

# Cultural Research Center

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Report from the *American Worldview Inventory 2026*

From Dr. George Barna and the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University  
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## Few Signs of Spiritual Renewal as the National Incidence of Biblical Worldview Remains Unchanged

Much discussion followed in the wake of the murder of Christian activist Charlie Kirk about a possible eruption of spiritual renewal and revival in the Christian Church. But a new national survey from Arizona Christian University's Cultural Research Center indicates that any increased interest in the Christian faith spurred by Kirk's assassination has not produced positive growth when it comes to biblical worldview.

That is one of the conclusions from the *American Worldview Inventory 2026 (AWVI 2026)*, the seventh annual worldview survey of American adults conducted by the group. Although 12% of American adults had a biblical worldview in 1994, that number was halved to just 6% by 2020, dropped to 4% in 2023, and remains stuck at 4% in 2026.

The research was conducted in January under the guidance of veteran researcher George Barna, Director of Research at the Cultural Research Center, among a national sample of 2,000 adults. The *American Worldview Inventory* is the only nationally representative annual tracking study of the worldview of American adults. The assessment incorporates 53 worldview questions, examining both beliefs and behavior.

According to the veteran worldview researcher, all adults have a definable worldview. This is the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual filter an individual uses to experience, interpret, and respond to reality. A person's worldview is the basis of every decision they make.

The biblical worldview (also known as biblical theism) is just one of many competing worldviews that exist. In the biblical worldview, people's ideas about all dimensions of life and faith are consistent with biblical principles and commands, and serve as the foundation of their lifestyle choices.

### Worldview Categorization

The *American Worldview Inventory* not only measures how many people are what the research terms "Integrated Disciples" (i.e., people with a biblical worldview), but also identifies how many adults are categorized as Emergent Followers and World Citizens.

Emergent Followers are adults who do not have a biblical worldview, but are leaning in that direction, possessing a substantial number of beliefs and behaviors that are consistent

with biblical principles, but not enough to qualify as Integrated Disciples. The survey found that one out of every 10 American adults (10%) is an Emergent Follower—a significant decline from 19% in 2020 and even from the 14% identified in 2023.

Most Americans—85%—are in the World Citizen category. These are people who may embrace some biblical principles, but generally believe and behave in ways that conflict with biblical teaching. This group has grown substantially—up 16 percentage points from the 69% identified in 2020.

<b>National Biblical Worldview Incidence, 2020-2026</b>				
<b>Worldview Segment</b>	<b>Segment Description</b>	<b>2020 National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview</b>	<b>2023 National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview</b>	<b>2026 National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview</b>
Integrated Disciples	80% or more of religious beliefs and worldview-related behaviors are consistent with biblical principles beliefs and behavior	6%	4%	4%
Emergent Followers	60%-79% of religious beliefs and worldview-related behaviors are consistent with biblical principles; dominant worldview is Syncretism	19%	14%	10%
World Citizens	Possess a worldview other than a biblical worldview, but might have a few beliefs and behaviors that are consistent with biblical principles	75%	82%	85%

Source: *American Worldview Inventory*, conducted in 2020, 2023, and 2026, by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Each study is based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online in January of the year.

## **Faith Connections**

People choose among numerous available worldviews to guide their lives. A biblical worldview—which refers to consistently interpreting and responding to life situations based on biblical principles and teachings—is just one of those options.

The newly released research shows that people’s church affiliation was loosely related to worldview.

One segment examined was adults associated with an evangelical Christian church. Those churches generally believe that Jesus Christ died to facilitate forgiveness for people’s sins, He is the only means to eternal salvation, and believe that the Bible contains the true words of God and is a reliable guide for life. Adults attending such a church—12% of all American adults—were only a bit more likely to have a biblical worldview than were people attending Christian churches that do not have a similarly “high view” of Scripture.

