



***2025 American Worldview Inventory – Report #6***

**Americans Possess Contradictory and Unbiblical Views  
about Moral Truth**

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(GLENDALE, AZ) – Most adults in the United States do not believe that there are any moral absolutes, and they live accordingly. New data from the *American Worldview Inventory 2025*, an annual survey of the core beliefs and behaviors of Americans conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, explains why.

An [earlier report](#) from that survey noted that two out of three American adults currently reject or doubt the existence of absolute moral truth. Even substantial majorities of some of the largest Christian church groups reject absolute morality, including 69% of Catholics and 61% of those who attend a mainline Protestant church.

Beyond that, half of the adults considered to be spiritually conservative and a cornerstone of evangelical Christianity—a niche known as “theologically-identified born-again Christians”—admit to rejecting absolute moral truth.

The research has shown that these days, Americans most often make their moral choices based on their emotional reaction to a situation. In fact, the only consideration that a majority of adults trust to discern moral truth is their feelings, which is relied upon by three out of four adults (74%).

In contrast, a minority (44%) turn to the Bible for occasional insights into truth, roughly the same number as trust the law and public policies (41%), scientific and mathematical claims (40%), or cultural norms and traditions (39%) to guide their moral decision-making.

The new report provides several insights into how Americans think about truth—and the contradictions inherent in those perspectives.

**Open-mindedness is Maturity**

One of the guiding moral ideals is that being open-minded and accepting of alternative philosophies of life is a sign of maturity—even if those points of view conflict with one’s personal perspectives. A large majority (67%) of adults embrace this supposed “sophisticated” thinking.

Such a vantage point only makes sense in a pluralistic society. Pluralism is alive and well in America today: the dominant worldview of nine out of 10 adults is Syncretism, which is the blending of beliefs and behaviors conceived or favored by a variety of competing worldviews.

The popularity of that approach to life provides an ideal philosophical environment for people to suppose that competing, even conflicting, truth views can all be right or should at least be appreciated as valid.

Indeed, with two-thirds of Americans adopting an all-truth-is-valid mindset, it is fitting that the segment most likely to reject such “open-mindedness” is the 4% who are Integrated Disciples—the segment of individuals who possess a biblical worldview. Biblical theism is, after all, the only significant worldview that argues for the existence of absolute moral truth and that such wisdom can be found in the Bible.

Astonishingly, two-thirds or so of virtually every religious segment of the population accepts the validity of different views of moral truth: self-identified Christians (67%), adherents of non-Christian faiths (69%), and people of no religious faith (69%). In fact, Catholics are the religious niche most likely of all (75%) to champion this kind of moral open-mindedness.

The only Christian segments that push back on this notion to any notable degree are the theologically-identified born-again Christians (56% of whom accept this type of moral pluralism) and adults who attend an evangelical church (54%) or a Pentecostal church (56%). But, even then, the majority supports accepting multiple views of moral truth.

### **Multiple Truths Exist**

Roughly six out of 10 adults (58%) assert that there can be multiple conflicting views of moral truth and yet all of those conflicting views can be completely accurate. Logically, that means most people must believe there is not only no such thing as objective moral truth, but also no such thing as subjective truth either, if truth is understood to reflect an indisputable reality.

Despite their overwhelmingly biblical perspectives on life, even one-quarter of Integrated Disciples (23%) buy into the all-truth-views-are-right mindset. As confounding as that is, it is just half as common as the proportion registered among theologically-identified born-again Christians (47%) and people who attend evangelical churches (44%).

Other historically Christian segments had even higher proportions of adherents who embraced the all-truths-are-right view, such as Catholics (64%), those who attend mainline Protestant churches (57%), and self-identified Christians (56%).

### **Things Change**

In defense of the notion that there is no absolute moral truth, nearly half of all adults (45%) contend that the ever-changing perceptions of people about moral truth—whether attributable to the passage of time or the shifting of culture—is “proof” that moral absolutes do not exist.

This argument is somewhat more likely to be embraced by non-Christians than by Christians. In fact, a majority of people aligned with non-Christians faiths (53%) and most of those who say they have religious faith at all (55%) cite changes in the human experience as evidence that moral absolutes are non-existent.

A substantial minority of most Christian segments also embrace this argument. As was true in each situation studied in the survey, Catholics were the Christian-oriented segment most likely to reject any point of view that supported absolute moral truth. In this instance, slightly less than half of Catholics (47%) said changes in views about moral truth produced by transitions in culture or by the passing of time disprove absolute moral truth.

