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Why some Americans prefer to go to religious services in person and others prefer to watch visually.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/06/why-some-americans-prefer-to-go-to-religious-services-in-person-and-others-prefer-to-watch-virtually/>

- Some 17% of U.S. adults regularly attend religious services in person *and* watch them online or on TV, according to a recent [Pew Research Center survey](#). Roughly three-quarters of this group – making up 13% of all U.S. adults – say they prefer attending in person, while 2% prefer viewing services virtually and 2% have no preference.
- Among those who prefer in-person religious services, the most common reason respondents give is a stronger sense of connection and community with fellow participants. About half (52%) say this – more than three times the share who name any other reason.
- An additional 14% of those who prefer in-person services say that those services are more personal. As one respondent puts it: “It’s more up close and personal. You can answer questions. You can participate in the service to get a better understanding.” Another says, “In-person interaction gives me an opportunity to ask questions with the visiting scholar, [and] meet community members, and kids have better interaction with their peers.”
- Another 8% of these respondents cite the quality of the worship practices at in-person services, saying that things like communion and singing can’t be replicated online:
 - “As a Catholic, you cannot receive communion at home.”
 - “For over 60 years I have been a church musician (organist/pianist) so congregational singing is very meaningful to me. Also, I think it is important to see, talk to and encourage my fellow believers.”
 - “I enjoy taking part in the service; i.e., singing hymns, taking communion and seeing other church members in person.”
- Smaller shares say they prefer in-person services because there are fewer distractions (6%), because they are better able to feel the spirit or presence of God (6%) or because attending in-person is a divine or scriptural commandment (4%).
- There are too few respondents who prefer virtual religious services to provide precise data on their reasons for doing so. However, several respondents allude to the comfort and convenience of watching services online or on TV. One explains, “It gives me more freedom and extra time to multitask and do some other things.”
- Fully 10% of U.S. adults say they attend religious services both in person and watch them virtually *and* say they watch virtual services offered by a different congregation than the one they attend in person most often.

- Other reasons these respondents mention include that the services they watch preach the “true word of God” and adhere closely to scripture, that the services are educational and that it is enjoyable to listen to a new or different perspective.

45% of Americans says U.S. should be a Christian Nation

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/10/27/45-of-americans-say-u-s-should-be-a-christian-nation/>

- Overall, six-in-ten U.S. adults – including nearly seven-in-ten Christians – say they believe the founders “originally intended” for the U.S. to be a Christian nation. And 45% of U.S. adults – including about six-in-ten Christians – say they think the country “should be” a Christian nation. A third say the U.S. “is now” a Christian nation.
- At the same time, a large majority of the public expresses some reservations about intermingling religion and government. For example, about three-quarters of U.S. adults (77%) say that churches and other houses of worship should not endorse candidates for political offices. Two-thirds (67%) say that religious institutions should keep out of political matters rather than expressing their views on day-to-day social or political questions. And the new survey – along with [other recent Center research](#) – makes clear that there is far more support for the idea of separation of church and state than opposition to it among Americans overall.
- Among those who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation, roughly three-in-ten (28%) said in March 2021 that “the federal government should declare the U.S. a Christian nation,” while half (52%) said the federal government “should never declare any particular religion as the official religion of the United States.”
- Similarly, among those who say in the new survey that the U.S. should be a Christian nation, only about a quarter (24%) said in the prior survey that the federal government should advocate Christian religious values. About twice as many (52%) said the government should “advocate for moral values that are shared by people of many faiths.”
- And three-in-ten U.S. adults who want the U.S. to be a Christian nation (31%) said in the March 2021 survey that the federal government should stop enforcing the separation of church and state. More took the opposite position, saying the federal government *should* enforce that separation (39%).
- At the same time, however, people who believe the U.S. should be a Christian nation are far more inclined than those who think it should not be a Christian nation to favor officially declaring Christianity to be the nation’s religion, to support government advocacy of Christian values, and to say the government should stop enforcing separation of church and state.
- Furthermore, the new survey finds that nearly eight-in-ten people who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation also say the Bible should have at least some influence on

U.S. laws, including slightly more than half (54%) who say that when the Bible conflicts with the will of the people, the Bible should prevail.