One out of every nine adults attending evangelical Protestant churches (11%) have a biblical worldview. Nearly as many who attend a charismatic or Pentecostal church (13%) have such a philosophy of life. In contrast, smaller proportions of people associated with mainline Protestant (6%) or Catholic (2%) churches—segments that typically place less trust in the reliability of the Bible and upon Jesus Christ as the sole means to God’s forgiveness—have a biblical worldview.

It is noteworthy that evangelical churches, once the stronghold of biblical preaching and belief, have experienced a sharp decline in the proportion of adherents with a biblical worldview. In 2020, 21% held that worldview, but that number has dropped by almost half—down to only 11% today.

Born-again Christians—a segment defined by their acceptance of scriptural teachings regarding sin, grace, and salvation—were three times more likely than the national average to have a biblical worldview (12%). That statistic, however, reflects a significant decline from 19% in 2020. The fact that only one out of eight born-again adults holds a biblical worldview highlights the extensive decline of core Christian principles in America in recent years. Born-again adults currently constitute one-third of the national adult population (34%).

The largest segment of people who describe themselves as Christian is “Notional Christians”—those who self-identify as Christian but do not embrace eternal salvation through a personal confession of sin and accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Notional Christians constitute a majority of U.S. adults (53%) who describe themselves as Christian. Very few Notional Christians—just one-tenth of one percent—have a biblical worldview.

## **Segments That Are More Biblically Inclined**

According to the new research, several demographic slices of the population had a higher likelihood of possessing a biblical worldview.

- In a break from the past, individuals who had earned a college degree were three times more likely than those who had never attended college to qualify as an “Integrated Disciple” (6% versus 2%, respectively).

- People from households earning more than \$100,000 annually were twice as likely as those from households earning less than \$60,000 to have a biblical worldview (6% versus 3%, respectively).
- The study also showed that the younger a person’s age, the less likely they were to possess a biblical worldview. Seven percent of Americans 50 or older had a biblical worldview, compared to just 2% of those in their 30s and 40s. Just 2% of 18- to 29-year-olds had a biblical worldview. Generationally, only 1% of Gen Z adults had a biblical worldview; 2% of Millennials did; but 7% of the people in the three older generations (Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Seniors) qualified as Integrated Disciples.
- Of the five most highly populated states in the United States, only residents of Texas (7%) exceeded the national average of biblical worldview incidence. The statewide incidence was only slightly below average in the other four large states (3% among residents of California, New York, Florida, and Illinois).
- Not surprisingly, political leanings were related to people’s worldview. Among adults who are politically conservative, 12% had a biblical worldview. That far exceeded the proportion among political moderates (1%) and liberals (1%). Still, among conservatives, the incidence has fallen from the 16% recorded in 2020.
- Adults who identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ community were highly unlikely to have a biblical worldview (less than one-half of one percent did). In contrast, 5% of the “straight” population qualified as Integrated Disciples.

A hybrid segment of the nation’s Christian population is known as SAGE Cons—which stands for Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians—who represent about 5% of the adult population. They are a group that is active in both politics and faith: they generally vote in every election, are consistently conservative, are born-again, frequently read the Bible, and stay informed about political and government matters.

SAGE Cons are credited with playing a pivotal role in putting Donald Trump in the White House in 2016 and 2024. The survey revealed that nearly half of all SAGE Cons (44%) had a biblical worldview.

For comparison, the survey did not encounter a single respondent from the other end of the political-spiritual continuum who had a biblical worldview (i.e., adults who consistently vote, are well-informed and consistently liberal on political matters, are not born-again Christian, and do not read the Bible).

### **Segments That Were Indistinguishable**

Several demographic and theological segments showed no discernible difference in their likelihood of possessing a biblical worldview.

- For instance, the incidence among men (3%) and women (5%) was statistically identical.
- In the past, higher proportions of the populations in the South and Midwest had a biblical worldview than did residents of the Northeast and West. That is no longer the case. There has been a substantial decline in biblical worldview in areas previously considered to be

“the Bible Belt” and other highly religious areas in those two regions. Perhaps the combination of massive population migration across state lines, plus the heightened influence of Millennials and Gen Z, help explain the regional shift.

