

Understanding a Post-Christian America in 2020

By Steve Cable

Some telling results from Probe's 2020 survey of Americans ages 18 to 50

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Introduction

What are the religious beliefs and behaviors of Americans in 2020 and how are they changing over time? This book sheds light on this question with an emphasis on what is happening among Born-again Protestants. The data presented herein is primarily mined from Probe's 2020 Survey of American Religious Beliefs and Behaviors. In our analysis, our understanding is expanded by comparing and contrasting our current survey data with data from Probe's earlier survey and surveys taken by other organizations¹.

Our analysis reveals a striking decline in evangelical religious beliefs and practices over the last ten years. From a biblical worldview to doctrinal beliefs and pluralism to the application of biblical teaching to sexual mores, the number of Americans applying biblical teaching to their thinking has dropped significantly over this period. Unfortunately, the greatest level of decline is found among Born-again Protestants (partly because the percentage of other religious groups applying biblical teaching already dimly low in 2010).

In 2010, Probe Ministries commissioned a survey² of over 817 born-again Christians ages 18 through 40 to gain a more in depth understanding of the changes occurring among Christians in America. Of those surveyed, most of these born-again (774) were Protestants. Many other survey takers and analysts had reported significant shifts in American religious beliefs including a noticeable growth in those selecting no religious affiliation, sometimes called the Unaffiliated. Probe focused their study on a deeper understanding of the beliefs and behaviors of born-again, American young adults.

Stephen Cable's book, *Cultural Captives*³, reported on the 2010 Probe survey and analyses of several other relevant survey datasets. Our analysis indicated that America was at least a decade into a significant change in its religious climate. These changes could be seen in

- the growth of the Unaffiliated from 1995 to 2010,
- the decline in the relative percentage of born-again or Evangelical Christians with an Expanded Biblical Worldview, and
- the less than one of seven young adult born-again combining a biblical worldview with a minimally consistent set of religious practices.

As stated in the book, "We have raised multiple generations of people who claim to be born-again, but who turn their back on the teaching of the one whom they claims is God Almighty in the flesh. They are living as if Christ's teaching was irrelevant to our postmodern situation."⁴

To assess the continued rate of change and evaluate beliefs in additional Christian doctrines and cultural behaviors, Probe undertook a second in depth survey in 2020. This survey collected data from Americans ages 18 through 55 from all religious persuasions. Although still focused on looking at religious beliefs and attitudes toward cultural behaviors, we expanded the scope surveying 3,106 Americans ages 18 through 55. Among those respondents, there are 717 who are Born-again Protestants⁵ allowing us to make meaningful comparisons with our 2010 results while also comparing the beliefs of Born-Again Protestants with those of other religious persuasions.

We found the disturbing trends uncovered in *Cultural Captives* continued throughout the decade and in some cases accelerated. Among these trends are:

- Over the last ten years, the number of young adult (18 – 39), Born-again Protestants with a **Basic Biblical Worldview has dropped by nearly two thirds** from 14% of the population down to about 5%. This is a remarkable and devastating drop in one decade.
- Unaffiliated Americans continue their growth toward one half of the population which began before the turn of this century. The current number of young adults (under the age of 40) who are **Unaffiliated ranges between one third and one half of our population**⁶.
- **Overall, only about one third of Americans 55 and under believe in an active, creator God.**
- The percentage of young adult, Born-Again Protestants who are strongly not pluralists has dropped by over one third over the last decade.
- From 2010 to 2020, the percent of Born-Again Protestants who reported attending church at least twice a month, considered their faith as strongly important and read their Bible daily dropped by nearly one half from 40% down to 23%.
- Less than one in three, Born-Again Protestants selected the redeeming work of God through faith as the key difference between Christianity and other religions.
- When asked about their beliefs on four areas of sexual behavior clearly addressed in the Bible, only about one in four (26%) of Born-again Protestants ages 40 to 55 agreed with the biblical view and only about one in eight (13%) of Born-again Protestants ages 18 to 29 did the same.

In the sections which follow, we will look at what these surveys tell us about religious beliefs, religious behaviors, cultural beliefs addressed by the Bible, and the nature of the American Unaffiliated group.

Section 1 Religious Affiliations

How have the religious affiliations of American young adults changed over the years? We have examined data over the last 50 years to answer this question⁷. From 1972 through the early 1990's, the portion of the population affiliated with each major religious group stayed fairly constant. But since then, there have been significant changes. As an example, looking at data from the General Social Survey (GSS) surveys⁸ of 1988, 1998, 2010, and 2018 and our 2020 Religious Views survey, we see dramatic changes as shown in Figure 1.

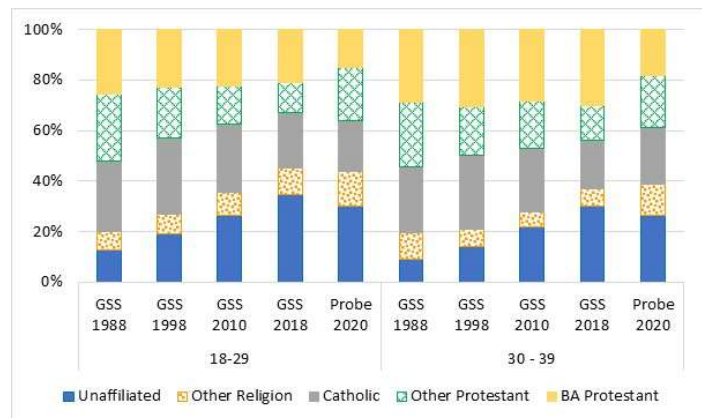
Note that the GSS survey asks, "Have you ever had a "born-again" experience?" while the Probe surveys ask relevant questions to determine those considered "born-again". Two questions were used in both surveys to categorize people as Born-again⁹. Those questions are:

1. Have you ever made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in your life today? **Answer: YES**
2. What best describes your belief about what will happen to you after you die? **Answer: I will go to heaven because I confessed my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my savior.**

Looking at the chart it appears that the question used in the GSS surveys is answered yes more often than the two questions used by Probe. This result is somewhat surprising as the term "born-again" picked up some social baggage in the 1980's but that appears to have dissipated to some extent.

Dramatic increase in the Unaffiliated: As shown in Figure 1, the most dramatic change is the increase in the percentage of those who **do not** select a Christian affiliation (i.e. Other Religion and Unaffiliated). Looking at GSS data for those age 18 through 29, the percentage has grown from 20% of the population in 1988 to over 45% of the population in 2018. Most of this growth is in the number of Unaffiliated (those who select Atheist, Agnostic or Nothing in Particular). In fact, those from other religious faiths¹⁰ grew from 7% to 10% over this time period while **the Unaffiliated almost tripled** from 13% to 35% of the population.

Figure 1 Religious Affiliations of Young Adults Over Time



The Probe data from 2020 tracks the GSS data lagging behind slightly but supporting the overall growth trend shown in the figure. Data from Pew Research surveys (not shown in the graph) shows an even greater increase in the Unaffiliated category for the 18 through 29 age group growing from 17%¹¹ in 1996 to 51% in 2019¹².

Changes as the Unaffiliated age: Looking at the Unaffiliated for the 30 through 39 age group, we see the same growth trend growing from 9% to 30%. Comparing the 18 through 29 data with the 30 through 39 data, we can determine that more people are transitioning to Unaffiliated as they mature. For example, we see that 26% of those in their twenties were Unaffiliated in 2010 growing to 30% of those in their thirties in 2018. This result means that more of the people in their twenties became Unaffiliated in their thirties. This result runs directly counter to the supposition of many that the growth in Unaffiliated will dissipate as young adults age and return to churches to raise their families.¹³

Slight Decline in Born-again Protestants: In the GSS data, Born-again Protestants have shown a slight decline as a percent of the population. There has been a steady decline in those ages 18 through 29, but those in their thirties have not declined over this time period. This data appears to indicate that some young adults in their late twenties and early thirties are undergoing a “born-again” experience.

However, while Born-again Protestants have remained stable those who say they are affiliated with an Evangelical church have begun to decline somewhat. Pew Research surveys¹⁴ of at least 10,000 American adults do show a decline in young adult Evangelicals from 28% in 2007 to 25% in 2014 to 20% in 2019.

Decline in Other Protestants and Catholics: Considering the other religions shown in Figure 1, we see that the group seeing the greatest decline is Other Protestants, i.e. Protestants who did not profess to being born-again. As shown, this group dropped by half (from 26% down to 13%) from 1988 to 2018. Similarly, those professing to be Catholics dropped by one quarter (from 24% to 18%) over the same time period.

Summary of Religious Affiliation Findings

Several findings addressed above are worth highlighting in summary.

- Unaffiliated Americans continue their growth toward one half of the population which began before the turn of this century. The current number of young adults (under the age of 40) who are **unaffiliated ranges between one third and one half of our population**.
- The percentage of young adult Americans who claim to be Born-again Protestants has declined slightly among the youngest group (18 – 29) but has remained fairly constant during this century.
- Other Protestants and Catholics have seen marked declines during this century. The percentage of **young adult Other Protestants has dropped by one half** (from about one quarter of the population to about one eighth) since 1988.

Section 2 Biblical Worldview

One important indicator of the spiritual health of the Christian church is how many people affiliated with a Christian denomination hold to a biblically based worldview. Dr. Jeff Myers of Summit Ministries says, “[A] person’s worldview is his default answers to life’s most pressing questions: Where did I come from? How should I live? What happens when I die? and How do I know my answers to these questions are true?” Or as Probe’s Sue Bohlin states, “Our worldview is like an invisible pair of glasses through which we see reality and life.”¹⁵

In assessing the worldview of people, we were not able to sit down and talk to them to fully understand their worldview. So, our 2010 and 2020 surveys include specific questions which help us identify someone with a Christian biblical worldview. A set of four questions is used to assess what we call a Basic Biblical Worldview. Two additional questions are added to get to a fuller assessment first used by the Barna Group. We use the six questions together to assess what we call an Expanded Biblical Worldview. The questions are as follows:

Basic Biblical Worldview

1. Which of the following descriptions comes closest to what you personally believe to be true about God: **God is the all-powerful, all knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today**¹⁶
2. The Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings: **Strongly Agree**
3. If a person is generally good enough or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in heaven: **Disagree Strongly**
4. When he lived on earth, Jesus Christ committed sins like other people: **Disagree Strongly**

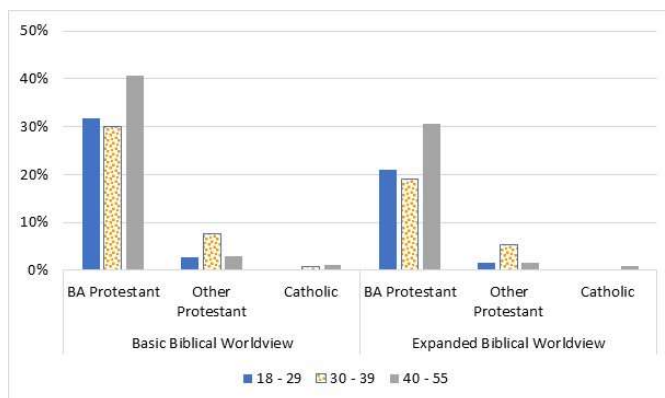
Additional Beliefs for an Expanded Biblical Worldview

5. The devil or Satan is not a real being, but is a symbol of evil: **Disagree Strongly**
6. Some people believe there are moral truths (such as murder is always wrong) that are true for everyone, everywhere and for all time. Others believe that moral truth always depends upon circumstances. Do you believe there are moral truths that are unchanging, or does moral truth always depend upon circumstances: **There are moral truths that are true for everyone, everywhere and for all time.**

How do different Christian groups respond? In

Figure 2, we show the percentage of each group in 2020 who have either a Basic Biblical Worldview or an Expanded Biblical Worldview. We use three groups of affiliations: Born-again Protestants, Other Protestants, and Catholics. On the left half of the chart, we indicate the percentage with a Basic Biblical Worldview by affiliation and age group. Those in the Born-again Protestant group are at about 32% (about 1 out of 3) for those under the age of 40 and then jump up to 40% (about 2 out of 5) for those between 40 and 55. For those in the Other Protestant group, much less than 10% (1 out of 10) possess a Basic Biblical Worldview. Almost no Catholics possess a Basic Biblical Worldview. For both the Other Protestant group and the Catholics, the concept the vast majority do not agree with is that you cannot earn your way to heaven via good works. The other three questions are also much lower for Other Protestants and Catholics than for Born-again Protestants.

Figure 2 Worldview Beliefs of 2020 Christians

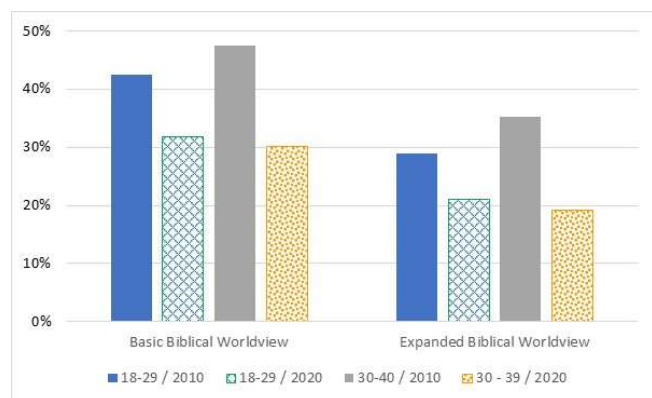


Adding in the questions on Satan and absolute moral truth for an Expanded Biblical Worldview, we see each group drop significantly. The Born-again Protestant group runs about 20% (1 out of 5) below age 40 and 31% (or 1 in 3) from 40 to 55. The other two groups drop from almost none to barely any.

Comparing 2020 to 2010

Now let's compare these 2020 results with the results from our 2010 survey. Figure 3 shows the results across this decade for Born-again Protestants looking at the percent who agree with the worldview answers above. As shown, there has been a dramatic drop in both the Basic Biblical Worldview and the Expanded Biblical Worldview.

Figure 3 Born-again Protestant Worldview Beliefs Across 10 Years
% of all Born-again Protestants



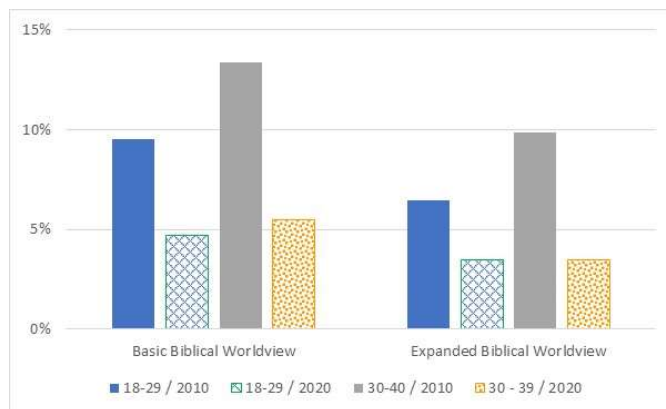
If we compare the 18-29 result from 2010 with the 30 – 39 result from 2020 (i.e. the same age cohort 10 years later), we see a drop from 43% to 30% for the Basic Biblical Worldview and from 29% to 19% for the Expanded Biblical Worldview. **So, the percentage of Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview (of either type) has dropped by one third over the last decade.** This result is a startling degradation in worldview beliefs of Born-again Protestants over just 10 years.

To dive further into the comparison of 2020 and 2010 results let's look at the individual questions asked to determine which questions degraded the most over this ten year period.

Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview as a Percent of the Population

Because the percentage of the population who profess to being born-again has dropped over the last ten years as well, the situation is even worse. We need to look at the percent of Americans of a particular age range who hold to a Biblical Worldview. Those results are shown in Figure 4. Once again, comparing the 18 through 29 age group from 2010 with the same age group ten years later now 30 thru 39, we find an even greater drop off. For the Basic Biblical Worldview, we see a drop off from 9.5% of the population down to 5.5% (a drop of over 40%). For the Expanded Biblical Worldview, the decline is from 6.5% down to just under 3.5% (a drop of close to one half).

Figure 4 Born-again Protestant Worldview Beliefs Across 10 Years as a % of Total Population

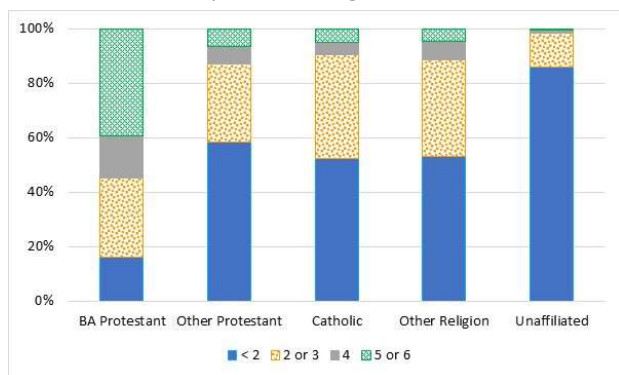


The drop-off seen over this ten-year period is more than dramatic and extremely discouraging. In 2010, we had about 10% of the population modeling an active biblical worldview. Although small, 10% of the population means that most people would know one of these committed Christians. At between 6% and 3%, the odds of impacting a significant number of Americans are certainly reduced.

However, we cannot forget that the percent of biblical worldview Christians in the Roman Empire in AD 60 was much less than 1% of the population. Three hundred years later virtually the entire empire was at least nominally Christian. If we will commit ourselves to “proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light”¹⁷, God will bring revival to our land.

All Religious Groups and a Biblical Worldview

Figure 5 Number of Biblical Worldview Topics Affirmed by Americans ages 18 - 39



Rather than look at the two biblical worldview levels discussed above, we will look at how many of the six biblical worldview questions they answered were consistent with a biblical worldview. In the chart, we look at 18- to 39-year-old individuals grouped by religious affiliation and map what portion answered less than two of the questions biblically, two or three, four, or more than four (i.e. five or six).

You can see that there are three distinct patterns. First, Born-again Protestants where well over half of them answered four or more questions from a biblical perspective (the top two sections of each bar). Then, we see Other Protestants, Catholics¹⁸, and Other Religions¹⁹ chart about the same with over half answering zero or one and very few answering more than three.

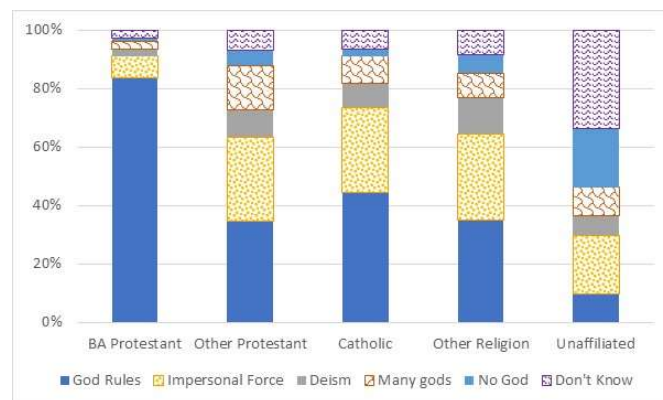
Finally, we see that the Unaffiliated have over 85% who answer zero or one. This result is one of many we have identified over the years clearly showing that the Unaffiliated are not active Christians who do not want to affiliate with a particular group. Some have suggested this possibility, but the data does not support that hopeful concept.

What do Young Americans say about God?

People have many different views of God or gods in this life. In this chart, we look at how 18-to-39-year old respondents define God across the different religious affiliations used in the prior chart. Our respondents were asked: Which of the following descriptions comes closest to what you personally believe to be true about God? They were given the following answers to choose from (without the titles).

1. **God Rules:** God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today.
2. **Impersonal Force:** God refers to the total realization of personal human potential OR God represents a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach.
3. **Deism:** God created but is no longer involved with the world today.
4. **Many gods:** There are many gods, each with their different power and authority.
5. **No God:** There is no such thing as God.
6. **Don't Know:** Don't know

Figure 6 What Do You Personally Believe to Be True About God



The responses can be arranged into the same three groups as the prior topic. First, over eight out of ten Born-again Protestants (~84%) believe in a creator God who is still active in the world today. It is somewhat surprising that over 15% ascribe to a different view of God. The second group consists of Other Protestants, Catholics and Other Religions. These groups are remarkably similar in their responses with around 40% who believe in an active, creator God. So, the remaining 60% have a different view. The third group are the Unaffiliated with less than 10% professing belief in an active, creator God. Over 50% believe in no God or they just do not know. **Overall, only about one third of Americans 55 and under believe in an active, creator God.** We must admit that **America is not a Judeo-Christian nation** as a belief in God is central to Judeo-Christian views. From an evangelistic viewpoint, one needs to be prepared to explain why someone should believe in a creator God. The Probe Ministries website, www.probe.org, is an excellent place to explore the topic.²⁰

Summary of Biblical Worldview Findings

- Born-again Protestants are the only group to have a significant number of adherents who profess to having a Basic Biblical Worldview. This worldview is measured by the answers to four very basic questions at the heart of Christian doctrine. Even among this group, **only about one in three (33%) of them hold to a Basic Biblical Worldview.**

- Over the last ten years, the number of young adult (18 – 39) Born-again Protestants with a **Basic Biblical Worldview has dropped by two thirds** from almost 14% of the population down to about 5%. This is a remarkable and devastating drop in one decade.
- Just over one half of Born-again Protestants agree with more than three of the six worldview questions. Amongst other Christian groups and the population as a whole less than one in ten do so.
- **Overall, only about one third of Americans 55 and under believe in an active, creator God.**

Be in prayer about what you can do in your sphere of influence to stem the trends listed above.

