

That word "Bible-minded"

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

February 11, 2014

I try not to post TOO many "you forgot about us mainline Protestants!" posts. The idea comes up almost daily when I'm going through the news and the blogs, but I know that kind of thing can get old so I try to set the bar pretty high.

If a person wanted to make this the focus of a blog, however, a person could do worse than to keep a close eye on the Barna Group. I've written before ([just once](#). see?) about how much it bugs me that a research firm peddling its findings to the news media would [define my faith tradition in almost entirely negative terms](#). Last month, Barna presented the results of its annual survey on "[The Most and Least Bible-Minded Cities in the U.S.](#)" (The short version: the South is a lot Biblier than the Northeast.)

Here's how Barna measures relative Biblecity: "Respondents who report reading the Bible within the past seven days and who agree [sic] strongly in the accuracy of the Bible are classified as 'Bible Minded.'"

"[Believe] strongly in the accuracy of the Bible?" Instead of, I don't know, find it foundational or formative or life-changing? [Ken Ham believes strongly](#) in the accuracy of the Bible; I love the Bible but I don't think *accuracy* is always the main thing at stake. Which of us is more Bible minded? I'd say that's a difficult question, and not a particularly useful one.

Evidently, the Barna Group disagrees with me on both fronts.

I'll let Clint Schneklath [pick it up from here](#):

Go to church in a Lutheran church some Sunday and set a timer. Measure how much of the service is taken up reading Scripture out loud. Then go to a "Bible" church, and set a timer to measure how much of the service is devoted to the public reading of Scripture. I guarantee the bible gets more air time in the Lutheran church.

Consider this alternative way to measure bible-mindedness. Go to these cities and measure how much time is devoted in public worship to the reading of Scripture in community. Call those cities bible-minded. Better yet, call those cities "predominately Catholic."

Read Clint's whole post, memorably titled "[Hi, My Name is Clint, and I'm the Least Bible-Minded Pastor in America](#)."

Meanwhile, the American Bible Society—which cosponsors this particular Barna survey—plans to control who can and can't run a website [using a new ".bible" top-level domain](#). ABS's [criterion](#): "individuals and groups who, regardless of faith, have a healthy respect for the Bible." That doesn't sound too bad—provided they take a broad view of whose respect is deemed sufficiently healthy.