- Whites were marginally more likely than non-whites to have such a worldview (5% versus 3%, respectively), a small difference that falls within the margin of the survey’s sampling error. Among the non-white adults, 3% of both the black and Hispanic segments possessed a biblical worldview, with only 2% of the Asian population having such a view.
- The difference between those who have children under the age of 13 in the home and those who do not was also within the margin of sampling error (3% versus 5%, respectively).

## Biblical Worldview Incidence among Key Population Groups

Population Segment	Integrated Disciples	Emergent Followers	World Citizens
All adults	4%	14%	82%
<b>Sex:</b>			
Male	4%	12%	84%
Female	4	16	80
<b>Age:</b>			
Generation Z (ages 18-22)	1%	5%	94%
Millennials (ages 23-41)	2	6	93
Gen X (ages 42-60)	7	12	81
Boomers (ages 61-79)	7	15	78
<b>Ethnicity:</b>			
White (non-Hispanic)	5%	12%	83%
Hispanic	3	6	91
Black	3	8	89
Asian	2	5	93
<b>Region:</b>			
Northeast	4%	5%	91%
Midwest	4	12	84
South	5	13	82
West	3	8	89
<b>Education:</b>			
No college	2%	10%	88%
Some college	4	14	83
College graduate (4-year)	6	9	85
<b>Religious Faith:</b>			
Self-identified Christian	6%	14%	80%
Not a self-identified Christian	*	3	97
Theologically-defined, born-again Christian	12	26	62
Not a born-again Christian	*	3	97

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2026*, conducted in January 2026 by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. The survey was based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online.

\* Indicates less than one-half of one percent

**Comparison of Biblical Worldview Incidence  
among Key Population Groups, 2020, 2023, and 2026**

Population Segment	2020	2023	2026
All adults	6%	4%	4%
<b>Sex:</b>	6%	4%	3%
Male			
Female	7	4	5
<b>Age:</b>	2%	1%	2%
18-29			
30-49	5	3	2
50-64	9	5	8
65 or older	9	8	7
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	7%	5%	5%
White (non-Hispanic)			
Hispanic	5	3	3
Black	3	4	3
Asian	4	*	2
<b>Region:</b>	3%	1%	4%
Northeast			
Midwest	7	5	4
South	9	6	5
West	5	3	3
<b>Education:</b>	4%	3%	2%
No college			
Some college	8	4	4
College graduate (4-year)	7	5	6
<b>Religious Faith:</b>	9%	6%	6%
Self-identified Christian			
Not a self-identified Christian	1	*	*
Theologically-defined, born-again Christian	19%	13%	12%
Not a self-identified Christian	*	*	*

Source: *American Worldview Inventory*, conducted in 2020, 2023, and 2026, by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Each study is based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online in January.

\* Indicates less than one-half of one percent.

## **Worldview Realities, Patterns, and Hope**

The survey results indicate that despite the increased attention given to faith matters after the Charlie Kirk murder, and the growth in church attendance and individuals purchasing Bibles immediately after that incident, there is no hint of improvement when it comes to biblical worldview.

According to the study's author Dr. George Barna, decades of research looking at worldview development suggests that people begin developing their worldview very early in life and continue to refine and integrate their worldview throughout their 20s. While there are many influences that affect the worldview people embrace, the dominant influences are family, media messages, public policy, schooling, and peer influence.

A person's worldview is perhaps the most critical factor in influencing character, values, and lifestyle. It also is a crucial element in biblical discipleship. Yet, worldview continues to be ignored by many Christian churches. According to Barna, a pioneer in measuring worldview for more than four decades, the findings of the current study continue the pattern of worldview decline he has long observed.

"A quarter century ago, 12% of the adult population held a biblical worldview," he explained. "Since then, we have seen a steady reduction in that incidence. We reached a low point—4%—in 2023. The fact that we have not plumbed new depths since then hopefully suggests that we have bottomed out and are in line to experience positive growth in biblical thought and action."