Section 3 Who is Jesus?

Our 2020 survey reveals a striking decline in evangelical religious beliefs and practices over the last ten years. In the first two sections, we saw a significant degradation in the percentage of American young adults who are born-again and profess a biblically informed worldview. Perhaps, a biblical worldview, as defined by the set of questions we used, is not an accurate gauge of an orthodox Christian belief. If so, we should find a significant difference with the answers to other questions central to orthodox beliefs.

In our survey, we examined several other questions to identify those people who closely align their thoughts with the teaching of the Bible. We will look at two areas of belief for all American young adults and for Born-again Protestants in greater detail:

1. Do you believe that Jesus was right in saying “no one comes to the Father except by me”?
2. Do you believe in some critical aspects of Jesus Christ’s mission on earth?

We will look at these two areas alone and then see how those with a biblical worldview align with these questions.

Section 3-A: Is Jesus the only way to heaven?

Pluralism is the belief that there are multiple ways to obtain a right relationship with God, including most if not all world religions. The Bible is very clear on how people can be reconciled to God and obtain eternal life. First, we cannot receive it through our own efforts at righteous living. This truth is addressed throughout the New Testament including Romans 3:23 *“For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* And Titus 3:5 *“He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy . . .”*

Second, we cannot receive it by placing our faith in some other person or deity. If we try, we are still weighed down by our sin and that other person or deity has no standing before the living God. Even an angel of the living God has no standing on which to intercede for our salvation as we see in Hebrews 2:5 *“For He did not put the world to come, about which we have been speaking, under the control of angels.”*

The only way God could redeem us was through the sacrifice of Jesus, fully God and fully man. As Paul goes on to say in Romans 3:24, *“But they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* And Titus 3:5 continues *“through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our savior.”*

Jesus clearly stated, “No one comes to the Father except through me.” The high price of degradation and suffering paid through Jesus’ life and death excludes the possibility of Jesus being just one of several options offered by God.

What do Americans believe about multiple ways to heaven? And, especially what do Born-again Protestants believe? To determine who was a pluralist, we asked what the respondents thought about the following two statements:

1. Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus all taught valid ways to God. (Answers from Disagree Strongly to Agree Strongly)
2. I believe that the only path to a true relationship with God is through Jesus Christ. (Answers from Disagree Strongly to Agree Strongly)

Multiple Valid Ways to God

First let’s look at question number one across the various religious groups looking for the answer **Disagree strongly** as shown in Figure 7. If someone disagrees with this statement, they could be a Christian or a Muslim or a Buddhist or an Atheist, etc. The first thing you may notice is that all religious groups other than Born-again Protestant all congregate around 5% to 15%. So, for all these groups around one in ten people take a strong non-pluralistic view. Or turning it around, about 9 out of 10 of them are not strong in their stand against pluralism. Born-again Protestants show about 4 out of 10 (40%) who take a strong stand, but that is far less than a majority. Note that the Born-again Protestants showed an increase of almost 25% (39% to 48%) from the youngest group to the oldest group. For the other groups, age did not seem to make a significant difference in those who disagreed strongly.

Figure 7 Muhammad, Buddha, and Jesus All Taught Valid Ways to God: Disagree Strongly

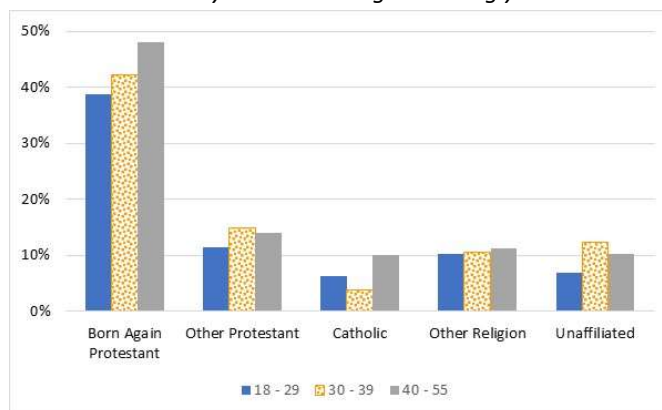
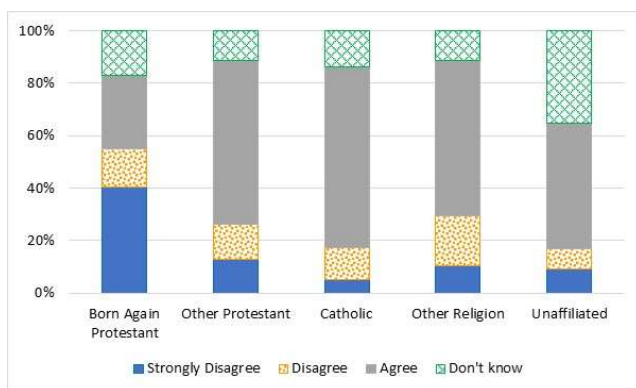


Figure 8 Muhammad, Buddha, and Jesus All Taught Valid Ways to God – Respondents Ages 18 thru 39



relationship between God and man, these people must feel that God is muddled in His thinking about what is required to satisfy his holiness.

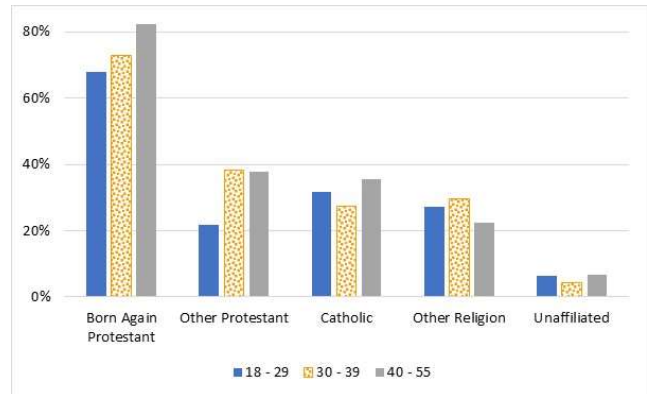
To get the full picture, Figure 8 plots all the answers for those ages 18 through 39. The real shocker jumping from this page is that almost 45% of Born-again Protestants are also pluralists or at least say they don’t know what they believe. Apparently, a majority of Born-again Protestants are ignorant about the key teachings of their faith. All the other religious groups are dominated by people who agree that Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus all taught valid ways to God. Because these religious figures taught very different things concerning the

Jesus is the Only Path

Now to narrow the question even further, we could have asked “Do you think only Jesus taught valid ways to God” The percentage of people strongly agreeing with this statement should be a subset of the people who disagreed strongly with the question above “Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus all taught valid ways to God.”

Instead, we asked this second question in a slightly different way but with the same intent: “I believe that the only path to a true relationship with God is through Jesus Christ.” We thought that this question would be equivalent to the one posited in the prior paragraph. But as we can see, people’s brains allow them to give answers that contradict each other. The results for those who strongly agreed with the statement are shown in Figure 9.

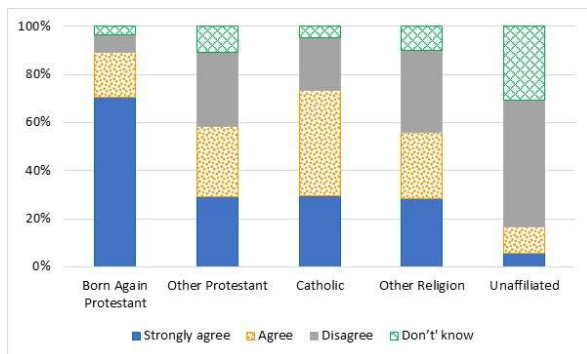
Figure 9 Jesus is the Only Path to a True Relationship with God: Agree Strongly



Comparing this chart with Figure 7 we see that Born-again Protestants are at least thirty percentage points higher for this second question. And, the other Christian religious groups are higher by about twenty-five percentage points as well. And even Other Religions⁹ are up by over ten percentage points. Only the Unaffiliated drop from the first question to the second dropping by almost half from ten percentage points down to about five percentage points.

Perhaps in answering the first question, they felt that Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus all taught some valid ways to reach out to God, such as prayer. But all these figures were not the complete path to a true relationship with God as asked in the second question.

Figure 10 Jesus is the Only Path to God
Respondents Ages 18 through 39



When we look at the full picture shown in Figure 10, the difference between the two questions becomes more pronounced. Only about one in five (20%) of Other Protestants and Catholics disagreed with the statement that all three religious figures taught valid ways to God. But now we see that around two out of three (66%) agree Jesus is the only path to God. Even for people affiliated with Other Religions over one half agree with that statement. Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses make up only a little over one third of the Other Religions group. So, finding over half saying Jesus is the only path is astonishing. Only the Unaffiliated are

highly unlikely to agree with Jesus as the only path.

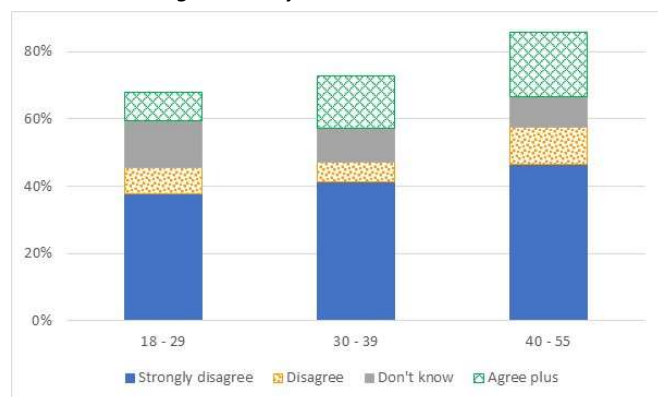
An Inconsistent Worldview Among Many Born-again Protestants

The results outlined above are disconcerting in that if the answers to the two questions were consistent, we would see Figure 9 reporting lower numbers than Figure 7 which is clearly not the case. Logically, one could say that Mohammad, Buddha, and Jesus are not all valid ways to God while still saying that

Jesus is not the only way to God. You could believe for example that Buddha is the only one who taught a valid way to God. But, if you say that Jesus is the only way to a true relationship with God, then it follows that you believe that Mohammad, Buddha, and Jesus cannot all be valid ways to God.

However, the survey respondents show us that one does not have to give answers which logically support one another. Even if some of the respondents misread the statement, the difference between the two is great enough that it is safe to assume that the results are not primarily attributable to misreading.

Figure 11 What Born-again Protestants Who Say Jesus is the Only True Path to God Say About Mohammad, Buddha, and Jesus All Teaching Valid Ways to God



In Figure 11, we look at what the Born-again Protestants who stated that Jesus is the only way to a true relationship with God said when responding to the question about Mohammad, Buddha and Jesus. First note that the total height of each column is the same as the Born-again Protestant columns in Figure 9. We then break up those groups into the four categories based on their response to Mohammad, Buddha and Jesus as follows: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Don't know and Agree plus. As shown, the upper portion of each column represents those who did not strongly disagree

with the pluralistic view. For the youngest adults, that upper portion is about evenly split between those who Don't Know and those who Agree or Strongly Agree that the three men taught valid ways to God. For those ages 40 through 55, we see that a significantly higher percentage affirm that all three men taught valid ways to God.

Based on these results, about 4 out of 10 (40%) of Born-again Protestants appear to have a consistent biblical view toward pluralism (the bottom blue area). About 3 out of 10 (30%) appear to be totally in line with the pluralist position for the younger ages and about 2 out of 10 (20%) for those 40 and over (the area at the top with no box). The last 30% are those who want to say that Jesus is the only true path to God AND that Mohammad and Buddha also taught valid ways to God. In church, they may say that Jesus is the only way, but out in the world they act as if Muslims and Buddhists don't need to know this critical truth. These individuals have an incoherent worldview.

Changes over the Last Decade

How have the statistics on Born-again Protestants and pluralism changed from 2010 to 2020? As shown in the figure, we see a significant drop in the percent of BACs who are not pluralists. Those age 18 to 29 drop by almost 20% (from 46% to 37.5% of all BA Protestants) and those age 30 to 39 drop by 22% (from 53% to 41% of all BA Protestants).

Of course, we need to remember that the percentage of BA Protestants in the population has dropped as well. So, when we look at the percentage of Born-again Protestants who are definitely not pluralists in our country the drop off is greater. As shown the number of those age 30 to 39 drops from 15% in 2010 to almost half of that number at under 8% in 2020 (a drop of 49%).

Over the last decade, Born-again Protestants in America have continued to drop in the number who are definitely not pluralists.

Figure 12 Born-again Protestants Who Are Not Pluralists

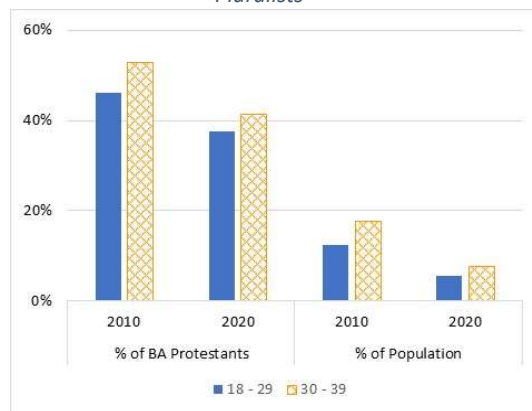
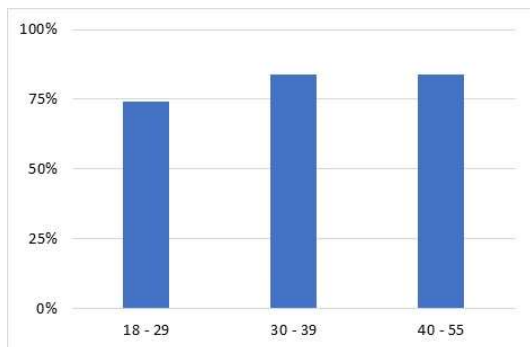


Figure 13 Born-again Protestants with a Basic Biblical Worldview Who are Not Pluralists



What about that smaller subset of people who have a Basic Biblical Worldview? Do a majority of them also have a pluralistic worldview? The answer is no. As shown, between 75% and 85% of them are not pluralists. This result is not a surprise since the Basic Biblical Worldview questions do not align well with a pluralistic view. Still, the result that about one in four of Born-again Protestants with a Basic Biblical Worldview appear to be pluralists is unsettling.

Section 3-B Important Characteristics of Jesus

In our survey, we asked three questions specifically about Jesus and His mission. The first question was about what caused Jesus to die on a cross as given below with the possible answers listed below it.

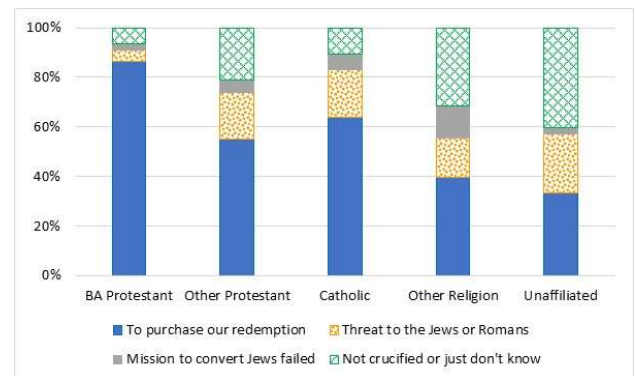
1. Why did Jesus die on a cross?

- He threatened the Roman authority's control over Israel.
- He threatened the stature of the Jewish leaders of the day.
- To redeem us by taking our sins and our punishment upon Himself
- He never died on a cross.
- He failed in his mission to convert the Jewish people into believers.
- I don't know.

Any reasonably knowledgeable Christian knows, Jesus was not forced to the cross. He went willingly to fulfill His redemptive purpose. As He said when being arrested, *"Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and that he would send me more than twelve legions of angels right now? How then would the scriptures that say it must happen this way be fulfilled?"*²¹

The responses for ages 18 through 39 are shown in Figure 14. As shown, Born-again Protestants have a far greater percentage than other groups, over 85%, stating that Jesus was crucified to purchase our redemption. One would suspect that all Other Protestant and Catholic leaders would want their people to know that Jesus' death on the cross was for their redemption. Yet less than two thirds of those groups selected that answer. Note that the answer to this question did not say that salvation was through grace alone. So even those with a works-based gospel should still select that answer.

Figure 14 Why Did Jesus Die on a Cross?
Americans ages 18 through 39



A fair number of Other Protestants and Catholics (about 20% of each group) said that either the Jewish leaders or the Romans caused Jesus' death on the cross. But any Christian should realize that Jesus had to choose crucifixion. Prior attempts by various groups demonstrated that they could not lay a hand on him otherwise. Surprisingly, over one out of five (20%) of the Other Protestants selected "He never died on a cross" or "don't know" as their answer.

Interestingly, about 40% of Other Religions and 30% of the Unaffiliated say Jesus died to redeem us. They understand this is what Christians say about Jesus' crucifixion. It is the best answer for them because it doesn't say that Jesus' death actually worked to redeem us only that He did it to redeem us. Also note that roughly one third of the Other Religion category is made up of people who affiliate with Christian cults, e.g. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses.

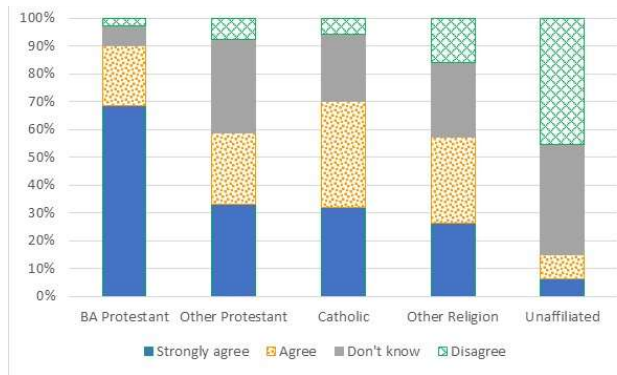
The second question is:

2. Jesus will return to this earth to save those who await his coming.

- a. Answers ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

This question is almost a quote of Hebrews 9:27-28 ESV, *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.* As you can see, this verse answers question 1 and question 2. The apostle Paul writing in 1st Thessalonians says, *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."* He makes it clear that the Lord Jesus will return to the earth to call us to Himself.

Figure 15 Jesus Will Return to Save Us
Americans Ages 18 through 39



The results for this question follow a similar pattern to those for the first question above with a little less surety shown among Christians. As shown in Figure 15, just over two thirds of Born-again Protestants strongly agree that Jesus will return to save. Meaning that almost one third of them are not absolutely sure of Jesus return.

For other Christian groups, only about one third of them strongly agree with this statement. Almost one third say they Disagree or Don't Know about this statement.

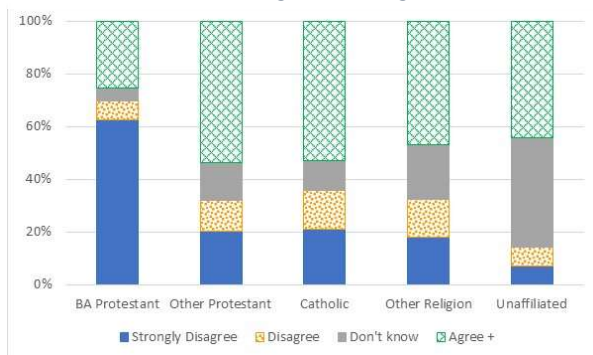
One again over half of those affiliated with Other Religions affirm what they believe to be taught by the Christian religion. At the same time, the Unaffiliated continue to show that very few of them affirm any Christian beliefs.

The third question (also used for determining a Basic Biblical Worldview) is:

3. When he lived on earth, Jesus committed sins like other people.
 - a. Answers ranging from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly

The Bible clearly states that Jesus lived a sinless life. For example, Hebrews 4:15 ESV states, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**"* And again in 2 Corinthians 5:21 *"God made the one who did **not know sin** to be sin for us so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God."* As indicated in this verse, God laid our sins upon Jesus in his earthly death. Jesus did not commit sin but He carried our sins to the cross and the grave to redeem us. If Jesus were a sinner like you and I, His death would have been for His own sin rather than for the sins of the world.

