

American Worldview Inventory 2020 – At a Glance
AWVI 2020 Results – Release #9: Worldview and Political Beliefs

**2020 Election: Survey Shows ‘Broad, Deep Gap’ in Political Beliefs Driven by Competing Worldviews;
98% of American Adults Who Support Socialism Reject Biblical Worldview**

As the 2020 election nears, new research from the *American Worldview Inventory 2020* shows a broad, deep gap in American political beliefs and behavior, rooted not in ideology or partisanship, but in fundamental differences in the worldview of voting-age adults being fueled by a national cultural shift away from the biblical worldview.

Veteran researcher and author of the survey, Dr. George Barna, says the findings lead to one unmistakable conclusion. “The 2020 election is not about personalities, parties, or even politics. It is an election to determine the dominant worldview in America.”

According to the latest *AWVI* findings from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, worldview differences are driving deep divisions in American politics. The findings show that those who possess a biblical worldview are more likely to be consistently conservative (78%), preferring capitalism over socialism (83%), favoring conservative fiscal (80%) and social (91%) policies, opposing abortion based on clear biblical teaching (89%), and holding a more conservative, limited view of the size and scope of government (83%).

Conversely, only 5% of those with a biblical worldview are likely to adopt liberal views on fiscal, social and governance issues. According to the research, those without a biblical worldview are more likely to support liberal fiscal (26%) and social (40%) policies, do not believe the Bible is unambiguous in its views on abortion (38%), and favor a more liberal, expansive view of governance (26%). And a full 98% of those who prefer socialism over capitalism also reject the biblical worldview, instead adopting a non-traditional worldview.

The research shows no clear majority for either conservative or liberal positions, which Barna says increases tensions in American politics, as both sides try to win over those with no consistent preference. Three out of ten voting-age Americans consistently embrace conservative points of view on fiscal, social, and governance matters, while two out of ten consistently assume liberal positions.

Other key findings:

- People with a biblical worldview are significantly more likely to pay a lot or quite a bit of attention to political news (70% versus 57%). The survey also found that adults with a biblical worldview are more likely than are those without such a worldview to be registered to vote.
- Gay marriage remains a deeply divided issue based on worldview. Almost all those with a biblical worldview (95%) hold a traditional view of marriage defined as a bond between one man and one woman. Only one-third of adults lacking a biblical worldview (34%) embrace that position.
- A person’s worldview affects their view of law enforcement. Those with a biblical worldview prefer “law and order” policies such as police neutrally enforcing the rule of law equally, while those who believe in the innate goodness of humanity more likely support defunding police and the military.
- The practical significance of religious freedom, largely protected by the First Amendment, is evident among those with a biblical worldview. Nearly all of them (98%) say they are “deeply committed to practicing” their religious faith—a claim made by only 57% of other adults.

**American Worldview Inventory 2020 Results –
FULL Release #9:2020 Election is about Worldview**

2020: The Worldview Election

Dr. George Barna, Director of Research, Cultural Research Center

Released: August 19, 2020

“The 2020 election is not about personalities, parties, or even politics. It is an election to determine the dominant worldview in America.” That is one of the key conclusions drawn by researcher and bestselling author George Barna, based on results from the *American Worldview Inventory 2020*. That extensive, groundbreaking survey from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University focused on what Americans really believe and how they translate those beliefs into action.

Recent reports based on the study have indicated that most adults have discarded the notions of a Bible-based moral code, a shared Christian faith, or the value of human life; dismissed the reliability of the Bible or salvation based on faith in Christ alone; and rejected the ideas that success in life is based on obedience to God, or that the central purpose of life is about knowing, loving, and serving God.

The current political upheaval in the United States is a consequence of a constantly changing, person-centered philosophy of life—i.e., worldview—that is fighting for pre-eminence in the nation’s economic, political, religious, educational, and familial spheres, according to Barna, CRC Director of Research.

Americans’ increasing comfort with non-traditional life perspectives is evident in the latest *AWVI* report, which shows this shifting of worldviews leads to increased acceptance of non-biblical views in relation to politics and public policy.

Biblical Worldview Impact

Barna’s research for the past quarter-century has consistently indicated that Americans have been transitioning away from biblical views to embrace a variety of alternative worldview perspectives. According to the *AWVI*, only 6% of American adults currently possess a biblical worldview. Barna refers to that group as “integrated disciples” because they have integrated their biblical beliefs into every dimension of their life, developing an internally and externally consistent philosophy of life.

With the coming election, what difference does a biblical worldview make regarding political matters? The *AWVI* report indicates that the gap between those who have such a perspective and those who do not is both broad and deep.

According to the study, adults who have a biblical worldview were twice as likely as those without one to have conservative positions on fiscal issues (80% versus 42%, respectively). They were also two and one-half times more likely to be conservative in relation to social issues (91% versus 34%).