Barna rejects the argument that further decline is inevitable and perhaps even irreversible, pointing to the experience of students at Arizona Christian University.

Since he began measuring the worldview of ACU students in 2020, Barna has found that between their freshman year and graduation from ACU, there has been an 833% increase in the proportion of students who develop a biblical worldview before they graduate—a nine-fold improvement! That means the typical ACU graduate is 28 times more likely than a typical 21- to 24-year-old in America to live as an Integrated Disciple.

Barna attributes that transformation to the "immersive biblical worldview environment" at the University, where every class, every extra-curricular activity, and even the relational atmosphere on the campus is intentionally designed to facilitate worldview development.

With the survey results underscoring how lacking American culture is in Integrated Disciples, he urged parents, churches, and Christian schools to get serious about the worldview development of young people.

"Make no mistake about it, we are losing American society and all that it has historically represented because we have succumbed to the influence of the culture instead of the exhortations and promises of God," Barna commented. "Entertainment and media messages as well as public policies and errant public education have distorted the thinking and behavior of our young people."

He continued, "It is time to reclaim the culture for Christ, who died for each of us. With just 1% of Gen Z exhibiting a biblical worldview, the ways of Christ are facing extinction in America unless we act today. The ACU discipleship model persuasively shows a turnaround is very

possible—but it must be intentional and strategic, and requires an immersive, multi-year commitment.

“This is urgent,” the bestselling author continued. “The fate of our nation hangs in the balance. The national divide is an indication of the spiritual battle for the soul of America. Jesus commanded us to make disciples. A disciple is one who imitates Christ, reflecting his beliefs and behaviors. You cannot become a genuine disciple of Jesus without having a biblical worldview, since that outlook on life is the outlook that Jesus had. And because you do what you believe, if you do not think like Jesus, you will not act like Jesus. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and pastors need to get on top of this now. If we lose another generation to secular humanism, postmodernism, Eastern Mysticism, Marxism, and all of the other unbiblical philosophies of life, we will lose America itself.”

As a tool to help in the much-needed worldview turnaround, Barna also created the ACU Worldview Assessment, an online tool designed to measure worldview beliefs and behaviors.

“When it comes to worldview, you get what you measure,” Barna explained. “It’s imperative that we measure worldview.”

He continued, “We created the ACU Worldview Assessment as a practical tool for individuals, churches and groups, and even K-12 educators—to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their students’ worldview in grades 4, 8, and 12, or as adults, so they can efficiently strengthen and improve worldview development.”

The ACU Worldview Assessment is available at [www.ACUworldview.com](http://www.ACUworldview.com). See below for more information.

### **About the Research**

The data referred to in this report are taken from the *American Worldview Inventory (AWVI)*, an annual survey that evaluates the worldview of the U.S. adult population (age 18 and over). Begun as an annual tracking study in 2020, the assessment is based on 53 worldview-related questions that fall within eight categories of worldview application, measuring both beliefs and behavior. Additional demographic and theolographic questions are included in the survey for segmentation purposes.

Interviews for the *AWVI-2026* were undertaken in January 2026 among a national sample of 2,000 adults whose background reflects that of the U.S. adult population. The data was collected using a multi-mode approach incorporating interviews conducted both by telephone and online. In total, the average survey length was 21 minutes per completion.

A survey of 2,000 randomly sampled individuals is considered to have sampling error of approximately plus-or-minus 2 percentage points, based on the 95% confidence interval. Additional levels of undeterminable error may occur in surveys based upon non-sampling activity.

The *American Worldview Inventory* is the first-ever annual national survey conducted in the United States measuring the incidence of both biblical and competing worldviews. Each year's reports, released to the public at no cost via CRC's website ([www.CulturalResearchCenter.com](http://www.CulturalResearchCenter.com)) throughout the year of the survey, are also compiled in book form and produced at the beginning of each subsequent year, published by Arizona Christian University Press. Those books are available at CRC's [Publications page](#) or on Amazon.