Figure 16 Jesus Committed Sins Like Other People
Americans Ages 18 through 39



Young adult American beliefs about this statement shown in Figure 16 follow a similar pattern as the first two questions. Once again, about one third of Born-again Protestants either Don't Know or Agree with this statement. Having this large a number of Born-again Protestants who don't accept a primary belief of Biblical Christianity is disappointing.

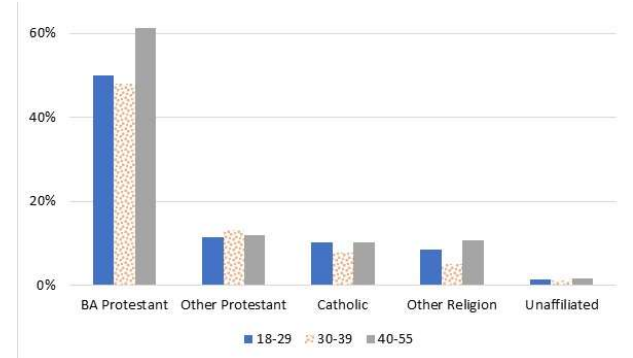
However, four out of five respondents who affiliated with Other Protestant or Catholic beliefs do not strongly believe that Jesus lived a sinless life. The Unaffiliated group continues to show their aversion

to accepting any Christian religious doctrines.

Accepting a Doctrinally Consistent Set of Beliefs

What happens when we look at how many Born-again Protestants take a biblically consistent view on all three of these questions? Consider the results shown in Figure 17. First, we see that young adult Born-again Protestants drop from about two thirds for the individual questions (as shown in Figure 11 – 13 above) down to about one half when looking at all three questions. It appears that about one half of those categorized as Born-again Protestants are trusting Jesus to save them but do not have a good understanding of biblical teaching on Jesus.

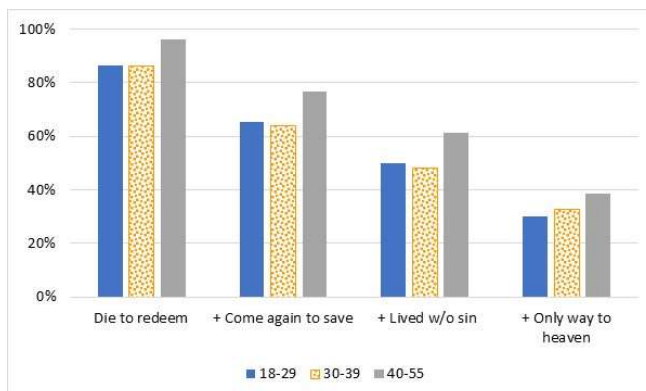
*Figure 17 A Biblical Position on Jesus Christ
Agreeing on Jesus sinless life, atoning death, and coming return*



As you can see, all other religious groups drop to around one in ten or less with a good understanding of Jesus. The Unaffiliated drop to a level that is basically zero. In toto, about one out of six Americans aged 55 and under have an understanding of who Jesus really is across all three fundamental areas.

Section 3-C Important Characteristics of Jesus

*Figure 18 Cumulative Graph of Beliefs about Jesus
For Born-again Protestants*



Combining these characteristics of His mission (Section 3-B) and the uniqueness of Jesus as the only way to heaven (Section 3-A), we see the results shown cumulatively in Figure 18. The youngest group of Born-again Protestants have less than one in three (33%) who affirm a biblical position on all five questions²² covered in the chart. It rises slightly up to almost 4 in 10 (40%) for those ages 40 through 55.

Does Having a Basic Biblical Worldview Equate to Having a Biblical Understanding of Jesus?

For most people it does. Approximately 90% of people with a Basic Biblical Worldview have a biblical understanding of Jesus, i.e. answer the three Jesus questions from a biblical perspective. This finding (especially if true across other questions where many Born-again Protestants ascribe to an unbiblical viewpoint) is important because the four simple questions which define a Basic Biblical Worldview identifies a set of people who also take a biblical view of Jesus' purpose.

Section 4 Views on Tolerance

Some of the key findings on this topic are summarized at the beginning of this report.

Looking at Born-again Protestants ages 18 through 39, we find:

- Only about one quarter (27%) of them disagree with the statement “. . . it is important to let people know that I affirm as true (at least for them) their religious beliefs and practices.”
- At the same time, almost two thirds (65%) agree that tolerance is best defined as: “Treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.”
- This is another topic where we see somewhat conflicting results. Apparently, many Born-again Protestant, young adults think that you cannot believe someone is “wrong or misguided” when it comes to religion. Or they believe that “Treating with respect” means “affirming as true (at least for them)”.

According to the Collins English Dictionary, *“Tolerance is the quality of allowing other people to say and do what they like, even if you do not agree with or approve of it.”*²³ In today’s culture, we find two conflicting understandings of the meaning of tolerance. One following the idea of the dictionary meaning is “treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.” The second one influenced by postmodern philosophy and popularized by the secular media is “valuing human beings equally and affirming their ideas as right for them.” The second definition basically assumes that there are no absolute truths in our existence and therefore we have no basis to disagree with what someone else believes.

Which of these definitions holds sway among our population today?

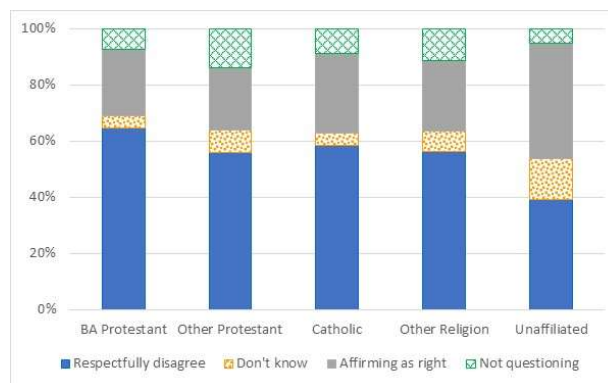
To explore this question, we asked two different questions dealing with how to treat those who have a different religious viewpoint. The first question we asked on this topic went beyond religious viewpoints asking about the concept as a whole: *“What does Tolerance mean to you?”* The respondents chose from four possible answers:

1. Treating with respect people with ideas or actions that you believe to be wrong or misguided.
2. Not questioning another person’s moral decisions.
3. Valuing human beings equally and affirming their ideas as right for them.
4. Don’t know.

This question gives us information on how people interpret the word not whether they apply tolerance in their dealings with others.

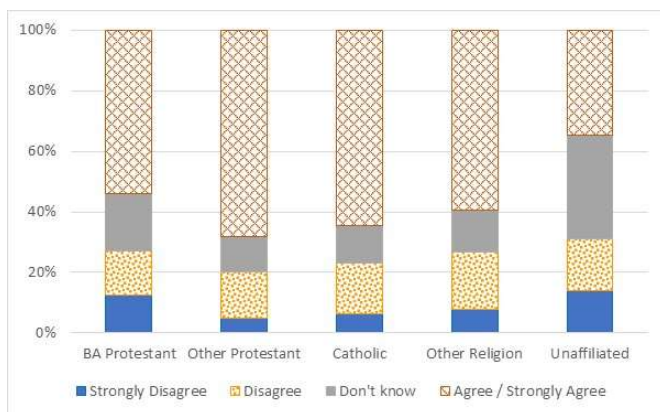
In figure 19, we see how the definitions are distributed. Almost two thirds (65%) of young adult, Born-again Protestants selected a classic definition of tolerance. As shown, over 50% of the other religious groups also selected a classic definition. But as one can see from the graph, a significant number of young adult Americans were selecting a different definition with the portions ranging from one third to almost one half of each religious group. So, it appears that the classic definition is hanging on with a majority of the population, but definitions which question the reality of absolute truths have a strong following.

Figure 19 How 18 - 39 Year Old Americans Define Tolerance



Now let's look at how people apply tolerance in the area of religious beliefs. Are they quick to say, "I will respect you and your beliefs even though I believe them to be wrong."? Or are they going to follow the trend saying they may well be true for you.

Figure 20 Should I tell others I affirm as true their religious beliefs
Ages 18 - 39



To find out, we asked another question: "When discussing religious matters, I feel that it is important to let people know that I affirm as true (at least for them) their religious beliefs and practices." with the answer ranging from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly. As an evangelical Christian, I would answer that I Disagree Strongly with that statement. I want them to know that I respect them as a person, but I believe I have been shown the one true answer as to how man can be reconciled to our creator God. But somehow, when asked in this manner, Born-again Protestants just don't seem to get the importance of

disagreeing as they said they would on the first question (Figure 19).

As shown in Figure 20, only about one in four (27%) Born-again Protestants disagree with the statement. This level tracks closely with the rest of the population. If one is agreeing with the statement, one is either saying 1) in religious beliefs what's not true for me can be true for you, or 2) there are multiple religions that are the truth, or 3) we should lie to others about the absolute truth of Christianity when discussing religion with them. All three of those options are clearly countered by the Bible which tells us that Jesus Christ is the source of absolute truth, that there is only one way to heaven, and that lying about the truth is against the nature of God.

The disconnect between the definition of tolerance and applying tolerance in our interactions with other religions is striking. As noted in the initial summary, apparently, many Born-again Protestant, young adults think that you cannot believe someone is "wrong or misguided" when it comes to religion. Or they believe that "Treating with respect" means "affirming as true (at least for them)". We don't have

data to distinguish between these two options, but I suspect that both of them contribute to the current reluctance to lift up Jesus as God's one true answer to the fundamental problem of mankind.

Section 5 Religious Practice

In this section, we examine the level of religious activity of different religious groups and how they relate to people with different religious beliefs.

Some of the key results for Americans ages 18 through 39 are as follows:

- Less than one in three (31%) Born-again Protestants prayed multiple times per day and a smaller number of less than one in four (23%) read their Bible at least daily.
- Only about one in five (21%) Born-again Protestants give 10% or more of their income to their church and other charities.
- Less than one in twenty (4%) Born-again Protestants reported a consistent religious life where they attended church at least **twice** a month, considered their faith as **strongly** important in their daily life, prayed **multiple times** per day, read their Bible **daily** and gave **at least 10%** of their income to charities.
- Less than one in five Born-again Protestants reported a nominal religious involvement where they attend church at least once a month, considered their faith as important in their daily life, prayed at least once a day, and read their Bible at least weekly, and gave at least 5% to their church and other charities.
- From 2010 to 2020, the percent of Born-again Protestants who reported attending church at least twice a month, considered their faith as strongly important and read their Bible daily dropped by nearly one half from 40% down to 23%.
- When asked about their ultimate purpose for living, somewhat more than half (57%) of Born-again Protestants selected a purpose which included serving God which was a significant drop from the two thirds (67%) who selected a similar purpose in 2010.

Level of Religious Activities

We will begin by looking at two different levels of religious activity: a Nominal Level and a Committed Level as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Defining Levels of Religious Activity

Religious Activity	Nominal Level	Committed Level
How often do you attend religious services, not including special events such as a wedding or funeral?	Monthly	Twice a month or more
My religious faith has a significant impact on my daily life	Agree	Agree strongly
How often do you pray outside of a formal religious service?	Daily	Multiple per day
How often do you read or study your Holy Book in a small group setting or by yourself	Weekly	Daily or more
How much do you give to religious organizations and charities each year?	5% to 10% of income	At least 10% of income

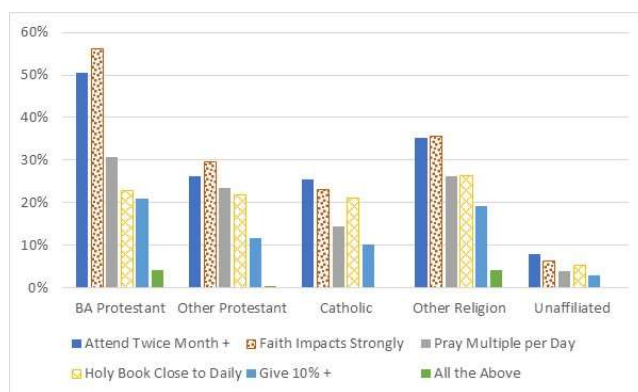
I think most would agree that someone doing the activities listed at the level required for the Committed Level is serious about their faith. They consider it important enough to make it a priority in their thoughts, time and finances. One can find specific instructions or examples in scripture for the importance of the first four activities listed above in the Committed Level column. Giving at least 10% of your income is not a clear direction in the New Testament, but it is a good metric for assessing someone's commitment. The nominal level probably represents someone who considers their faith as important but not important enough to involve a significant amount of time and money.

Committed Level of Religious Activity

Those ages 18 through 39 who practice their religion at a committed level are shown in Figure 21 at right. We have roughly ordered these items from highest probability of adherence to lowest.

As shown in the figure, Born-again Protestants lead the way in frequent church attendance and for strongly considering their faith significant. For the next two, prayer and reading your holy book, all four of the religious groups were similar. Finally, for the giving metric, Born-again Protestants show about 20% at that level of giving while Other Protestants and Catholics are about half of that level, or 10%.

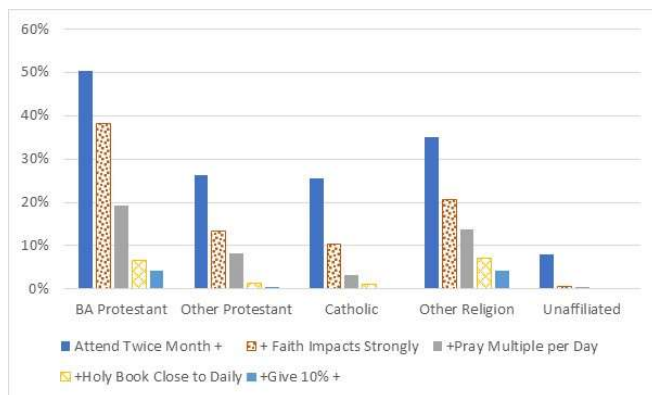
*Figure 21 Committed Level of Religious Activity by Faith Group
Ages 18 through 39*



It is distressing that three of the five metrics show only three out of ten or fewer Born-again Protestants who practice them. Even the most commonly practiced religious behaviors show slightly more than half of Born-again Protestants active at those levels.

And when we combine all these metrics together (as shown in Figure 22) to identify people who show a strong commitment to their religious faith, we find around 4% (1 out of 25) Born-again Protestants saying they perform all five activities. In fact, people of Other Religions also have about 4% performing all five metrics. So, for all practical purposes, there is not difference between faithfulness of Born-again Protestants and those who practice other religions. Both numbers represent a tiny portion of the faith group.

*Figure 22 Committed Level of Religious Activity – Cumulative
Ages 18 - 39*



Note that if we exclude the question on giving, the percentage of Born-again Protestants increases from 4% to 7%. Clearly, money is not the primary issue driving down the number of consistently active believers.

Also note that the entire Unaffiliated group reports less than 8% on each of these practices and less than 1% who claim to do even two of these practices.

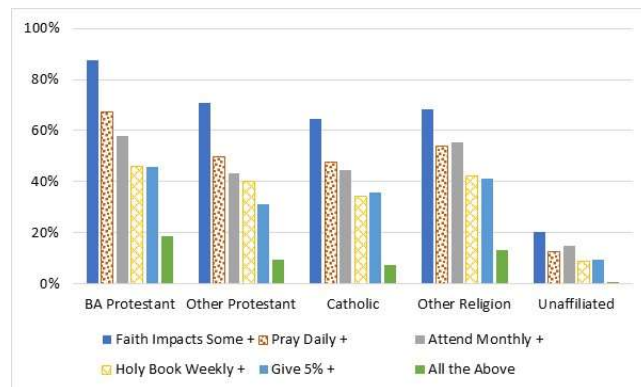
These survey results clearly show that a scant few Americans of any religious persuasion take the time to be actively involved in practices to help them grow in their faith.

Nominal or Committed Levels of Religious Activity

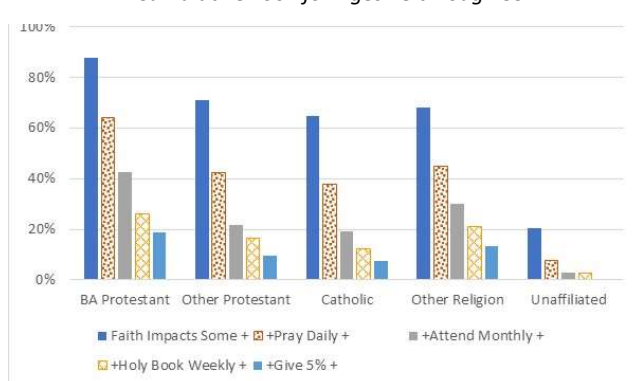
Now let's look at those with at least a Nominal level of religious practice (i.e. those who select the nominal level or the committed level). As shown in the figure, this is a much lower bar with all religious faiths hovering over 60% on those who agree/strongly agree that their faith has a significant impact on their daily lives and around half on those who pray at least daily. The other three activities range between 30% and 50%.

We should not forget that the pastors of these religious groups should be (and probably are) ashamed of these numbers. Particularly so when we consider the percentage of each group that practices all five of these relatively easy levels of commitment as shown in Figure 24. The numbers for those who practice all five are 19% of Born-again Protestants, 13% of Other Religions, 9% of Other Protestants, 7% of Catholics and almost no Unaffiliateds. I must believe that pastors of those who answered the two Born-again questions would expect those congregants to be greater than 80% rather than hovering around 20%.

*Figure 23 At Least a Nominal Level of Religious Activity by Faith Group
Ages 18 through 39*



*Figure 24 At Least a Nominal Level of Religious Activity
A Cumulative Look for Ages 18 through 39*



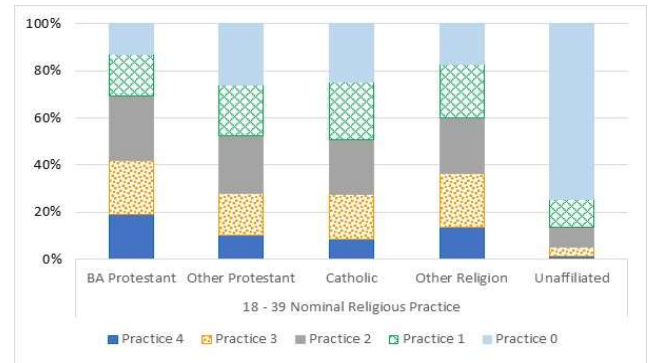
It is interesting that when we combine five different metrics each of which is greater than 45% for Born-again Protestants that it drops down to under 20%. Note both the metrics for reading the Bible at least weekly and giving at least 5% of your income to charities come in at almost half (46%). When we combine the two metrics to see how many Born-again Protestants affirm that they practice both of these activities, the number drops to a little over one in four (29%).

So, let's look and see how many said they did all the activities, three of the activities, two of the activities, etc as shown in Figure 25. Almost 40% of Born-again Protestants did at least three of the activities. Only 5% of the Unaffiliated could say the same. In fact, over 75% of the Unaffiliated did none of these activities.

It is worth noting that Other Protestants and Catholics lag behind Born-again Protestants by a little over ten percentage points in doing at least three of the activities. This difference is a significant contrast to the Basic Biblical Worldview questions and the "who is Jesus" questions where these other religious groups lagged far behind Born-again Protestants.

Once again, we see that the Unaffiliated are very different than Protestants with over 85% of them doing one activity or less.

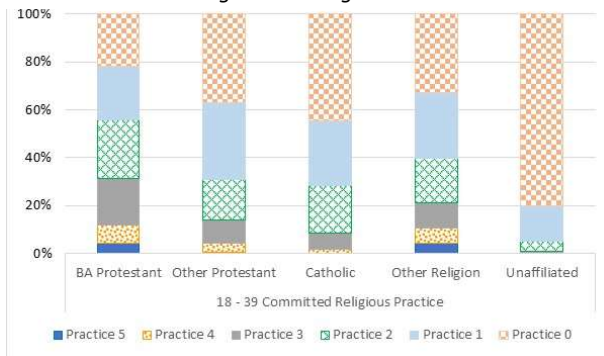
Figure 25 Number of Nominal Religious Activities
Ages 18 through 39



If I were to say to a Born-again believer, “to consistently grow in your faith and represent the good news of Christ to the world, I recommend that you pray to God daily, attend church at least one a month, read your Bible at least one a week, and give at least 5% of your income to religious charities including your church.” I would not expect to get much blow back. After all, this commitment takes less than one hour a week and requires no real financial hardship.

