

2011 GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY



FAITH
MEDIA+**CULTURE**

PERSPECTIVES FROM
LARRY HOLLON

2011 Global Involvement Survey

Nearly One-Third of Americans Are More Worried About Economy Than Terrorism

72% of Adults Are Very Proud to be American

60% of Adults Think World Is More Interconnected

One-Third Turn to Prayer to Support a Need

Objective

In 2011 major international events have dominated the news with growing frequency. To better understand American views on global involvement, United Methodist Communications commissioned a survey among Americans, looking at media habits, views on U.S. involvement in international issues, national pride, and generosity.

Methodology

United Methodist Communications commissioned a third party, independent research firm to conduct a consumer opinion poll on its behalf. This study involved an online survey conducted June 10-18, 2011 among 870 adults 18 years of age and older. United Methodist Communications designed the questionnaire and methodology with the outside research firm managing the fieldwork and weighting the data to reflect US demographics. This research has a 95% confidence level that the maximum sampling error is +/- 4%.

Survey Highlights:

TOP INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN WORLD TODAY

Economic weakness and unemployment are the most important issues in the world today. Issues of the economy and how it affects people personally seem top of mind among most Americans. When asked to identify the single most important international issue from a list of alternatives, almost a third, 32%, of adults cite economic weakness and unemployment. Terrorism comes second at 16%. These two issues lead with all age groups, although “economic and social inequality” are tied with terrorism for those 18 to 24 years old.

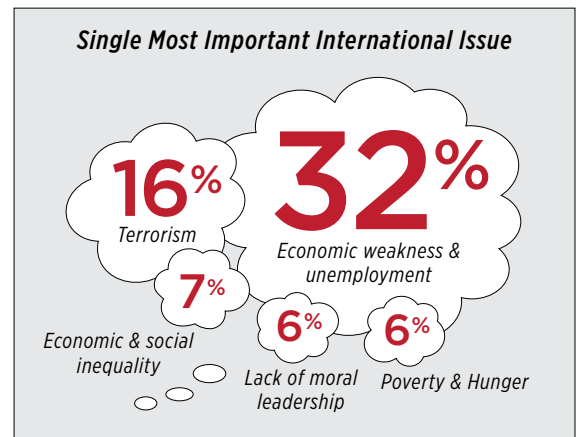
A distant third most-mentioned problem was poverty and hunger throughout the world. Other news making issues were ranked extremely less important. Those included lack of moral leadership among nations, deficit spending, political instability in the Middle East, climate change, global health issues, civil strife and genocide, religious conflicts, pollution, drugs, energy costs and nuclear arms proliferation.

While still ranking terrorism second in importance, younger adults 18 to 34 are less likely to consider terrorism a key international issue. This may reflect their relative youth when the 9/11 attacks occurred.

Respondents generally indicate that their top-ranked issues are important because of the impact on their lives, rather than because of faith or religious conviction. This is particularly true among adults 18 to 24.

Japan and Osama bin Laden top international stories. Of recent events making the news, the Japanese earthquake/tsunami, the related Japanese nuclear disasters and the death of Osama bin Laden were three of the most followed stories. Approximately 40-45% of adults followed each of these topics closely. The next most followed stories included the efforts to overthrow Moammar Gaddafi, the Arab Spring, Mexico’s fight against drug cartels, and the recent royal wedding. These subjects garner 16-22% of adults as close followers. Topics related to global health, sub-Saharan African conflicts, and North Korea’s famine have the fewest adults following them closely.

Among those who follow international news closely, the most important topics are Japan, turmoil in North Africa, Osama bin Laden, the Arab-Israeli conflict, drug cartels in Mexico and the European economy.



WORLD VIEWED AS MORE INTERCONNECTED

Approximately 60% of the respondents agree that “the world is more interconnected today”.