- And about a third of U.S. adults who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation (32%) also think the fact that the country is religiously diverse – i.e., made up of people from many different religions as well as people who are not religious – weakens American society. Those who want the U.S. to be a Christian nation are far more inclined than those who do not want the U.S. to be a Christian nation to express this negative view of religious diversity.
- Still, among those who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation, there are roughly as many people who say the country’s religious diversity *strengthens* American society as there are who say it weakens society (28% vs. 32%).
- Indeed, in response to a question that gave respondents a chance to describe, in their own words, what the phrase “Christian nation” means to them, nearly half (48%) of those who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation define that phrase as the general guidance of Christian beliefs and values in society, such as that a Christian nation is one where the population has faith in God or Jesus Christ, specifically. Fewer people who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation explain that they mean the country’s laws should be based on Christianity (6%).
- Those who say the U.S. should *not* be a Christian nation are much more likely than those who say it should be one to say that being a Christian nation would entail religion-based laws and policies (30% vs. 6%). Others who oppose Christian nationhood use negative words to describe the concept, such as that a Christian nation would be “strict,” “controlling,” “racist,” “bigoted” or “exclusionary” toward people of other faiths (21%).
- In addition to the questions that asked about being a “Christian *nation*,” the survey asked other respondents about their familiarity with the term “Christian *nationalism*.”¹ Overall, the survey indicates that more than half of U.S. adults (54%) have heard nothing at all about Christian nationalism, while 14% say they have heard a little, 17% have heard some, 9% have heard quite a bit and 5% have heard a great deal about it.
- Altogether, 45% say they have heard at least a little about Christian nationalism. These respondents received a follow-up question asking whether they have a favorable or unfavorable view of Christian nationalism. (Those who said they had heard nothing at all about the term were not asked for their opinion on it.) Far more people express an unfavorable opinion than a favorable one (24% vs. 5%), though even among respondents who say they have heard at least a little about Christian nationalism, many don’t express an opinion or say they don’t know enough to take a stance.
- The new survey finds a big jump in the share of Americans who say they think the Supreme Court is friendly toward religion. Today, roughly a third of U.S. adults (35%)

say the court is friendly to religion, up sharply from 18% who said this in 2019, when the Center last asked this question.

- About four-in-ten U.S. adults (42%) say the Supreme Court’s recent decisions have helped the interests of Christians in the United States, compared with 15% who say they have hurt Christians. And 44% of U.S. adults say Supreme Court justices have relied on their religious beliefs too much in their recent decisions, versus 13% who say they have relied on these beliefs too little. Both of these questions were asked for the first time as part of the new survey.
- The survey also finds a small but noticeable uptick in the share of respondents who say religion is gaining influence in American life – from 20% in 2019 to 23% today. And the share of Americans who say it has become harder to be a person of strong religious faith over the last decade declined from 54% in 2014 (when the Center last asked this question) to 47% today.
- Still, with religiously unaffiliated Americans [rising steadily as a share of the U.S. population](#), the share of people who say religion is losing influence in American life continues to far exceed the share who say religion’s influence is growing (by a 74% to 23% margin). And those who say it has gotten harder to be a deeply religious person in the U.S. continue to outnumber those who say it has become easier (by a 47% to 13% margin).
- And over the past year, there is no sign that any religious group analyzed in the survey has increasingly come to view their side as “winning” on the political issues that matter most to them. Indeed, majorities in every religious group analyzed in the study – ranging from 62% of Black Protestants to 78% of White evangelical Protestants – say their side has been losing more often than winning on the political issues that matter to them. This also includes people who are religiously unaffiliated (those who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular”). Three-quarters (74%) of unaffiliated U.S. adults (sometimes called “nones”) say their side has been losing. (For additional discussion of the public’s view of whether their side has been winning or losing in politics, see [“Growing share of Americans say their side in politics has been losing more often than winning.”](#))
- In addition to asking about the Supreme Court’s stance toward religion, the survey also asked similar questions about the country’s two major political parties and the Biden administration. Republicans and Democrats mostly agree that the Republican Party is “friendly” toward religion; 61% of Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party say this, as do 60% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.
- Partisans differ sharply, however, in their perceptions of the Democratic Party. Six-in-ten Democrats say their party is “neutral” toward religion, and roughly three-in-ten say their party is friendly toward religion. Just 8% of Democrats view the Democratic Party as “unfriendly” toward religion. In sharp contrast, most Republicans (61%) say

the Democratic Party is unfriendly toward religion, while 27% say it is neutral and just 10% say it is friendly.