Of course, what I really say is we should all try to live at a Committed level. Not because it is necessary for salvation, rather this level of activity will help us live a life honoring God and making a difference beyond the temporal into eternity. How does it look when we see how many of the Committed levels activities that each religious group participates in?

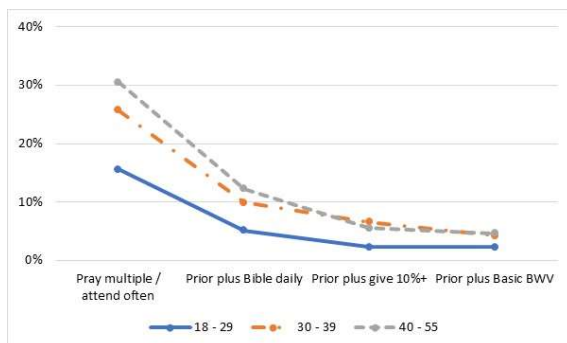
Figure 26 Number of Committed Level Religious Activities
Ages 18 through 39



As shown in Figure 26, the percent of people doing at least four of the Committed activities drops to just over 10% for Born-again Protestants and to almost zero for other Christian groups. Those who practice three or more range from just under one in three (32%) for Born-again Protestants to under one in 10 (9%) for Catholics.

Variations by Age among Born-again Protestants

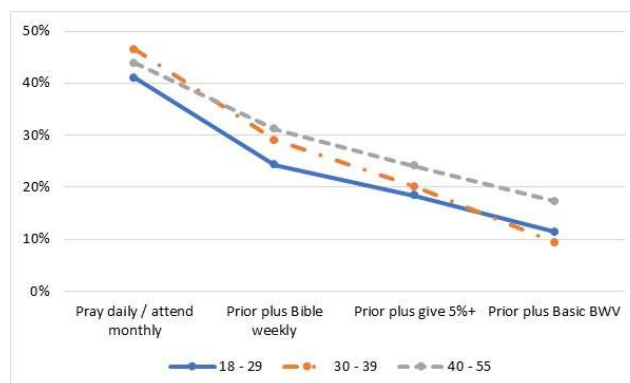
Figure 27 Committed Level of Religious Activity for Born-again Protestants by Age Range



How do these religious activities vary by age among Born-again Protestants? The results are plotted in the graph on the left for a Committed Level of Activity. As shown, for the first activities of praying and attending the percentage of the youngest adults is significantly less than for the two older groups. However, as the graph moves to the right adding more aspects to the cumulative total, the difference becomes small. In general, the youngest adults are less likely to practice key components of an active faith, but regardless of age the numbers are a disappointment.

The results are shown on the right for a Nominal through Committed Level of Activity. We have more Born-again Protestants who participate when we add these lower levels of activity. The lines still trail down sharply as we move to the right adding more practices to the cumulative total. The fact that only one out of five Born-again Protestants ages 18 through 39, pray daily, attend church at least monthly, read the Bible at least weekly, and give at least 5% of their income to religious organizations and charities presents a major challenge to our young adult ministries. I would suggest that these activities are essential to consistently growing our sanctification. When we add in a Basic Biblical Worldview, the number drops to one in ten. Amazingly, half of these young adults stating they are actively Committed do not agree with the four doctrinal statements in the Basic Biblical Worldview.

Figure 28 At Least a Nominal Level of Religious Activity for Born-again Protestants by Age Range

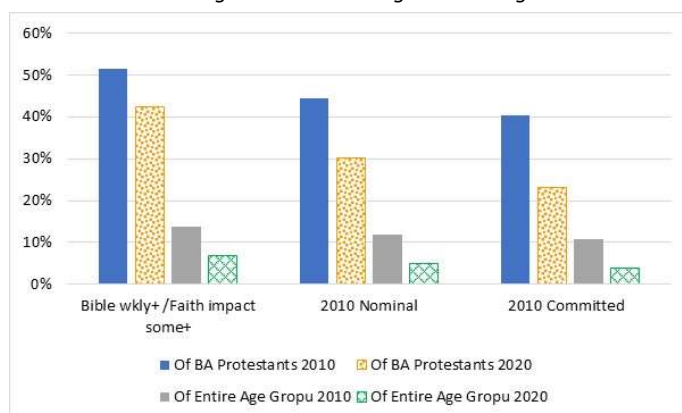


Religious Practice from 2010 to 2020

How has the commitment to religious practices fared over the last 10 years or so? Our survey from 2010 asked the same questions regarding attendance, Bible reading, and the importance of faith. The questions on prayer and giving were different. However, we can get some good comparison data looking at the three shared questions.

In Figure 29 at right, we use two terms 2010 Nominal and 2010 Committed as defined below. The 2010 Nominal attend monthly plus, read the Bible weekly plus, and agree that their faith is significant in their daily lives. The 2010 Committed attend **more than** monthly, read the Bible weekly plus, and **strongly agree** that their faith is significant in their daily lives.

Figure 29 Comparison of Religious Practices in 2010 and 2020 Born-again Protestants Ages 18 through 39



The first category shown in the figure does not include church attendance. One unknown with the attendance question taken during the Covid 19 pandemic is that some respondents may have replied taking the pandemic into consideration while other respondents considered normal times. We see a slightly greater drop off between the first category and the 2010 Nominal category which could be associated with this issue. However, the difference is not large enough to impact the overall conclusions.

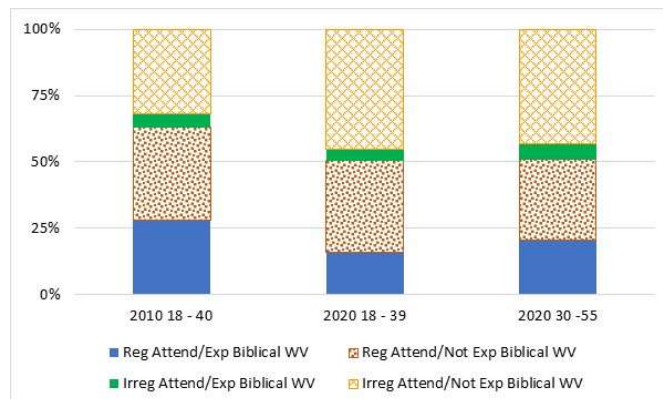
What we see is that the drop off in the 2010 Nominal category is from 44% to 30% and the drop off in the 2010 Committed category is down by almost one half from 40% to 23%. These numbers reflect an astounding drop in the importance that Born-again Protestants place on these simple religious activities.

Combining Worldview and Church Attendance (a key metric from our earlier book²⁴)

In our prior study in 2010, one of the key divisions we used in looking at religious practices, religious beliefs and cultural practices was a combination of Biblical Worldview and Church Attendance. We found that those Born-Again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview and regular church attendance (twice a month or more), were much more likely to demonstrate biblical religious practices, beliefs, and cultural practices. So, we wanted to compare those results with the findings from our new survey.

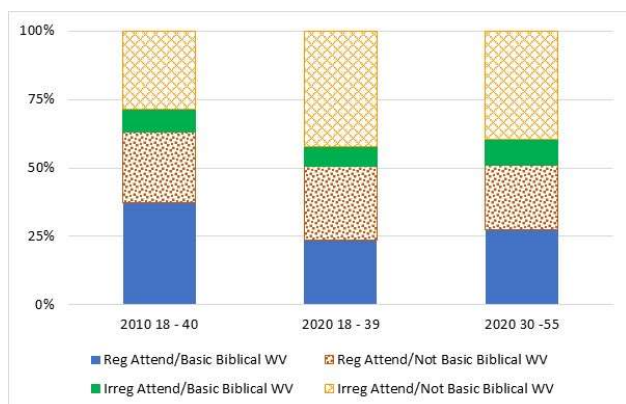
The figure on the right compares the findings from 2010 with those from 2020 using the more stringent Expanded Biblical Worldview. The values shown are the percent of Born-Again Protestants (so all columns add up to 100% even though the percentage of Born-again Protestants in the population is less in 2020). Two age ranges are used in 2020, the first one is basically the same age range used in 2010 (18 – 39) and the second age range (30 – 55) is very close to the age range of the 2010 survey aged by the ten years that have gone by.

Figure 30 Church Attendance and Expanded Biblical Worldview among Born-again Protestants in 2010 and 2018



Looking at those with regular attendance and an Expanded Biblical Worldview we see a significant reduction among 18 to 39 year old's in 2020 (28% down to 16%) with a lesser reduction when comparing with 30 – 55 year old which are down to 21%. The percentage of regular attenders without an Expanded Biblical Worldview has remained relatively constant at around one third or all Born-again Protestants. But of course, that does not mean that the people who stopped attending were those with an Expanded Biblical Worldview. It could be that many without it stopped attending while some decided that they did not believe all of the positions in the worldview but kept attending on a regular basis.

Figure 31 Church Attendance and Basic Biblical Worldview among Born-again Protestants in 2010 and 2020



The area showing a startling high level of growth are those attending monthly or less who do not hold to an Expanded Biblical Worldview. This is the portion of the figure that ten years ago we wanted to drive down to a smaller number. Instead, it has grown by about 40% (from 32% to 45%).

Now let's examine the same metrics using a Basic Biblical Worldview. We see nearly the same features as discussed above. A significant drop is shown in those with regular attendance and a Basic Biblical Worldview coupled with a significant increase in those with irregular attendance and no Basic Biblical Worldview.

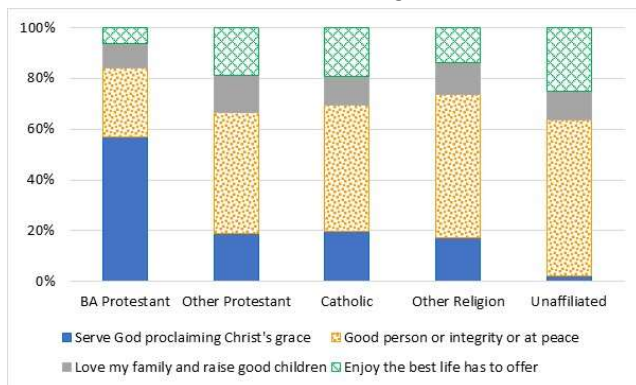
Ultimate Purpose for Living

We wanted to explore what American young adults thought they were ultimately living for. So, we asked “Which statement comes closest to describing your ultimate primary purpose for living?” The choices given them to select from were:

1. To be a good person and make others happy.
2. To serve God by living a life which proclaims Christ’s grace.
3. To make it through each day with integrity.
4. To live at peace with all.
5. To enjoy the best life has to offer, e.g. success, money, travel.
6. To love my family and raise loving, productive children.

Most of these answers sound like good purposes for life. But only one of them extends into eternity and recognizes our Creator and his “desire for all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”²⁵ The answers to this question help identify those who are living their life as eternal beings rather than as temporal beings.

*Figure 32 My Ultimate Purpose for Living
Americans 18 through 39*



The results are charted in the graph to the left. As shown, well over half of Born-again Protestants (57%) profess an eternal perspective. This means almost half do not with most of those selecting a purpose that focuses on good behaviors in their personal life.

Every other religious group has very few (less than one in five) that selected an eternal perspective as their ultimate purpose for living. Around forty to fifty percent of the other groups selected a purpose reflecting good behaviors.

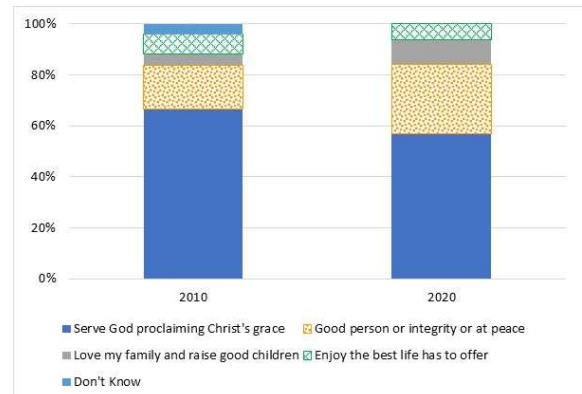
It is interesting that only a small percentage of each group selected the family focused purpose for living. I would like to know if that would have been a larger number say fifty years ago.

Finally note this is another question that highlights the stark difference between the Unaffiliated and Born-again Protestants. We see that 57% of Born-again Protestants selected the eternal answer while only 2% of the Unaffiliated did the same. This result is a clear indicator that the Unaffiliated do not include a lot of believing Christians who do not want to affiliate with a particular Christian group.

We can also compare data from our 2010 survey with the 2020 survey as shown in the figure. The 2010 survey had the same question as the 2020 survey, but it had more answers to choose from. For example, there were three answers that had an eternal perspective: *to serve God and live out His will for my life, to lead others to salvation in Jesus Christ, to praise and glorify God*. These three answers were grouped together to align with the 2020 answer: *To serve God by living a life which proclaims Christ's grace*.

As you can see the percentage of Born-again Protestants who included God in their ultimate purpose for living dropped from 67% in 2010 to 57% in 2020; a significant drop. It appears that in 2020 people who did not name God in their answer opted to pick an admirable answer focused on themselves.

Figure 33 My Ultimate Purpose for Living: 2010 and 2020
Born-again Protestants 18 through 39



Relationship to a Basic Biblical Worldview

Consider the question of how many Born-again Protestants accept a Basic Biblical Worldview and an eternal perspective on their ultimate purpose. We find that 88% of those with a Basic Biblical Worldview selected an ultimate purpose proclaiming God's grace. Conversely, 48% of those selecting an ultimate purpose proclaiming God's grace affirmed a Basic Biblical Worldview for their life (as compared with 31% for Born-again Protestants as a whole). Thus, we find a fairly strong correlation between a biblical worldview and an eternal ultimate purpose for life.

Section 6 Witnessing to Your Faith and the Response

As Evangelicals, we want to know how people of various faiths view evangelism. How many are sharing their faith on a regular basis with unbelievers? What keeps them from sharing their faith with others? Let's begin by considering the first question.

Topic 1: How Often Do You Witness to Your Faith

In our 2020 survey we asked two questions about this topic. The first question was: *How often do you engage in intentional spiritual conversation with non-believers about your faith with a desire to see them accept it for themselves?* Potential answers were:

- At least monthly
- At least yearly
- Rarely
- Never

With this question, we wanted to avoid casual mentions of your faith and discussions with no intent at conversion. The results as shown in the chart below are surprising.

Among Americans ages 18 through 39 who profess an affiliation with some religion, we find that less than 1 out of 5 (20%) of them strongly disagree with the statement that Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus

all taught valid ways to God (see Section 3 for a discussion of this question). Yet at the same time almost 6 out of 10 (60%) of them state that they share their faith with an unbeliever at least once a year with the intent of converting them to their beliefs about spiritual things.

The majority of American believers (of any faith) must believe that at least for some people with different religious beliefs, it would be better for them to turn from their current belief and accept the tenets of my faith. They want to do this even though they believe that there are multiple ways to God beyond the one(s) their faith teaches.

Looking at the detailed results, all religions except the Unaffiliated showed very similar results: over 20% (1 in 5) of those witnessed at least monthly and about half witnessed at least yearly. So, it would appear that there is a lot of witnessing going on with very few conversions.

Figure 34 Witness with a Desire to See Conversion

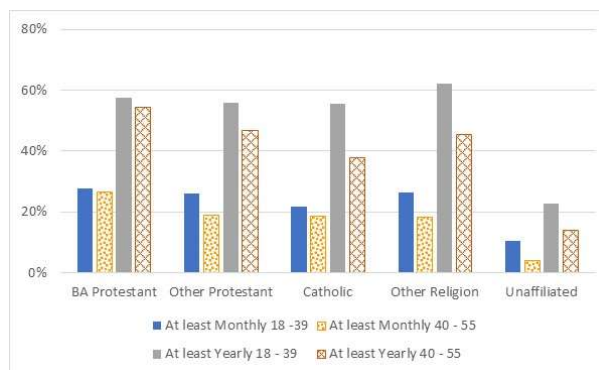


Table 2 below shows several estimates as to how many people are the recipients of these “*intentional spiritual conversations*” in a given year. The different levels shown are based on different assumptions as to how often they share with the same person and how many people they share with in a year consistent with the responses to the survey. More details are provided in the endnotes.

Table 2 Potential Number of People Shared with by American Adults Ages 18 through 55

Religious Affiliation of Person Sharing with Intent to Convert	Potential number of individuals shared with in one year		
	Low estimate (millions) ²⁶	Nominal estimate (millions) ²⁷	High estimate (millions) ²⁸
Born-again Protestant	27	56	118
Other Protestant	24	50	106
Catholic	25	51	108
Other Religion	15	31	65
Unaffiliated	12	25	52
Total	103	212	449

These results, when considered together, paint an amazing picture of people sharing their faith with the intent to convert other. If the nominal estimate was truly happening almost 60% of the population would have someone attempting to convert them every year. This topic deserves additional related questions to determine what level of sharing with the intent of conversion is actually happening in America. It may be that most people answering this question are only sharing with one or two family members such as their teenage children or a sibling. Or perhaps, many people think they should do this, but in reality they do not.

What makes this especially surprising is that Other Protestants and Catholics have a lot more people claiming to witness than they have holding a Basic Biblical Worldview or actually being involved in their religion. While only about one in ten (10%) strongly disagree with the statement that Mohammed,

Buddha and Jesus all taught valid ways to God, over half (50%) of them are sharing their faith with the intent to convert at least once a year. And, one in five (20%) are sharing monthly or more. If you think that there are multiple ways to heaven, why would you want to go out of your way to convert someone to your religion? Of course, you could be sharing with an Unaffiliated person who needs to choose a valid religion.

Only 4.6% of Other Protestants and 0.7% of Catholics have a Basic Biblical Worldview, but almost half of them say they intentionally witness to their faith at least yearly. When they engage in a conversation with the intent of having this other person accept their faith for themselves, WHAT IS THIS FAITH THEY ARE TRYING TO GET THE OTHER PERSON TO ACCEPT? These results do suggest that most people desire more people to think like them when it comes to religion. But they also suggest that many people are not thinking clearly about their beliefs and their desire to share them with others.

In a similar vein, less than 1 in 10 (10%) Catholics and Other Protestants say they pray daily, attend church at least monthly, read the Bible weekly and say their faith is important in their daily life. So, the question remains, “What are they witnessing to???”

In contrast, only 31% of Born-again Protestants ages 18 to 39 have a Basic Biblical Worldview while well over half of them (58%) report intentional witnessing at least once a year. But at least BA Protestants have something to witness to. Those Born-again Protestants with a Basic Biblical Worldview report that almost two thirds (64%) of them share their faith at least once a year. This level is only a few percentage points higher than that for Born-again Protestants as a whole.

How should we respond?

If the number of people sharing their faith is actually consistent with the answers to this question, then we know that the percentage of people actually converting as a result of their witness is very small. Otherwise, we would have many people toggling back and forth between different professed religions.

Among Born-again Protestants, we project they are sharing their faith with between 25 million and 100 million nonbelievers. However, they are sharing ineffectively since the reported number being shared with far exceeds the growth rate of evangelicals in America. So, pastors and parachurch organizations need to up their game in training their people to share the good news of Christ. BA Protestants need to understand and practice the following:

1. bathe their unsaved acquaintances in prayer asking God to bring to a clear feeling of need,
2. recognize their call to effectively share the gospel looking for opportunities to share,
3. understand how to build bridges spanning the gaps of understanding for those with different worldviews,
4. clearly explain the wonderful gift purchased for us through Jesus’ death and resurrection,
5. unapologetically ask for a response to the good news shared with others,
6. realize that they should not be discouraged by a lack of interest or the lack of a positive response

Topic 2: What Keeps You From Communicating Your Religious Belief

We also asked the question: “When I refrain from communicating my religious belief with someone, it’s usually because:”²⁹

1. They can get to heaven through their different religious belief. [Pluralism]
2. We shouldn’t impose our ideas on others. [Pluralism]
3. The Bible tells us not to judge others. [Pluralism]
4. It just doesn’t seem to be that important and I don’t want to risk alienating them. [Not confident]
5. I’m not confident enough in what I believe. [Not confident]
6. I’m waiting for a better opportunity. [Hesitant]

For the chart in Figure 35, we grouped these responses into three sets:

- **Pluralism** – there are other ways to get to heaven besides my way and I don’t need to impose my way on others (responses 1, 2 and 3)
- **Not confident** – not confident that what I have to share is important to them and/or not confident that what I believe is true (responses 4 and 5)
- **Hesitant** – no rush I can probably find a better time (response 6)

As seen in the chart, the level of respondents selecting each set of reasons for refraining is consistent across all religious beliefs. At first glance, this may seem surprising. But in a culture where pluralism is a dominant part of all religious groups, it begins to make sense. And the pluralistic reasons were dominant, attracting around two thirds of the population across all religious groupings.