Catholics were joined in that position by large minorities of self-identified Christians (41%), adults who attend independent or non-denominational Protestant churches (41%), and 38% of Pentecostals. The religious group least likely to agree with this thinking were Integrated Disciples (only 6% accepted this perspective).

### **Proof of No Moral Absolutes**

Another popular “proof” that moral absolutes do not exist is the fact that different religious groups and philosophical communities have conflicting ideas about morality. This view is embraced by 44% of American adults.

This basis for rejecting moral absolutes makes sense if you believe that everyone’s truth view is right, nobody’s truth view can be considered wrong, and it is better to live with a multiplicity of equally valid truth claims than to discern which truth claim is objectively accurate and therefore legitimate.

This perspective is especially attractive to atheists and agnostics, as a majority of them (54%) support this argument. They are not alone, though, as large minorities of religious groups hail this idea as well. That includes nearly half of all Catholics (47%) as well as millions of people from non-Christian faiths (43%), those who attend Pentecostal churches (42%), and individuals aligned with mainline Protestant churches (39%).

### **The Impact of Culture**

One out of every three adults (33%) contends that the very idea of moral truth is a social creation, believing that truth cannot be an absolute, consistent reality that is unaffected by cultural realities.

A very similar proportion of all religious segments, except for one, concurred with this idea. The greatest concentration of those who disagree with this argument is Integrated Disciples, with just 4% agreeing that absolute moral truth is a social creation and not an objective reality.

<b>Absolute Moral Truth Views of Adults, by Religious Segments</b>						
Truth View	All Adults	Self-Identified Christians	Non-Christian Faith	No Religious Faith	Theologically -Identified Born-Again	Integrated Disciples
A mature human accepts different truth views to be just as valid as their own views	67%	67%	69%	68%	56%	31%
There can be multiple, conflicting moral truth views in any given situation without anyone being wrong	58%	56%	64%	61%	47%	6%
Perceptions of moral truth change over time and across cultures, proving there is no absolute moral truth	45%	41%	53%	55%	28%	6%
Different religions/ philosophies having conflicting ideas about moral truth proves there are no moral absolutes	44%	41%	43%	54%	30%	14%
Truth is a social creation; it is not an absolute, consistent reality unaffected by cultural differences	33%	31%	36%	35%	22%	4%
Telling a falsehood of minor consequence in order to protect your personal best interests or reputation is morally acceptable	33%	31%	42%	34%	23%	5%
Source: <i>American Worldview Inventory 2025</i> ; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, January 2025.  Note: “Theologically-identified Born-Again” refers to adults who believe they will go to Heaven after they die but only because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. “Integrated Disciples” refers to adults who possess a biblical worldview, based on answers to worldview-related questions.						

## **Lying Can Be Justified**

Putting feet to the anti-morality philosophy, one-third of all adults (33%) believe that telling a falsehood of minor consequence—or lying—to protect one’s personal best interests or reputation is morally acceptable. At best, this is supporting the idea of a “white lie” or a “fib” as morally defensible behavior. At worst, however, this perspective gives moral cover to any deception or

manipulation that can be shown to be beneficial to its perpetrator, despite the allegedly minor personal impact on its victims.

Once again, the statistical gap between the dozen-plus religious segments examined was insignificant, with a single exception: only 5% of Integrated Disciples support the “harmless lie” or “beneficial fib” idea.

### **Demographic Correlates**

The research revealed that certain demographic groups are those most consistently opposed to the argument that absolute moral truth exists.

People under the age of 50 were consistently the most likely Americans to reject absolute moral truth. Within that age cohort, the views of Gen Z and Millennials were statistically similar.

Non-whites were typically more likely than whites to reject the existence of absolute moral truth. Asians and blacks, in particular, rejected moral absolutism, although Hispanics were consistently more likely than whites to join in the dismissal of moral absolutes.

Parents of children under the age of 13 were more likely than adults without young children in their home to deny moral absolutes exist. This is a reflection of the fact that most parents are under 50 years of age—an age block that is clearly offended by moral absolutes—but also underscores the philosophical and moral exposure that America’s children are currently experiencing.

Adults who describe themselves as part of the LGBTQ community were far more likely than those who do not identify with that group to reject moral absolutes.

Mental health issues are also related to perceptions of moral absolutes. Adults who contend that they are recovering addicts, and those who say they frequently struggle with depression, anxiety, and fear, were consistently more likely to reject the existence of moral absolutes.