- Majorities in most religious groups say the Republican Party is friendly toward religion, although Black Protestants (32% of whom view the GOP as friendly to religion) and Hispanic Catholics (47%) are two exceptions. White evangelicals, meanwhile, are the only religious group in which a majority views the Democratic Party as unfriendly to religion (64%).
- Opinions about the Biden administration's approach to religion resemble views toward the Democratic Party. Most Democrats say the Biden administration is neutral toward religion, while a sizable minority say it is friendly and just 5% say it is unfriendly. By contrast, most Republicans (57%) say the White House is unfriendly toward religion, while three-in-ten say it is neutral and just one-in-ten say it is friendly.
- A plurality of all U.S. Catholics (44%) say the Biden administration is neutral toward religion, while 29% say it is unfriendly and 25% say it is friendly to religion. (Biden is the nation's [second Catholic president](#).)
- Perhaps not surprisingly, the view that the U.S. should be a Christian nation is far less common among non-Christians than among Christians, as is the view that the founders originally intended for the U.S. to be a Christian nation (though 44% of non-Christians express the latter view). But non-Christians are *more* likely than Christians to say they currently see the U.S. as a Christian nation (40% vs. 30%).²
- Three-quarters of Republicans (76%) say the founders intended for the U.S. to be a Christian nation, compared with roughly half of Democrats (47%). Republicans also are at least twice as likely as Democrats to say that America should be a Christian nation (67% vs. 29%) and that the Bible should have more influence over U.S. laws than the will of the people if they conflict (40% vs. 16%).
- Americans of different ages also differ on these questions, with older Americans much more likely to express the desire for America to be a Christian nation. For example, 63% of Americans ages 65 and older say the United States should be a Christian nation, compared with 23% of those ages 18 to 29. [Other studies](#) consistently find that older Americans are far more likely than younger ones to identify as Christians.
- A third of U.S. Christians say "being patriotic" is "essential" to what being Christian means to them, while four-in-ten say it is "important, but not essential" and roughly a quarter (27%) say being patriotic is "not important" to what it means to be Christian. There are only modest differences among White evangelical Protestants, White Protestants who are not evangelical, and White Catholics on this question. Black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics are somewhat less inclined than their White counterparts to cite patriotism as an essential element of Christianity. Christians from all backgrounds are instead much more likely to rank believing in God, living a moral life and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as "essential" elements of Christianity.

- Roughly four-in-ten U.S. adults say churches and other religious organizations have too much influence in politics – on par with the share who said this in 2017, and slightly higher than the share who said it in 2019. Roughly one-third now say churches and religious organizations have about the right amount of sway in politics, while 22% say they do not have enough political influence.
- The survey suggests that more Americans see religion as a positive influence in American life than a negative one. Four-in-ten U.S. adults say religion’s influence is declining and that this is a bad thing. Approximately one-in-ten say religion’s influence is growing and that this is a good thing. Roughly half, then, express a positive view of religion in these questions. By contrast, about a quarter of U.S. adults express a negative view of religion by saying either that religion’s influence is waning and that is a good thing, or that religion’s influence is growing and that is a bad thing.

10 Facts about Religion and Government in the United States

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/07/05/10-facts-about-religion-and-government-in-the-united-states/>

- Nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults (73%) say religion should be kept separate from government policies, according to a [survey conducted in spring 2022](#). Just 25% say government policies should *support* religious values and beliefs. While majorities of both Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (84%) and Republicans and Republican leaners (61%) say religion should be kept separate from government policies, Republicans are far more likely to say government should support religious values (38% vs. 16%).
- About four-in-ten Protestants (39%) say government policies should support religious values and beliefs, compared with 24% of Catholics and 9% of religiously unaffiliated adults – those who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular. White evangelical Protestants are split, with 49% saying that government policies should support religious values and an identical share saying they should be kept separate from religion.
- The [Johnson Amendment](#) limits political activity by religious organizations, and most Americans (70%) want churches and other houses of worship to stay out of politics, according to [a 2021 analysis](#). Still, a survey conducted during the presidential race [in July 2020](#) found that some U.S. adults who had attended religious services in the month prior or watched services online said they had heard sermons expressing support for then-President Donald Trump (9%) or then-candidate Joe Biden (6%), while others had heard sermons expressing opposition to Trump (7%) or Biden (4%).

Meanwhile, four-in-ten had heard sermons discussing the importance of voting, protesting or other forms of political engagement.