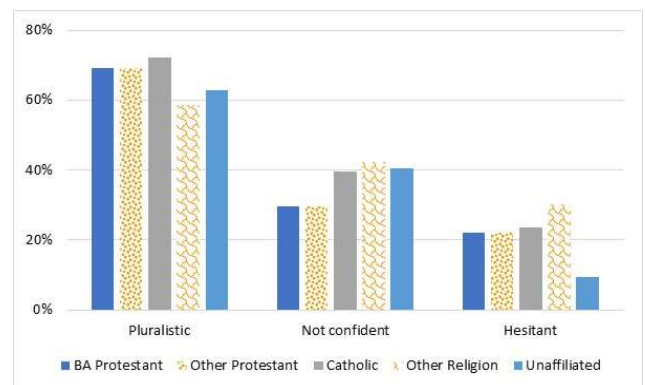
For Protestants, lack of confidence in what they believe is less of an issue than for most other groups. And we see that the Unaffiliated are much less likely to be hesitant waiting for a better time at around 5% of all Unaffiliated. But note that most of the other groups had less than 25% say that they were hesitant.

Looking at both of the charts, we see that (even with a lot of people saying they sometimes used excuses to avoid the subject) a majority of people of any religious group (not including the unaffiliated) share with someone with a desire to recruit them at least once a year. I would suspect that most of these people are sharing with a family member or close friend. However, we did not ask them who they were sharing with so that is only reasonable speculation.

How should we respond?

If you are a church leader or a person who desires to see Christians sharing the good news of Jesus with those who need to know, how should you respond to this data on self-identified barriers to sharing with others?

Figure 35 Reason for Refraining from Witnessing
Americans 18 through 39



On the most common reasons (which indicate a belief that other people don't really need to know about salvation through faith in Jesus), we need to make the exclusive role of Jesus Christ in any hope of salvation a recurring and prominent theme in our teaching. This is not a topic to tiptoe gingerly around. Rather, we need to boldly proclaim, "There is salvation in no other name under heaven other than the name of Jesus Christ". God would not have planned from before the beginning of time to sacrifice himself on the cross for our salvation if there were any other means to reconcile sinful men and women to Himself. God will not force reconciliation on us. We can choose to reject His grace. But as Paul tells us in Romans, "How are they to believe in one they have not heard of?" If we think we can sluff off our responsibility to tell others, we do not understand the grace of God and our role as citizens of heaven living on this earth.

For those who do not feel confident in their ability, we need to provide training and practice environments for them to learn to share their faith experience. You are telling someone about the most important element of your life; the process that brought you out of death into true life. Help prepare them and put them in a position to share the good news with a mentor along side them.

Topic 3: Why Have You Not Believed In Salvation Through Jesus Christ?

Finally, we wanted to know why people have not accepted the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. This is a question for those who need a Christian witness. I am including it in this chapter because it provides insight into what our Christian witness needs to address.

The question asked was as follows: *What keeps you from believing that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone?*

The following options were given to select from:

1. Don't believe that God would take upon Himself the penalty for my sin.
2. Salvation is not a gift, it must be earned.
3. I am clearly as good as Christians I know so I should be accepted by God if they are.
4. There is no personal, creator God.
5. Another answer not listed here.
6. Never gave the question any thought.
7. Not applicable, I do believe.

Table 3 below captures how different religious groups responded to this question.

Table 3 Why People Do Not Believe Salvation is by Faith in Jesus Christ Alone

	Ages 18 - 39				
	Born-again Protestant	Other Protestant	Catholic	Other Religion	Unaffiliated
Don't believe that God would take the penalty for my sin	4.1%	13.7%	16.3%	10.6%	5.9%
Salvation is not a gift, it must be earned	15.7%	20.1%	23.8%	22.0%	8.0%
I am clearly as good as Christians I know	11.9%	10.6%	16.2%	12.9%	8.1%
There is no personal, creator God	1.0%	2.8%	2.7%	5.8%	23.9%
Another answer not listed here	6.9%	9.9%	9.3%	21.9%	28.2%

Never gave the question any thought	15.0%	29.7%	16.3%	12.7%	13.5%
Not applicable, I do believe	45.4%	13.3%	15.5%	14.1%	12.5%

The first thing to notice in this table is that less than half of Born-again Protestants selected “Not applicable, I do believe”. This result is odd since one of the questions required to be considered a Born-again Protestant is “The statement that best describes you own belief about what will happen to you after you die is *‘I will go to heaven because I confessed my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my savior.’*” Those with a pluralistic belief (about two thirds of BA Protestants) may have taken exception to the “Jesus Christ alone” portion of the question. Perhaps some of the Born-again Protestants thought we wanted to know what was keeping them away before they surrendered to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Clearly some of them believe it takes faith plus the work of “confessing my sins and accepting” or performing to a certain level in order to earn their salvation. In that case, one could possibly consider answers 2, 5, 6 and 7 as consistent with Born-again Protestants. Although that would be somewhat of a stretch. That assumption still leaves 17% of BA Protestants whose answers are clearly inconsistent.

Other Protestants are most likely to say, “I never gave the question any thought” or “Salvation must be earned” with only 13% saying they do believe the statement about salvation through faith alone. Catholics are about the same as Other Protestants in saying they believe in salvation through faith alone. The more frequent answers for Catholics being “it must be earned”, “I am clearly as good as Christians I know”, and “never gave the question any thought.”

The most common answer from the Unaffiliated is “another answer not listed here” followed by “there is no personal, creator God”. Those who claim that most “nothing in particulars” are really Christians find little support in that only one in five (20%) say that they do believe in salvation through faith in Jesus.

Topic 4: Christianity and Other Major World Religions

One of the things that drives our attitude toward and our approach to witnessing to our faith is how we think Christianity relates to other world religions. In Section 3 above, we looked at questions dealing with believing that multiple religions could offer a workable road to an eternity with God. In this part we will look at what people believe distinguishes Christianity from other world religions if in fact anything does.

We asked our respondents the following question: “*How does Christianity relate to other major world religions?*” The respondents selected from the following choices:

1. Serves the same function with only minor differences
2. Focuses on living after the example of Jesus Christ
3. Teaches that reconciliation with God is a gift of God accessed by faith not by works
4. Promotes love for other people more deeply than other religions
5. Differs based on misconceptions about God and/or history
6. Not sure how it relates

Note that answers 1, 5 and 6 indicate an ignorance about the tenets of Christianity and/or the tenets of other major world religions. As noted earlier, Christianity teaches a way to reconciliation that is very different from other world religions and is not compatible with the reconciliation stories of those other religions.

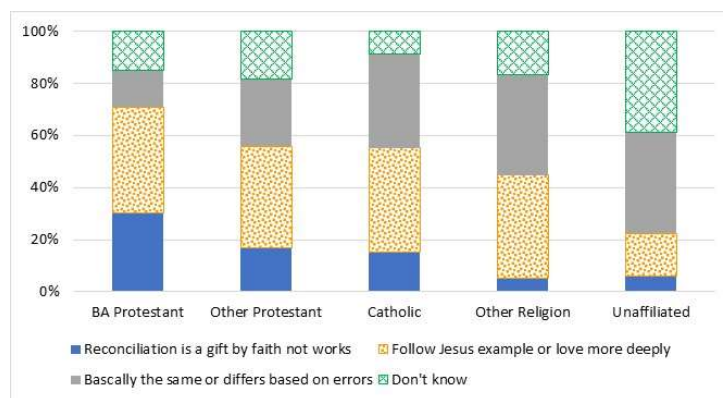
Answers two and four reflect potential differences between Christianity and other world religions. We do want to follow Christ's example and other world religions would not teach us to do that. Other religions could not promote loving other people more deeply that Christianity does, but some of them might argue that they also promote love for others.

Teaching that reconciliation is a gift of God accessed by faith alone not through works is the greatest substantial difference between Christianity and other world religions. This teaching is significantly different than the teachings of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and others.

The results are charted in the graph to the right.

First, notice the interesting result that only about 30% of Born-again Protestants selected 'reconciliation is a gift' while 40% selected following Jesus' example or love others more deeply. As noted above, this second answer is not inconsistent with the concepts of Christianity but is not as fundamental as the first. However, selecting this answer over 'reconciliation is a gift' is consistent with what we saw earlier: 60% of Born-again Protestants in this age group are not strong exclusivists.³⁰

*Figure 36 How Does Christianity Relate to Other Religions
Ages 18 - 39*



Other Protestants and Catholics have less than one in five that selected 'reconciliation is a gift' and the total selecting answers 1 and 2 is slightly over one half. Thus, almost half of them selected answers showing ignorance of or disbelief in the basic tenets of Christianity.

The results for the Unaffiliated shows their total disregard for salvation by grace and any substantial difference between Christianity and other religions.

Topic 5: Summary of Key Results in Section 6

Among Americans ages 18 through 39 who profess an affiliation with some religion, we find that less than 1 out of 5 (20%) of them strongly disagree with the statement that Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus all taught valid ways to God. Yet at the same time almost 6 out of 10 (60%) of them state that they share their faith with an unbeliever at least once a year with the intent of converting them to their belief.

So, the majority of American believers (of any faith) must believe that at least for some people with different religious beliefs, it would be better for them to turn from their current belief and accept the tenets of my faith. They want to do this even though they believe that there are multiple ways to God beyond just their faith.

We also discovered that Born-again Protestants are not really more likely than other religious groups to share their faith with the purpose to convert. Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview are only

marginally more likely to share with the purpose to convert at least yearly as are Born-again Protestants as a whole (64% vs. 58%).

Amazingly, one could project that nominally about 212 million Americans a year would be the recipients of these spiritual conversations with the intent to convert. However, if almost all of these conversations were with the same person it might represent as few as 34 million Americans which could be primarily the children and relatives of the person sharing their faith. We cannot know for sure without asking more questions.

Conversely, when asked what makes them refrain from sharing their faith, almost 70% of Born-again Protestants selected a reason that indicated they believed that the other person did not really need to know; a universalist belief where all religious beliefs lead to heaven.

About one out of seven (14%) of adults under age 40 who **are not** Born-again Protestants believe that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone. This small number is true for Other Protestants, Catholics and Other Religions. This same group of religious affiliates has about 1 in 3 who believe that salvation is a result of good works and is earned or rewarded on a curving scale.

Less than one in three, Born-again Protestants selected the redeeming work of God through faith as the key difference between Christianity and other religions. And less than one in five Other Protestants and Catholics selected that answer. Instead, about three out of four (75%) selected either love deeply, obey Jesus, or Christianity is basically the same as the message of other religions.

Section 7 Sexual Attitudes in 2020

The preceding sections were primarily focused on religious beliefs and practices. In the following sections, we will look at how these beliefs impact Americans as they deal with cultural issues. In this section, we begin with what they think about sexual issues. In general, the survey results confirm a continuing degradation in Americans, and particularly Born-again Protestants, view of sex within a heterosexual marriage. We find that fewer than one in five Born-again Protestants affirm a biblical view in this area.

We asked four questions regarding sexual attitudes and behaviors in this survey.

1. Sex among unmarried people is always a mistake: from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly
2. Viewing explicit sexual material in a movie, on the internet, or some other source is:
 - a. To be avoided
 - b. Acceptable if no one is physically or emotionally harmed in them.
 - c. A matter of personal choice
 - d. Not a problem if you enjoy it
 - e. Don't know
3. Living with someone in a sexual relationship before marriage:
 - a. Might be helpful but should be entered into with caution.
 - b. Just makes sense in today's cultural environment.
 - c. Will have a negative effect on the relationship.
 - d. Should be avoided as not our best choice as instructed by God
4. People attracted to same sex relationships are:

- a. To be loved and affirmed in their sexual choices.
- b. To be avoided as much as possible.
- c. To be accepted while hoping they realize there is a better way.
- d. To be loved and told God's truth regarding our sexual practices.

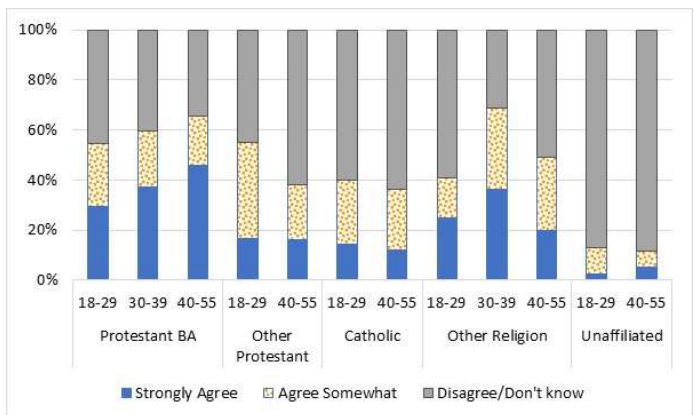
First, let's see how the different religious affiliations impact the answers to these questions.

Sex Among Unmarried People.

First, let us establish the biblical standard for sexual relations outside of marriage. Is there clear teaching on this topic? Consider Jesus' discussion in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*³¹ In 1st Thessalonians 4:3, Paul writes, *"For this is God's will: that you become holy, that you keep away from sexual immorality."* And then in 1st Peter 2:11, Peter writes, *"I urge you to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."* It is very clear that the biblical standard calls for all sexual relations to occur within a marriage between one man and one woman.

Results from the first question are plotted in Figure 37. As shown, here and in the next three graphs, we will look at those ages 18 through 29 next to those ages 40 through 55 to see if there are differences based on age. If there is a trend or variation seen in the 30 through 39 age group, then that one is also shown as seen for Born-again Protestants and Other Religion in the figure.

Figure 37 Sex Among Unmarried People is Always a Mistake



The graph shows the older group of Born-again Protestants is much more likely to Strongly Agree that fornication is always a mistake than the youngest group dropping from almost one half to a little over one quarter, 46% to 29%. **Over two thirds of Younger Born-again Protestants have adopted the common view of the culture that sex and marriage are not necessarily related.** Note that even among the older group, **less than half of them strongly agree that sex outside of marriage is always a mistake.**

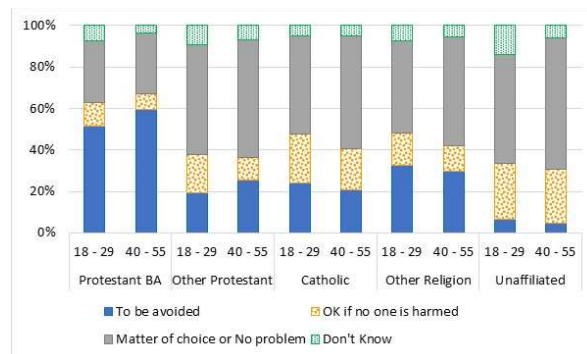
Looking across other religious affiliations, we see that the vast majority said they Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with this statement³². They generally believe that sex outside of marriage by unmarried people is not an issue. This is particularly true of the Unaffiliated with close to 90% (nine out of ten) disagreeing.

How have these views changed among born-again young adult individuals over the last decade? Looking at the GSS survey from 2008, we find that over one in three (37%) Born-again Christians ages 18 through 29 agree with the statement, "If a man and woman have sex relations before marriage, I think it is always wrong." Now in 2020, we find that over one quarter (27%) of Born-again Christians agree that it is always wrong. Although the questions asked were not identical, they are close enough to indicate that

the drop of ten percentage points is a significant decline in young adult, Born-again Christians who take a biblical position on sexual activity outside of marriage.

Pornography. The second question deals with views on the acceptability of viewing pornographic material. What does the Bible tell us about feeding our minds with sexually immoral material? Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:19, *“For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”* We are warned in 1st Corinthians 6:18, *“Flee sexual immorality! Every sin a person commits is outside of the body but the immoral person sins against his own body.”* And further in Ephesians 5:3, *“But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints.”* Clearly avoiding sexual immorality in all forms includes avoiding explicit sexual material.

Figure 38 Viewing Explicit Sexual Material is . . .



The results are shown in Figure 38. Once again, we see that Born-again Protestants are much more likely to say that we should avoid exposure to such material. Both the younger group and the older have more than 50% who say it is “to be avoided”. However, the data also shows over four out of ten Born-again Protestants believe it is usually okay. Given what we know about the negative effects of pornography on healthy living and relationships, this result is surprising.

All the other religious affiliations have only a small percentage of people who think that explicit sexual material should be avoided. Only about one in five Other Protestants and Catholics affirm that pornography is to be avoided. Once again, the Unaffiliated lag those affiliated with some religion having only about one in twenty (5%) that think pornography should be avoided.

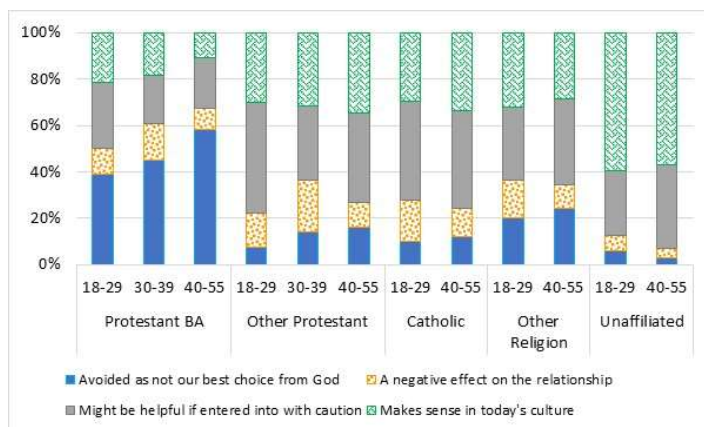
For those who are not Born-again Protestants, around 10% to 20% say that such material is okay if no one is hurt in them. These people fail to realize that the person being hurt by these materials is themselves and their loved ones. More surprisingly, the vast majority of these people selected “a matter of personal choice” or “not a problem if you enjoy it” implying that if people are shown being harmed in this pornographic material that is perfectly okay if you enjoy it or want to put up with it.

Living Together Before Marriage.

What does the Bible tell us about living in a sexual relationship before marriage? In Colossians 3:5, Paul states, *“So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry.”* The current philosophy of ‘try before you buy’ is popular but totally contrary to biblical instruction for a rich, fulfilling life. This philosophy clearly *“belongs to the earth”*.

The third question examines views on whether it is a good thing to live together in a sexual relationship before committing to marriage. The results are summarized in Figure 39. This is another question where Born-again Protestants show a significant difference based on age. The older group, 40 through 55, shows almost 60% who say that it should be avoided as instructed by God. The younger group, 18 through 29, shows only 40% with the same viewpoint. Across all age ranges only about one half of Born-again Protestants say that this practice should be avoided. So, even among this group over half belief that is okay and might be helpful.

Figure 39 Living in a Sexual Relationship before Marriage



Once again, this question reveals a stark difference between Born-again Protestants and all other religious affiliations. Other Christian groups show **much fewer** than one in five adherents who believe this practice should be avoided. And we see the Unaffiliated lead the other viewpoint with about nine out of ten of them saying the practice “might be helpful” or “makes sense in today’s culture.”

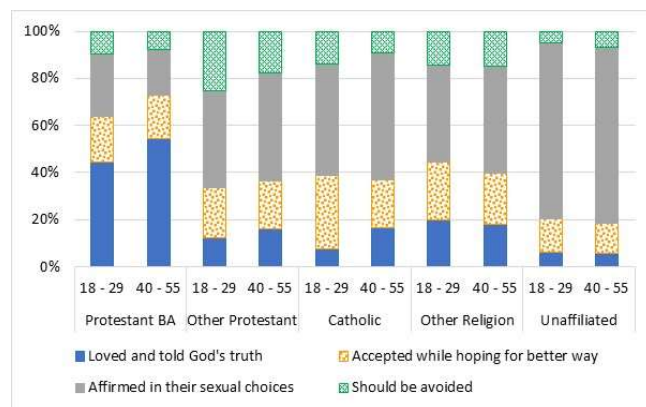
Same Sex Relationships. The fourth question deals with how people react toward those who profess to having a sexual attraction towards those of the same gender. What does the Bible say about same sex relationships? Let’s consider the instruction from 1st Corinthians 6:9b-11, *“Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolators, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

The verse above tells us two things. First, that someone who is given over to homosexual activity (like those given over to idolatry, sexual immorality, and greed) are not true followers of Christ. Even in Paul’s era, many were apparently saying they would inherit the kingdom of God and so Paul begins the statement by saying “Do not be deceived”. But it also clearly states that such a one can be washed, sanctified and justified in Jesus Christ. As Christians, we should love them and tell them the truth that God has a better way for their life.

Note that our question does not distinguish between those experiencing same sex attraction and those actively involved in living out their attraction through homosexual activity. Both categories of people need to be loved and told the truth.