### **Inherent Contradictions**

The arguments supported by those who oppose the existence of absolute moral truth reflect logical inconsistencies, despite the positive emotions the dismissal of moral absolutes produces for that group. Some of the logical inconsistencies include:

- Maturity is demonstrated by respecting the people who hold inappropriate moral ideas, not by accepting or adopting those inappropriate ideas. That is moral irresponsibility.

<b>Absolute Moral Truth Views of Adults, by Demographic Segments</b>								
Truth View	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boom	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
A mature human accepts different truth views to be just as valid as their own views	67%	66%	70%	65%	67%	68%	66%	75%
There can be multiple, conflicting moral truth views in any given situation without anyone being wrong	61%	58%	59%	56%	59%	55%	62%	58%
Perceptions of moral truth change over time and across cultures, proving there is no absolute moral truth	56%	52%	44%	36%	42%	49%	54%	57%
Different religions/philosophies having conflicting ideas about moral truth proves there are no moral absolutes	52%	48%	44%	38%	42%	50%	52%	58%
Truth is a social creation; it is not an absolute, consistent reality unaffected by cultural differences	42%	43%	30%	20%	28%	37%	46%	45%
Telling a falsehood of minor consequence in order to protect your personal best interests or reputation is morally acceptable	42%	39%	32%	24%	31%	38%	41%	34%
Source: <i>American Worldview Inventory 2025</i> ; nationally representative sample of 2,100 adults 18 or older; conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, January 2025.								
Note: Gen Z adults were born from 2003-2007; Millennials were born from 1984-2002; Gen X were born from 1965-1983; Baby Boomers were born from 1946-1964.								

- The fact that some cultures or worldviews shift their moral views over time or across geographic boundaries is a reflection of the human and cultural tendencies to change their preferences, but it is not proof that the foundations of morality change. Absolute moral truth, by definition, remains unaffected by cultural context or personal interest and preference.
- Because moral truth is dictated by the One who created humanity, culture, and truth, and He never changes His character or moral contours, the moral boundaries He has established are absolute. The God of the Bible, who created moral philosophy on the basis of His moral commands and principles, may change cultures or social preferences,

but individuals and cultures will never change the moral absolutes of the God who created and defines morality.

- Lying, by definition, is the corruption of truth. It cannot, at the same time, be considered to be moral purity, even if it produces personal comfort or benefit. The act of deception may assuage feelings, but it will not represent moral truth.

### **Truth Views Are a Divisive but Critical Cultural Issue**

After reviewing the survey's findings, the project's lead researcher, George Barna, expressed concern about the long-term implications for America.

"Accepting all truths as equally valid cannot help but dig a deep foundation of chaos, confusion, and helplessness," Barna commented. "In the absence of strong, consistent, logical, and compassionate opposition to philosophies that reject moral absolutes, cultural gravity will lead to the acceptance of an authoritarian political savior or powerful elitist group as the arbiter of truth for the masses."

"Historically, such leaders have claimed to reject moral absolutes in favor of policies that are good for the people," Barna continued. "Yet, objective analyses indicate that more often than not they simply impose their own absolute moral code under the guise of looking out for the best interests of the masses. It is a ruse that unprepared and intellectually undisciplined populations sometimes fall prey to."

As he explained, "Those situations never bode well for the public, and the ideology pendulum typically swings back to the masses yearning for a return to moral absolutes based on a standard of individual freedom within defined, compassionate, and proven moral boundaries."

Barna noted that Americans have historically embraced moral absolutes, as evidenced by the values that have sustained the nation's strength and longevity.

"It is impossible to separate America's core values—such as honesty, respect, service, responsibility, trustworthiness—from beliefs about moral truth," the ACU professor continued. "New data shows that Americans trust each other less, are disappointed in the lack of respect shown toward others, a growing emphasis upon being served rather than serving others, and the generational divide over commitment to personal responsibility."

As Barna stated, "These are all outgrowths of the increasing belief that there are no absolute moral truths that bind us together and should shape our life choices for both personal and communal benefit."

The survey results also caused the veteran researcher dismay over the failure of local churches to spearhead debate and action regarding the restoration of biblical truth.

“The role of the Church is to both display and promote biblical principles, including the central role of moral truth as defined by God, who is the embodiment of absolute, consistent, and reliable moral truth,” Barna said.

“A Christian body that waffles on truth has no credibility and cannot bless the nation as it is called to do,” he cautioned. “Local churches that fail to persistently teach reasons why the Bible can be trusted, what moral truth is, why it must be understood as absolute rather than situational, and facilitate accountability for the application of biblical truth in our personal lives are not churches with biblical purpose and power, but merely pawns of the culture.”

### **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](http://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 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).