- The [Supreme Court ruled in 1962](#) that it's unconstitutional for a teacher to lead a class in prayer at a public school, but three-in-ten U.S. adults [said in a March 2021 survey](#) that public school educators should be allowed to do this. A considerably larger share of Americans (46%) said teachers in public schools should *not* be allowed to lead students in any kind of prayers, with Democrats twice as likely as Republicans to say this (60% vs. 30%). Another 24% did not prefer either option.
- Among U.S. public school students ages 13 to 17, 41% [said in a 2019 survey](#) that it's appropriate for a teacher to lead a class in prayer, including 29% of teens who knew that this practice was banned but said it was acceptable nevertheless.
- This year, the Supreme Court decided another case that involved prayer at public schools. In that case, the high court ruled that a high school football coach in Bremerton, Washington, had a [constitutional right to pray](#) at midfield following games.
- Americans are divided on whether local governments should be allowed to put religious symbols on public property, according to the same March 2021 survey. Nearly four-in-ten U.S. adults (39%) say cities and towns should be allowed to do this, while 35% say religious symbols should be kept off public property. Roughly a quarter (26%) don't favor either option. While [some Supreme Court cases](#) have determined that religious displays on government property are constitutional in certain contexts, [other cases](#) have found that such displays can be endorsements of religion, violating the First Amendment.
- While the U.S. Constitution does not mention God, nearly all state constitutions reference either God or the divine, according to a [2017 analysis](#). God also appears in the [Declaration of Independence](#), the [Pledge of Allegiance](#) and on [U.S. currency](#).
- Christmas Day is the only federal holiday that's also a religious holiday, although many Americans view Christmas as a [cultural holiday](#), too. Congress made Christmas – along with the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day – an unpaid holiday for the federal D.C. workforce in 1870; a [later bill](#) extended these as paid vacation days for all government employees. Courts have [upheld Christmas Day's constitutionality](#), arguing that federal office closures do not coerce citizens to engage in religious activities. Efforts to recognize other religious holidays, such as [Muslim Eid al-Fitr](#), have been unsuccessful to date.
- Almost all U.S. presidents, including Joe Biden, **have been Christian**. Biden is only the second Catholic president (after John F. Kennedy), while the vast majority of others have been Protestant – most often Episcopalian or Presbyterian. Two of the most famous presidents, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, had no formal religious affiliation. Most presidents have been [sworn in with a Bible](#), and they traditionally seal their oath of office with the phrase “so help me God.” Roughly half of Americans feel it is either very (20%) or somewhat (32%) important for a president

to have strong religious beliefs (even if they are different from their own), according to a [survey conducted in February 2020](#).

- Congress has always been overwhelmingly Christian, and roughly nine-in-ten representatives (88%) in the current Congress – including 99% of Republicans and 78% of Democrats – identify as Christian, according to a [January 2021 analysis](#). Congress is both more heavily Protestant than [the U.S. population overall](#) (55% vs. 40%) and more heavily Catholic (30% vs. 21%).
- The Constitution guarantees that religion can never be a requirement for holding public office, but most Americans don't know this, according to a [2019 Pew Research Center survey](#). When asked in a multiple choice question what the Constitution says about religion, only 27% of adults [are able to correctly identify](#) that “no religious test” is necessary to hold public office. Many U.S. adults incorrectly select that the Constitution requires federal officeholders to affirm that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights (15%), that the Constitution requires federal officeholders to be sworn in on the Holy Bible (12%), or that the Constitution says nothing about religion as it relates to federal officeholders (13%). Another 31% say they are not sure what the Constitution says about this.
- Americans are divided on the extent to which the country's laws should reflect biblical teachings. Roughly half of adults say the Bible should influence U.S. laws either a great deal (23%) or some (26%), and more than a quarter (28%) say the Bible should prevail over the will of the people if the two are at odds, according to a [February 2020 survey](#). Half of Americans, meanwhile, say the Bible shouldn't influence U.S. laws much (19%) or at all (31%).

Biblical Worldview among U.S. Adults drops 33% since the start of Covid-19 Pandemic.

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/2023/02/28/biblical-worldview-among-u-s-adults-drops-33-since-start-of-covid-19-pandemic/#:~:text=The%20younger%20a%20person%2C%20the,%25%20among%20adults%2065-plus>

- The first national study of Americans' worldview since the COVID-19 lockdowns shows that the incidence of biblical worldview has fallen to a mere 4%—a drop of one third from the 6% recorded just three years earlier.
- In fact, the 6% benchmark measure recorded in January 2020 may prove to be the high-water mark of biblical worldview among American adults for the foreseeable future, according to a new report from the *American Worldview Inventory 2023* from the [Cultural Research Center](#) at [Arizona Christian University](#).
- The report shows declines in biblical understanding throughout American society since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest report from [Dr.](#)

George Barna, CRC Director of Research and creator of the *American Worldview Inventory*.

