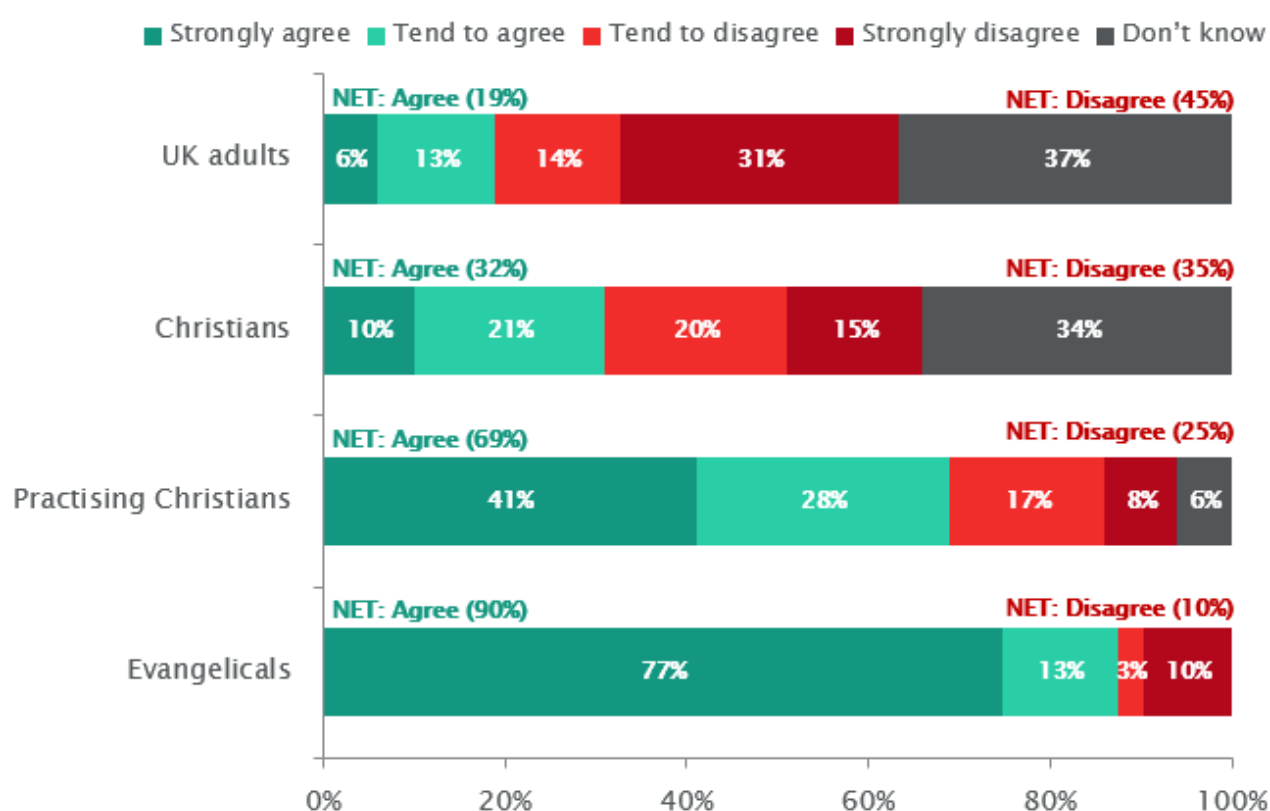
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation.  
Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ

Almost half of UK adults (45%) disagree that God counts a person as righteous because of one's faith in Jesus Christ alone, as do 35% of self-identifying Christians. Notably however, both groups are most likely to answer that they don't know in this case (37% UK adults, 34% Christians).

In stark contrast, nine out of ten Evangelicals (90%) agree that that God counts a person as righteous only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ, as do 69% of practising Christians. However, Evangelicals are considerably more likely than practising Christians to strongly agree (77% vs 41%). Roman Catholics are less likely than both groups to agree with the statement (58%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

### 4.3. BLESSING, PUNISHMENT, AND JUDGEMENT

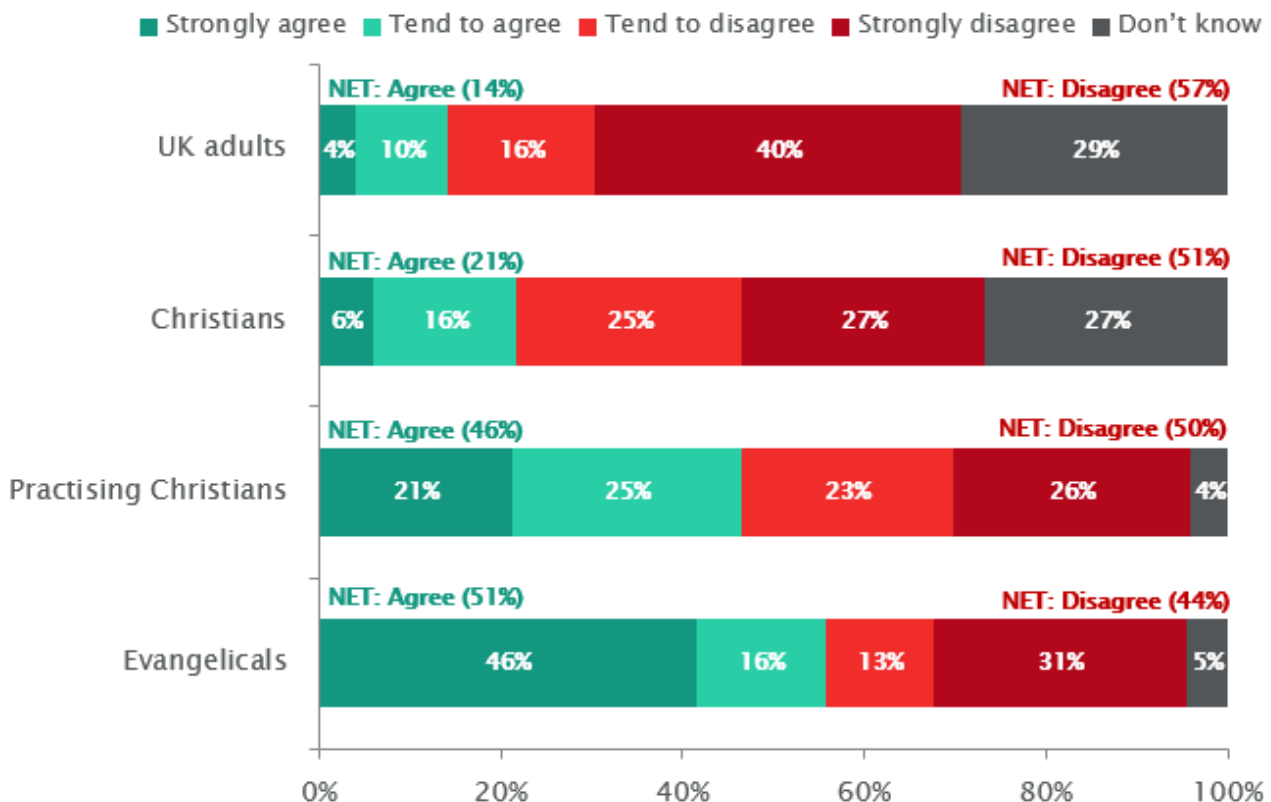
#### God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life

Over half of UK adults (57%) and self-identifying Christians (51%) disagree with that God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life, though around three in ten respond that they don't know (29% UK adults, 27% Christians). This suggests both negative sentiments and low levels of understanding or perceived relevance in these areas.

Evangelicals and practising Christians are particularly divided on the question of whether God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life. Practising Christians are almost evenly split between those who agree with the statement and those that disagree (46% and 50% respectively), with Evangelicals slightly more likely to agree than disagree (51% and 44% respectively). It is notable that while Evangelicals are more likely than practising Christians to strongly agree with the statement (46% vs. 21%), they are also more likely to strongly disagree (31% vs 26%), possibly reflecting the presence of prosperity gospel teaching in some churches, while others reject it outright.

The data suggests that younger people are more likely to expect blessings from God in this life as a reward for true faith: three in five practising Christians that are aged 18–34 (60%) and 35–44 (59%) agree with the statement, while only about a third of those aged 45–64 (37%) and 65+ agree (34%).

#### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

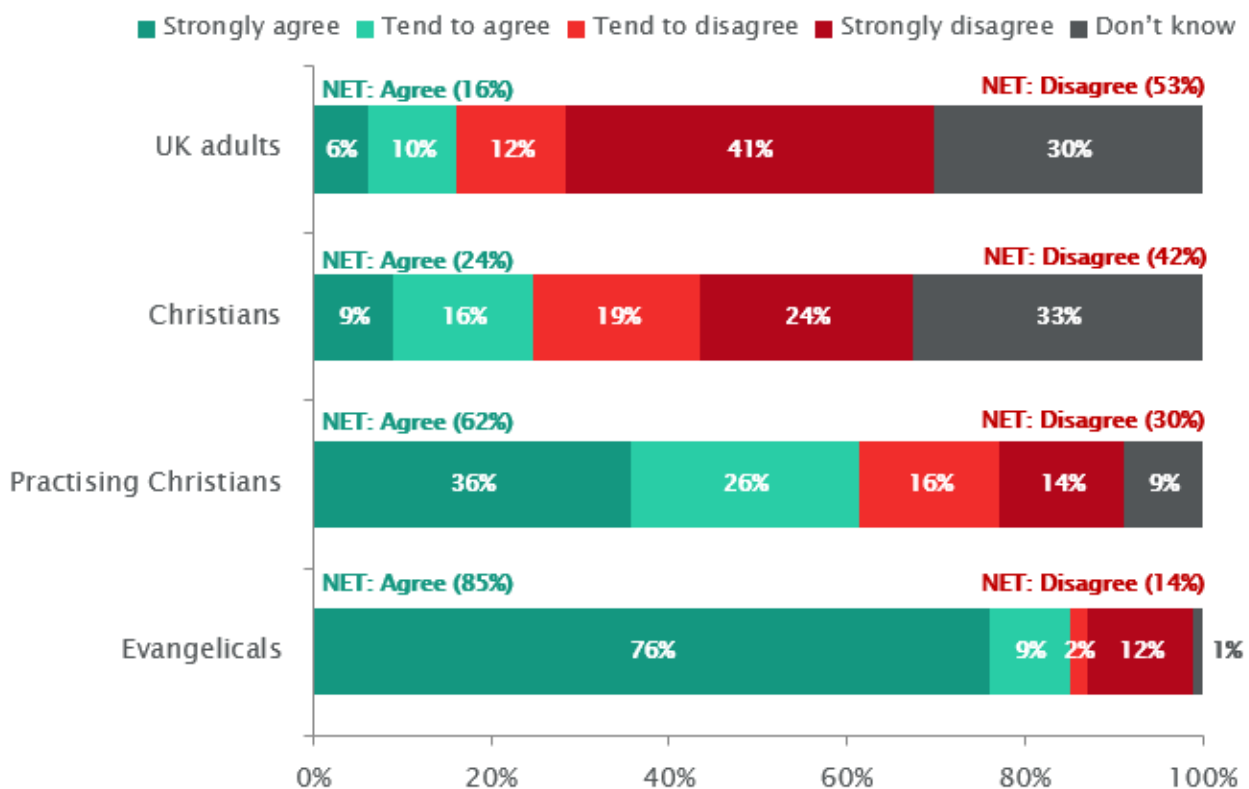
## Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever

Over half of UK adults (53%) and two in five self-identifying Christians (42%) disagree that Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever. It is interesting that among both groups, a high proportion answered that they don't know (30% UK adults, 33% Christians), indicating that this may not be a subject that evokes the negative sentiments or perceived relevance of other statements. With that said, two in five UK adults (41%) do strongly disagree that hell is a real place.

The picture is very different among practising Christians and Evangelicals: over eight in ten Evangelicals (85%) agree that Hell is a real place, with three quarters (76%) strongly agreeing with this. While practising Christians are slightly more divided on this issue, and less likely overall to agree that Hell is a real place than Evangelicals (62% and 85% respectively), a similar proportion strongly disagree (14% practising Christians, 12% Evangelicals).

