



2025 American Worldview Inventory – Report #5

Survey Reveals Significant Shifts in Faith Allegiance and Growing Confusion about Moral Truth

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(GLENDALE, AZ) – The annual national worldview assessment from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University continues to reveal shocking transformations in the faith of Americans. A new report based on data from the *American Worldview Inventory 2025* reveals in just five years a sharp decline of Christian affiliation, a growing embrace of non-Christian faiths and no faith at all, and continued widespread rejection of absolute moral truth.

Non-Christian Faiths Growing

The survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults found that the incidence of people connected to the Christian faith continues to decline, while the numbers of people who align with a non-Christian faith or who disassociate from religious faith altogether continue to grow.

In 2020, 72% of adults described Christianity as their faith. In 2025, that number dropped to 66%. That reflects a decline of about 8%, or a loss of some 15 million adults during the half-decade.

Meanwhile, a number of non-Christian faiths in the United States have experienced significant growth in numbers of adherents. Buddhism has grown by 56%; Judaism by 21%; and Islam by 12%. All non-Christian faiths combined have increased by 39% since the start of the decade.

Researcher George Barna cautioned that because the non-Christian faiths each attract a relatively small number of people, the growth rates seem large. Statistically, even a modest influx of new adherents produces an eye-catching growth rate. Nevertheless, he noted, the aggregate trend is undeniable: Christianity is slowly shrinking at the expense of competing faith systems.

The “no-faith” segment of America also continues to grow. In 2020, about 20% of adults said they were not associated with any religious faith group or belief system. That proportion has inched up to nearly 23% today, constituting some 60 million adults. Catholics have traditionally been the largest church-related segment in the country, but the no-faith group now outnumbers

them. The 10% growth experienced by the no-faith category in the past half-decade shows no signs of reversing in the near future.

Christianity Is Declining -- While Other Faiths and 'No Faith' Are Growing

Religious Alignment	Incidence: 2025	Change Since 2020
Christianity	66%	Down 7%
No faith	23%	Up 10%
Judaism	3%	Up 21%
Islam	2%	Up 12%
Buddhism	1%	Up 56%
Other non-Christian	4%	Up 77%

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University

Rejecting Absolute Moral Truth

Most U.S. adults contend that truth is up to each individual to determine; there are no objective moral truths that apply to everyone, all the time. Overall, two out of three American adults (66%) currently reject or doubt the existence of absolute moral truth.

Perhaps surprisingly, that percentage is statistically similar to the outcome measured in 2020, indicating virtually no change in the nation's dismissal of the notion that absolute moral truths exist. However, there have been significant increases and decreases from year to year, suggesting that the thinking of adults regarding the existence of moral absolutes remains in flux. During the last five years, rejection of absolute truth topped out at 71% and bottomed out at 64%.

The research identifies some noteworthy patterns regarding ideas about the existence of absolute moral truths.

One such finding is the inconsistency over the past five years regarding views about the existence of absolute truth among people associated with non-Christian faith groups. During the past five years the percentage of people from non-Christian faiths who reject absolutes has been as high as 79% and as low as 66%. That number is currently 67%—approximately the national average. At the same time, the pattern among the no-faith population is one of consistent growth, rising from 68% who rejected absolute moral truth in 2020 to 77% today.

Among Christian church groups, there has been a small but statistically significant rise in the rejection of absolute moral truth among adults who attend mainline Protestant churches (now at 61%). And although there has been no change in the proportion of Catholics who reject absolute moral truth, the incidence remains a staggering 69% among the nation's Catholic adults. The most pro-truth change in the last five years was witnessed among theologically-identified born-

again Christians, whose truth rejection numbers plummeted from 57% in 2020 to just under half (49%) in 2025.

Sources of Truth

Even as most Americans deny the existence of absolute moral truths, they are clearly unsettled about how to best determine truth for themselves and others in any given situation. The *American Worldview Inventory 2025* did a deeper dive into what adults consider to be viable sources of truth, even if those truths are situational and inconsistent rather than absolute and predictable.

The most widely accepted source of truth is the God of the Bible, as revealed by Him in the Bible. However, even though two-thirds of adults identify themselves as Christian, just four out of 10 (44%) cite God and the Bible as their basis of truth. Other popular bases of truth among U.S. adults included: verifiable scientific facts (25%); personal, inner certainty, based on the circumstances (13%); public agreement or a majority consensus (5%); and laws, public policies, or government declarations (5%).

