



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 9, 2022

## Barna: Fewer Than Four in 10 Pastors Hold a Biblical Worldview

The results of [a survey of 1,000 Christian pastors](#) by the Cultural Research Center (affiliated with Arizona Christian University) were published last month, revealing that just 37 percent of them hold a Biblical worldview.

George Barna, who headed up the study, defined “Biblical worldview” as believing that

Absolute moral truth exists;

The Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches;

Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic;

A person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works;

Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and

God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today.



Daniel Tadevosyan/iStock/Getty Images Plus

After engaging those 1,000 pastors in phone or online interviews, asking them 54 questions related to their theological worldview, Barna and his associates found the results “shocking.” The survey “shows that a large majority of those pastors do not possess a Biblical worldview.”

Among senior pastors the results are only slightly better, with 41 percent holding a Biblical worldview. Among youth and children’s pastors, however, the results were much worse: Only 12 percent, or one in eight, of them hold a Biblical worldview.

This was most troubling to Barna:

Keep in mind, a person’s worldview primarily develops before the age of 13, then goes through a period of refinement during their teens and twenties.

From a worldview perspective, a church’s most important ministers are the Children’s Pastor and the Youth Pastor.

Discovering that seven out of every eight of those pastors lack a Biblical worldview helps to explain why so few people in the nation’s youngest generations are developing a heart and



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mind for Biblical principles and ways of life, and why our society seems to have run wild over the last decade, in particular.

If a majority of so-called Christian pastors don't hold to a Biblical worldview, what do they believe? Said Barna:

Instead, their prevailing worldview is best described as Syncretism, the blending of ideas and applications from a variety of holistic worldviews into a unique but inconsistent combination that represents their personal preferences.

More than six out of 10 pastors (62%) have a predominantly syncretistic worldview.

Syncretism is a hodge-podge of beliefs taken from various non-Christian sources, a "disparate, irreconcilable collections of beliefs and behaviors ... a cut-and-paste approach to making sense of, and responding to, life."

It's similar to a salad bar: Take a little here, leave the rest — whatever you're comfortable with or looks most attractive at the moment.

Specifically, syncretism is an unhappy and illogical blending of secular humanism, postmodernism, Marxism, eastern or "new age" mysticism, and nihilism. Barna calls such a blending as an "impure, unrecognizable worldview" compared to a Biblical worldview.

In another study by the Cultural Research Center of 2,000 adults last year, syncretism is the "religion of choice" of almost 90 percent of the American population. At the time Barna wrote that those

Americans embrace points of view or actions that feel comfortable or seem most convenient. Those beliefs and behaviors are often inconsistent, or even contradictory, but few Americans seem troubled by those failings.

There is a ray of light buried in the pastors' survey:

One group within the general public that is more likely to possess a Biblical worldview than pastors are SAGE Cons (Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians).

The American Worldview Inventory 2021 showed that 46% of SAGE Cons have a biblical worldview, a full nine percentage points higher than the incidence among pastors.

SAGE Cons are individuals who are believers in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, active in their pursuit of a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, and passionate about the current state of the culture's social, political, and moral decline.

The good news is that there are more SAGE Cons than Biblical pastors:

Given that SAGE Cons constitute about 8% of the national adult population and pastors of Christian churches are less than 1% of the general public, SAGE Cons with a biblical worldview are roughly 10 times as numerous as Christian pastors with a biblical worldview.



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