Among practising Christians, people aged 18–34 and 35–44 are most likely to agree that Hell is a real place (18–34 67%, 35–44 70%, 45–64 59%, 65+ 53%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



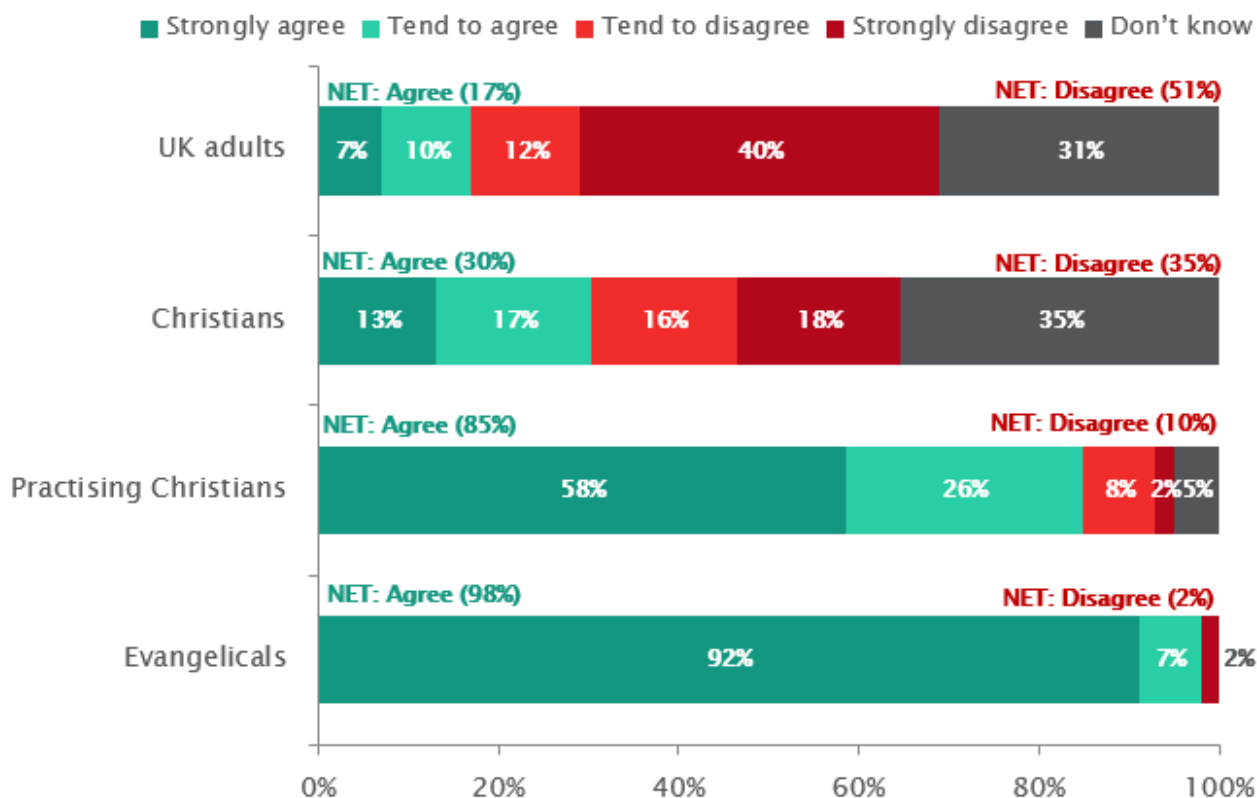
*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## There will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived

Again, half of UK adults (51%) disagree that there will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived, and two in five of this group (40%) strongly disagree. Self-identifying Christians are more divided on this statement however, with three in ten (30%) agreeing that Jesus Christ will return, and a third (35%) disagreeing with this. Again, a high proportion of both groups answered that they don't know (31% UK adults, 35% Christians), presumably because they do not feel that the statement is relevant to them.

In stark contrast, almost every Evangelical respondent (98%) agrees that there will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived, with nine in ten (92%) in strong agreement. While a similarly high proportion of practising Christians (85%) agree with this statement, only three in five (58%) strongly agree, suggesting slightly more hesitation than there is among Evangelicals, or alternatively that Evangelicals place more of an emphasis on this.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? There will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

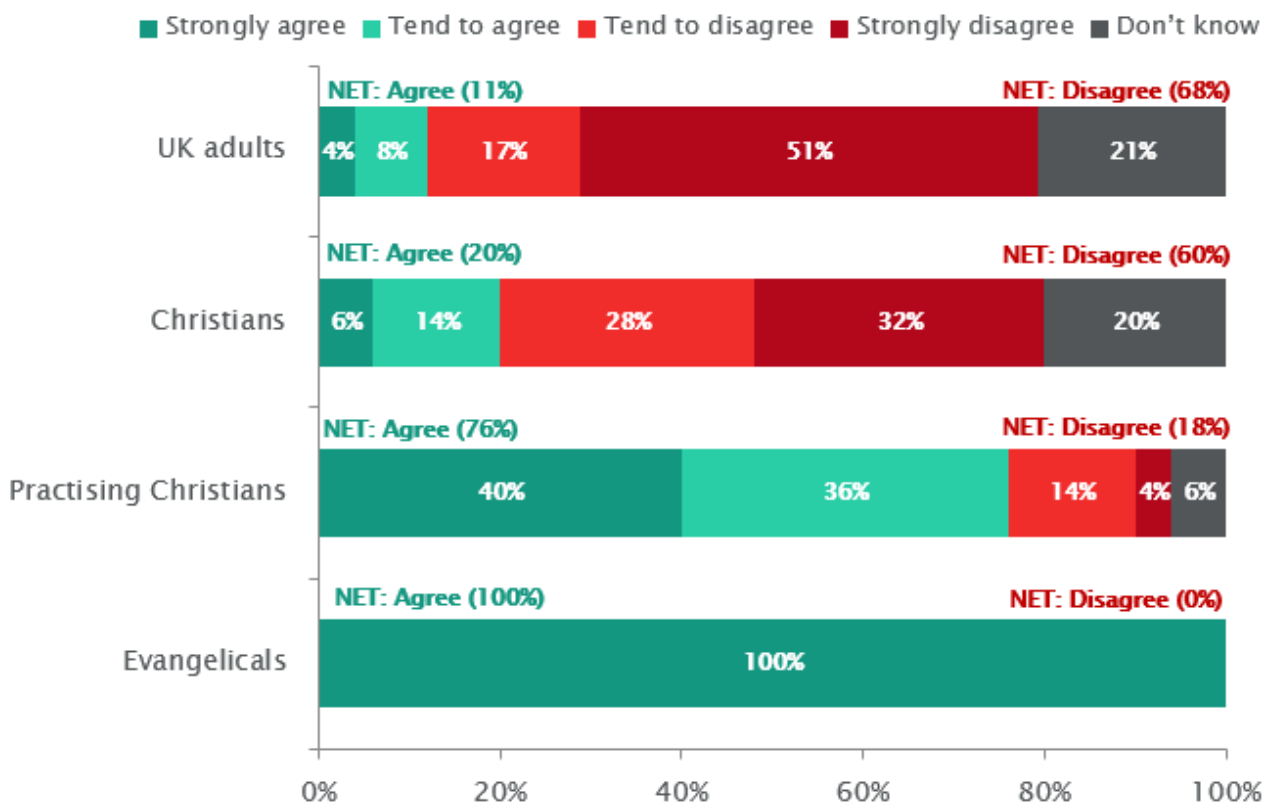
## 4.4. SALVATION

### It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour

This statement prompted a critical response from UK adults, with seven in ten (68%) disagreeing that it is very important for them personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour, and half (51%) in strong disagreement. Similarly, three in five people who identify as Christian (60%) disagree with the statement, though there is more hesitation here than there is among UK adults overall (only 32% strongly disagree). It is especially notable that only one in five UK adults and self-identifying Christians (21% and 20% respectively) answer that they don't know to this question, indicating that this statement was not perceived to be irrelevant and that it provoked negative sentiments.

Because this question was one of four that was used to define the category of Evangelical respondents, every respondent in the Evangelical group strongly agrees that it is very important for them personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour. As such, it is unsurprising that there is a clear disparity between Evangelicals and UK adults on this question. Furthermore, just as self-identifying Christians are slightly more hesitant than UK adults when it comes to this question, so too are practising Christians relative to Evangelicals: 76% agree with the statement, but only 40% strongly agree. Roman Catholics are less positive than practising Christians overall, with less than seven in ten (67%) in agreement.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



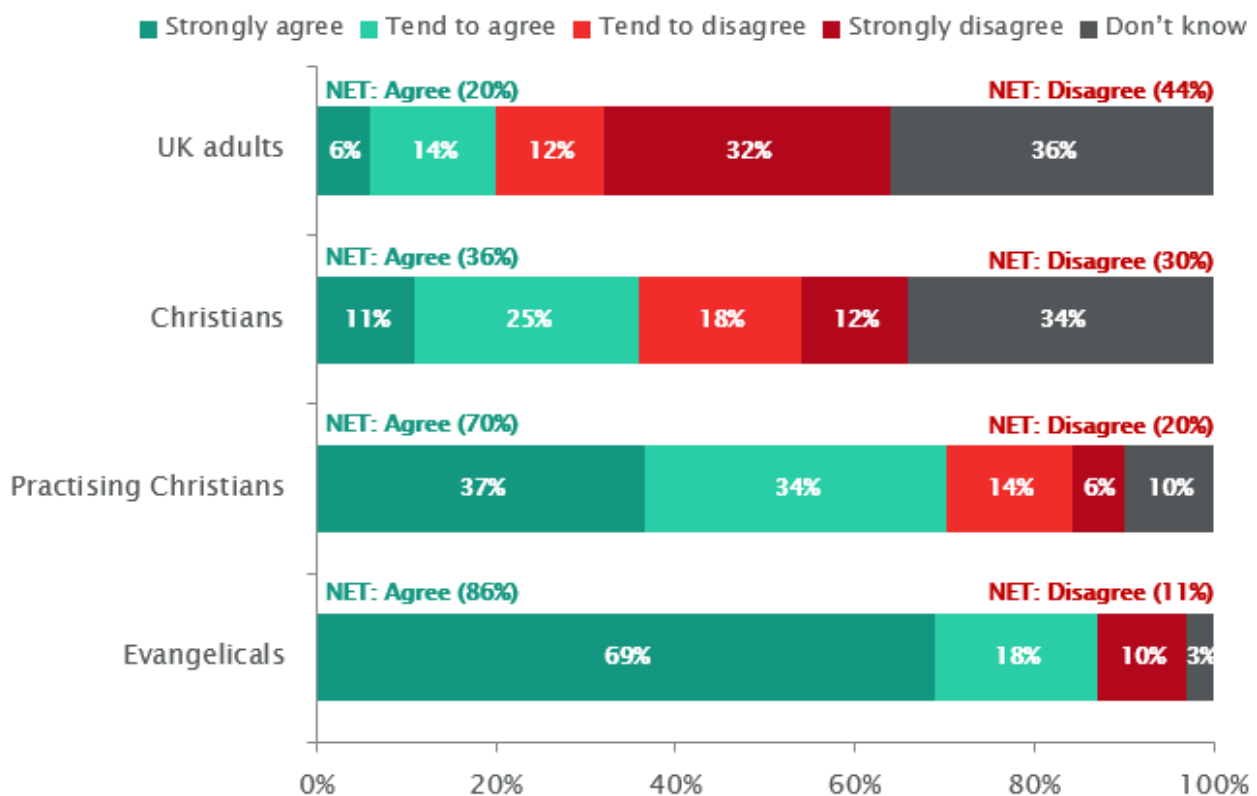
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## Only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour

While UK adults are most likely to disagree that only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour (44%), over a third (36%) respond that they don't know. A similar proportion of self-identifying Christians (34%) also answer that they don't know, suggesting low levels of comprehension or perceived relevance. Nevertheless, Christians are more divided than UK adults on this question, with over a third (36%) agreeing with the statement.

In stark contrast, almost nine in ten Evangelicals (86%) agree that only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour, with seven in ten (69%) in strong agreement. Again, practising Christians are a little more hesitant than Evangelicals: 70% agree overall, but only 37% strongly agree.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

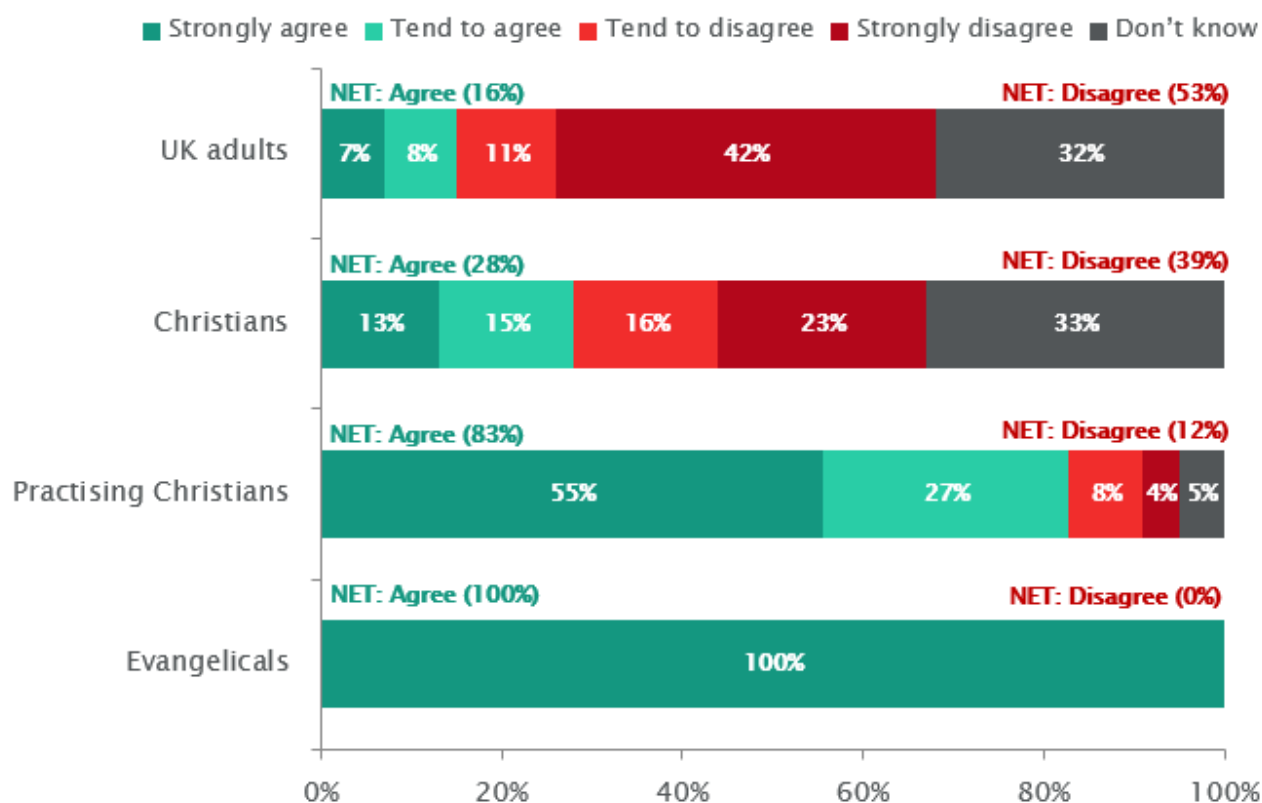


## Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin

Over half of UK adults (53%) disagree that Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of their sin. Self-identifying Christians are more divided on this subject (28% agree, 39% disagree). Notably, a third of both UK adults and Christians say that they don't know whether they agree or disagree (32% and 33% respectively), again indicating that a high proportion of both groups don't understand the question or find it to be relevant.