Among faith segments, three-quarters of people attending Pentecostal churches (78%), attending evangelical churches (73%), or theologically-identified born-again Christians (73%) named God and the Bible as their basis of truth. Smaller majorities of other Christian segments joined in, such as two-thirds of non-denominational Christian church attenders (65%) and almost six out of 10 mainline Protestant church attenders (58%). Slightly less than half of all Catholics (48%) identified God and the Bible as their basis of truth.

The discomfort and inconsistency of adults in explaining their truth views was evident when they were asked to list all of the published sources, if any, that convey “consistent, relevant, and reliable truth.” Nearly six out of 10 adults (59%) chose the Bible, surpassing any other written sources of truth by more than a 10-to-1 margin. That 59% far surpasses the 44% who claimed that God, through the Bible, was their basis for knowing truth, or the 46% who believe that the Bible provides the true, inerrant words of God.

Other commonly listed sources of revealed truth included: the Koran; the Book of Mormon; the Torah, Talmud, or Tanakh; and *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche, each listed by 5% of adults; *The Five Dialogues* by Plato, named by 4%; the *Book of Shadows* (a Wiccan text), *The Communist Manifesto* (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels), and the *Humanist Manifesto* (I-III), each chosen by 3%. Various other published works were each identified by 2% or fewer adults.

Sources of “Consistent, Relevant, and Reliable Moral Truth”

Source of Truth	Incidence	Associated Faith/Worldview
The Bible	59%	Christianity
Koran	5%	Islam
Book of Mormon	5%	Mormonism
Torah, Talmud, Tanakh	5%	Judaism
<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> – Nietzsche	5%	Nihilism
<i>Five Dialogues</i> – Plato	4%	Secular Humanism
<i>Book of Shadows</i>	3%	Wicca
<i>Communist Manifesto</i> – Marx and Engels	3%	Marxism
<i>Humanist Manifesto</i> (I-III)	3%	Secular Humanism
<i>Dianetics</i> – L. Ron Hubbard	2%	Scientology
The Vedas	2%	Hindu
Tripitaka	1%	Buddhism

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University

Relative Popularity of Moral Truth Sources

Combining all of the belief and behavioral tendencies of Americans examined in the survey as people seek to know “their” truth, the survey data indicate that varying shares of the adult population are willing to turn to each of eight specific truth sources studied in the research.

The most popular source of truth input remains *personal feelings*. Approximately three-quarters of all Americans (74%) at least occasionally rely upon their emotions to discern moral truth. Feelings emerged as the sole truth source trusted by a majority of adults.

About two out of every five adults rely on each of four other truth sources. Those included the *Bible* (44%), *public policies and laws* (41%), *scientific and mathematical claims* (40%), and *social norms, majority beliefs, and cultural traditions* (39%).

About one out of five adults sometimes turn to *philosophical or religious views other than the Bible* (24%), or *personal experience* (21%), or to input from *family, friends, and peers* (18%).

The Pool of Adults Who Draw from Various Truth Sources

Source of Moral Truth	Users
Feelings, personal emotions	74%
The Bible	44%
Law, public policy, political leaders	41%
Scientific/mathematical claims	40%
Societal norms, majority beliefs, cultural traditions	39%
Philosophical/religious views, other than the Bible	24%
Personal experience, trial and error	21%
Family, friends, peers	18%

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University

Consistent Reliance Upon the Bible

Biblical Christians contend that God is the definition and embodiment of truth, and therefore His words contain only truth. That positions the Bible as an unerring wellspring of moral truth that is absolute and unchanging. People who desire to live as authentic Christians should rely on the Bible as their dominant and deciding source of truth views related to faith and morality.

As the survey shows, however, most Americans who even consider the scriptures relevant to moral decision-making treat the content of the Bible as just one alternative among many for distilling moral truth. It appears that people tend to lean on the Bible for guidance if its content is readily accessible, its message is comfortable or validating, or its claims are clear, pertinent, and undeniable.

Most people who integrate the Bible into their stable of truth sources weigh its wisdom and situational value in tandem with the other factors the survey identified as truth filters and revealers: personal emotional reaction, popularity, worldly validation, culturally normative perspectives, personal experience, and legal directives.

Despite larger numbers of people who acknowledged the Bible as a document that assists them in their search for truth, most of those individuals (59% of those who included the Bible among their sources of truth) do **not** consistently rely on the Bible for moral guidance. ***The survey found that fewer than one out of every five adults (18%) consistently rely upon the Bible to discern moral and spiritual truth.***

What kinds of people are most devoted to the scriptures as their dominant source of moral truth?