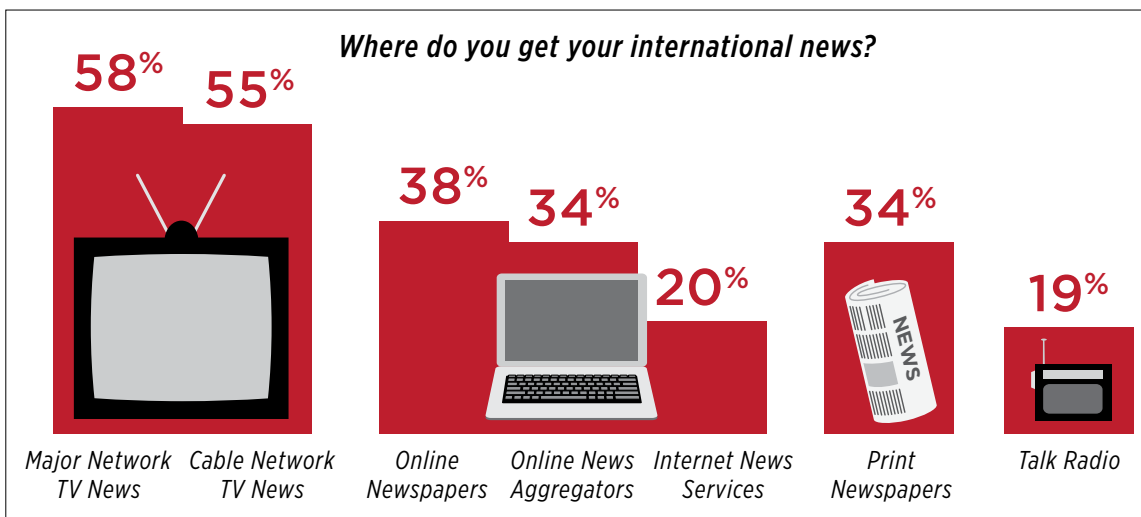
This percentage is much higher among those that follow international news closely (71%) and adults over 65 (73%). Adults 18 to 44 have lower levels of agreement. This suggests that these groups may have a different “benchmark” for comparing levels of interconnectedness.

About half of all adults view international and domestic issues of equal importance, with adults 18 to 24 (61%) most likely to view them as equal in importance. Some 43% of adults feel that domestic issues are more important, and only 6% view only international news as more important. It seems that issues of the economy and unemployment are perceived to be international in nature.

CHANGING MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND THE AGE DIVIDE

One in five adults follows international news closely. Almost half (48%) of the population follows international news at least once a day, even though some 32% of Americans say that they do not follow these events “very closely”. The heavy international news consumer tends to be male and over 55 years of age. Our interest in international news seems to grow with our age, with only 28% of those 18 to 24 following international news at least daily, compared to 63% of those over 55 years of age.

Those who follow international news tend to get their information from more sources than those who do not. The heavy users of international news look to cable news, online newspapers, print newspapers, talk radio, foreign news services and print and online magazines.



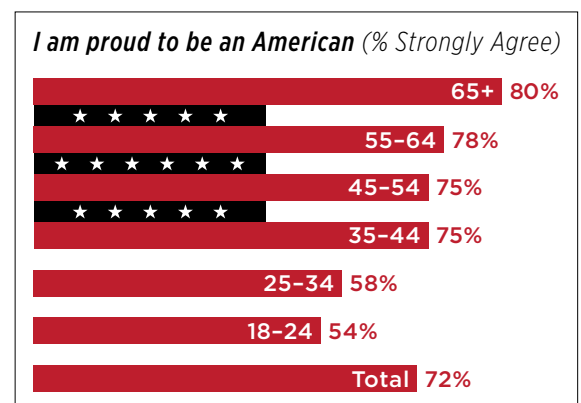
Older adults look to traditional media while younger persons seek international news online. Older adults are much more likely to seek network TV, cable TV and print newspapers as key sources, while younger adults are more likely to get news from online newspapers, online news aggregators like Yahoo or Google, and even Facebook.