This question was another of four that was used to define the category of Evangelical respondents, meaning that every respondent strongly agrees with the statement. Once again, practising Christians are in broad agreement with Evangelicals on this question but demonstrate slightly more hesitation, with only 55% strongly agreeing that Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of their sin (compared to 100% of Evangelicals). Roman Catholics are less likely than other denomination groups to agree with this statement (Roman Catholics 81% vs. Nonconformists 93%, Protestants 83%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



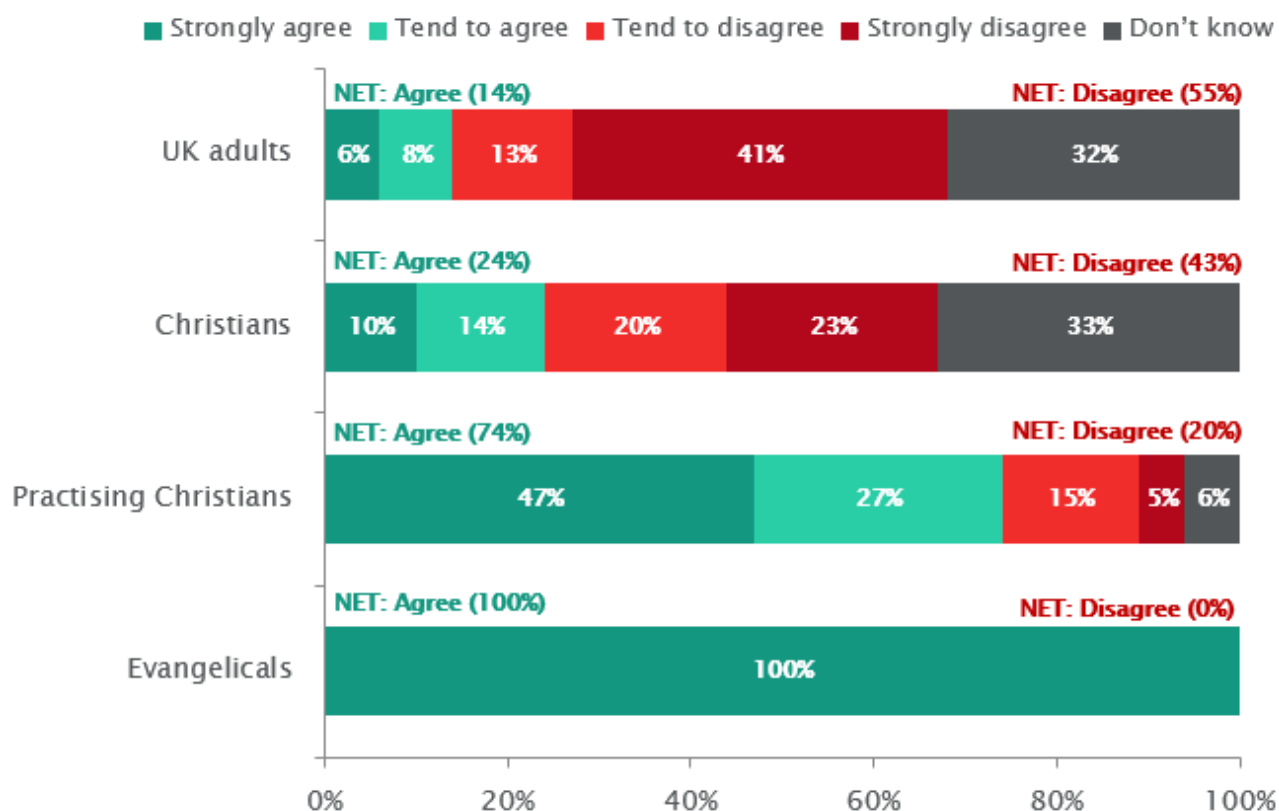
*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

Again, over half of UK adults disagree that only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation (55%), as do over two in five self-identifying Christians (43%). Once again, one in three of both groups (32% UK adults, 33% Christians) say that they don't know whether they agree or disagree with the statement, indicating low levels of comprehension or perceived relevance.

As one of the four questions which were used to define the category of Evangelical respondents, 100% of Evangelicals agree with this statement. As seen in the previous statement, practising Christians are slightly more hesitant than Evangelicals here: 47% strongly agree that only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation (compared to 100% of Evangelicals).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n=520); all Christian respondents (n=1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## 5. SCRIPTURE

## 5.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- **UK adults** are consistently likely to have low levels of belief in the authority and truth of Scripture, and most notably in the case of questions relating to its authority in their lives.
- **Evangelicals** report high levels of belief in the authority and accuracy of the Bible, but there are two statements which yield rather more unexpected results: the first is that the Bible is not literally true, and the second is that modern science disproves the Bible. In both cases, a significant minority of Evangelicals agree with the statement.
- While **self-identifying Christians** generally respond to statements in a similar fashion to UK adults, they are more hesitant in their answers. The same is true of **practising Christians** who generally follow Evangelicals in their responses, but do so less decisively. However, in both cases there is a notable exception to the rule: the statement about whether the Bible is not literally true. Here, self-identifying Christians are more likely than UK adults to say that the Bible is not literally true, and practising Christians offer more radically polarised responses to the question in contrast to Evangelicals.

## 5.2. BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

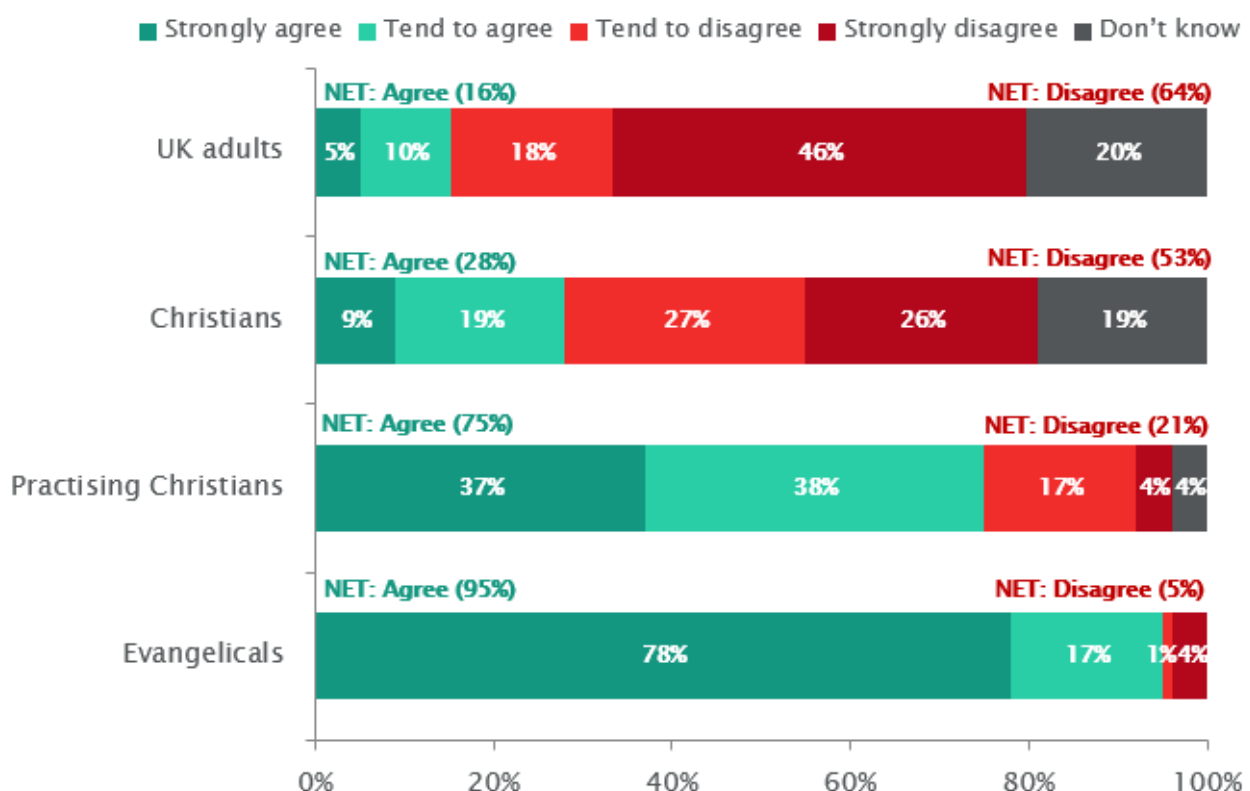
### The Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do

Two in three UK adults (64%) disagree that the Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do, as do over half of self-identifying Christians (53%). However, UK adults are considerably more likely to answer that they strongly disagree with the statement than Christians (46% vs. 26%). It is notable that, in contrast to statements elsewhere in the survey, only one in five of both groups (20% UK adults, 19% Christians) respond that they don't know to each question.

In stark contrast, almost every Evangelical respondent (95%) agrees that the Bible has the authority to tell us what to do. While three quarters of practising Christians agree with the statement, they are more hesitant on the subject (37% strongly agree, 38% tend to agree). Only seven in ten Roman Catholics (68%) agree with this statement.

Practising Christians in Scotland and the South East of England are most likely to agree that the Bible has the authority to tell us what to do (83% and 85% respectively); those in Yorkshire and Humberside (65%), the North East (67%), the South West (68%), and Northern Ireland (69%) are least likely to agree with this.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

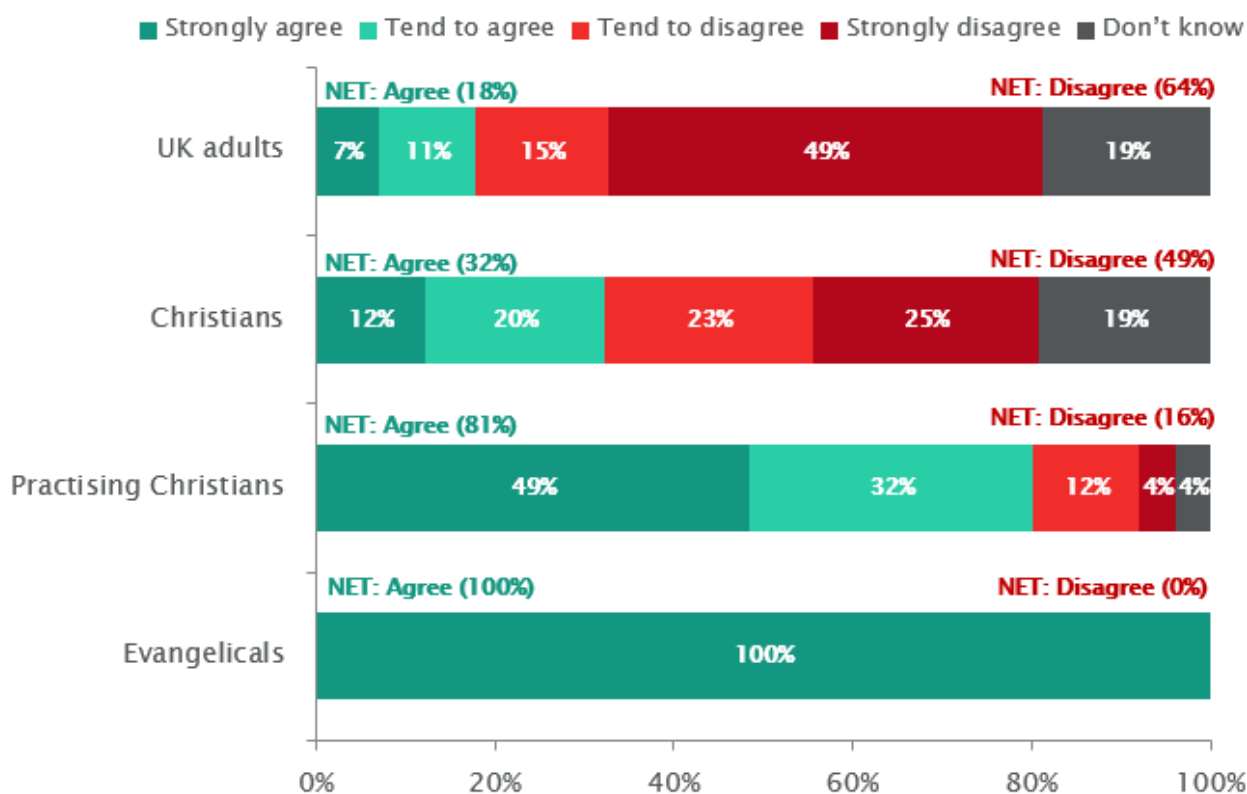
## The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe

Again, two in three UK adults (64%) disagree that the Bible is the highest authority for what they believe, with half strongly disagreeing (49%). Self-identifying Christians are more divided on this statement (32% agree, 49% disagree). However, it is interesting to note that, as with the above statement, only one in five of both groups (19% for both) respond that they don't know to each question.

Again, this is one of the questions that was used to construct the sample of Evangelicals, and it is clear again that practising Christians are more hesitant than Evangelicals about whether they strongly agree that they Bible is the highest authority for what they believe (49% and 100% respectively).