People with a biblical worldview are significantly more likely to pay a lot or quite a bit of attention to political news (70% versus 57%). The survey also found that adults with a biblical worldview are more

likely than are those without such a worldview to be registered to vote.

Although the Bible does not address political party preference, the survey showed that a large majority of people with a biblical worldview (65%) align themselves with the Republican Party while the largest share of the people without a biblical worldview (36%) prefer the Democratic Party.

Worldview, Political Party and Ideology		
	Have a biblical worldview?	
	YES	NO
Political Ideology		
Conservative on fiscal issues	80%	42%
Conservative on social issues	91	34
Conservative on governance issues	83	38
Liberal on fiscal issues	5	26
Liberal on social issues	5	40
Liberal on governance issues	5	26
Consistently conservative*	78	24
Consistently liberal**	2	25
Party Self-identification		
Democrat	8	36
Republican	65	25
Independent	15	18
<small>* Indicates self-identified as conservative related to fiscal, social, and governance issues. ** Indicates self-identified as liberal related to fiscal, social, and governance issues.</small>		
<small>Source: American Worldview Inventory 2020; Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. N=2,000 adults 18 or older.</small>		

But given the dramatic contrast in the public policy prescriptions proposed by the major-party candidates for the presidency, how might worldview translate into behavior at the ballot box?

Some worldview implications for public policy are clear:

- More than eight out of ten (83%) integrated disciples (i.e., individuals who possess a biblical worldview) prefer capitalism to socialism. In comparison, just half of those who do not have that worldview prefer capitalism (50%). Stated differently, 98% of the adults who prefer socialism do not have a biblical worldview!
- Unlike most adults, integrated disciples are overwhelmingly opposed to abortion, regardless of the circumstances. The survey showed that nine out of ten integrated disciples (89%) contend

that the Bible is unambiguous in its opposition to abortion, a view shared by less than four out of ten other adults (38%). Integrated disciples were also more than twice as likely as others (92% versus 41%, respectively) to argue that difficult emotional or financial circumstances are insufficient reasons to justify an abortion.

- Gay marriage remains a bone of contention based on worldview. Almost all integrated disciples (95%) believe that marriage is defined as a bond between one man and one woman, is God’s plan for humanity, and is morally superior to all other relational options. Only one-third of adults lacking a biblical worldview (34%) embrace that position. These views are similar to the gap between the two segments concerning whether human life is sacred: 93% of integrated disciples believe it is, but just 36% of other adults concur.
- The practical significance of religious freedom, which is largely protected by the First Amendment, but under consistent attack by progressives, is evident in the views of integrated disciples. Nearly all of them (98%) say they are “deeply committed practicing” their religious faith—a claim made by only 57% of other adults.
- The importance of religious freedom is seen in the fact that more than nine out of ten integrated disciples describe the primary purpose of life as “knowing, loving and serving God” (93%, versus 24% among other Americans); their acceptance of a “personal responsibility, in appropriate situations, to share your religious beliefs with people who believe differently than you” (94%, compared to 46% of other adults); and their agreement that life success is best determined by “consistent obedience to God” (89%—more than five times the 16% of adults without a biblical worldview who agree with that characterization).
- Comparatively speaking, integrated disciples invariably prefer a decreased role for government in peoples’ lives. Integrated disciples were more than twice as likely as other adults to champion a decrease in the size, reach, and power of government (83% versus 38%).

The *AWVI* also revealed that worldview perspectives are significantly connected to the public policy or governance prescriptions that people embrace. For instance, integrated disciples are substantially less likely than other adults to believe that “people are basically good” and are more than twice as likely to say that they acknowledge their sins and ask for God’s forgiveness on a daily basis. Such disparate views help to explain why integrated disciples prefer “law and order” policies such as police neutrally enforcing the rule of law to all equally while those who believe in the innate goodness of humanity and who see no compelling reason to confess their sins or seek God’s forgiveness are more likely to embrace defunding police and military.

Another example offered by Barna related to views about truth. Integrated disciples were far more likely than others to view God and the Bible as inerrant sources of truth and moral guidance, while those who lack a biblical worldview were five times more likely to argue that there are “no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time.” Consequently, the perspectives of those two segments varied dramatically regarding moral issues such as the moral acceptability of pre-marital sex, recreational drugs, getting drunk, gambling, divorce, and exposure to pornography.