The results for this question are summarized in Figure 40. As shown, we see some difference based on age for Born-again Protestants. However, it is not as pronounced as for the question on fornication above.

Figure 40 People Attracted to Same Sex Relationships Are to be . .



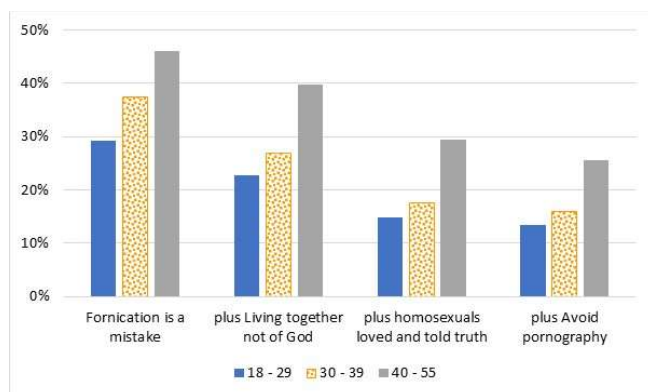
Looked at as a group between age 18 and 55, less than one half of Born-again Protestants selected loving them and telling them what the Bible says about homosexual practices.

Once again, all other groups are much less likely to take a biblical position. However, when we add in the answer about ‘accepting them while hoping they find a better way’, the other religious groups (excluding the Unaffiliated) show almost four in ten who desire them to find a better way.

Note that Other Protestants are most likely at 20% (about one out of five) to say they would try to avoid people attracted to the same gender.

Combining Questions for Born-again Protestants. How many Born-again Protestants take a clear biblical view of all four questions concerning sexual attitudes and behaviors? Results are charted in Figure 41 below. The chart begins with results by age for the first question concerning fornication. As you move to the right, additional questions are added to the questions already addressed to the left. Thus, the bars on the right include those who took a biblical position on all four of the questions.

Figure 41 Born-again Protestants Combined Views on Sexual Issues



Clearly, ones in the older group are more likely to take a biblical view on sexual behavior. In fact, on the far right, we see that those 40 to 55 are twice as likely as those 18 to 29 to hold to a biblical view. However, more important, is that over 80% of the younger ages and over 75% of the oldest ages do not hold to a biblical view on these combined topics regarding sexual behavior.

To understand how disturbing these results should be, consider **Born-again Protestants with a biblical view on sexuality as a percentage of the entire United States population. The results**

are 2% for 18 through 29, 3% for 30 through 39, and a whopping 6% for 40 through 55. In other words, a slim remnant of adults in America hold to a biblical view of sexuality. A secular view promoting no relationship between sexual behavior and marriage and no limits on satisfying one's lusts currently dominates our national thinking.

Don't Do What You Say You Will Do. We will address this topic more fully under Topic 10 but it is relevant to thinking about the Combining Question topic above. We asked this question:

When you are faced with a personal moral choice, which one of the following statements best describes how you will most likely decide what to do?

One of the answer choices is "Do what biblical principles teach."

Almost half (47%) of Born-again Protestant young adults (18 through 39) selected that answer. They would follow biblical principles in making moral decisions. Yet as just seen, only about 15% of Born-again Protestant young adults selected biblical principles on all four questions regarding sexual behaviors.

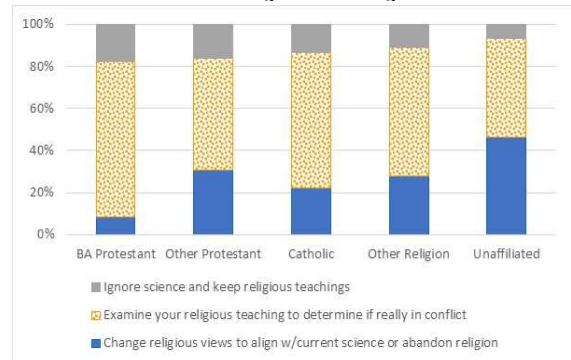
Although we can't be certain, it appears that many Born-again Protestant young adults either don't know what topics are covered under moral choices OR they don't know what biblical principles teach OR both. Clearly, almost half of Born-again Protestant young adults think that they are choosing to think biblically about moral choices, but most of them are not living the way they think they are.

Responding to These Results on Sexual Attitudes

All of the results presented above show that a large majority of young adult, Born-again Protestants do not adhere to a biblical position on topics related to sexual morality. The data also shows that when Born-again Protestants enter the world of higher education and secular careers, they are surrounded by an even greater majority of people who believe that pretty much anything is acceptable in the area of sexual relations. Among other conclusions, we can be sure that these two data points tell us that when young adults were involved in church as teenagers they were not adequately taught the basics of Christian doctrine in the area of sexuality and did not receive a good explanation as to why the Christian attitudes are much, much better than the free license rampant in our society today.

Christian teaching on sexuality must occur more frequently from the pulpit, in bible studies, in small group times. If we think that parents as the only source of information is sufficient to set up young Christians to be an example of godly sexuality, the data says not so fast. However, we do not to equip parents to discuss these matters with their children. We cannot allow their peers to set the bar on acceptable behavior.

Figure 42 Responding to Apparent Conflicts Between Science and Religious Teachings Americans ages 18 through 39



Section 8 Christianity and Science

We included three questions probing people's views on the relationship between science and religion. The first question relates to any apparent conflicts between current scientific theories and their beliefs based on their religion. From the answers, one can tell whether the respondent puts more credence in current scientific theories or in their religious beliefs. The question is:

Question #1: When apparent conflicts appear between science and religious teachings, one should:

1. Ignore science accepting that when science learns more it will agree with your religion.
2. Examine your religious teachings to determine if the scriptures are in conflict or it is just someone's interpretation of the scriptures that conflict.
3. Change your religious views to align with current scientific views.
4. Abandon your religion as being false.

The first two answers are consistent with a Basic/Enhanced Biblical Worldview reflecting 1) a view that their scripture is informed by a higher source of truth than secular science can draw upon, 2) a recognition that generally accepted scientific viewpoints have often changed over time, and 3) on the type of scientific questions where apparent conflicts may appear there are in most cases a variety of

theories supported by different groups of scientists. The second answer includes the possibility that the person's holy scriptures do not directly address the topic at hand, but that some religious leaders have inferred a position on the topic from their interpretation of scriptures.

The second two answers, i.e. 3 and 4, reflect a view that scientific teaching communicates truth that religious teachings are unable to counter. The third answer results in a religious viewpoint that will vary over time as scientific ideas gain or fall out of favor in the scientific community.

As shown in Figure 42, a minority of American young adults would accept that science is always right at least when compared with religious beliefs (by supporting answers 3 or 4). Less than 10% of Born-again Protestants selected one of these answers. And even among the Unaffiliated, less than half of them selected an answer where scientific theories trump other sources of beliefs.

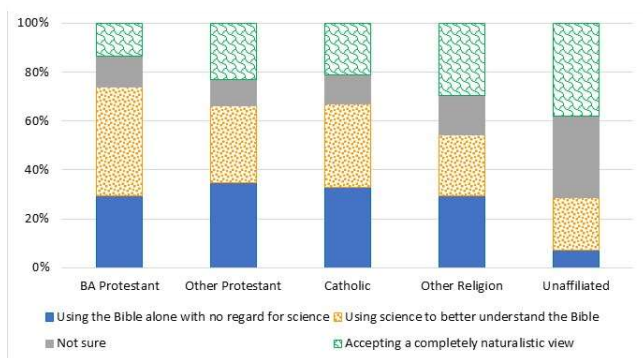
At the same time, those who selected a view that ignores science all together (answer 1) were a small minority as well. Less than one in five (20%) of the Born-again Protestants and slightly over one out of ten for the other religious groups.

So well over 50% of all religious groups selected answer number 2 showing a willingness to go against science but also a desire to meld the views of science into their religious views. We did not ask a follow up question as to what they would do if they determined there was an unresolvable conflict with the current position supported by most scientists. There are not many unresolvable conflicts if one is willing to adopt a position supported by a reputable minority of scientists, e.g. intelligent design.

Question #2: My understanding of human origins is the result of:

1. Using the Bible alone with no regard for the findings of science.
2. Using science to better understand what the Bible teaches us about origins.
3. Not sure
4. Accepting a completely naturalistic view, i.e. no intelligence involved in the process.

*Figure 43 Source for Understanding of Human Origins
Americans ages 18 through 39*



Note these answers follow a similar pattern to those of the first question, but now they are applied to a specific question where many people assume there is no meeting ground between science and religion.

The answers are shown in the adjacent graph. On this more specific question, the percentage of each religious group that is going to look at the Bible alone for their understanding hovers around 30% for all religious groups but plummets to under 8% for the Unaffiliated.

Conversely, only the Unaffiliated show more than three out of ten who “accept a completely naturalistic view” (choice #4). Born-again Protestants show only about one out of eight who select such a view. This result is amazing given the concerted push by some educators to force our students to accept a completely naturalistic view of creation. However it is consistent with the current state of the research on the origins of man, including new reports from 2021.³³

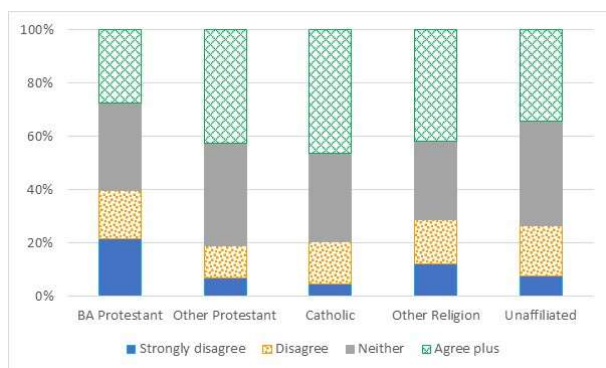
The majority for each group of people selected “Not sure” or said they would use science to help them better understand what the Bible teaches.

Question #3: All real scientists believe that science is the only source of real truth.

The potential answers ranged from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree and included Neither agree or disagree.

First note that if we strictly define real scientists as individuals meeting these qualifications 1) a PhD in a scientific field, 2) actively involved in the field and 3) published in reputable scientific journals, we will find many scientists who agree that there are other sources of truth outside of science. So, we can say with confidence that **the statement in question #3 is objectively, verifiably not true**. However, there are certainly some believers in scientism who claim the statement is true. They accomplish this trick by claiming that anyone who does not believe that science is the only source of real truth cannot by

*Figure 44 All Real Scientists Believe Science is the Only Source of Real Truth
Americans ages 18 through 39*



definition be a real scientist.³⁴ In other words, they use circular reasoning.

But there is certainly a movement to instill scientism as the favored viewpoint in society.³⁵ How successful are these proponents of scientism? Looking at the answer shown in the adjacent chart will throw some light on this question.

We would like to see the answer: Strongly Disagree. This answer aligns with the objective truth discussed above. But what we find is that only one out of five (20%) Born-again Protestants profess this view.

Among Other Protestants and Catholics only about

one out of twenty (5%) profess this view. Adding some uncertainty by adding those who say they Disagree, increases those amounts to two out of five (40%) for Born-again Protestants and one out of five (20%) for Other Protestants and Catholics.

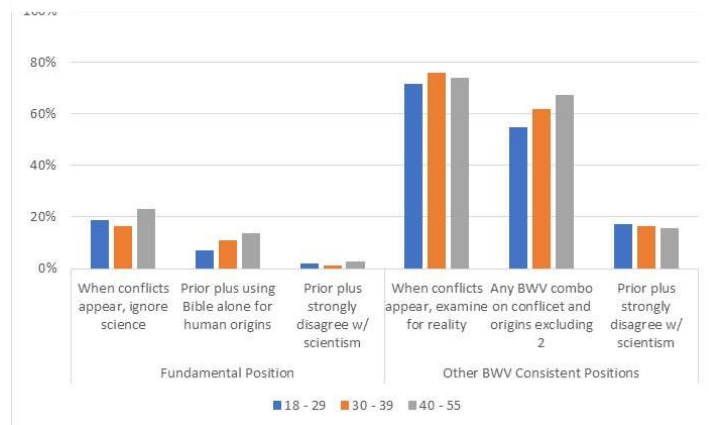
Those who agree with the statement range from one out of four (25%) Born-again Protestants up to nearly one half (almost 50%) of Other Protestants and Catholics. Clearly, the proponents of scientism have done a good job of skewing our understanding of who scientists are and what they believe.

Combining the questions.

What do the results look like when we combine these questions? In our opinion, there are a number of different answers that could be consistent with a biblical worldview. Starting with the strictest view of relying on the bible rather than science and then adding in those who would look at the results from science to obtain a clearer understanding of what the bible teaches or those areas where the bible is

silent. Then, we add in their view on scientism which as already discussed is demonstrably false as evidenced by a long list of scientists who disagree with the statement.

Figure 45 Combining Questions on Science for Born-again Protestants



The results from this comparison are shown in the adjacent figure. The first thing to notice is that the percentage of Born-again Protestants who take a more fundamental position, i.e. science should be ignored as a source of information, is low for one question and goes down to only a few percentage points when all three questions are combined.

The right hand side of the chart considers all combinations of answers that reflect a commitment to biblical truth above current scientific theories combined with a

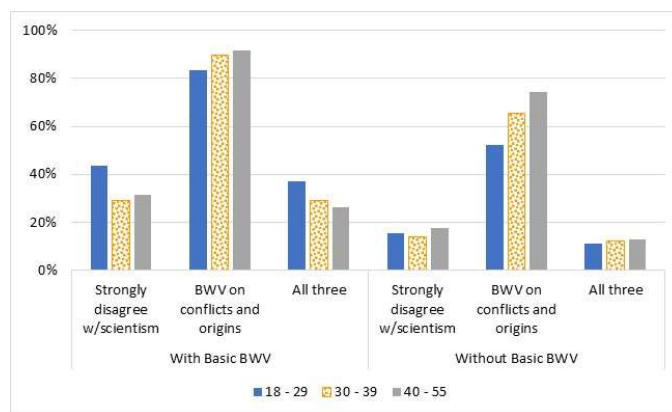
willingness to consider what science has to offer. As shown, the combination of the first two questions has a large percent of Born-again Protestants ranging from 55% for the youngest age group and growing to over 65% for the older age group. Since only a minority of Born-again Protestants stated Strongly Disagree that all scientists are adherents of scientism, when we add that question to the mix on the far right, we see less than one in five take a Biblical position on all three.

Effect of a Basic Biblical Worldview.

A natural question to ask is, “Does having a Basic Biblical Worldview correlate with having a biblical view on these science issues?” We can look at this question by comparing Born-again Protestants with a Basic Biblical Worldview with Born-again Protestants without a Basic BWV. The results are shown in the adjacent figure.

At a top level, we can see a correlation between a Basic Biblical Worldview and a biblical understanding of the relationship with science. This correlation appears to be strongest with those ages 18 through 29. We see that those with a Basic Biblical Worldview are about twice as likely to have a biblical view on all three of the questions related to science.

Figure 46 Impact of a Basic Biblical Worldview on View of Science Born-again Protestants



Responding to These Results on Science and Religion

As we can see from the first two science questions above, the majority of Americans do not buy into the idea that the only real source of truth is science. They don't believe that scientific positions automatically take precedence over their religious beliefs. Perhaps one factor supporting this stance is an understanding that scientific hypotheses and positions have changed fairly often over the years

particularly in the areas of the origin of life and the role of evolutionary processes on our current bounty of life forms. Certainly, it is not the public school system which has attempted to promote concepts which current day scientists studying the field do not support.

However, Americans do have a skewed view of scientism with a vast majority believing that all real scientists support this religious concept. This position is a little surprising given that the view is demonstrably false.

In one area, sexual behavior, even American Christians have thrown out the teaching of the Bible. At the same time, they are resisting the call to make science the ultimate source of truth.

Section 9 Who Are the Unaffiliated?

We want to examine the Unaffiliated and particularly those who selected Nothing in Particular(NIPs) as their religious preference. As noted in the first chapter, some researchers earlier in this century posited that many of the Nothing in Particulars were actually part of the Christian majority in America and would return to the fold as they aged. However, as discussed earlier, this idea has not materialized as the young adults aged. Rather, the percentage of NIPs in each age group has grown as the age group has aged.

In this report, we will see how very different the beliefs of the NIPs are from those taught in the New Testament. We will look at this in three separate areas:

1. Salvation through Christ alone.
2. A Biblical Worldview
3. Attitudes concerning Sexual Issues

In these three areas, we will discover that most NIPs disagree with biblical teaching on these topics.

Reasons for Not Believing in Salvation Through Christ Alone

One question asked was “What keeps you from believing that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone.” Particularly for the Unaffiliated, we want to know whether it is a lack of knowledge or some other reason. When asked this question, the respondents could select from the following answers:

1. Never gave the question any thought.
2. Don’t believe that God would take upon Himself the penalty for my sin.
3. Salvation is not a gift, it must be earned.
4. I am clearly as good as Christians I know so I should be accepted by God if they are.
5. There is no personal, creator God.
6. Another answer not listed here.
7. Not applicable, I do believe.

First let's consider how the various religious groups answered this question as shown in Figure 47. This data has already been discussed in Chapter 6. But in the current discussion, we want to focus on Other Religions and Unaffiliated. Respondents from Other Religions were most likely to select either "salvation must be earned" or "another answer not listed). A smaller percentage, just over 10%, selected "I am clearly as good as Christians I know". That answer appeared to be irrelevant to them.

On the other hand, the two largest segments selected by the Unaffiliated were "no personal, creator God" and "another answer not listed." Both groups had about 15% of their number select "Not applicable, I do believe."

Figure 47 What keeps you from believing in salvation through Jesus alone: Ages 18 - 39

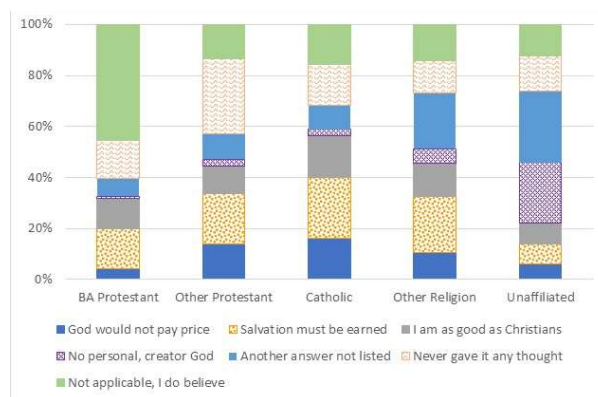
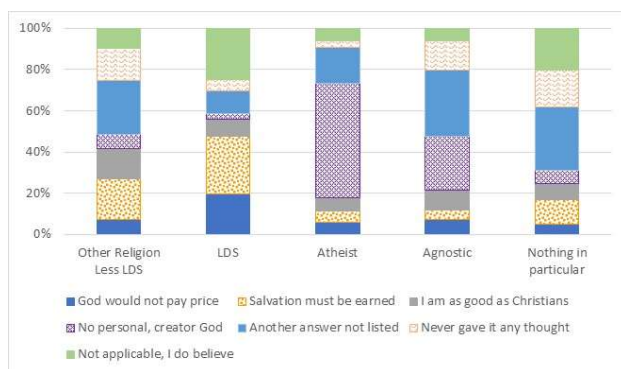


Figure 48 What keeps you from believing in salvation through Jesus alone: Ages 18 - 39



To get a better understanding of what drives these results, we dove further into the make up of each of these two groups. The results are shown in Figure 48.³⁶ We divided Other Religions into the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) and all other non-Christian religions. We divided the Unaffiliated into Atheist, Agnostic and Nothing in Particular. As shown, the LDS respondents are much more likely than other religions to select "salvation must be earned", "I do believe", and "God would not pay the price." Almost one quarter of the LDS selected "I do believe" which explains how the Other

Religion category showed about 15% with that answer. So, we see that a strong majority of LDS people believe that they must do something more than believing in Christ to achieve salvation. At the same time, a significant minority believe in salvation through faith in Christ alone.

The atheist subgroup follows our expectations. A majority (> 55%) don't believe in Jesus as savior because they do not believe in any God at all. When we add in "another answer not given", about three quarters of the Atheists are covered.

Moving to Agnostics, we see that a strong majority selected either "no God" or "another answer not given." Adding in "I never gave it any thought" we cover about three quarters of the Agnostics.

The Nothing in Particular group (NIPs) has a significantly different range of answers. About one in five say they do believe in salvation through faith in Christ. This number is significantly higher than Atheist and Agnostics, but it still leaves four out of five who say they do not believe. Almost one half of them selected "another answer not given" or "I never gave it any thought."