Social media more important to younger international news users. Social media is much more important to those 18 to 24, with some 26% citing social media as very important in learning about international news. No doubt the democratic youth movements in Iran, Egypt and other Arab countries using social media have been instrumental in affecting younger adult readers in the United States. Social media are of moderate importance to all adults with 25% ranking them as very or somewhat important.

PRIDE IN AMERICA

Almost three of four respondents, 72%, indicate they are “very proud” to be an American, with another 22% indicating they are “proud” to be an American. Adults 18 to 34 are significantly less likely to express pride in being an American with percentages in the 50’s.

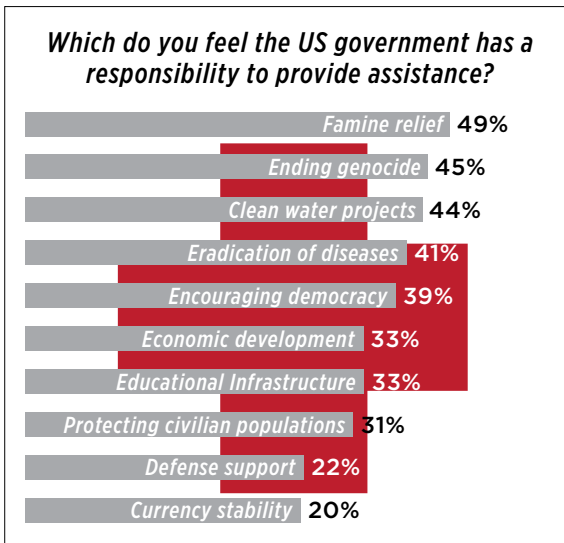
Americans who are not proud to be American are slightly more likely to follow international news very closely, 33% to 20%. They are less likely to watch network and cable TV news, but more likely to get information from online sources. They expressed less interest in terrorism as the international issue of highest importance. Reflecting this, these respondents were



less likely to follow the story of Osama bin Laden's death. While economic/ social injustice and poverty tended to be more important with this audience, their focus on these issues does not reflect a faith or religious conviction. They appear to have reflected a more secular approach.

ROLE OF UNITED STATES IN INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Most adults expect the US government to take an active role in addressing international issues related to human suffering, specifically providing famine relief, ending genocide, ensuring clean water and eradicating disease. Respondent reactions are mixed when evaluating the US role related to educational development, defense, protecting civilian populations, and currency stability.



Close followers of international affairs are more likely to expect an activist US involvement in encouraging democracy, protecting civilian populations, and aiding economic development.

Younger adults 18 to 24 are more likely to support an active US role for clean water, economic development, educational infrastructure, defense support, protecting civilian populations, and currency stability. Adults 65 and older are more likely to expect the United States to encourage democracies around the world.

Most Americans express some reservations with the statement that US behavior in world affairs reflects American values. Only 29% strongly agree with it.

Most adults agreed that the United States should not become involved militarily in other countries unless national security is threatened; 40% agree strongly while 40% somewhat agree.

Respondents see leadership in addressing global issues of hunger and poverty falling to the United Nations, followed by international medical organizations and the governments of the countries suffering from the problem. Most adults felt that the United States should only take a support role.

The United Nations and the governments of the countries involved in a particular situation are the institutions most often expected to address problems of health, poverty, educational and economic development, the environment and protecting civilian populations. Religious institutions are less likely to be seen as involved in addressing problems; however, the highest levels of support for religious organizations come in regard to health, poverty and educational development. Women are more likely to support a church involvement in all of these issues.

In regard to world health and diseases of poverty, the most widespread and serious concerns are perceived to be HIV/AIDS (64%), malnutrition (53%) and obesity (49%). Interestingly, the rating of obesity issues may be a reflection of rising awareness about weight problems here in the United States. The 18 to 24 year-old adults were more likely to think obesity was a major widespread disease. Malaria, cholera and dysentery (diseases of poverty) tended to be rated as less widespread.