- The number of adults who don't possess a biblical worldview, but still hold "a substantial number of beliefs and behaviors consistent with biblical principles," has also fallen dramatically. Only one of every seven adults (14%) belong to the category of what Barna identifies as an "Emergent Follower." That number was 25% only three years ago.
- The bulk of the American adult population—82%—falls into the "World Citizen" category, described as people "who may embrace a few biblical principles but generally believe and behave in ways that are distinct from biblical teaching." According to the report, this group has grown substantially from the 69% registered in 2020.
- The research also found a decline in biblical worldview in almost every demographic subgroup in America. The most striking shifts in biblical worldview levels were recorded among born-again Christians (down 6 percentage points) and people from households earning \$60,000 to \$100,000 (down 5 points), according to the report.
- "When you put the data in perspective, the biblical worldview is shuffling toward the edge of the cliff," Barna commented. "As things stand today, biblical theism is much closer to extinction in America than it is to influencing the soul of the nation. The current incidence of adults with the biblical worldview is the lowest since I began measuring it in the early 1990s."
- The veteran researcher noted that "young people, in particular, are largely isolated from biblical thought in our society and are the most aggressive at rejecting biblical principles in our culture."
- Facilitating a return to biblical thinking and living in America will take "an intentional, strategic and consistent effort by the remaining population that represents a biblical approach to life," Barna said.
- "As bad as this data is, we should never discount the possibility that God is setting up His next Great Awakening," Munsil said. "In the meantime, we must remain faithful wherever God calls us to equip the next generation in biblical truth—so they have every opportunity to flourish."
- Most Americans (68%) still consider themselves to be Christians. Among these self-identified Christians, though, only 6% have a biblical worldview. Less than half of the self-identified Christians can be classified as born-again, defined as believing that they will go to Heaven after they die but only because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Within the born-again population (just 33% of the adult population), a shockingly small proportion (13%) hold a biblical worldview.
- Age has a consistent correlation with biblical worldview incidence. The younger a person, the less likely they are to be an Integrated Disciple (i.e., have a biblical worldview). Among adults under 30, just 1% have a biblical worldview. The incidence

rises to 3% among people in their 30s and 40s; 5% among those ages 50 to 64; and peaks at 8% among adults 65-plus.

- Adults without children under the age of 13 living in their household were slightly more likely to have a biblical worldview than those adults who do have preteen children (5% compared to 3%).
- People from the highest-income households were more likely than other adults to qualify as Integrated Disciples. Overall, 6% of people in homes earning beyond \$100,000 were Integrated Disciples, compared to 4% among people in the \$60,000-\$100,000 category and also 4% among people from households with a pre-tax combined income below \$60,000.
- People living in regions of the country considered to be more religiously active had slightly higher levels of biblical worldview. Six percent of residents of the South and 5% of those living in the Midwest had a biblical worldview, compared to just 3% in the West and 1% in the Northeast.
- Formal education shows little correlation with having a biblical worldview. The incidence of biblical worldview among those who never attended college is 3%; among those who attended college but do not have a 4-year degree is 4%; and among those with a bachelor's degree or more, it is 5%.
- Among adults who are consistently conservative on political issues, 12% are Integrated Disciples. In contrast, just 2% who are consistently moderate on political issues and 1% of political liberals and progressives have a biblical worldview.
- In his analysis of the research, Barna emphasized the need for more Christian churches and schools to focus on biblical worldview development.
- “People do not develop a biblical worldview randomly or by default,” he explained. “The impact of arts and entertainment, government, and public schools is clearly apparent in the shift away from biblical perspectives to a more experiential and emotional form of decision-making.”
- “It will require parents, in particular, and cultural leaders who care about this matter to energetically and creatively persuade children and their influencers to embrace biblical principles as the foundation for personal decision-making,” Barna said.

Basic Biblical Beliefs among U.S. pastors lacking in all Denominations and church roles.

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/2022/08/30/basic-biblical-beliefs-lacking-among-most-pastors-in-all-u-s-denominations/>

- An earlier report from the *American Worldview Inventory 2022* showed that **just 37% of Christian pastors** have a biblical worldview, with the predominant worldview among pastors (62%) being syncretism, a hybrid mixture of disparate worldview elements blended into a customized philosophy of life.