So, there are about one fifth of the NIPs who might have a somewhat Christian view of salvation. However, less than 3% of this group claim to be born-again. And of course, four fifths of this group say they do not believe in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. So, an overwhelming majority of the NIPs clearly are not born-again or evangelical Christians.

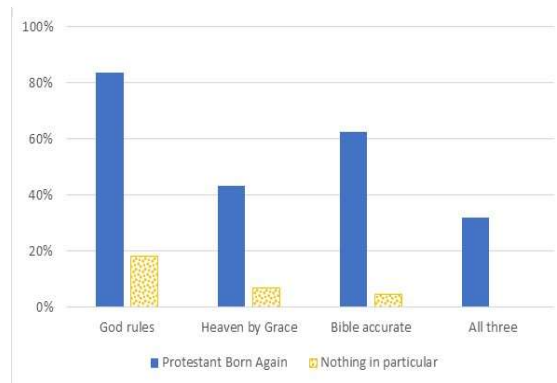
NIPs and a Subset of a Biblical Worldview

How do those who claim their religion is “Nothing in particular” stand in accepting a subset of the Basic Biblical Worldview discussed in earlier articles. The subset consists of the following three questions:

1. Which of the following descriptions comes closest to what you personally believe to be true about God: **God is the all-powerful, all knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today**³⁷
2. The Bible is totally accurate in all its teachings: **Strongly Agree**
3. If a person is generally good enough or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in heaven: **Disagree Strongly**

Let’s compare the results for Born-again Protestants and those who claimed to be Nothing in Particular. As shown in Figure 49, for each of the questions those agreeing with a biblical worldview among the Nothing in Particulars is a small fraction of those among Born-again Protestants. When we combine the three questions together, we see one out of three Born-again Protestants vs. no NIPs. Certainly, some of these NIPs came from an evangelical background, but none of them interviewed in our survey ascribe to a basic evangelical worldview as adults. As noted in our first report, one in three Born-again Protestants is a disappointing percentage ascribing to these biblical worldview questions, but it is certainly dramatically better than the Nothing in Particular group.

*Figure 49 Biblical Worldview Comparison
Ages 18-39*



NIPs and Biblical Sexual Morality

On another front, we compare views on biblical sexual morality held by Born-again Protestants and Nothing in Particulars. To do this, we will consider three of the questions from our survey as listed below.

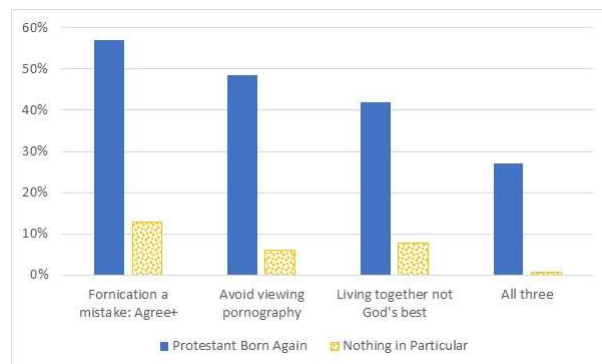
5. Sex among unmarried people is always a mistake: from **Agree Strongly** to Disagree Strongly
6. Viewing explicit sexual material in a movie, on the internet, or some other source is:
 - a. **To be avoided**
 - b. Acceptable if no one is physically or emotionally harmed in them.
 - c. A matter of personal choice
 - d. Not a problem if you enjoy it
 - e. Don't know
7. Living with someone in a sexual relationship before marriage:
 - a. Might be helpful but should be entered into with caution.
 - b. Just makes sense in today's cultural environment.
 - c. Will have a negative effect on the relationship.
 - d. **Should be avoided as not our best choice as instructed by God**

For this comparison, we are looking for the following answers:

1. Either Agree Strongly or Agree Somewhat
2. To be avoided
3. Should be avoided as not our best choice as instructed by God

The results from our survey are shown in Figure 50. Once again, we see a large difference between these two groups. Clearly, the NIPs do not ascribe to a biblical view on sexual morality. The majority of Born-again Protestants do not ascribe to those beliefs either, but a significant minority of them do.

*Figure 50 Comparison of Sexual Morality
Ages 18 - 39*



Summary

As discussed above, we find that the Nothing in Particular group have

- less than one in five who say they are trusting in Christ for their salvation,
- none who accept a simple three question take on a biblical worldview and
- almost none who accept a biblical view on sexuality.

In each of the age groups considered in our surveys, the percentage of respondents selecting a NIP affiliation has grown as the age groups have grown older. There is no indication that any significant number of them are returning to or turning to an Evangelical Christian perspective.

Clearly for the upcoming decade a critical question for the Evangelical church is how do we reach the Unaffiliated and especially the Nones with the good news of the gospel. Since the vast majority of NIPs do not accept the authority of the Bible, we need to be prepared to share with them why we can believe the Bible is an accurate communication from the Creator of this universe. In particular, that the biblical account of the death and resurrection of Jesus is an accurate historical account. One source to use in this task is our article "The Answer is the Resurrection"³⁸ which can be found on the Probe website.

Section 10 More Cultural Topics: Morals, Politics, Social Justice

In this section, we want to consider three topics that are important to any society:

1. Where do you obtain your moral beliefs?
2. Do you mix your religion with your politics?
3. Where do you learn how to bring about social justice?

If you have a society where moral questions are answered by popular opinion, religious faith has no place in informing one's political stances, and social justice training is left to the state, you are in danger of becoming a totalitarian state where all thinking is controlled for the benefit of the government. In an alternative society where moral questions are answered by parents and churches, one can bring their religion's teaching into the domain of political discourse, and your personal thinking on social justice is

informed by your parents and pastor, you are in danger of having a democracy if everyone is allowed to develop and express their opinion.

Let's examine our survey results to see where America sits on these topics.

Making Moral Choices

Our first question deals with making moral choices as laid out below:

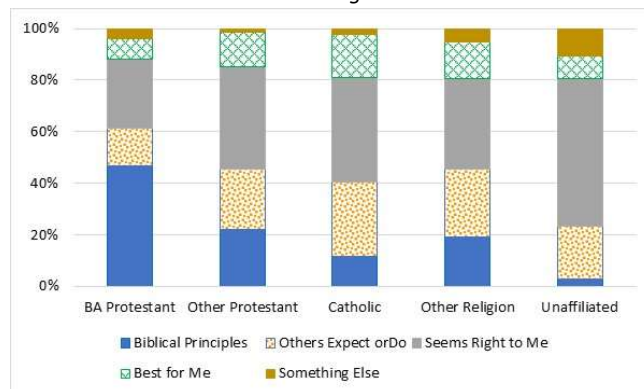
When you are faced with a personal moral choice, which one of the following statements best describes how you will most likely decide what to do?

1. Do what makes the most people happy.
2. Do what your family or friends would expect you to do.
3. Do what biblical principles teach.
4. Do what you believe most believe would do under similar circumstances.
5. Do what seems right to me at the time.
6. Do what will produce the best outcome for yourself.
7. Other.

For our analysis, we combined answers 1, 2 and 4 as being answers where people are looking to see what other people think. Across all Americans ages 18 through 55, almost one in five (20%) of the people selected one of those three answers (all three at about 7% each). However, since those 40 and over were less likely to select one of those (about 15%), for those under age 40, they were more than one in five.

The results for those 18 through 39 are shown in the figure at right. As you can see, the most likely answer is "Do what seems right to me at the time?" weighing in at over four out of ten respondents across all religious affiliations.

*Figure 51 Where do We Look for Personal Moral Guidance?
Americans Ages 18-39*



However, for Born-again Protestants, we see that almost half (47%) look to biblical principles for guidance. That is somewhat encouraging but tempered by the fact that this number also means over half of these Born-again Protestants are not primarily looking at biblical principles for moral guidance. As shown, Other Protestants are have just over one in five looking to biblical principles and Catholics show around one in ten.

Once again, we see that the Unaffiliated are not aligned with Christian values with less than three out of one hundred (2.7%) looking to biblical principles for guidance.

Do Protestants Really Do What They Say?

Almost half of Born-again Protestants and only one in five Other Protestants said they would use biblical principles to decide what to do. With this survey, we have the opportunity to see if their actions match their stated approach to moral decisions. Specifically, let's look at those who claim to use biblical

principles and see if they applied those to their ideas about sexuality. Let's use two questions on which the bible provides clear moral guidance.

1. Sex among unmarried people is always a mistake: from **Agree Strongly** to Disagree Strongly
2. Living with someone in a sexual relationship before marriage:
 - a. Might be helpful but should be entered into with caution.
 - b. Just makes sense in today's cultural environment.
 - c. Will have a negative effect on the relationship.
 - d. **Should be avoided as not our best choice as instructed by God**

The bible clearly states that fornication (sex between people who are not married to each other) is always a mistake. Thus, they should select Agree Strongly. Living with someone in a sexual relationship is also fornication. They should select answer d. for that question. For our discussion, we will call someone who answered these two questions as shown a **Supporter of Sexual Purity**.

We see how these two questions on sex relate to the answer on moral choices in the table below.

Specific Combination of Questions	Formula	BA Protestant	Other Protestant
1. Use Biblical Principles for Moral Choices		47%	22%
2. Supporter of Sexual Purity		25%	3.7%
3. Use Biblical Principles and Support Sexual Purity		21%	3.1%
4. % of those who Use Biblical Principles who also Support Sexual Purity	Row 3/Row 1	45%	14%
5. % of those who Support Sexual Purity who also Use Biblical Principles	Row 3/Row 2	85%	82%

I realize that many of your eyes glazed over when you saw this table. So, let me explain the primary result. In Row 4, we see 45% under the Born-again Protestant column. This means that less than half of the Born-again Protestants who said they used Biblical Principles in making moral choices ALSO selected the biblical position on the two questions relating to fornication. For the other Protestants it was much worse with only one in seven (14%) selecting to Support Sexual Purity.

What do we make of this disconnect? Either those whose supported Biblical Principles picked areas where they chose not to apply Biblical Principles OR those who supported Biblical Principles do not understand what the bible says about sexual purity. Both of those choices are a disconcerting view of the fractured worldviews held by many Born-again Protestants.

We also note in row 5, that almost all of those who select to Support Sexual Purity also said they would use Biblical Principles in making moral choices. This figure seems to show that those who do not use Biblical Principals are much more consistent in rejecting biblical morality.

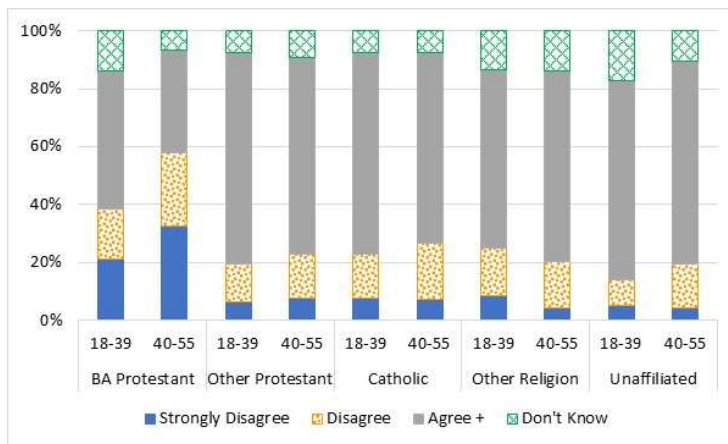
Religion and Politics

The second question deals with how we relate our religious thinking and our political thinking. The question asked was:

Just as the government should not be involved in the internal workings of churches, Christians should not let their faith impact their position on how government functions. Responses from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly.

A person's understanding of religious principles should drive their thinking on any political questions which intersect with a religious principle. So we should expect not only Christians but people of every religion to disagree strongly with this statement. For a genuine Christian, their faith in Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Bible are the foundation for all of their beliefs. Christians can genuinely disagree about the best way to achieve certain objectives. For example, we know we want our children to lead productive lives building up those around them, but we may disagree on the best way to structure public education to help achieve this goal. But any political position we agree with should not contradict our underlying faith position related to the issue at hand.

Figure 52 Your Faith Should Not Impact Your Positions on Government



We can see how people responded to this question in the figure below. First, let's note that significantly less than one out of ten people who are not Born-again Protestants strongly disagreed with the statement. Around one out of five (20%) of this same group disagreed or strongly disagreed with this clear misunderstanding of the principles upon which this country was founded.

Looking at Born-again Protestants, we see two significant features. First, this group is much more likely to Strongly Disagree or Disagree with the statement. Among those

ages 18 to 39, we see that about one in five (21%) Strongly Disagree and close to four out of ten (39%) Disagree or Strongly Disagree. A significant number appear to realize that you cannot segregate your faith beliefs from your beliefs about how our government should operate. However, for this age group, we see that almost two out of three (61%) either agree with the statement or don't know. So, a strong majority buys into the lie that their religious faith does not impact their political beliefs.

Secondly, we see a significant difference in the answers based on the age of the Born-again Protestants. For those ages 40 through 55, we find that one third of them strongly disagree and almost two thirds (58%) disagree or strongly disagree. In fact, for those under the age of 30, only about one out of six (17%) strongly disagree with this statement or one half of the level for those between 40 and 55.

Of those Born-again Protestants under the age of 40 saying their faith has a significant impact on their daily lives, over two thirds (70%) of them said they make moral choices relying on biblical principles. This is not surprising since if faith has a significant impact on your daily life, one would expect it to impact your moral choices. But at the same time, less than one third (29%) of these Born-again Protestants said they strongly disagreed with the statement that *our faith should not impact our political positions*. Clearly some combination of the news media, secular education and politicians have succeeded in misleading Americans on this topic.

Bringing About Social Justice

Most Americans probably want a fair and just society where law abiding citizens have fair access to opportunity and can apply themselves toward achieving their life goals. However, there are many different ideas on how to best achieve such an objective. To find out what people thought, we asked this question:

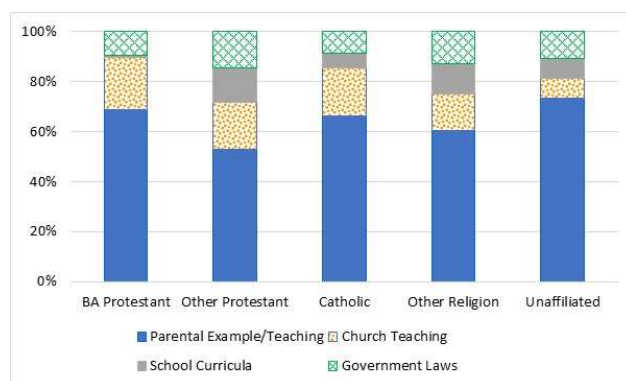
Matters of social injustice like racial prejudice and bullying are best remedied by (rank from 1 most important to 5 least important):

1. Government laws and penalties
2. Churches teaching on how to live with and treat others
3. Parents overtly teaching their children how to treat others
4. Parents showing their children by example
5. School curricula focused on correct social thinking

As noted in the question, respondents were asked to rank the five responses rather than pick the best one. We did this because we felt that many people would have more than one approach they considered important.

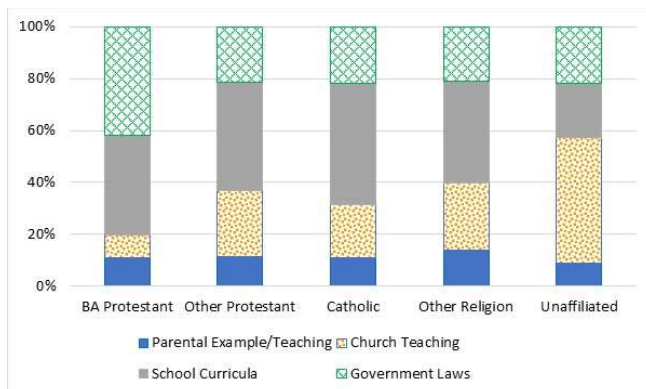
Let's begin by considering the options that were ranked as most important. In our evaluation, we combined the two options featuring parents as one item. As shown, parental teaching and examples were by far the most popular choice across all religious backgrounds, averaging about two thirds of the responses. Except for the Unaffiliated, church teaching was a distant second polling about one out of five for the other religious groupings.

Figure 53 Item Selected as Top Choice for Remedying Social Injustice – Ages 18-39



Considering the other extreme, the figure on the left shows the response selected fifth by our respondents. Except for the Unaffiliated, the least popular option was school curricula focusing on correct social thinking. This option received about four out of ten respondents. For the religious groups, excluding Born-again Protestants, the second most popular option was basically a tie between

Figure 54 Item Selected as Least Favorite Choice for Remedying Social Injustice – Ages 18-39



government laws and church teaching. For Born-again Protestants, government laws were selected at the same level as school curricula.

As you can see, most Americans would say that remedying social injustice required parental involvement while school curricula was the least popular option. Thus, it is very interesting that many politicians and educators want to make the school the primary place for remedying social injustice while “protecting the students” from the poor examples of their parents. This may well be

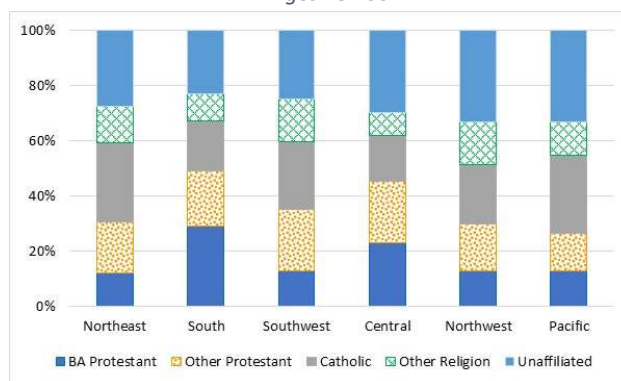
the reason, at the time this is being written, that some school boards are seeing a significant change in their makeup as pro-parental rights candidates are being elected.

Section 11 What Impact Does Location Have on What Americans Believe?

America is a large country and its beliefs vary as you travel across our country. Let's examine how geography effects religious affiliation and biblical worldview. In our survey, we divided up the country into six regions: Northeast, South, Southwest, Central, Northwest, and Pacific.³⁹

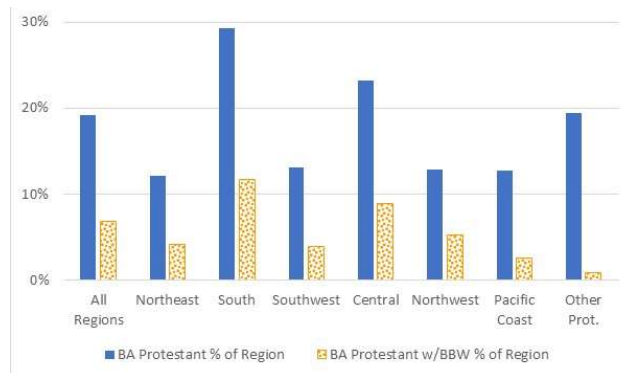
Let's begin with the distribution of our religious groups across these geographic divisions. As seen in the figure below, there are some significant differences across these divisions. Born-again Protestants are over 20% of the population in the South and Central regions and drop to under 15% for the rest of the country. Catholics are strongest in the Northeast, the Southwest and the Pacific. The Southwest and Pacific states are home to a large number of people with Hispanic backgrounds who tend to be Catholic. However, the correlation between Hispanics and Catholicism is weakening (this will be discussed in the next section). The Unaffiliated run over one quarter of the population in every region except the South. In the Central, Pacific and Northwest regions, they are at 30% or more.

Figure 55 Religious Makeup by Geographic Regions
Ages 18 - 55



Now let's consider how a Basic Biblical Worldview fares across these geographic regions. In figure 56, we find the percentage of people in each region who are Born-again Protestants next to the percentage of people in each region who are Born-again Protestants and hold a Basic Biblical Worldview. In each region, much less than half of people who profess to be Born-again hold a Basic Biblical Worldview. However, in the South and Northwest that number is roughly 40% of the Born-again Protestants. The number drops to around 30% of Born-again Protestants in the Southwest and to around 20% in the Pacific Coast region.

Figure 56 People in Each Region Affiliating as Born-again Protestant and Holding a Basic Biblical Worldview



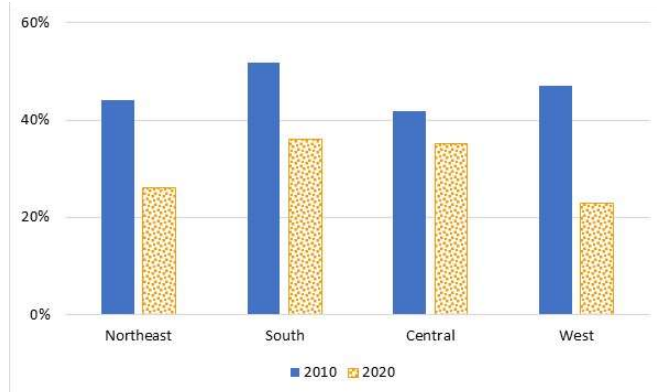
We also included the nationwide numbers for Other Protestants to remind you of the contrast between the two groups. As you can see, the numbers are 19% of the people profess to be Other Protestants and less than 1% claim to be Other Protestants and hold a basic biblical worldview. This means that less than 5% of Other Protestants hold to a Basic Biblical Worldview as opposed to nearly 36% of Born-again Protestants.