It is notable that, among practising Christians, those residing in the South East of England are most likely to agree with the statement, while those from the North East are the least (96% vs. 65%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

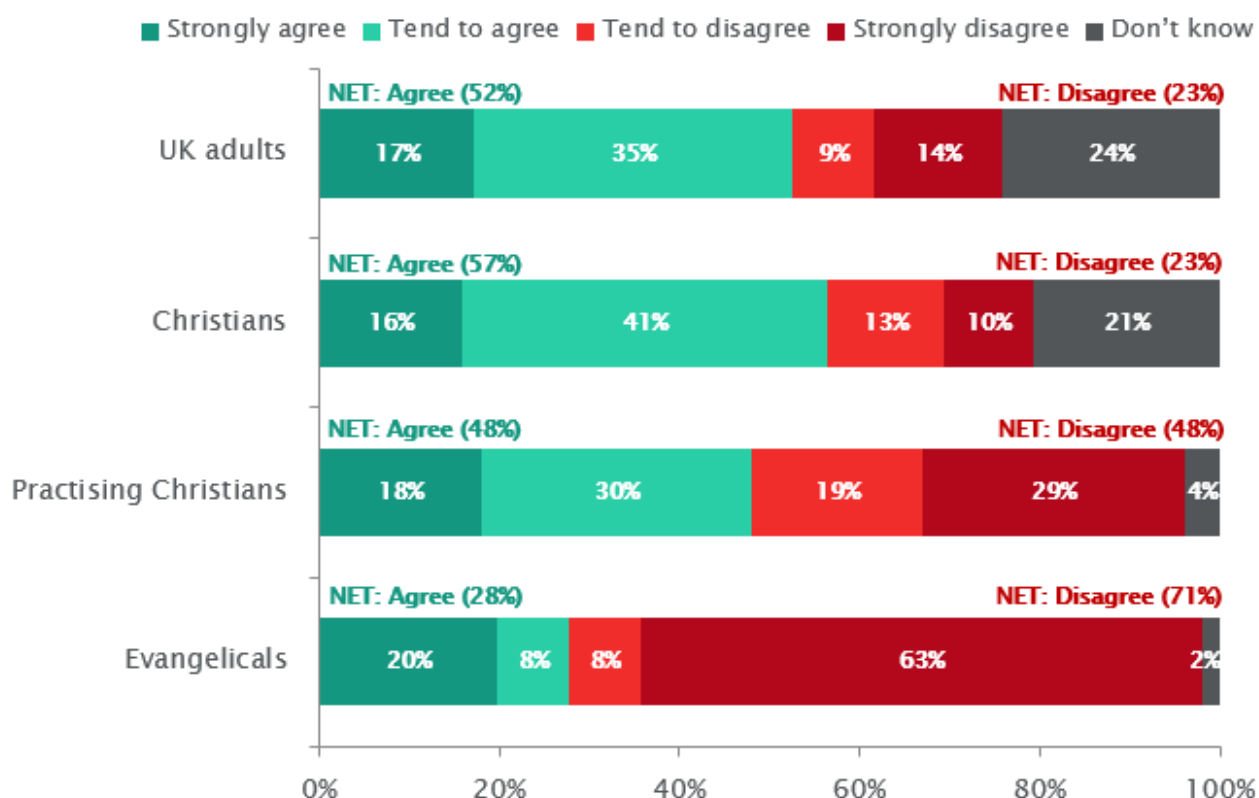
## The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true

Over half of both UK adults and self-identifying Christians (52% and 57%) agree that the Bible is not literally true. It is notable that self-identifying Christians are actually more likely to agree with this statement. UK adults aged 55+ are more likely than their younger counterparts to agree that the Bible is not literally true (18–34 42%, 35–54 50%, 55+ 62%).

While a majority of Evangelicals (71%) disagree that the Bible is not literally true, it is notable that three in ten Evangelicals (28%) agree with this statement. In fact, Evangelicals are actually slightly more likely to strongly agree that the Bible is not literally true than the other three groups (20% vs. 16%–18%). Practising Christians are extremely polarised on this subject, with half agreeing and half disagreeing with the statement (48% agree, 48% disagree).

Among practising Christians, it is notable that men are more likely to agree that the Bible is not literally true than women (56% vs. 40%), as are Roman Catholics compared to other denominations (Roman Catholics 53% vs. Protestants 46%, Nonconformists 28%). Practising Christians in London are most likely to agree that the Bible is not literally true (62%), and those in the West Midlands, South East, and South West the least (35% for all three).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

### 5.3. BIBLICAL INERRANCY

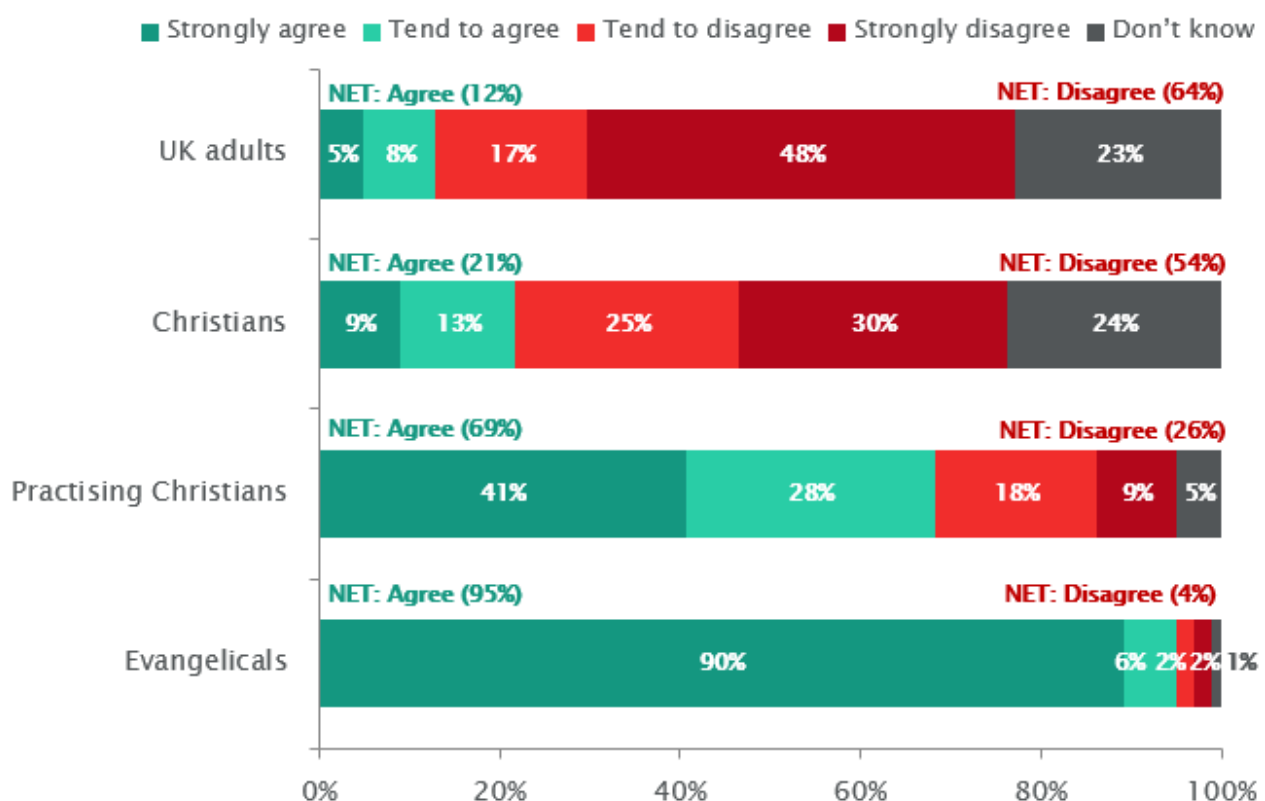
#### The Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches

Two thirds of UK adults (64%) and over half of self-identifying Christians (54%) disagree that the Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches. UK adults residing in Northern Ireland are most likely to agree with this statement (25%), with those in London and the South West the most likely to disagree (72% for both).

The difference in response could hardly be starker in the case of Evangelicals, 95% of whom agree that the Bible is 100% accurate, with 90% strongly agreeing with this. One in seven practising Christians (69%) also agree with this statement, though only 41% strongly agree with this (compared to 90% of Evangelicals). Only three in five (62%) Roman Catholics agree that the Bible is 100% accurate, compared to 86% of Nonconformists and 71% of Protestants.

Among practising Christians, three quarters of people aged 18–34 and 35–44 (76% and 75% respectively) agree that the Bible is 100% accurate, whereas only 65% of those aged 45–64 and 60% of those aged 65+ responded similarly.

#### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches.  
Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).



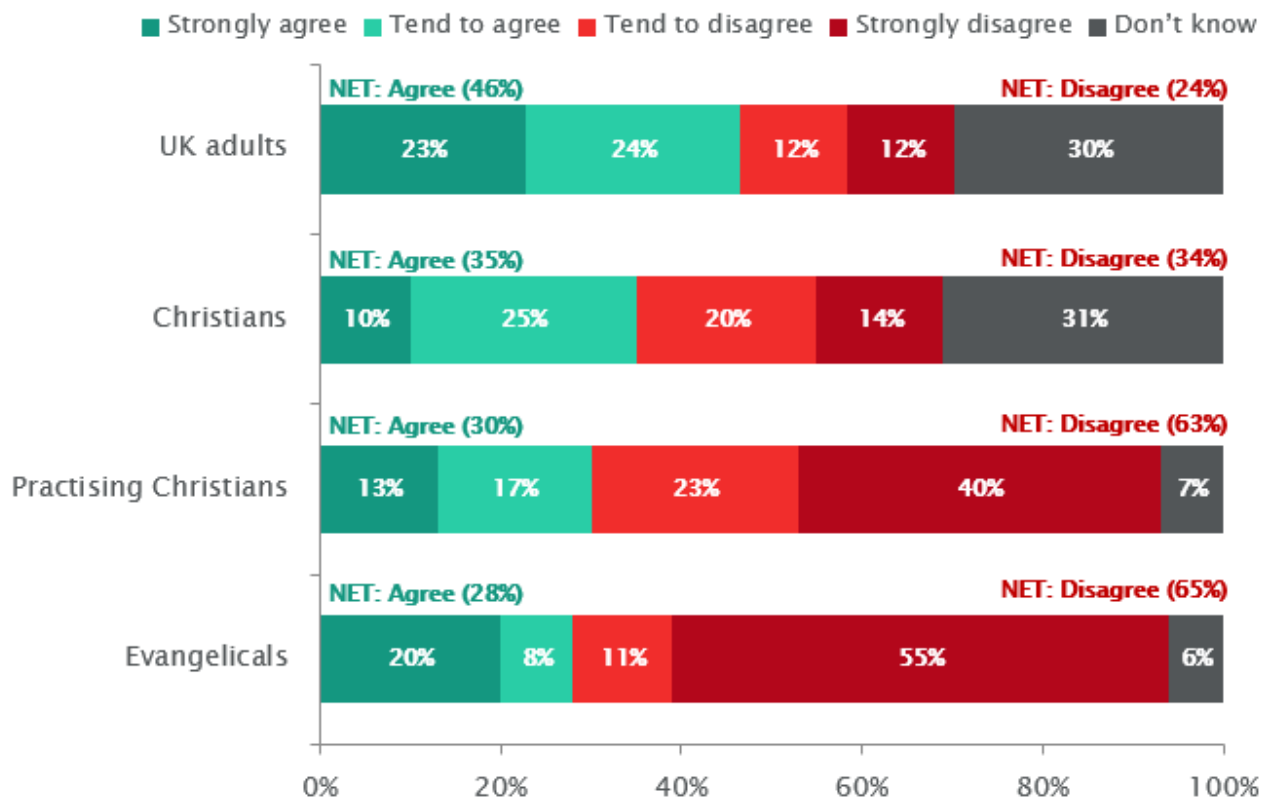
## Modern science disproves the Bible

Almost half of UK adults (46%) agree that modern science disproves the Bible, as do a third (35%) of those who identify as Christian. The latter group is more divided on the subject, with a similar proportion (34%) disagreeing with the statement. Three in ten of both groups responded that they don't know (30% UK adults, 31% Christians), suggesting that a sizeable proportion of UK adults do not feel qualified to answer this question with any conviction.

It is somewhat surprising that only two thirds of Evangelicals (65%) and a similar proportion of practising Christians (63%) disagree that modern science disproves the Bible. In fact, one in five Evangelicals (20%) strongly agree with this statement; a higher proportion than both practising Christians (13%) and self-identifying Christians (10%). At the same time, Evangelicals are most likely to strongly disagree that modern science disproves the Bible (55% vs. 40% practising Christians, 14% Christians, 12% UK adults). This perhaps reflects an increasingly common teaching among evangelicals that 'science teaches us how; the Bible teaches us why' which deliberately avoids setting up science and Scripture in competition with each other but expects them to deliver different things. This may also help explain the surprising proportion of Evangelical respondents who, as seen above, agree that the Bible is not literally true.

Among practising Christians, those that are in younger age groups are more likely to agree that the Bible is disproved by modern science (18–34 45%, 35–44 38%, 45–64 24%, 65+ 15%). Practising Christians in London and Wales are most likely to agree with the statements (54% and 49% respectively), whereas those in Yorkshire & Humberside are least likely to disagree (14%).

## Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Modern science disproves the Bible. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## 6. CHURCH AND SOCIETY

## 6.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- **Practising Christians** are particularly likely to agree that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion and that God created male and female, and to disagree that God is unconcerned with our day-to-day concerns. **Evangelicals** are particularly likely to agree with statements saying that God created male and female and that sex outside of traditional marriage and abortion are sins, but especially likely to disagree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality doesn't apply today and that God is unconcerned with our day-to-day concerns.
- As in previous sections, the responses of **practising Christians** and **Evangelicals** are often similar (and dissimilar from those of UK adults and self-identifying Christians), for instance with statements relating to worship, politics, and the everyday. However, practising Christians and Evangelicals respond very differently from one another on questions about religious pluralism, homosexuality, sex, and abortion.
- **Practising Christians** are generally more divided on statements in this section, especially on gender identity, homosexuality, whether religious belief is a matter of personal opinion, and worship. Similarly, **Evangelicals** are far more divided on statements in this section than they are elsewhere, particularly on those that relate to religious pluralism, gender, and worship.
- **UK adults** are particularly likely to agree that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion and that the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality doesn't apply today, and particularly likely to disagree that sex outside of traditional marriage and abortion are sins. **Self-identifying Christians** are particularly likely to agree with religious pluralism and the fact that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual marriage doesn't apply today, and to disagree that sex outside of traditional marriage and abortion are sins. They are also especially likely agree that worshipping alone or with family at home is as valid as regularly attending church, as well as that churches should provide entertaining worship.
- As in previous sections, there are high levels of agreement between **UK adults** and **self-identifying Christians** on the majority of statements. However, these two groups respond quite differently to statements on religious pluralism, God having created male and female, and God being unconcerned with day-to-day decisions.
- Again, there are several instances where a high proportion of **UK adults** and **self-identifying Christians** answer that they don't know, indicating that they don't understand a statement or that they don't find it relevant to them. For example, when it comes to whether God accepts the worship of all religions, worship and church, and God's concern with day-to-day decisions, a high proportion of UK adults and self-identifying Christians respond that they don't know. However, this proportion is notably lower for statements about religious belief being a matter of personal opinion, sex, and abortion; all presumably matters that both groups found more inclined to comment on.
- While UK adults and self-identifying Christians respond differently to Evangelicals and practising Christians on statements about religious pluralism, abortion, sex outside traditional marriage, and homosexuality, **all four groups** are as divided as one another on questions of worship. Similarly, on the question about gender identity, all four groups are highly divided (though 61% of Evangelicals still disagree that it is a matter of choice). In stark contrast, there is one instance where a majority of all four groups are united on a statement: namely that Christians should be silent on politics (an issue that the majority disagree with).

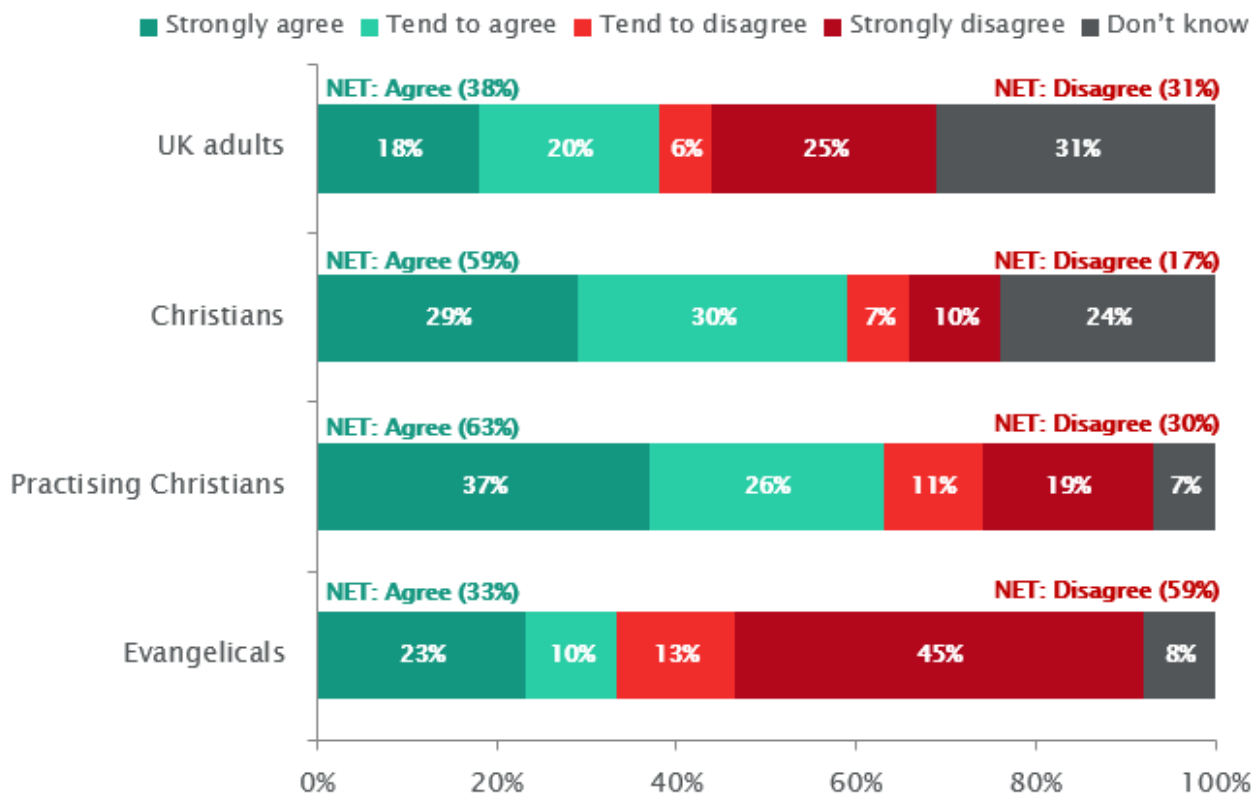
## 6.2. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

### God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

All four groups provide a highly polarised response to this statement. UK adults are the most divided on this statement (38% agree, 31% disagree, 31% don't know). Self-identifying Christians respond very differently to UK adults on this statement, with three in five (59%) agreeing that God accepts the worship of all religions. Practising Christians respond in a similar fashion to self-identified Christians on this question, but are even more likely to agree with the statement, with seven in ten (63%) agreeing with the statement. This is not far from twice the proportion of UK adults who agree that God accepts the worship of all religions (63% practising Christians vs. 38% UK adults). Among UK adults, those that are 55+ are more likely to agree that God accepts the worship of all religions than their younger counterparts (18–34 29%, 35–54 38%, 55+ 46%).

Evangelicals are far and away the most likely to disagree that God accepts the worship of all religions (59%), with almost half in strong disagreement (45%). Nevertheless, one third of Evangelicals (33%) still agree that God does accept the worship of all religions; only 4 percentage points than UK adults overall (33% vs. 38%). Four in five Roman Catholics (78%) agree that God accepts the worship of all religions; considerably more than other groups tested. Among practising Christians, men are more likely to agree that God accepts the worship of all religions than women (68% vs. 58%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



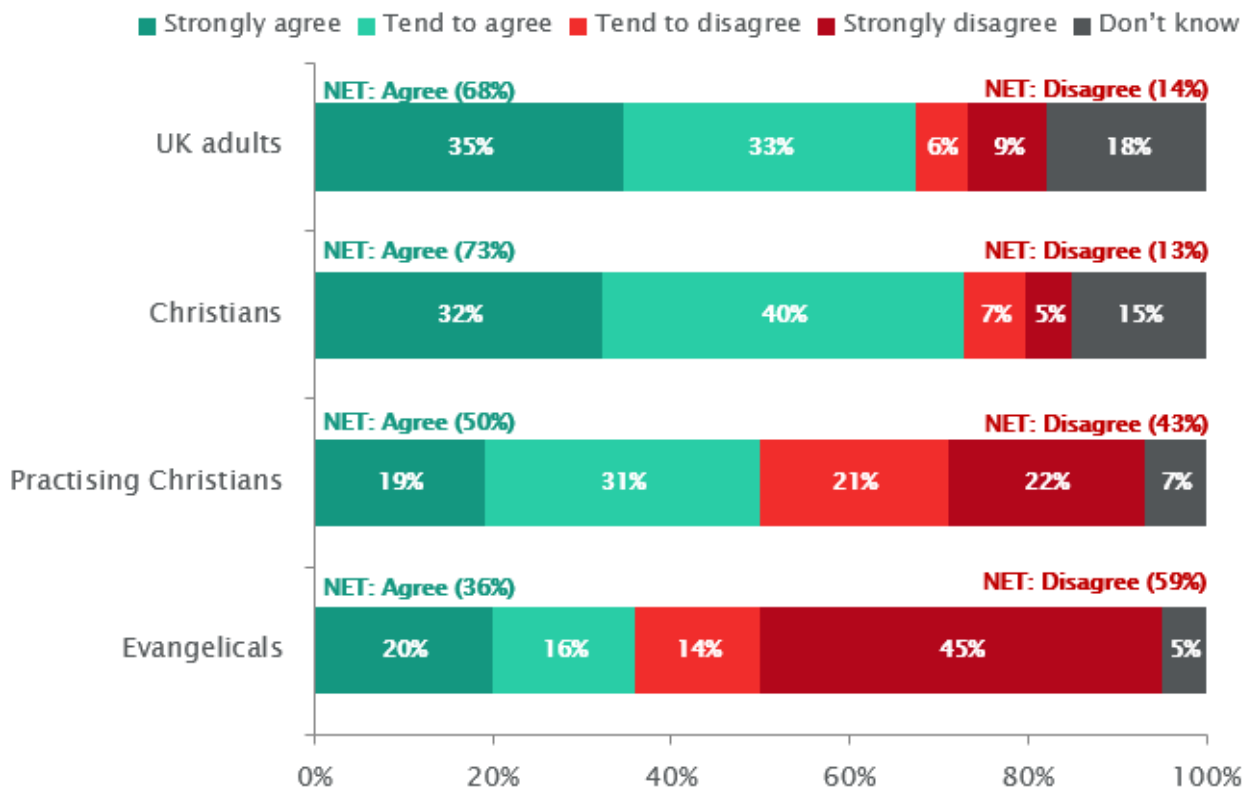
*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth

Seven in ten UK adults (68%) agree that religious belief is a matter of opinion, with self-identifying Christians even more likely to agree by 5 percentage points (73%). In both cases, less than one in five (15%–18%) answer that they don't know, indicating that this question is one about which people have strong convictions or a perceived sense of relevance. Among UK adults, those that are 55+ are more likely to agree that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion than their younger counterparts (18–34 54%, 35–54 67%, 55+ 79%).

Perhaps unexpectedly, half of practising Christians (50%) also agree that religious belief is a matter of opinion, as do over a third of Evangelicals (36%). Nevertheless, three in five Evangelicals (59%) disagree that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; far more than any other group. Roman Catholics are notably more likely to agree with this statement than Protestants and Nonconformists (63% Roman Catholics vs. 46% Protestants and 32% Nonconformists).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## 6.3. GENDER AND SEXUALITY

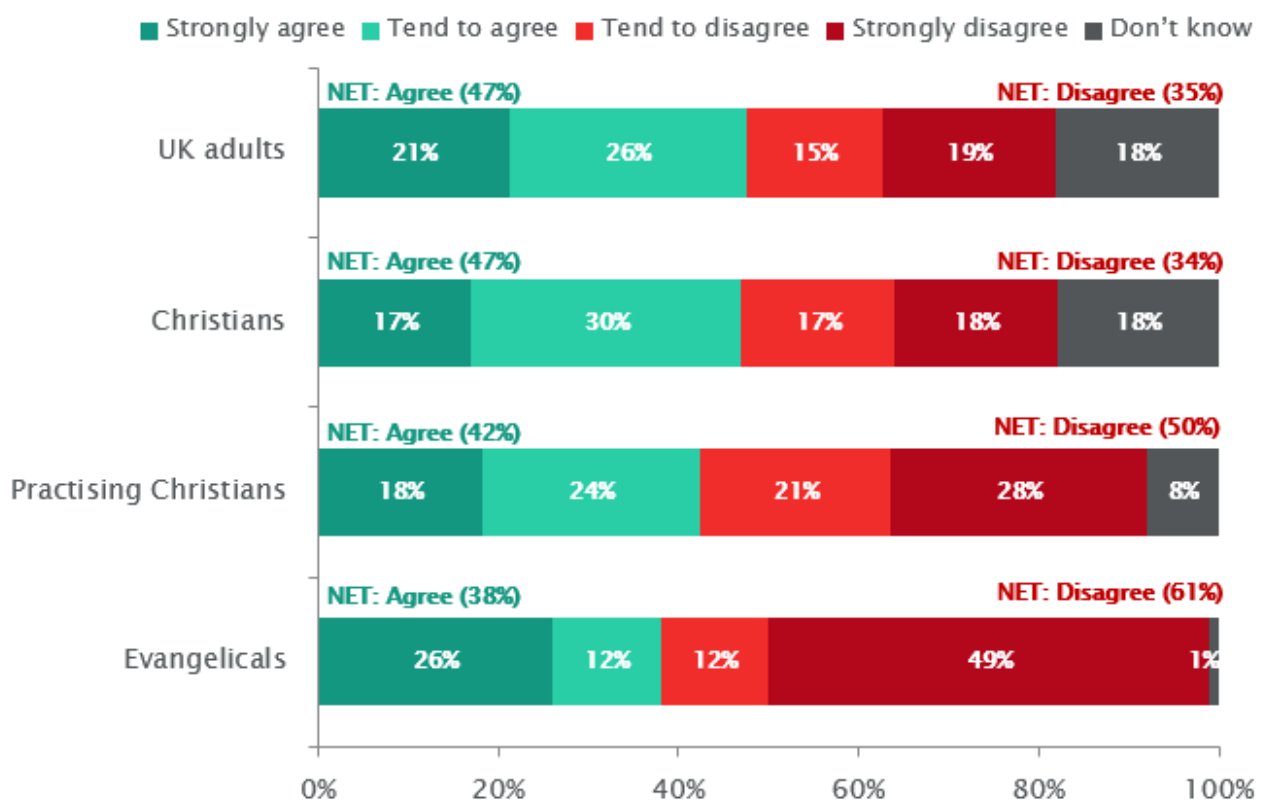
### Gender identity is a matter of choice

All four groups provide a highly polarised response to this statement. About half of UK adults and self-identifying Christians agree that gender identity is a matter of choice (47% for both), and a third of both groups disagree (UK adults 35%, Christians 34%).