- According to [this latest report](#), the widespread absence of biblical worldview among American pastors is resulting in eroding beliefs in areas as basic as salvation through Jesus Christ, the nature of God, the sinful condition of human beings, and the existence of objective truth.
- As Barna notes, “Our survey demonstrates that large numbers of pastors have abandoned even the most basic and hallowed biblical teachings for ideas that now permeate our culture.”
- “Because pastors teach what they believe, many churches are becoming centers of syncretism and secular thought,” he said. “Perhaps without even realizing it, thousands of pastors have become leaders of a movement away from God.”
- “With so many churches and their pastors in the culture’s grip, rather than fervently committed to serving God and teaching His word,” Barna explained, “you can clearly see why most church-going Christians are being more influenced by the culture than the culture is being influenced by America’s Christians.”
- This latest report from the *AWVI 2022* looks at 17 basic beliefs, including salvation through Jesus Christ, moral and biblical truth, human purpose, the value of human life, and other foundational biblical issues, among pastors in the nation’s seven major denominational groupings.
- The report found that pastors serving non-denominational and independent Protestant churches were by far the most likely to embrace basic biblical principles. Lowest levels of biblical belief were found among pastors of holiness and traditionally black churches.
- Surprisingly low numbers of biblical beliefs were held by pastors in evangelical churches. Amazingly, given the biblical foundations of evangelicalism, three out of every 10 (30%) do not believe that their salvation is based on having confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. According to the report, more than one-third believe that there is no absolute moral truth, deny that human life is sacred, and say that having faith matters more than which faith you have.
- The report also found an unexpectedly large percentage of pastors, regardless of their title or position or denominational affiliation, reject biblical teaching on a wide range of issues. The least biblically centered pastors, by a substantial margin, are those who serve as executive pastors, teaching pastors, and children’s or youth pastors.
- Although 41% of senior and lead pastors have a biblical worldview (the highest among all pastoral positions), unexpectedly substantial proportions hold beliefs that are in conflict with the Bible on a range of teachings.

Specifically, the report found that one-third or more of senior pastors believe:

- Sexual relations between two unmarried people who believe they love each other is morally acceptable.
- Determining moral truth is up to each individual; there are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time.

- The Holy Spirit is not a living entity, but is a symbol of God’s power, presence, or purity.
- Having faith matters more than which faith you have.
- Reincarnation is a real possibility.
- A person who is generally good, or does enough good things for others, can earn a place in Heaven.
- Socialism is preferable to capitalism.
- Allowing property ownership facilitates economic injustice.
- The Bible is ambiguous in its teaching about abortion, enabling you to make a strong argument either for or against abortion based on biblical principles.
- Additionally, one-third or more of senior pastors reject the following beliefs: human life is sacred; wealth is entrusted to individuals to be managed for God’s purposes; success is consistent obedience to God; people are born into sin and can only be saved from its consequences by Jesus Christ; they, personally, will experience eternal salvation only because they have personally confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.

Shocking Lack of Biblical Worldview among Pastors

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/2022/05/12/shocking-lack-of-biblical-worldview-among-american-pastors/>

- A new nationwide survey of America’s Christian pastors shows that a majority of pastors lack a biblical worldview. In fact, just slightly more than a third (37%) possess a biblical worldview and the majority—62%—hold a hybrid worldview known as Syncretism.
- These shocking findings are part of the *American Worldview Inventory 2022*, conducted by the [Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University](#) and administered to Christian pastors to better understand the worldviews that drive their thinking and behavior.
- As veteran researcher and CRC Director of Research George Barna explains, “It’s just further evidence that the culture is influencing the American church much more than Christian churches are influencing the culture.”
- According to this latest report, the level of biblical worldview varies by the pastoral position held. Among Senior Pastors, for instance, 41% hold a biblical worldview—the highest incidence among any of the five pastoral positions studied. Next highest was the 28% among Associate Pastors.
- One of the more concerning revelations emerging from the research is the worldview of pastors who work with young people, Barna noted. The study found that only 12% of Children’s and Youth Pastors hold a biblical worldview. And among Teaching Pastors, the level of biblical worldview is a mere 13%.
- “A person’s worldview primarily develops before the age of 13, then goes through a period of refinement during their teens and twenties. Therefore, from a worldview

development perspective, a church's most important ministers are the Children's Pastor and the Youth Pastor," Barna said.