We would also like to compare the results of our 2010 survey with the results presented here. As

noted above, the 2010 survey only included respondents from ages 18 through 40. If also, divided the United States into 4 regions (Northeast, South, Central, and West). So for this comparison, we will look at those ages 18 through 40 and for our 2020 survey we will combine South and Southwest into one region, i.e. South, and Northwest and Pacific into one region, i.e. West. For the West region, we will expand the ages in 2020 to 18 to 55 to get enough respondents to make it viable.

Consistent with results presented above, we see a noticeable degradation of Born-again Protestants holding a Basic Biblical Worldview in 2020 when compared with 2010. The Central region only shows a small decline while the West and Northeast drop by nearly half. The larger decline in the South relative to that in the Central may be partially due to combining the Southwest with the South. The western states in the Southwest are somewhat lower in percentage than the South.

Figure 57 Regional Results for 2010 and 2020 of Born-again Protestants Who Hold a Basic Biblical Worldview



Section 12 What Impact Does Education Have on What Americans Believe?

America is a large country and its religious beliefs vary as function of education level. Let's examine how the level of education effects religious affiliation and biblical worldview. In our survey, we asked people their highest level of education ranging across the following levels: no high school diploma, high school or GED, trade school, attended some college, a bachelor's degree, a graduate degree. For the analysis presented below, we grouped these six levels into four: up through high school or GED, trade school or some college courses, a bachelor's degree, a graduate degree.

Let's begin with the distribution of religious affiliations across the different levels of education. There are several items of interest to note in this chart. First, we see that the percentage of Protestants is constant up through a Bachelor's degree. However, for those with a high school diploma or less, the percentage of Other Protestants is far greater than BA Protestants (25% to 15%) but for those with more education the two are basically equal (20% to 20%). Then when we look at those with a graduate degree, we see the percentage of Other Protestants drop to 10% while the BA Protestants grow to 23%. As you can see, those with graduate degrees who affiliate as Catholics was greater than for lesser levels of education.

Figure 58 Distribution of Religions Across Levels of Education Ages 18 - 55

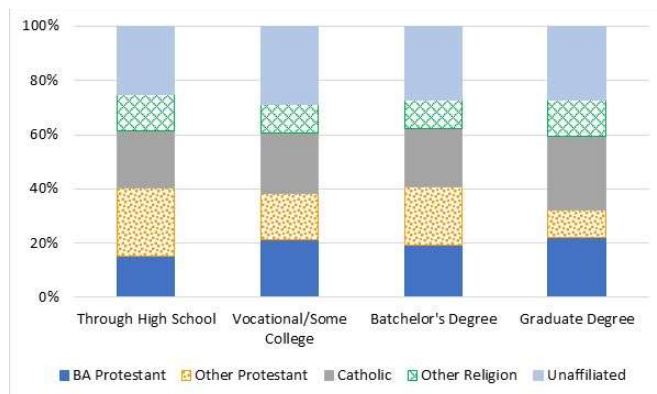
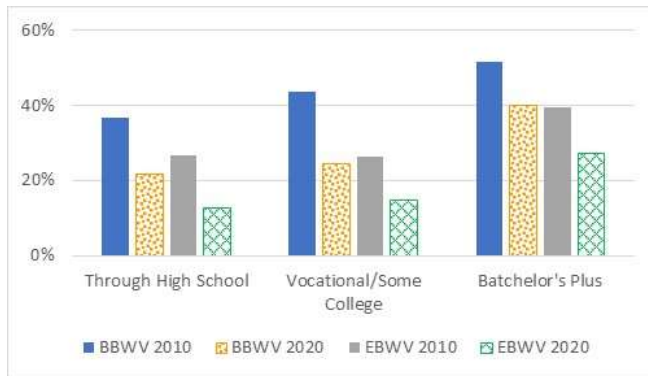


Figure 59 BA Protestants with a Biblical Worldview Across Education Levels – Ages 18 - 39/40



Now let's consider how education level and biblical worldviews correlate among BA Protestants as shown in Figure 59. In this chart, we also can compare data from our 2010 survey with our 2020 survey. Let's first consider the Basic Biblical Worldview in 2020 (the second column with dense dots). We can see that BA Protestants with a Bachelor's degree or above are much more likely to agree with a Basic Biblical Worldview than those with less than a Bachelor's degree.

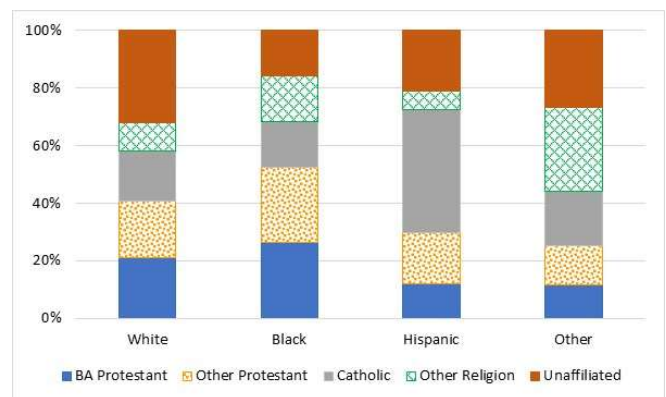
Looking across to the Expanded Biblical Worldview (the fourth column with cross hatching), we see the same relationship with the Bachelor's degree or above much more likely to ascribe to an Expanded Biblical Worldview than those with less than a Bachelor's Degree. It is important to remember that even for those with a Bachelor's Plus, the number who do not ascribe to a biblical worldview is a large majority.

Now when we compare our 2010 results with those from 2020, we see the same drop off in percentages as reported in the earlier sections of this report. For those reporting a lower educational level, the results drop to only about half of those reported in 2010. While for those with a bachelor's degree or better, the results drop by 20% (from 50% down to 40%).

Section 13 What Impact Does Ethnicity Have on What Americans Believe?

In our earlier book on our 2010 survey, we noted differences in religious beliefs between different ethnic groups in American. Let see if those differences are still apparent in our 2020 survey. Let's begin by looking at the distribution of religions for each ethnicity as shown below. As shown, among White Americans the most prevalent religious affiliation is Unaffiliated at over 30%. Born-again Protestants, Other Protestants and Catholics all report in at about one in five (20%). Black Americans have the lowest percentage of people aligned with the Unaffiliated group at about 16%. They have a higher percentage of Born-again Protestants and Other Protestants both at about one in four (26%, 26%). Not surprisingly, Hispanics report over four out of ten (43%) with a Catholic affiliation. But the second largest group among Hispanics is the Unaffiliated at just over two out of ten (21%). Asians and other ethnic groups report the largest percentage affiliated with Other Religion at 3 out of ten (29%) and Unaffiliated at almost 3 out of ten (27%).

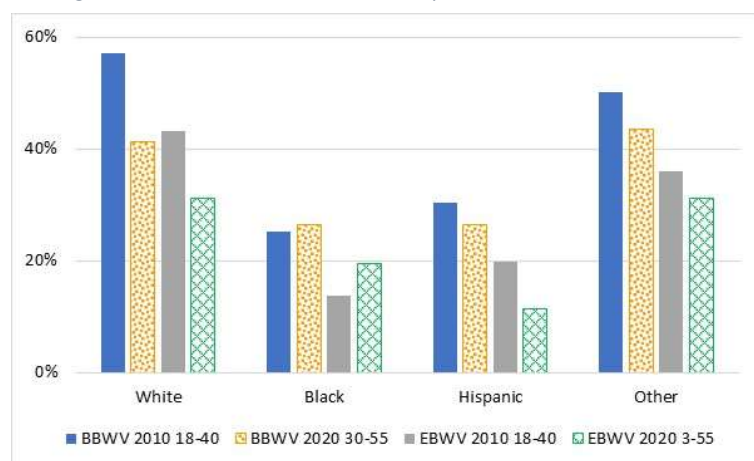
Figure 60 Religions Practiced by Four Ethnic Groups Ages 18 - 55



It is worth noting that the only ethnic group where a majority of respondents are affiliated with a Protestant church are Black Americans. No other ethnic grouping is even close to a majority position for Protestants.

How have biblical worldview beliefs changed for Born-again Protestants over the last ten years? Comparative results are shown in the figure below. As shown, we are comparing those who were ages 18 through 40 in 2010 with those ages 30 through 55 in 2020. So approximately the same age grouping compared ten years apart.

*Figure 61 Comparing Biblical Worldviews from 2010 and 2020
Looking at Basic Biblical Worldviews and Expanded Biblical Worldviews*



Among the largest ethnic group, Whites, we see the most dramatic drop across the decade from 57% to 41% for the Basic Biblical Worldview and 43% down to 31% for the Expanded Biblical Worldview. These drops indicate that more than one quarter of White Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview in 2010 no longer hold to that view ten years later.

Hispanics and Other Ethnicities show a clear drop as well but not as large as

for Whites. Interestingly, Black Born-again Protestants showed a slight increase in those with a Biblical Worldview across the decade.

Section 14 What Impact Does Gender Have on What Americans Believe?

In this period of time when many are trying to create a variety of different gender identities, our survey only allowed people to self-identify as male or female. All of the respondents selected one of those two categories.

In Figure 62, we can see how males and females ages 18 to 39 identified with different religion categories. As shown, females are more likely to identify as Born-again Protestants (20%) than are males (13%). However, the combination of Born-again Protestants and other Protestants have an identical percentage of males and females at about 38%.

One result of interest is the percentage of Born-again Protestants of each gender who expressed a Biblical Worldview as defined earlier. In the table below we show two different rows of results. The first row is the percent of Born-again Protestants of each gender who answered the polling questions to qualify as holding a Basic Biblical Worldview and an Expanded Biblical Worldview.

*Figure 62 Males and Females by Religious Group
Ages 18 through 39*

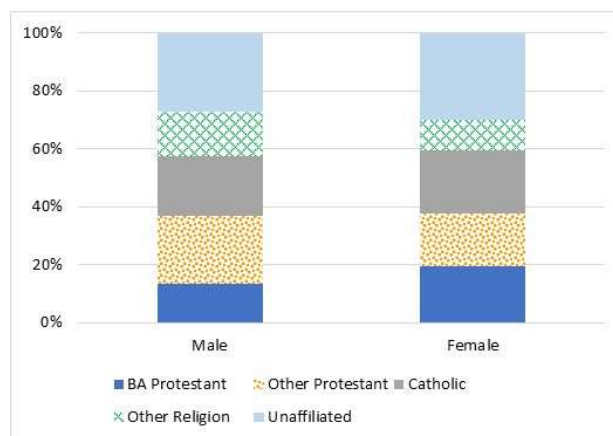


Table 4 Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview by Gender in 2020

Percentage of the groups below	Ages 18 – 39		Ages 40 - 55	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
BA Protestant w/ Basic Biblical WV	37%	27%	49%	35%
BA Protestant w/ Expanded Biblical WV	25%	17%	40%	23%
Gender who are BA Protestant w/BBWV	5%	5%	10%	9%
Gender who are BA Protestant w/EBWV	3%	3%	8%	6%

What jumps out to us on the first two rows is that the percentage of Males in both age categories and for both an Basic and Expanded Biblical Worldview is significantly greater than the percentage of Females. The difference is around 10% for ages 18 through 39 and around 15% for ages 40 through 55. So Males who identify themselves as Born-again Protestants are much more likely to also ascribe to a Biblical Worldview than are Females.

However, before drawing a faulty conclusion, now consider the next two rows of the table. In these rows, we are looking at what percent of people of each gender are Born-again Protestants who ascribe to a Biblical Worldview. As you can see, in this case the numbers are basically the same for Males and Females. This outcome results from the data in Figure 62 showing that a significantly greater number of women profess to be Born-again Protestants. So, the take away here is that fewer males profess to being Born-again Protestants, but if they do they are more likely to also ascribe to a Biblical Worldview. However, be sure and note that even for males fewer than one half of those who are Born-again Protestants ascribe to even a Basic Biblical Worldview.

Is this notable difference between males and females something that occurred over the last decade? Or has it been occurring over a longer period. We looked at our 2010 survey results for some information on this question as shown in the table below.

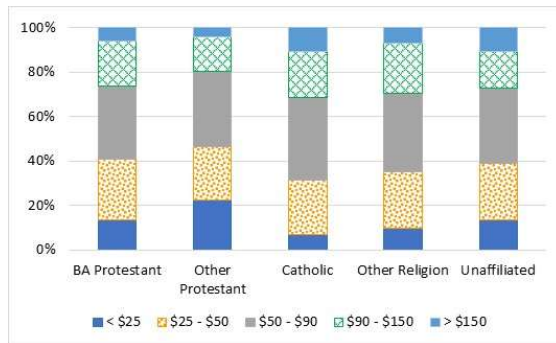
Table 5 Born-again Protestants with a Biblical Worldview by Gender Comparing 2010 and 2020

Percentage of the groups below	Survey 2020: Ages 18 – 39		Survey 2010: Ages 18 - 40	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
BA Protestant w/ Basic Biblical WV	37%	27%	47%	44%
BA Protestant w/ Expanded Biblical WV	25%	17%	39%	27%

You can see a similar difference between males and females when looking for the Expanded Biblical Worldview. For the Basic Biblical Worldview, a difference still exists but it is not as large as found in the 2020 Survey.

Section 15 What Impact Does Income Have on What Americans Believe?

Figure 63 Level of Income and Religious Affiliation
Ages 30 - 55



Level of income is a major distinguishing factor across America. Is there a correlation between religious beliefs and practices and level of income? Let's consider the data to look for answers. In the chart, we have plotted the income distribution for each major religious group for Americans ages 30 through 55. Note that we choose to start at age 30 since many of those under 30 may be in school, in a part time or short term job or both. As shown, the income distributions are fairly consistent across religious groups. The major features which differ are the higher percentage of Other Protestants with incomes below \$25,000 a year and the low percentage of Catholics in the same income category.

How do income levels impact the religious beliefs of Born-again Protestants? Figure 64 below gives us one look at this question by plotting the percent of Born-again Protestants in a particular age/income group who have a Basic Biblical Worldview. As shown, the younger group, 30 – 39, are reasonably consistent across the income ranges shown. Those making less than \$25,000 a year are somewhat more likely to espouse a biblical worldview. For the older group, 40 – 55, those making between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year are significantly less likely than those making over \$50,000 who report that almost half of them have a Basic Biblical Worldview.

Figure 64 Percent of Born-again Protestants with a Basic Biblical Worldview
For Different Income Levels

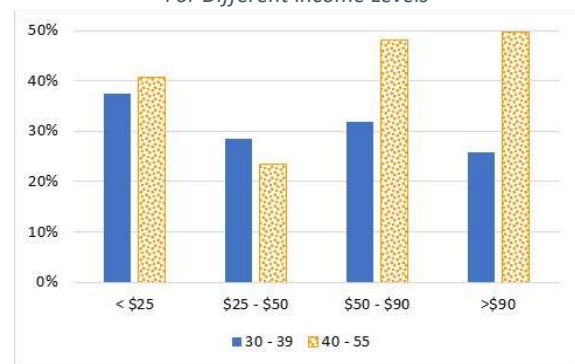


Figure 64 can be compared to Figure 65 which shows the percentage of those Born-again Protestants of a particular age who a particular income range and a Basic Biblical Worldview.

¹ GSS, George Barna, Pew

² 2010 Probe Culturally Captive Christians survey, administered by Barna Research

³ Stephen Cable, *Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behavior of American Young Adults*, 2012

⁴ Stephen Cable, *Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behavior of American Young Adults*, p. 193

⁵ The 717 respondents equated to 747 equivalent people when weighted to adjust for differences between those surveyed and the distribution of gender, ethnicity, ages, and location as given by the United States Census Bureau.

⁶ The range comes from looking at the Probe survey along with surveys from GSS and Pew Research

⁷ We have looked at religious affiliation from Pew Research, GSS, PALS, Barna Group and others

⁸ General Social Survey data was downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by the National Opinion Research Center.

⁹ Our 2010 survey was facilitated by the Barna Group and I presume they commonly use these two questions in other surveys to identify born-again Christians

¹⁰ Note that the Other Religions category includes Christian cults (e.g. Mormon, Jehovah’s Witnesses), Jews, and other world religions.

¹¹ **Religion and Politics Survey 1996**, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (a project of The Pew Research Center). The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by the Pew Research Center.

¹² **Religious Knowledge Survey 2019** Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (a project of The Pew Research Center). The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by the Pew Research Center.

¹³ In future releases, we will also see that the Unaffiliated are very unlikely to hold to basic Christian beliefs

¹⁴ **U.S. Religious Landscape Survey 2007, U.S. Religious Landscape Survey 2014, Religious Knowledge Survey 2019** Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (a project of The Pew Research Center). The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by the Pew Research Center.

¹⁵ Sue Bohlin, *What a Biblical Worldview Looks Like*, Probe website: probe.org/what-a-biblical-worldview-looks-like/

¹⁶ Other answers to select from: God created but is no longer involved with the world today, God refers to the total realization of personal human potential, there are many gods, each with their different power and authority, God represents a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach, there is no such thing as God, and don’t know

¹⁷ 1st Peter 2:9

¹⁸ Catholics here include about 20% who profess to be born-again.

¹⁹ One of the reasons that Other Religions include some that answer more than three worldview questions is that Mormons and other Christian cults are included in that category.

²⁰ Articles on our website addressing this topic include Evidence for God’s Existence, There is a God, Does God Exist: A Christian Argument from Non-biblical Sources, The Impotence of Darwinism, Darwinism: A Teetering House of Cards, and many others.

²¹ Matthew 11:53-54, New English Translation

²² The fourth category labeled Only way to heaven adds in those who strongly agreed /disagree with the two pluralism questions.

²³ Collins English Dictionary, [Tolerance definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary \(collinsdictionary.com\)](http://collinsdictionary.com)

²⁴ Stephen Cable, *Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behaviors of American Young Adults*, 2012

²⁵ 1st Timothy 2:4

²⁶ Low Estimate: Calculated assuming that those sharing at least monthly on the average shared their faith 12 times per year and those sharing at least yearly but less than monthly shared on the average 1 times per year AND that they shared on the average with the same individual four times.

²⁷ Nominal Estimate: Calculated assuming that those sharing at least monthly on the average shared their faith 18 times per year and those sharing at least yearly but less than monthly shared on the average 2 times per year AND that they shared on the average with the same individual three times.

²⁸ High Estimate: Calculated assuming that those sharing at least monthly on the average shared their faith 24 times per year and those sharing at least yearly but less than monthly shared on the average 4 times per year AND that they shared on the average with the same individual two times.

²⁹ Although most people selected only one answer, on this question they could select multiple answers

³⁰ Exclusivists are those who believe that their religion is the only source of correct teaching concerning our relationship with God. When I get time, I will check out the relationship between those who are exclusivists and those who selected ‘reconciliation is a gift’

³¹ Matthew 5:27-28

³² There is also a small number of those answering Don’t Know included in the number of those who do not state that they Strongly Agree or Agree Somewhat with the statement.

³³ In March, Nobel Prize-winning physicist Brian Josephson declared that “intelligent design is valid science.” In April, researchers writing in the journal *Current Biology* asked whether Darwin’s “tree of life” should “be abandoned.”

³⁴ See for example: Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*, 2006

³⁵ See for example the book by J. P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism*, 2018

³⁶ As we dive down into these subgroups remember that the smaller number of respondents of each type reduce the accuracy as we apply our limited sample to the entire group across the United States. In this case, we surveyed 68 LDS, 178 Other Religions not LDS, 124 Atheist, 167 Agnostic, and 245 Nothing in particular (between 18 and 39 years old)

³⁷ Other answers to select from: God created but is no longer involved with the world today, God refers to the total realization of personal human potential, there are many gods, each with their different power and authority, God represents a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach, there is no such thing as God, and don't know

³⁸ [The Answer Is the Resurrection: Sharing Your Faith in Christ \(probe.org\)](http://probe.org)

³⁹ 1) Northeast: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont 2) South: Alabama, Arkansas, DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia 3) Southwest: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas 4) Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin 5) Northwest: Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming 6) Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington