

Poll: Sinking Perceptions Of Islam

Fewer Than 1 in 5 Express Favorable View Of The Religion

By Jennifer Hoar



(AP / CBS)

(CBS) Although Americans believe they are better informed about Islam than they were five years ago, a new CBS News poll finds fewer than one in five say their impression of the religion is favorable.

Forty-five percent of respondents queried April 6 - 9 said they have an unfavorable view of Islam, a rise from 36 percent in February. And the public's impression of Islam has diminished even more compared with four years ago. In February 2002 less than six months after the terrorist attacks of September 11 the country was evenly divided in its impression of Islam.

WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF ISLAM?

FAVORABLE

Now



2002



UNFAVORABLE

Now



2002



Thirty-six percent of respondents said they haven't heard enough or don't know enough to say either way.

Americans today are also more likely than not to believe that Islam encourages violence, at least in comparison to other religions around the world.

The last few months have seen escalating sectarian violence between Shiite and Sunni Islamic factions in Iraq and the ongoing trial of Zacarias Moussaoui in the United States. The poll finds 46 percent of Americans believe Islam encourages violence more than other religions, compared with 39 percent of Americans who felt that way two months ago and 35 percent who felt that way in March 2002 (according to a Gallup Poll).

When compared with some other religions practiced in America, positive views of Islam rank below those for mainstream Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, and Christian fundamentalist faiths. Only Scientology, of all the religions asked about, ranked lower.

WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF....

PROTESTANTISM/OTHER CHRISTIANS

Favorable



Unfavorable



Don't Know



THE CATHOLIC RELIGION

Favorable



Unfavorable



Don't Know



THE JEWISH RELIGION

Favorable



Unfavorable



Don't Know



CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISTS RELIGIONS

Favorable



Unfavorable



Don't Know



THE MORMON RELIGION

Favorable



Unfavorable



Don't Know

 41%

ISLAM

Favorable

 19%

Unfavorable

 45%

Don't Know

 36%

SCIENTOLOGY

Favorable

 8%

Unfavorable

 52%

Don't Know

 40%

For detailed information on how CBS News conducts public opinion surveys, [click here](#).

This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 899 adults, interviewed by telephone April 6-9, 2006. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. Error for subgroups may be higher.