- "Discovering that seven out of every eight of those pastors lack a biblical worldview helps to explain why so few among the nation's youngest generations are developing a heart and mind for biblical principles and ways of life, and why our society seems to have run wild over the last decade," Barna explained.
- According to ACU President Len Munsil, the findings highlight that the biblical worldview crisis in America begins at the top.
- "Our latest research shows this is stunning erosion of biblical understanding is present even among the leaders of the Church," Munsil said. "We need a comprehensive strategy to rebuild biblical worldview into every generation and in every part of life," Munsil said. "For ACU, this means strategically training our students to develop a biblical worldview through their academic curriculum, spiritual formation programs, and co-curricular activities. And through CRC, we continue to identify ways to build biblical worldview throughout the church, in families and throughout our culture."
- The latest report from the *AWVI 2022* found that the prevailing worldview among pastors is best described as [Syncretism](#), the blending of ideas and applications from a variety of holistic worldviews into a unique but inconsistent combination that represents their personal preferences.
- More than six of every 10 pastors (62%) hold a syncretistic worldview. This trend is also being seen more widely in American culture, with almost nine out of 10 U.S. adults (88%) embracing Syncretism as their primary worldview, according to a report from last year's study of competing worldviews in the *American Worldview Inventory 2021*.
- According to the latest release, pastors have a biblical worldview in only one of eight worldview categories measured. Overall, 57% of all pastors think and act in consistently biblical ways regarding the purpose of life and their calling.
- Leading the way in biblical understanding of life purpose and calling is Senior Pastors, among whom 60% are consistently biblical. A minority of the other four pastoral segments hold a biblical worldview in this area—48% of children's and youth pastors, 41% of Associate Pastors, 36% of Teaching Pastors, and 27% of Executive Pastors.
- A minority of all Christian pastors thinks and acts biblically in each of the other seven categories of worldview measurement. Specifically, only 47% have a biblical worldview regarding family and the value of life; 44% concerning issues related to God, creation, and history; 43% in relation to personal faith practices; 43% when it comes to matters of sin, salvation, and one's relationship with God; 40% pertaining to human character and human nature; and 40% when it comes to measures of lifestyle, personal behavior, and relationships.
- Lowest of all is a category that might have been expected to top the list: beliefs and behaviors related to the Bible, truth, and morality. Only 39% of all pastors have a biblical worldview in this area.

- Barna offered a note of hope in spite of the data. “You cannot fix something unless you know it’s broken,” he commented. “Other recent research we have conducted suggests most pastors believe that they are theologically in tune with the Bible. Perhaps these findings will cause many of them to take a careful look at how well their beliefs and behavior conform to biblical principles and commands.”
- As Barna noted, “It certainly seems that if America is going to experience a spiritual revival, that awakening is needed just as desperately in our pulpits as in the pews.”

Most U.S. Kids age K-12 Lack Biblical Cornerstone

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/2023/10/11/most-us-kids-ages-8-12-lack-biblical-cornerstones/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CAmerica%27s%20children%20are%20in%20the,worldview%20and%2096%25%20are%20Syncretists>

- How many American kids are on track to develop a biblical worldview? According to a recent and extensive worldview research study conducted by renowned researcher and bestselling author Dr. George Barna, in collaboration with the [Family Research Council](#) and Arizona Christian University’s [Cultural Research Center](#), the answer is—not many.
- Based on the research, Barna identified seven specific beliefs, known as the [“Seven Cornerstones of a Biblical Worldview,”](#) that significantly increase the likelihood that an individual will develop a biblical worldview. Even though these beliefs do not constitute a complete biblical worldview, they provide a very strong foundation for developing that philosophy of life.
- Individuals who embrace all seven cornerstones, Barna found, have an astounding 83% chance of developing a complete biblical worldview. Those who reject even one of the pillars have only a 2% likelihood.
- So, what are the seven cornerstones and what percentage of U.S. children adhere to each?
- 69% believe God exists and is the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect Creator and ruler of the universe.
- 36% believe that as a sinner, the only solution to the consequences of sin is to acknowledge your sins, ask God to forgive you through Jesus Christ, and rely on Him to save you from those consequences.
- 35% believe sin is real, and significant; that we are all sinners, by choice.
- 27% believe their most important reason for living is to do what God wants—i.e., God’s will.
- 25% trust the Bible because they believe it is completely true and personally relevant to their life.
- 21% uphold that the Bible provides a complete and reliable understanding of right and wrong.
- 17% believe success is consistently doing what the Bible teaches.

