

Most Americans— Including Christian Churchgoers—Reject the Trinity

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(GLENDALE, AZ) – Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox churches are trinitarian, teaching that the God of the Bible is one inseparable and unified deity comprised of three persons. Two out of three Americans claim to be Christian, leading to the expectation that they embrace the core teachings of their chosen faith.

Yet, a new research report from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University shows that only 11% of American adults, and only 16% of self-proclaimed Christians, believe in the trinity.

Weak Foundations

The trinity is one of the central theological foundations of Christian churches. However, that teaching is widely misunderstood, often rejected, and rarely acted upon by Americans. The unfamiliarity or negligible acceptance of the trinity among self-described Christian adults raises serious ministry challenges for churches and families, in addition to creating practical dilemmas for the nation.

The research, part of the annual *American Worldview Inventory* series conducted by the Cultural Research Center under the direction of Dr. George Barna, has revealed the difficulty people have with fundamental biblical teachings.

For instance, only 40% believe that the supreme deity portrayed in the Bible (i.e., God or Yahweh) exists and affects people's lives. About six out of 10 (59%) believe in the existence and influence of Jesus Christ. Only half as many (29%) believe in the living presence and power of the Holy Spirit. When put together, a mere one out of every 10 adults (11%) believes in the existence and influence of all three persons of the trinity—whether they call the triumvirate God by that name or not.

How Faith Segments Perceive the Trinity (Percentage who believe in the existence and human influence of each Person of the Trinity)						
Person in the Trinity	All Adults	Self-identified Christians	Theologically-identified, Born-Again Christians	Integrated Disciples	Attend a Protestant Church	Attend a Catholic Church
God of the Bible	40%	53%	60%	100%	58%	44%
Jesus Christ	59	78	82	89	81	78
Holy Spirit	29	30	42	69	35	22
All 3	11	16	24	62	20	9

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*, conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, January 2025; N=2,100 adults 18 and older.

Note: Integrated Disciples possess a biblical worldview.

Background on the Trinity

Although the biblical, Christian faith is trinitarian, the actual term “trinity” is nowhere to be found in the Bible. Nevertheless, considering the God of the Bible to be three distinct but inseparable and equal persons in one infinite Being is a fundamental tenet of Christianity.

The three persons of the trinity are known as God, the father and creator of all things; Jesus Christ, the holy and divine Son of God, who is the redeemer of humanity; and the Holy Spirit, the sustainer of life who provides guidance, power, and advocacy to people. The three persons of God are unique in their functions but united in their purpose, will, power, and nature. They are equal in essence but distinct in their roles.

As abstract as the concept may be to some, it is one that theologians and church leaders over the last 16 centuries have agreed upon and believe to be clearly and indisputably conveyed in the scriptures. Among the Bible passages often cited as revealing the trinity are Matthew 3:16-17, 28:18-20, and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

The idea of a trinitarian God was introduced by Tertullian, a Second-Century Roman philosopher, theologian, and Christian apologist. The view was controversial and sparked intense debate among Christian leaders. After vigorous debate, the notion of a trinitarian God was adopted and expounded by several important church councils, including the

renowned gatherings of Nicaea and Constantinople, and subsequently championed by Augustine. By the Fifth Century, the trinitarian description of the God of the Bible was widely recognized by Christians, although perhaps not fully understood by them. The trinity is often referred to, even today, as one of the “mysteries of the faith.”

Confusion regarding the trinity persists today, although an overwhelming majority of Christians churches—including almost all Protestant, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communities of faith— embrace the trinity as a mainstream doctrinal foundation. The best-known religious groups that reject the trinitarian idea of God are the Mormon, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, and Scientology communities.

Who Accepts the Trinity Today?

Adopting the belief that God exists in three unique, equal, and indivisible persons is more common among certain population segments.

Not surprisingly, nearly two-thirds of adults who possess a biblical worldview (62%) believe in the trinity. What *is* surprising is they are the *only* population segment identified for which more than 40% believe in the existence and influence of all three persons of the trinity!

How Demographic Segments Perceive the Trinity (Percentage who believe in the existence and human influence of each Person of the Trinity)										
Person in the Trinity	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Male	Female	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
God of the Bible	44%	37%	39%	45%	42%	39%	41%	39%	39%	21%
Jesus Christ	59	53	60	67	58	61	60	59	59	46
Holy Spirit	17	27	29	33	31	27	30	25	25	21
All 3	8	7	11	18	12	11	13	8	7	3

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*, conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, January 2025; N=2,100 adults 18 and older.

Demographically, the people groups most accepting of the trinity are Baby Boomers (18% of whom believe in the three supernatural persons of the trinity); people from households with a gross annual income above \$200,000 (14%); whites (13%); people who attended or graduated from college (13%); and adults who prefer capitalism to socialism (13%). Those least likely to embrace the trinity are under 45 years of age, residents of the northeastern states, Asians, singles who have never been married, and homosexuals.