The proportion of practising Christians and Evangelicals that agree that gender identity is a matter of choice is not vastly dissimilar to that of UK adults and Christians (Evangelicals 38%, practising Christians 42%, Christians 47%, UK adults 47%). However, they are both more likely to disagree with the statement (Evangelicals 61%, practising Christians 50%), and half of Evangelicals (49%) strongly disagree with the statement. Roman Catholics are more likely than Protestants and Nonconformists to agree with the statement (Roman Catholics 50%, Protestants 41%, and Nonconformists 31%).

Among practising Christians, men are more likely to agree that gender identity is a matter of choice than women (48% vs. 37%), while those aged 65+ are less likely to agree than their younger counterparts (18–34 46%, 35–44 55%, 45–64 43%, 65+ 26%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



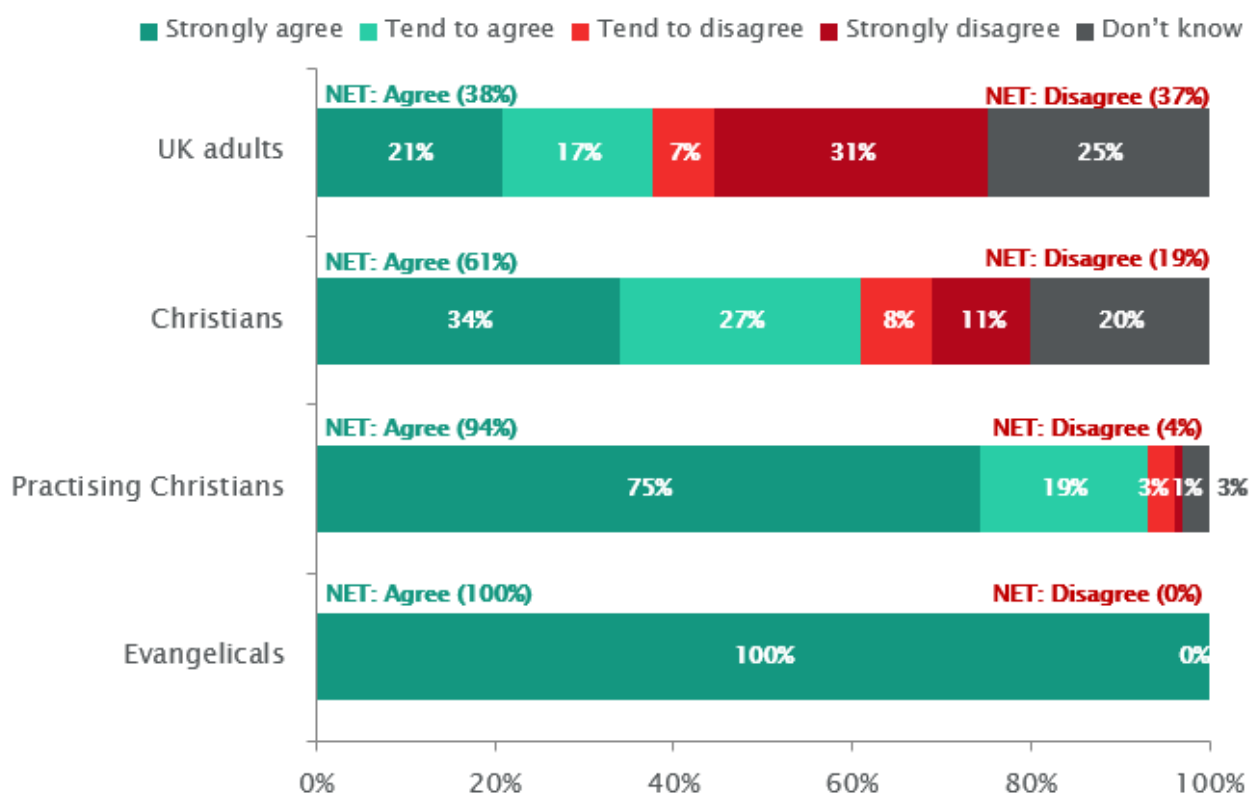
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Gender identity is a matter of choice. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## God created male and female

UK adults are divided on the question of whether God created male and female (38% agree, 37% disagree, 25% don't know). In contrast, there is far more consistency among practising Christians, with three in five (61%) agreeing that God created male and female. Among UK adults, women are more likely to agree with this statement than men (42% vs. 34%). Similarly, those aged 55+ are more likely to agree than their younger counterparts (18–34 29%, 35–54 38%, 55+ 44%), as are those in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the United Kingdom (52% vs. 30%–38%).

Strikingly, every Evangelical respondent (100%) and nearly the same proportion of practising Christians (94%) agree that God created male and female, which may reflect familiarity with the specific wording used in the Genesis narrative.

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God created male and female. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today

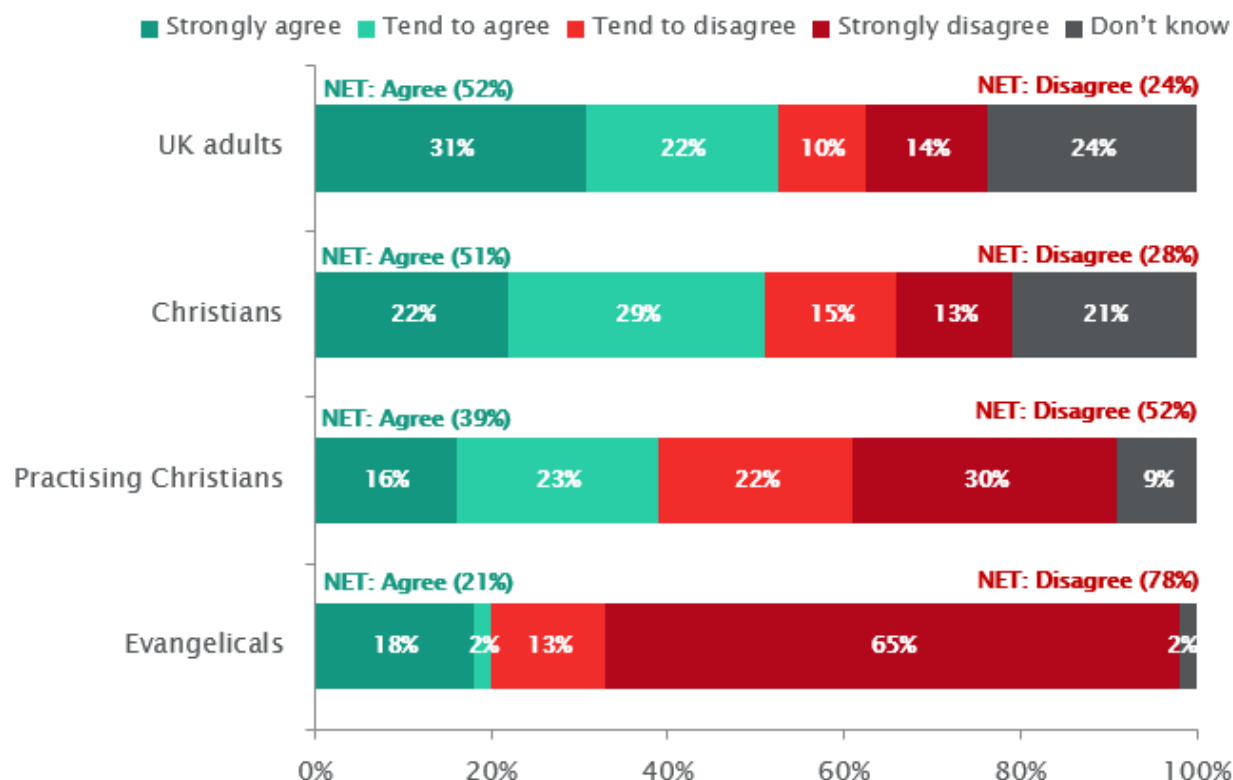
Half of UK adults (52%) and self-identifying Christians (51%) agree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today, with UK adults more likely to strongly agree with this statement than Christians (31% vs. 22%). The remainder of UK adult and Christian groups are divided between those who disagree with the statement (24% UK adults, 28% Christians) and those who answer that they don't know (24% UK adults, 21% Christians). The high proportion of those answering that they don't know may be accounted for by a lack of Biblical knowledge. Among UK adults, those aged 18–34 are less likely than their older counterparts to agree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today (18–34 47%, 35–54 54%, 55+ 55%). Similarly, those in social grades AB and C1 (56% for both) are more likely to agree with the statement than those in C2 and DE (47% and 48% respectively).

Practising Christians are divided on this statement subject (39% agree, 52% disagree). In stark contrast, four out of five Evangelicals (78%) disagree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today, with only one in five (21%) who agree. Furthermore, two thirds of Evangelicals (65%) strongly disagree with the statement. On the other hand, almost half of Roman Catholics (47%) agree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today.

Among practising Christians, men are more likely than women to agree that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today (45% vs. 35%). This is notable because, among UK adults overall, the genders are reversed: women are more likely than men to agree with the statement (55% vs. 50%). Similarly, while it was seen above that younger adults are less likely to agree with the statement than their older counterparts, among practising Christians it is younger adults who are most likely to agree (18–34 48%, 35–44 48%, 45–64 36%, 65+ 28%). This is striking insofar as, among UK adults overall, younger people are known to be increasingly less condemnatory of homosexual behaviour.



## Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behaviour doesn't apply today. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n=520); all Christian respondents (n=1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

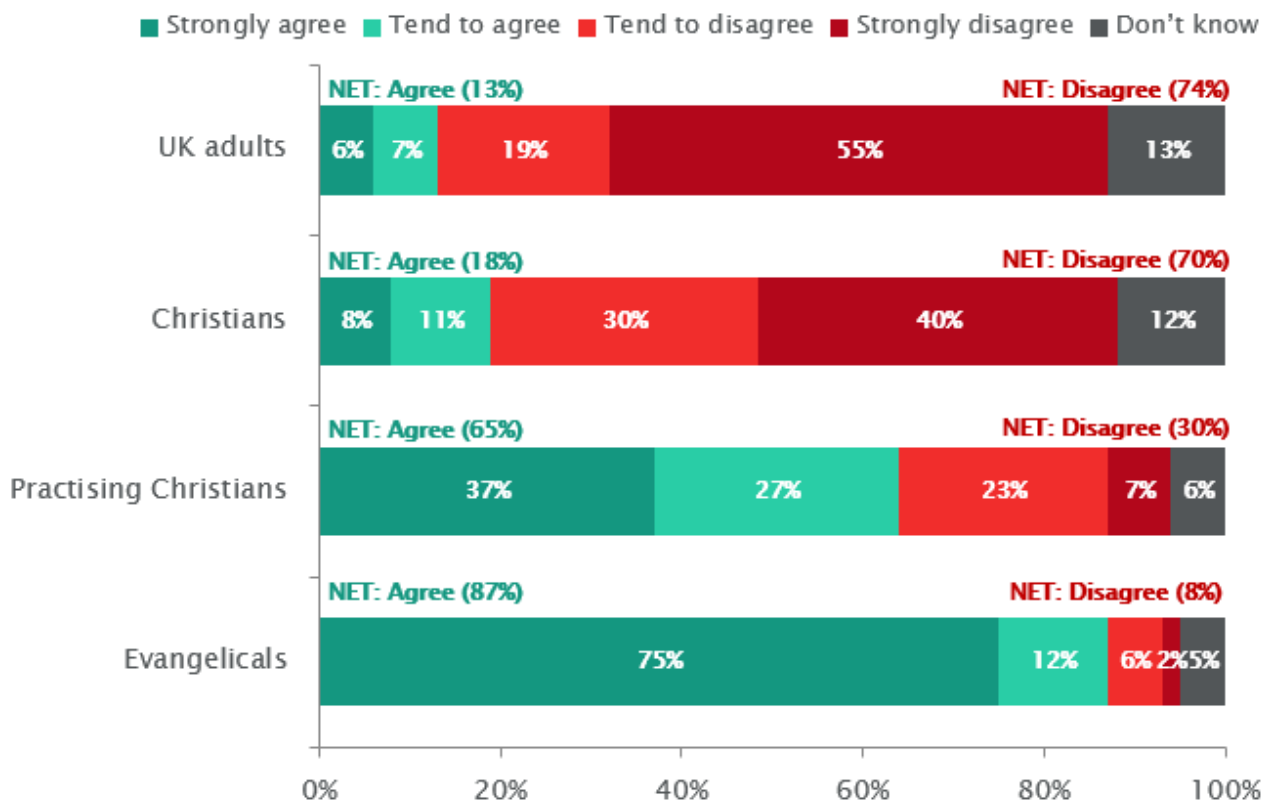
## 6.4. SEX AND ABORTION

### Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin

Three quarters of UK adults (74%) disagree that sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin, with over half (55%) strongly disagreeing with this. Similarly, seven in ten (70%) self-identifying Christians disagree with this statement. In both cases, the proportion of those who say that they don't know is low in comparison to other questions (UK adults 13%, Christians 12%), indicating that this is an issue that these groups feel is more comprehensible or relevant to them. Adults living in Scotland are more likely to disagree with this statement than those living elsewhere in the UK (81% Scotland vs. 74% England, 71% Northern Ireland, 73% Wales).

There is a clear contrast between the way that UK adults and self-identifying Christians respond to this statement and the way that practising Christians and Evangelicals respond to it. An overwhelming majority of Evangelicals (87%) agree that sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin, with three quarters (75%) strongly agreeing with this. Practising Christians are slightly more hesitant on this matter (37% strongly agree, 27% tend to agree), but two thirds (65%) are in clear agreement. Roman Catholics are less likely to agree that sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin than other denomination groups (Roman Catholics 58%, Protestants 66%, Nonconformists 83%). Among practising Christians, those aged 45–64 are least likely to agree with this statement (18–34 72%, 35–44 73%, 45–64 56%, 65+ 63%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



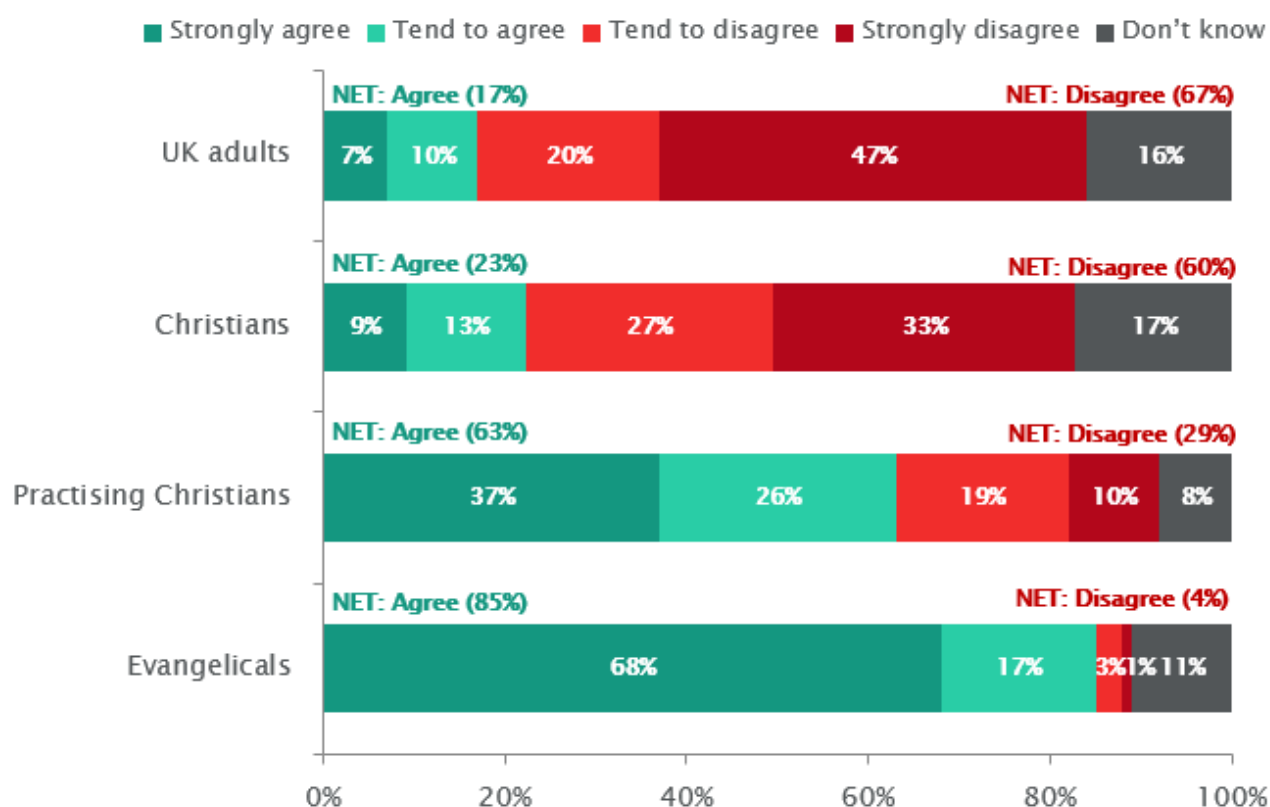
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n=520); all Christian respondents (n=1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## Abortion is a sin

Two thirds of UK adults (67%) disagree that abortion is a sin, almost half of whom strongly disagree (47%). A similar proportion of self-identifying Christians disagree with this statement (60%). Again, the proportion of those who respond that they don't know is low in comparison to other questions (UK adults 16%, Christians 17%), indicating that this is an issue that these groups feel is more comprehensible or relevant to them. Among UK adults, those residing in Northern Ireland are more likely to agree that abortion is a sin than those elsewhere in the UK (31% Northern Ireland vs. 17% England, 16% Wales, 13% Scotland).

A large majority of Evangelicals (85%) agree that abortion is a sin, with seven in ten (68%) strongly agreeing with this. Again, practising Christians respond similarly but are more hesitant (63% agree, 29% disagree). Protestants are less likely to agree that abortion is a sin than other denominational groups (Protestants 61%, Nonconformists 77%, Roman Catholics 70%). Among practising Christians, those aged 18–34 are more likely than their older counterparts to agree that abortion is a sin (18–34 70%, 35–44 67%, 45–64 57%, 65+ 59%). Practising Christians in London and Northern Ireland are most likely to agree with the statement (73% and 71% respectively), and those in the North East and Yorkshire & Humber are the least (43% and 46% respectively).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Abortion is a sin. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

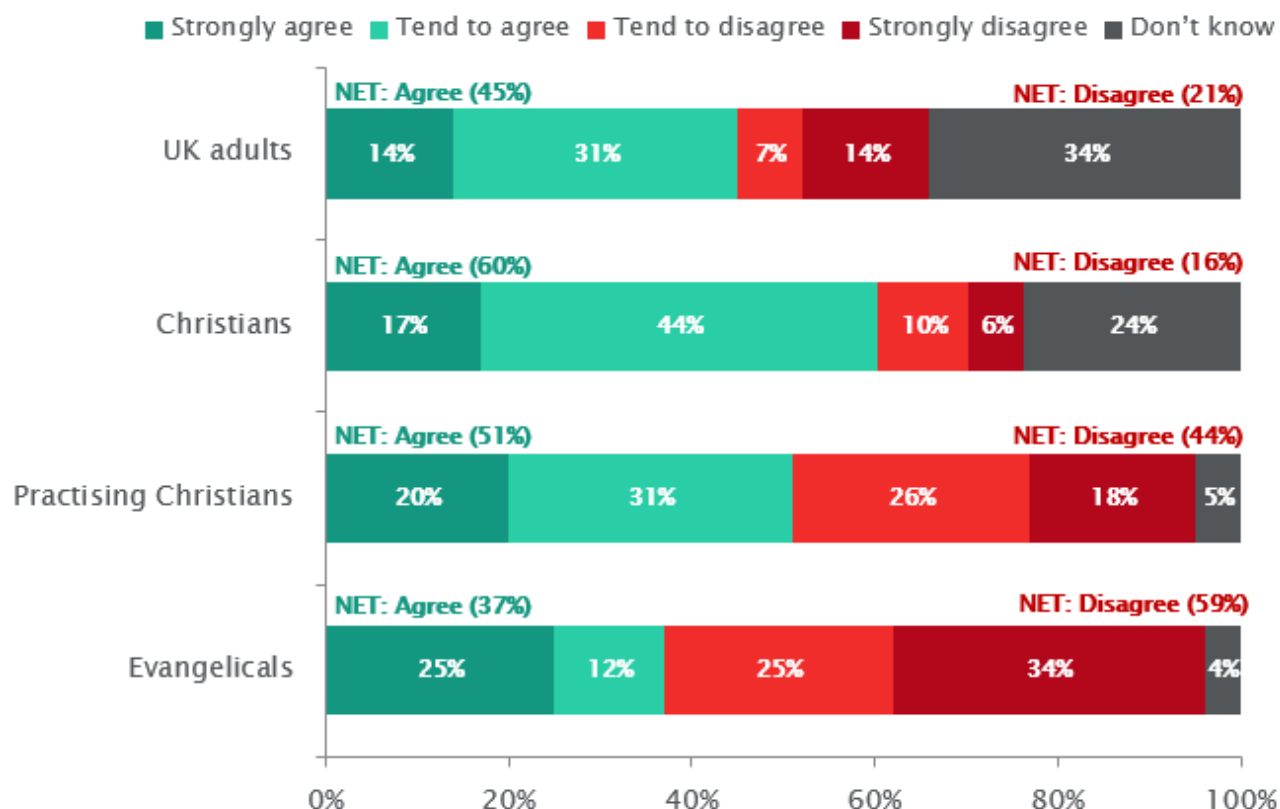
## 6.5. WORSHIP

### **Worshipping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church**

Close to half of UK adults (45%) agree that worshipping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church, with three in five self-identifying Christians (60%) also agreeing with the statement. It is notable that a third of UK adults (34%) and a quarter of Christians (24%) answered that they don't know to this statement, suggesting that they did not perceive the question to be relevant to them. UK adults aged 55+ are more likely to agree with this statement than their younger counterparts (55+ 55% vs. 18–34 34%, 35–54 43%). Similarly, UK adults residing in Northern Ireland are most likely to agree with this statement, while those from the South West of England are the least likely (52% vs. 39%).

Practising Christians and Evangelicals are far more divided on this matter. 51% of practising Christians agree that worshipping alone or with family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church, but 44% disagree. While Evangelicals are more likely than the other three groups to disagree with this statement (59% Evangelicals vs. 44% practising Christians, 16% Christians, 21% UK adults), almost two in five Evangelicals (37%) agree with it. Over half of Roman Catholics (53%) agree with the statement, compared to 49% of Protestants and only 27% of Nonconformists. Among practising Christians, those aged 65+ are less likely to agree with this statement than their younger counterparts (18–34 52%, 35–44 60%, 45–64 51%, 65+ 42%). Practising Christians residing in London are most likely to agree with this statement, whereas those from the North East of England are least likely (61% vs. 28%).

## Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



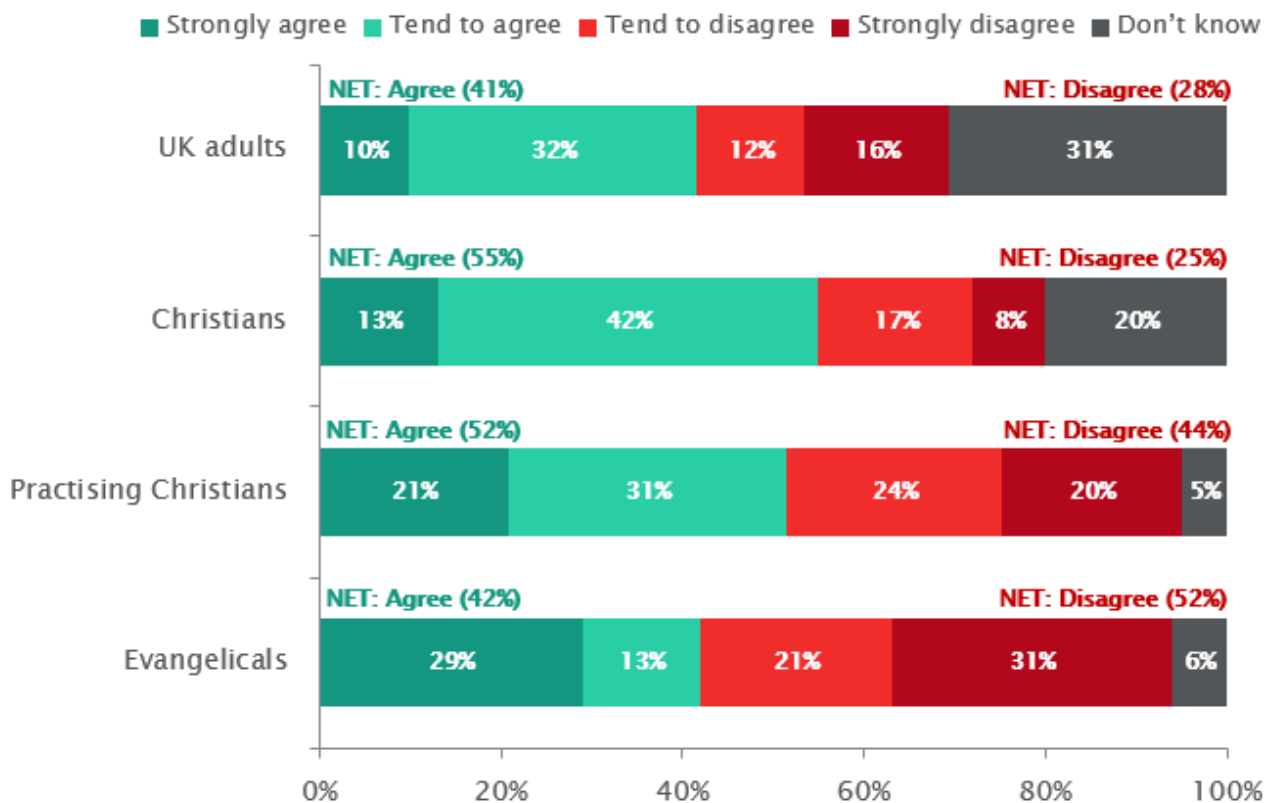
*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Worshipping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

## Churches must provide entertaining worship if they want to be effective

Two in five UK adults (41%) agree that churches must provide entertaining worship services if they want to be effective, a proportion that rises to 55% among self-identifying Christians. In the case of UK adults, it is significant that a third (31%) respond that they don't know, possibly indicating that they don't perceive the statement to be relevant to their experience. UK adults aged 55+ are more likely than their younger counterparts to agree with this statement (18–34 26%, 35–54 40%, 55+ 54%).