- Surprisingly, only one of the seven core viewpoints—belief in the existence and biblical nature of God—is held by a majority of adolescents. A mere 3% of all 8- to 12-year-olds embraced all seven perspectives. Nearly a third (32%) embraced only one or two of the seven. Another one out of four (26%) embraced none of them.
- According to ACU President Len Munsil, it's imperative that parents and others who work with children focus efforts on these seven cornerstones.
- “Because of this groundbreaking research, we don't have to guess what *might work* when it comes to helping our children and grandchildren learn to think and act like Jesus,” Munsil explained. “We *know* the foundation that needs to be in place for children to develop a biblical worldview that they can carry into their adult lives.”
- Munsil said, “These seven cornerstones give us a practical, proven roadmap to build biblical worldview in the next generation.”
- Barna, a professor at Arizona Christian University and Director of Research at the Cultural Research Center, says that instead of being trained in the seven cornerstones, kids are following what's being modeled for them.
- “America's children are in the process of adopting Syncretism as their predominant worldview,” Barna said. “They are following in the footsteps of their parents, of whom only 2% have a biblical worldview and 96% are Syncretists. This mindset and lifestyle is modeled daily for their children and has become the default position for the majority of Christian adults, adolescents, and children.”
- **Syncretism** is the summary name for a disparate, irreconcilable collection of beliefs and behaviors that define people's lives. It's a cut-and-paste approach to making sense of and responding to life. Rather than developing an internally consistent and philosophically coherent perspective on life, Barna says, Americans embrace points of view or actions that feel comfortable or seem most convenient or popular.
- Barna says children begin forming their worldview between 15 and 18 months of age and by the age of 13, it's almost entirely formed. And for the majority of people, research shows, it is unlikely to change much, if at all, over the remainder of their lives.
- Barna says any parent who so desires can be a part of the solution, which simply begins with a commitment to raise a spiritual champion. This, he says, requires a solid plan that is consistently executed by the adult.
- Barna concluded, “Thanks to the research detailed in the book, we're now aware of the most effective practices for fostering the spiritual growth of young disciples. The only factor missing is a large number of parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers, coaches, and other influential individuals who are willing to make it their top priority in life.

More than half of Gen Z still identify themselves as Christians.

<https://www.westmont.edu/faith-young-christian-student#:~:text=Delving%20more%20deeply%20into%20Barna%27s,classifies%20as%20a%20biblical%20worldview>

- Who is Gen Z? Their birth years range from the mid-to-late 1990s through the early 2010s, making them roughly 6 to 24 in 2021. Generation Z, with nicknames such as the Zoomers, iGen and screenagers, succeeds the Millennials.
- Gen Z grew up with a phone and electronic devices in their hands, which distinguishes them from prior generations. Social media shapes their lifestyle, and technology and the digital space frame their sense of the world. Their weekly screen time averages six hours a day — and when asked to comment on this number, many say it’s too much. They’re aware of the problem and seek to better navigate their use of technology.
- Gen Z expresses increased skepticism about established institutions, such as the government, media, and churches. This could create a challenge for Christian higher education. But this generation also seeks out and trusts older mentors to a much higher degree than previous ones. During my time at Barna, I consistently told church leaders and educators that they play a sacred role as they get to know and work with younger students. Despite their skepticism and mistrust, Gen Z considers older mentors a unique source of trust and support.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA VS. EMBODIED COMMUNITY.** Other key factors make Westmont College a good environment for Gen Z. For example, they experience much of their community through a screen. From social media to virtual chat rooms, they spend less and less time with people in person. So, they consider a school with a residential focus and a strong campus community compelling. They appreciate the real, embodied community at Westmont as a good alternative to an increasingly disembodied world. Even during COVID-19, Westmont brought students back to campus and held some classes in person (following strict safety protocols) because of our commitment to community. Students learn the important skills of living together despite differences, managing conflict, disagreeing well and forming deep friendships that will last a lifetime. Talking to students who’ve spent the last year of high school mediated through a Zoom screen reminds me of the importance of a residential college experience.
- Learning how to talk to people who think differently, disagreeing well and dialoging with others represent important skills for Gen Z to acquire. Westmont created the
- Student Success Center to better support students in their classes, and Gen Z appreciates this kind of assistance. The college also sponsors conversations about mental health, another important issue for them, and offers counseling through Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Delving more deeply into Barna’s findings, more than half of Gen Z still identify themselves as Christians, but only about 4 percent have actually developed what Barna classifies as a biblical worldview. Many lack the theological and biblical foundation of earlier generations, which puts them under theological pressure. Westmont encourages

and equips students to develop a Christian worldview. The liberal arts education gives students the resources to cultivate a Christian faith both theologically robust and deeply personal.

- The most frequently reported obstacle to the faith of Gen Z is questioning how a loving God could allow such suffering (29 percent). The next most likely response describes Christians as hypocrites (23 percent), creating philosophical pressure for them. Westmont provides a safe and constructive space where Gen Z can wrestle with these questions and many other important ones, equipping them to explore deep faith-related issues constructively.
 - Gen Z also feels less confident that they can know the truth or be sure of it. While many older generations consider this problematic, Gen Z frames the issue with humility, openness, and space for dialogue.
 - Gen Z places an increased emphasis on professional development. Looking toward the next 10 years, nearly all (91 percent) agree they hope to achieve a great deal.
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