Views by Worldview Status		
	Have a biblical worldview?	
	YES	NO
Truth is personal, there are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time	11%	61%
Prefer capitalism to socialism	83	50
Success is best determined by consistent obedience to God	89	16
The Bible is unambiguous on its view of abortion	89	38
Do not support having abortion, even in situations where the personal circumstances are emotionally or financially difficult	92	41
Human life is sacred	93	36
The primary purpose of life is to know, love, and serve God	93	24
You have a personal responsibility, in appropriate situations, to share your religious beliefs with those who believe differently than you	94	46
Marriage is a bond between one man and one woman, is God's plan for humanity, is morally superior to other relational options	95	34
You are deeply committed to practicing your faith	98	57

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2020*; Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. N=2,000 adults 18 or older.

Defining America's Future through Its Worldview

The biblical worldview has been central in America's political and cultural battles for decades, but recent events and politically-progressive leaders have challenged the viability of that worldview in relation to social and governance issues and are aggressively pushing alternatives to the American people.

Barna, who directed the worldview research, noted that because an individual's worldview is the foundation of their decision-making, a worldview permeates every dimension of a person's life, from beliefs and behavior concerning family, politics, and entertainment to those related to religion, education, finances, and health. He reiterated that Americans will be pushed to declare their worldview preference through their electoral choices in November.

"The raging political wars in America, with the population seemingly irreconcilably divided, is not really the result of the divergent political platforms of the leading parties or differing opinions of the candidates, as much as it is about the worldview differences that separate factions within our country," stated the Arizona Christian University professor. "In fact, recent battles over how to respond to the Coronavirus and the urban lawlessness triggered by the indefensible murder of George Floyd are primarily outgrowths of conflicting worldviews.

"One of the important implications of a worldview is that people do what they believe," Barna continued. "Over the past 40 years Americans have been gradually but consistently abandoning a range of foundational, biblical beliefs in favor of a human-centric, consensual, emotion-driven understanding of and response to the world. That transition has been highly visible in relation to morality and political preferences."

Citing survey data showing that three out of ten voting age Americans consistently embrace conservative points of view on fiscal, social, and governance matters, and that two out of ten consistently assume liberal positions, the veteran researcher discussed the emergence of today's political tensions.

"Neither ideological camp holds a majority, so the balance of power is largely determined by the decisions of the five out of ten in the middle of the continuum,' Barna explained. Those individuals, who typically are less likely to take risks, to engage in deep philosophical thinking, to consistently participate in religious activity, and to regularly vote, have become more comfortable with liberal social and political perspectives over the past two decades."

Looking ahead, Barna noted that America's future is steadily moving toward domination by liberal social and governance policies, partially attributable to demographic realities. "If you consider the demographic patterns, the expansion of population groups that possess a non-biblical worldview and consequently prefer liberal policies—particularly young adults, non-whites, and irreligious individuals—will usher in an era of liberal public policies."

Barna explained, "A significant reason why a more comprehensive shift has not yet happened is that left-leaning moderates have been less politically active. But come November 3 we will know which worldview has won the hearts of Americans and will then determine the foundation for the nation's values, lifestyles, and public policy for the near future."

The bestselling author of numerous books about cultural conditions and change then described what it will take to reverse the trend.

"The rejection of traditional biblical views pertaining to the existence and nature of God, the role of sin, the means to forgiveness and salvation, the reliability of the Bible, and the influence of the local church has fostered a nationwide reorientation toward truth, purpose, and authority," Barna commented. "Those shifts have generated dramatic changes in social policy and governance preferences.

"The only way conservatives can regain political momentum is by transforming the foundational perceptions of young people—that is, their worldview. A person's worldview is formed when they are young and rarely changes substantially when they are 30 or older. Without an urgent and intentional worldview intervention, America is destined to move toward liberal social and political options," Barna explained.

"Unless conservative churches and parents, as well as Christian schools, take intentional and strategic steps to direct the minds of children toward biblical principles and practices, the cultural changes many Christians now lament will become the dominant way of life in this country."

About the Research

The *American Worldview Inventory 2020 (AWVI)* is an annual survey that estimates how many adults have a biblical worldview. The assessment is based on 51 worldview-related questions drawn from eight categories of worldview application, measuring both beliefs and behavior. *AWVI 2020* was undertaken in January 2020 among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 adults, providing an estimated maximum sampling error of approximately plus or minus 2 percentage points, based on the 95% confidence interval. Additional levels of indeterminable error may occur in surveys based upon non-sampling activity.

About the Cultural Research Center

The Cultural Research Center (CRC) at Arizona Christian University is located on the school's campus in Glendale, Arizona. CRC conducts nationwide research studies to understand the intersection of faith and culture and shares that information with organizations dedicated to transform American culture with biblical truth. Like ACU, CRC embraces the Christian faith, as described in the Bible, but remains inter-denominational and non-partisan. Access to past surveys conducted by CRC, as well as additional information about the Cultural Research Center, is available at www.culturalresearchcenter.com. Further information about Arizona Christian University is available at www.arizonachristian.edu.