Theolographic* Connections

Individuals who are the most active in religious pursuits, and those who are most in-tune with biblical teachings and principles, are more likely than their religious counterparts to believe in the trinity.

For instance, those who attend church services on a weekly basis are three times more likely than the typical American to embrace the trinity. People who are twice as likely as the national norm to believe in the trinity include: those who read the Bible on a daily basis; those who thank, praise, and worship God each day; adults who commit to determine and do God's will each day; and individuals who acknowledge their sins and seek God's forgiveness each day.

Belief in the trinity also varies somewhat according to the type of church attended, although the variance is rather small. One out of four people who attend an evangelical church (25%) or a Pentecostal church (24%) believe in the trinity. Slightly fewer attenders of mainline Protestant churches (19%) accept the idea of a trinitarian God. Less than half as many Catholics (9%) are trinitarians.

Various biblical beliefs correspond more closely to embracing the three divine persons of the trinity. For example, one-third of Americans who believe that God is involved in every moment of their life (33%) also accept the trinitarian perspective. Similarly, one-third who contend that the God of the Bible provides them with power (34%) or guidance (33%) embrace the trinity. Slightly more of those who claim to have an intimate or close spiritual relationship with the God of the Bible (35%) also believe in the existence and influence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Back to the Basics

Researcher and bestselling author George Barna expressed practical concerns about the implications of the survey findings.

* Theolographics refers to the religious characteristics of populations, used to identify and analyze the religious beliefs, behaviors, and relationships of those market segments.

“It could be argued that the primary theologians influencing the spiritual views of America these days are figures such as Tucker Carlson, Joe Rogan, Russell Brand, Jordan Peterson, Megyn Kelly, and Bill Maher,” Barna noted. “They mix practical and sometimes unbiblical theology and philosophical points of view into their commentary on life and world events. Meanwhile, many Christian churches are focused on delivering multi-part series that are not effectively developing or bolstering an integrated, biblical worldview that congregants can rely upon to counteract popular, secular takes on reality.”

“Who is devoted to obsessively building a solid theological foundation for the masses?” he asked rhetorically. “Who is committed to ensuring that people grasp the basic theological building blocks of a biblical worldview? Where is the concern or anguish over the near-universal rejection of numerous central biblical teachings? Is the Church of God devoted to know Him and making Him know, or has it been seduced by the distractions and distortions of our culture?”

“We know from our national worldview tracking studies that most Americans are uninformed about the many essential biblical teachings, ranging from the Ten Commandments and the trinity, to matters related to repentance, salvation, the chief purpose of life, and divine measures of success,” Barna noted.

“These findings about America’s ignorance or rejection of the trinity are simply another in a long list of examples of people living without the truths and life principles of God shaping their life,” he continued.

“These results are further evidence of the limited or lack of trust Americans have in the Bible, the limitations we place on the authority and influence on God, and our refusal to cooperate with God by living in harmony with His ways and purposes,” Barna explained. “Even the statistics for the groups that are most in-tune with biblical teachings, such as belief in the nature and impact of the trinity, are shockingly low for a nation in which most people claim to be Christian.”

About the *American Worldview Inventory*

The data in this report are part of the *American Worldview Inventory (AWVI)*, an annual nationwide survey that examines a wide variety of aspects of the worldview of U.S. adults. The current worldview research was generated in two waves of surveys fielded during the first quarter of 2025. *American Worldview Inventory 2025* is the sixth of the annual surveys.

The data reported in this report were collected via the first of those two waves, conducted in January 2025, among a national, demographically-representative sample of 2,100 adults (age 18 or older). The survey contained 82 questions and the average duration of the survey experience for respondents was 18 minutes. The sample was constructed from among the

members of a national research panel managed by Braun Research and Fulcrum as part of the Lucid national panel of survey respondents. A probability sample of this size would have 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 both sampling and non-sampling activity.

The *American Worldview Inventory 2025: A National Study for Strengthening the Worldview of Americans* from Dr. George Barna is designed to examine concerning trends in American beliefs about God, truth, sin, and salvation. It seeks to understand why these key aspects of American faith are weak and to provide practical insights for rebuilding a strong biblical worldview in our nation. This major research from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University is essential for understanding the nation's current worldview landscape and for guiding future improvements, with approximately 12 reports planned for release in 2025.

Begun as an annual tracking study in 2020, the *American Worldview Inventory (AWVI)* is based on several dozen worldview-related questions that fall within eight categories of worldview application, measuring both beliefs and behavior. The same questions are asked in each of the worldview incidence studies conducted by the Cultural Research Center (CRC), facilitating reliable tracking data from year to year. Additional worldview-related research is part of the *AWVI* project, allowing researchers at CRC to look beyond incidence data, digging deeper into an array of worldview components toward understanding the genesis of existing worldview and how to more effectively move people toward a biblical worldview.

The *American Worldview Inventory* is the first-ever 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) 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 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.