An unexpected outcome was the correlation between generation and the incidence of consistent and exclusive reliance on the Bible for decision-making. One-quarter (26%) of Baby Boomers

(currently in their 60s or 70s) appear to consistently turn to the Bible first and foremost to discern truth.

The incidence of the “scripture first and foremost” mindset about truth was significantly lower for succeeding generations: just 20% among Gen X (people now in their early 40s through late 50s), 12% among Millennials (the group from ages 22 through 40), and only 9% for the youngest adult generation (Gen Z, the adult portion of which is 18 to 21 years old).

Another way of viewing that information is to realize that although Baby Boomers represent just 24% of the adult population today, they constitute 36% of the U.S. adults who consistently turn to the Bible first and foremost to determine what they believe to be moral truth.

**Demographic Portrait of Those Who Consistently Seek
Moral Truth Based on the Bible Rather Than Other Sources**

Demographic Segment		Consistently Rely on Bible
Generation: Generation Z		9%
Millennials		12%
Gen X		20%
Baby Boomers		26%
Sex:	Men	16%
	Women	20%
Ethnicity:	White	19%
	Hispanic	17%
	Black	13%
	Asian	21%

Source: *American Worldview Inventory 2025*; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University

Demographically, the survey data found that Asian-Americans were the least likely of the four major ethnic/racial segments to self-identify as Christian (42%), but were also the most likely to consistently seek moral truth from the Bible (21%). Blacks were the ethnic/racial group least likely to do so (13%). Also, women were slightly more likely than men to be in the “Bible, first and foremost” segment (20% versus 16%, respectively).

There were also noteworthy differences in truth views across the religious spectrum. The Christian segment *least likely* to be in the “scripture first and foremost” camp were Catholics: just one out of every eight (12%) determines truth consistently and exclusively on the basis of biblical substance.

The people *most likely* to determine truth via scripture included adults aligned with a Pentecostal church (47%), those attending an evangelical church (44%), and theologically-identified born-

again Christians (43%). A “scripture first and foremost” mindset was less common among people who attend a Christian non-denominational church (34%) or a mainline Protestant church (30%).

The Mutability of Truth

According to researcher George Barna, the wide and seemingly inconsistent range of responses regarding how people discern moral truth suggests that many adults lack any strict boundaries in such determinations.

“Two out of three adults believe truth is conditional, and more than four out of five Americans are comfortable drawing from multiple sources or bases of truth,” Barna explained. “Even people who generally believe the Bible or the God of the Bible are the most reliable sources of moral truth admit that it is common for them to make their moral choices based on feelings, laws, traditions, peer pressure, social standards, science, or ease.”

Barna attributes much of the social instability and turbulence Americans admit to feeling to the public’s confusion over how to ascertain truth. “There is little predictability to the moral choices people make because there is so little consensus and conversation related to the basis of truth,” the veteran researcher explained.

“With a minority of Americans believing that the God of the Bible is real and reliable, and an even smaller number reading the Bible during a typical month, it’s no wonder there is such moral turbulence in our culture,” Barna continued. “Everyone becomes his or her own arbiter of truth, and without absolutes, there is little sense that there is a ‘right’ answer to discover, or to have ideas about how to figure it out if there were such a definitive reality.”

Having done more nationwide research on America’s worldview than anyone, Barna asserted that the philosophical and spiritual chaos in America today is the result of rejecting moral absolutes, the unfortunate reliance on feelings as the ultimate determination of truth, and a widespread acceptance of unreliable or misleading sources of wisdom regarding morality. That combination of factors has produced people’s comfort with the prevailing worldview in America.

“As sad as this state of affairs may be,” Barna commented, “it is predictable and understandable. The dominant worldview in America is Syncretism, an eclectic and highly personalized mixture of the sacred and the secular, embraced by nine out of 10 adults. Possessing a worldview that thrives on relativism and the flexibility of its core beliefs certainly fosters the ‘all sources are legitimate’ route to moral decision-making.”

One route to providing clarity about truth would be for churches, families, and schools to consistently advocate the existence of absolute moral truth based on a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of biblical truth principles. In Barna’s view, too many churches and Christians sidestep deeper discussions about people’s basis of truth and how it compares to what the Bible teaches.

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 ACU Worldview Assessment

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

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’s 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 K-12 Schools** – 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 in Christian K-12 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 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.