Practising Christians are extremely divided on this subject: half (52%) agree that churches must be entertaining if they want to be effective, while over two in five (44%) disagree. Evangelicals are similarly divided on this subject, though they are more likely to disagree (52%) than agree (42%). Nonconformists are less likely than other denomination groups to agree with this statement (Protestants 51%, Nonconformists 39%, Roman Catholics 54%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Churches must provide entertaining worship if they want to be effective. Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).*

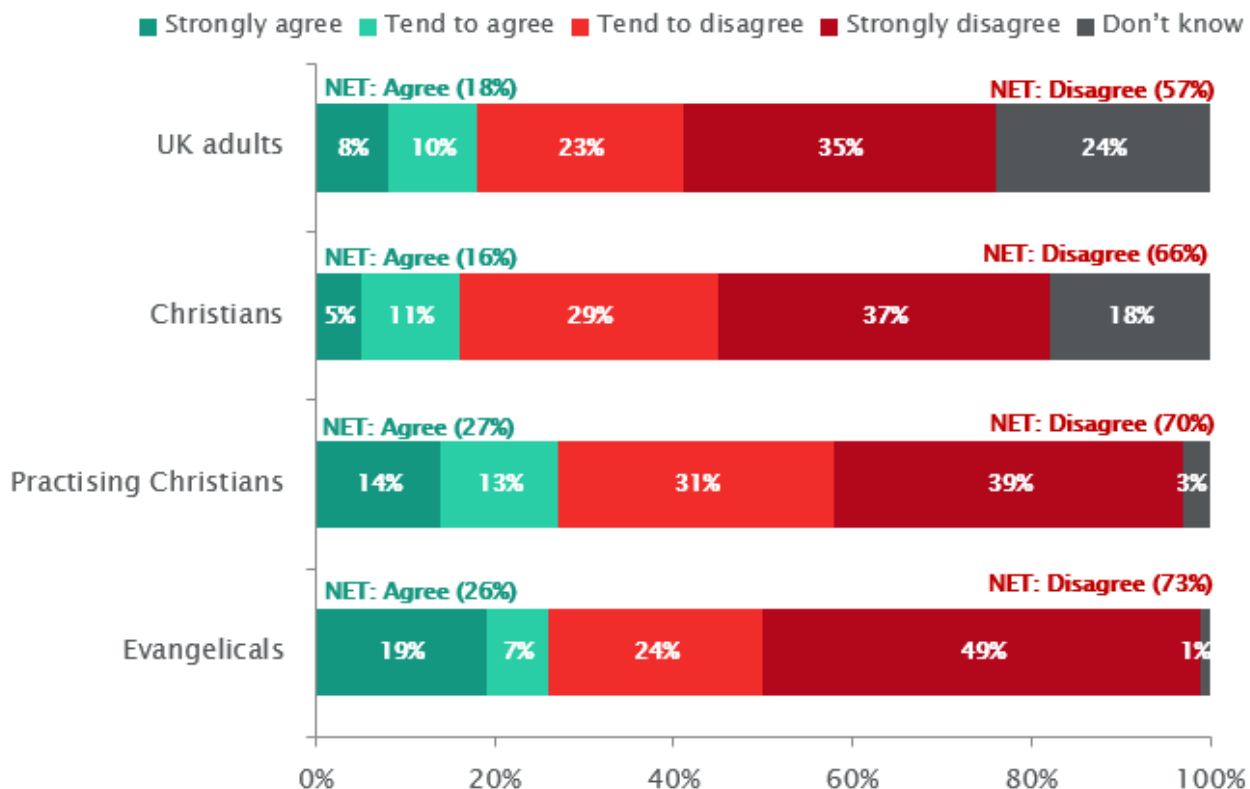
## 6.6. POLITICS AND THE EVERYDAY

### Christians should be silent on issues of politics

A majority of all four groups disagree that Christians should be silent on issues of politics. Almost three in five UK adults (57%) and two thirds of self-identifying Christians (66%) disagree with this statement. Among UK adults, those residing in the South East of England are most likely to agree that Christians should be silent on issues of politics, with those from Northern Ireland and the West Midlands least likely (25% vs. 13%).

It is notable that practising Christians and Evangelicals are more likely to agree with this statement than UK adults and Christians (27% practising Christians, 26% Evangelicals vs. 18% UK adults, 16% Christians). However, both groups are also more likely to disagree with the statement (70% self-identifying Christians, 73% Evangelicals vs. 57% UK adults, 66% Christians). Between different denomination groups, only 17% of Roman Catholics agree with this statement, compared to 29% of Protestants and 26% of Nonconformists. Among practising Christians, those aged 65+ are less likely to agree that Christians should be silent on issues of politics than their younger counterparts (18-34 41%, 35-44 34%, 45-64 21%, 65+ 15%). Practising Christians in Wales are most likely to agree with this statement (47%), and those in the West Midlands (18%) and Eastern England are the least (18%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



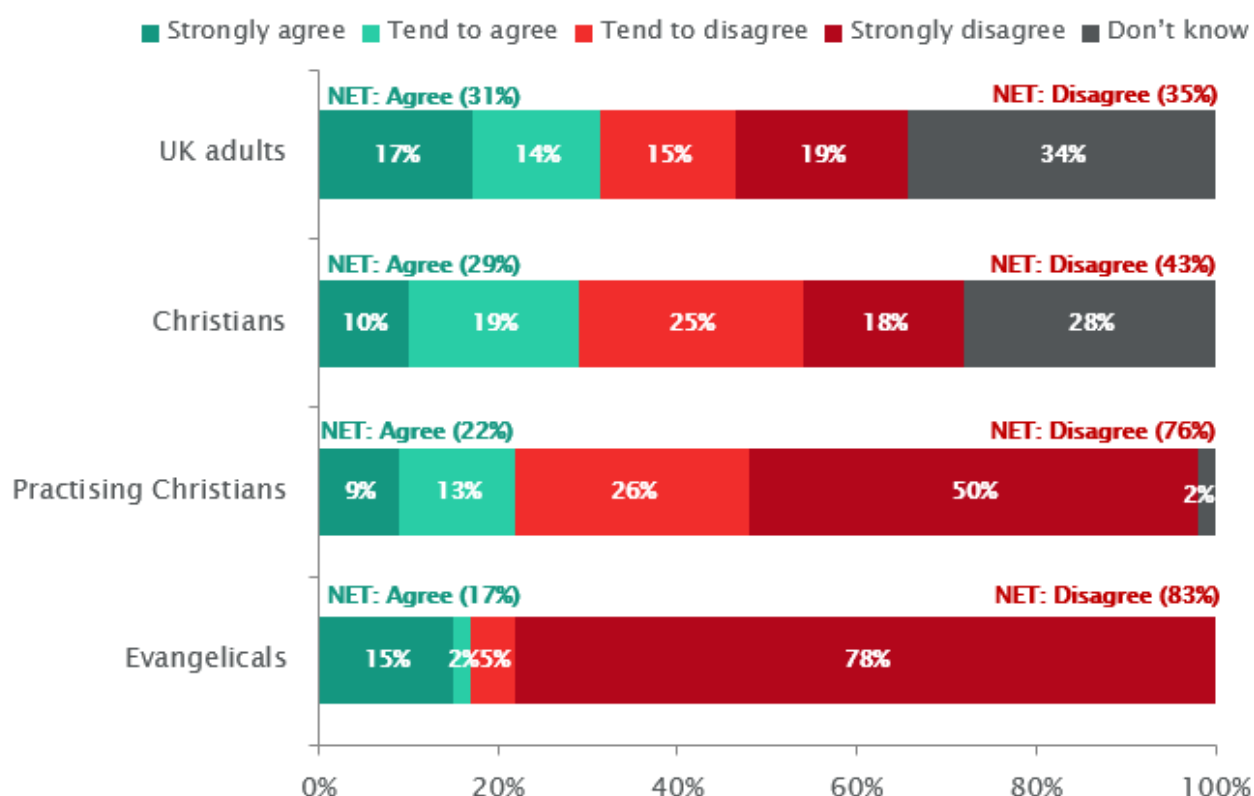
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Christians should be silent on issues of politics.  
Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).

## God is unconcerned with my day-to-day decisions

UK adults are highly divided on the question of whether God is unconcerned with their day-to-day decisions (31% agree, 35% disagree, 34% don't know). While self-identifying Christians are almost as likely as UK adults to agree with this statement (29% and 31% respectively), they are more likely to disagree (43% Christians, 35% UK adults). It is notable that a third of UK adults (34%) answered that they don't know to this question (compared to 28% of self-identifying Christians), suggesting that UK adults perceive the question to be irrelevant to them. UK adults aged 55+ are more likely than their younger counterparts to agree with this question (18–34 27%, 35–54 31%, 55+ 35%). Adults in Scotland are more likely than those in other regions of the UK to agree with the statement (41% Scotland vs. 35% Wales, 26% Northern Ireland, 30% England).

Over four in five Evangelicals (83%) disagree with this statement, as do three quarters of practising Christians (76%). A majority of both groups strongly disagree that God is unconcerned with their day-to-day decisions (78% Evangelicals, 50% practising Christians). Among practising Christians, those residing in London are more likely than those in other regions to agree with the statement, with those in the South East least likely (35% vs. 9%). Practising Christians aged 65+ are less likely to agree with the statement than their younger counterparts (65+ 4% vs. 18–34 38%, 35–44 30%, 45–64 18%).

### Showing % who agree or disagree with the statement



*Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? God is unconcerned with my day-to-day decisions.*  
 Base: all Evangelicals (n=132); all practising Christians (n= 520); all Christian respondents (n= 1,048), all UK adult respondents (n=2,133).



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

## Overview

As might be expected on account of their diverging religious commitments, the responses of UK adults and Evangelicals tend to differ considerably, and particularly when presented with key theological commitments. For the majority of statements, there is a high level of correspondence between the responses of UK adults and self-identifying Christians on the one hand, and those of practising Christians and Evangelicals on the other. However, self-identifying Christians are typically more likely to only tend to agree or disagree to responses than UK adults, just as practising Christians are more likely to do so compared to Evangelicals. However, there are some clear exceptions to this rule. In what follows, there is a short discussion of several themes which demonstrate particular unanimity and division both among and between different groups.

## Jesus Christ

There is considerable unanimity among and between practising Christians and Evangelicals on statements on the person, resurrection, and saving work of Jesus Christ. However, these statements received a far more critical response from UK adults than others in the Theology Proper and Soteriology and Eschatology sections. Similarly, self-identifying Christians are notably more divided on statements about Christology and the role of Christ in relation to salvation and judgement than they are on other statements found in the Theology Proper and Soteriology and Eschatology sections. This may suggest that UK adults and self-identifying Christians in general are reluctant to accept, or are critical of, claims relating to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

## Holy Spirit

There is considerable unanimity among and between practising Christians and Evangelicals on statements concerning God, Trinity, and Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, there is far less unanimity on matters relating to the Holy Spirit. This may be an indication of diverse theological commitments relating to the Holy Spirit within these groups, or alternatively a lack of knowledge in this area.

## Sin

Compared to other statements, a low proportion of UK adults and self-identifying Christians answer that they don't know with respect to statements about sin. Indeed, a majority of practising Christians join UK adults and self-identifying Christians in agreement that most people are good by nature, as well as being considerably more divided than Evangelicals on whether the even smallest sin deserves eternal damnation. This may suggest that the majority UK adults and Christians have reservations about language of sin. With that said, it is interesting that a substantial proportion of UK adults, self-identifying Christians, and practising Christians are less critical of the notion of Hell being a real place than they are of the smallest sin deserving eternal damnation.

## Scripture

The statement about which proposes that the Bible is not literally true attracted a series of interesting responses. First, not only do a majority of self-identifying Christians agree that the Bible is not literally true, but they are more likely to do so than UK adults overall. Second, practising Christians are far more divided on this subject than they are on the majority of statements, and considerably more so than Evangelicals whose responses typically correspond more closely to those of practising Christians. Third, a significant minority of Evangelicals agree that the Bible is not literally true. The literal truth of Scripture is then a somewhat contested area among Christians and adults more generally in the United Kingdom.

## **Worship**

In stark contrast to statements about, for example, the person and saving work of Jesus Christ, when it comes to the two statements about worship and church, all four groups are as divided as one another. In other words, whether or not someone attends church once a month or strongly agrees with evangelical theological propositions, these cannot be straightforward indicators of specific attitudes to worship and church in the UK.

## **Blessings**

As in the case of the statements on worship, the statement about whether God will always reward true faith with blessings in this life receives a notably divided response from all four groups. However, it is very likely that the basis for division between UK adults on this matter is different to that between practising Christians.

## **Religious pluralism**

The question of whether religious belief is a matter of personal opinion provokes a far more divided view among practising Christians overall than is seen elsewhere in the study, and to a lesser extent the same is true of Evangelicals. Furthermore, the question that precedes this about whether God accepts the worship of all religions receives a divided response from all groups relative to other question. This is an unusual instance in which the responses of practising Christians are more closely aligned with self-identifying Christians than those of Evangelicals. While Evangelicals appear to be more closely aligned with UK adults on this question, this is again presumably for different reasons: for example, because a smaller proportion of UK adults accept that God accepts worship from a religion, whereas Evangelicals are less likely to embrace religious pluralism.

## **Knowledge and perceived relevance**

A high proportion of UK adults and self-identifying Christians answer that they don't know to a large amount of statements, and most notably in the Theology Proper and Soteriology and Eschatology sections. In many of these instances, it has been suggested that that they do so because they have low knowledge or comprehension when it comes to a given statement (e.g. regarding theological terms, content of Scripture). Similarly, it has also been suggested that some of these respondents answer that they don't know because they perceive a statement to be irrelevant to their personal beliefs, choosing instead to decline comment.

With that in mind, it is revealing that the proportion of UK adults and self-identifying Christians who answer "don't know" is significantly lower in response to certain statements. UK adults and self-identifying Christians are less likely to respond that they don't know when asked about several issues: sin and judgement, encouraging non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their saviour, sex outside traditional marriage, whether religion is a matter of a personal opinion, and abortion. In some instances this is possibly because these groups perceive a statement to be more relevant to them, but in others this is unlikely to be a sufficient explanation (e.g. in the case of encouraging non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour).





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