AMERICANS ARE GENEROUS - TURNING TO RED CROSS AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WHEN THERE IS NEED

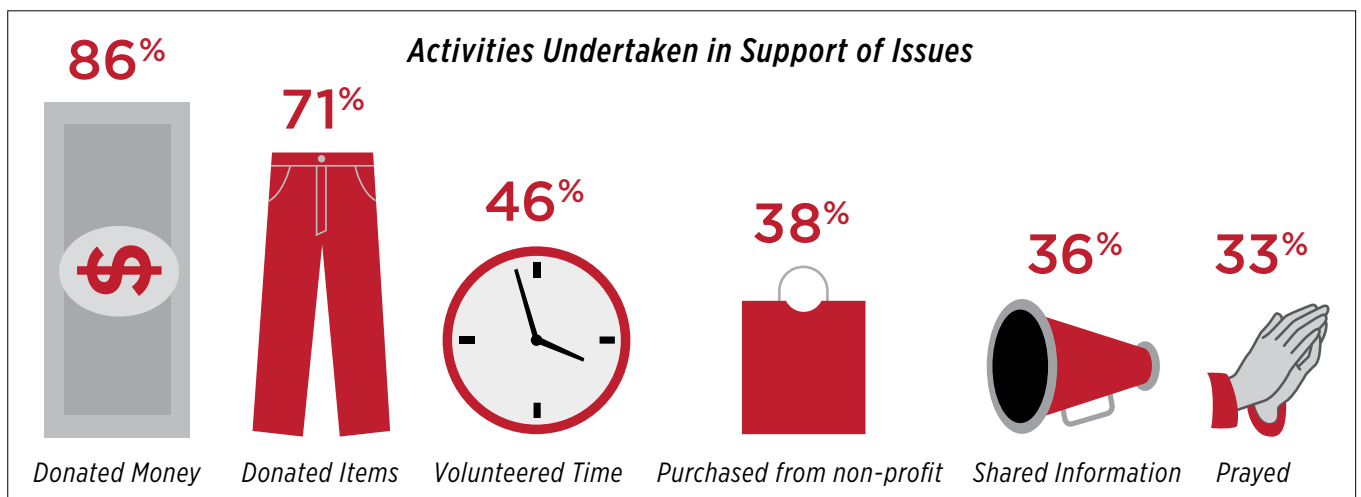
Fifty two percent of respondents tend to turn to American and International Red Cross organizations to become involved when disasters occur. Church and religious organizations are mentioned second in terms of frequency with 29%. Adults over age 55 tend to turn more to religious

organizations while those 18 to 34 are more likely to participate in a social media text opportunity. Those 18 to 24 and over age 65 also turn to celebrity endorsements. Some 20% of Americans do not get involved at all.

Americans report high levels of involvement in donating money and time. Local disasters warrant the greatest involvement with 74% reporting a donation of time or money. About half of the respondents report volunteering time or money to national and international disaster responses. Women are more likely to be involved in locally related activities.

ONE-THIRD TURN TO PRAYER TO SUPPORT A NEED

The top activities for involvement are donating money (86%), donating items (71%), volunteering time (46%), purchasing from a non-profit (38%), sharing information (36%), and praying for a group or issue (33%). Women tend to be more likely to be involved in almost all areas related to community involvement, particularly prayer. Adults 18 to 24 are less likely to pray over an issue, advocate or write a political representative, donate items or talk via Facebook on an activity related to improving the community.



FAITH MEDIA + CULTURE

Faith Media + Culture, a blog about contemporary issues that intersect media, culture and religious faith, is taking a comprehensive look at the survey results and providing in-depth perspective on the various topics. The blog was created to encourage more voices to take part in positive dialogue about today's society, in hopes of creating a more inclusive and affirmative voice.

Conversation about Christian values must include peace and justice issues, food and healthcare, human rights, responsibility for the environment, and the role and impact of faith.

The blog is written by the Rev. Larry Hollon, a lifelong storyteller with experience in radio, TV, print and video. He is the general secretary of United Methodist Communications, and also serves as publisher of United Methodist News Service.

Please visit the blog at www.larryhollon.com

For more information on this survey, please contact presscenter@umcom.org or call (615) 742-5406.