### **About the ACU Worldview Assessment**

The [ACU Worldview Assessment](#) is a powerful online tool designed to measure and strengthen a person's worldview. Developed by Dr. George Barna and based on 40+ years of research, this 15-minute assessment reveals how a person's beliefs and behaviors align with biblical truth—and how to grow spiritually.

The ACU Worldview Assessment measures worldview beliefs and behaviors in five basic categories (Bible, Truth, and Morals; God, Creation, and History; Faith Practices; Sin, Salvation, and God Relationship; and Lifestyle, Behavior, and Relationships). It also evaluates the "Seven Cornerstones" of the Biblical Worldview. Dr. Barna's exhaustive worldview research shows that if these seven basic worldview concepts—or cornerstones—are in place, a person is far more likely to possess or develop a biblical worldview. Only the ACU Worldview Assessment identifies and measures these worldview-building basics.

The ACU Worldview Assessment is a *practical tool* for evaluating and improving worldview. And there is a specifically tailored version of the ACU Worldview Assessment for every need:

- **The ACU Worldview Assessment for Individuals** -Designed specifically for adults to identify their worldview and discover areas for spiritual growth and personal worldview development.
- **The ACU Worldview Assessment for Students** – Created by Dr. Barna in collaboration with ACU professors and other educational experts, to measure the worldview of students in grades 4, 8, and 12, using a pre- and post-test format. The student assessments are specifically designed for each grade level, making the questions age-appropriate and easier to understand, while maintaining the integrity of the results.

Dr. Barna's extensive research into childhood worldview development shows that an individual's worldview is essentially formed by age 13. This highlights the importance of strategic worldview training, especially in Christian schools, using the ACU Worldview Assessment to measure worldview development along the way.

- **The ACU Worldview Assessment for Churches, Ministries, and Groups** – This version of the assessment is designed for use by churches, ministries, and other groups of adults.
- **The ACU Worldview Assessment for Colleges and Universities** – Designed in a pre- and post-test format tailored for Christian colleges and universities to use each academic year to assess the worldview of their students, and understand the effect of their university's teaching and community on their student's worldview development.

Visit [www.ACUWorldview.com](http://www.ACUWorldview.com) to experience the ACU Worldview Assessment.

And learn more about the new assessment in our full report, "[Arizona Christian University Unveils Groundbreaking Worldview Assessment from Dr. George Barna and the Cultural Research Center.](#)"

### **About the Cultural Research Center**

The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University in Glendale, Arizona, conducts the annual *American Worldview Inventory* as well as other nationwide surveys regarding worldview and cultural transformation. National studies completed by the Cultural Research Center (CRC) have investigated topics related to family, values, lifestyle, spiritual practices, and recent election-related activity and political views.

One of the groundbreaking efforts by CRC has been the worldview-related surveys conducted among the ACU student population. The first-of-its-kind *ACU Student Worldview Inventory* is administered to every ACU student at the start of each academic year, and a final time just prior to graduation. The results of that student census enable the University to track and address the worldview development of its students from a longitudinal perspective.

Research studies conducted by CRC are led by Dr. George Barna. Barna is a veteran of more than 40 years of national public opinion research, having previously guided the Barna Group (which he sold in 2009), and the American Culture and Faith Institute. His research findings have been the subject of more than 60 books he has authored or co-authored, many of which have become national bestsellers. His most recent bestseller is [Raising Spiritual Champions: Nurturing Your Child's Heart, Mind and Soul](#) (Arizona Christian University Press, 2023).

Like ACU, CRC embraces biblical Christianity. The Center works in cooperation with a variety of Bible-centric, theologically conservative Christian ministries and remains politically non-partisan. Further information about Arizona Christian University is available at [www.ArizonaChristian.edu](http://www.ArizonaChristian.edu).