



CENTER FOR
BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Survey on Adult Churchgoers on Social Issues and Worldview

A National Survey from the Center for Biblical Worldview

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INTRODUCTION

In June of 2023, a national survey was conducted regarding public opinion related to a variety of social issues, as well as responses regarding their worldview. The survey incorporated responses from 1,009 adults, age 18 or older, who attend a worship service at a Christian church at least once a month, either in-person or online. Based on national tracking by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, that segment of the population constitutes 44% of all U.S. adults.

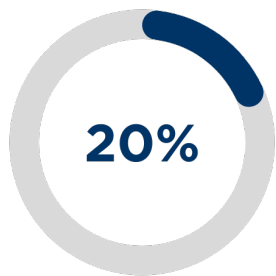
Key Findings

43%

43% of adult churchgoers claim to have a biblical worldview. However, extensive testing through the American Worldview Inventory indicates that just 6% of the adult population actually has one. (Source: Cultural Research Center, Arizona Christian University).



Despite the onslaught against biblical marriage over the last few decades, 75% said the Bible is “clear and decisive” on the definition of a legitimate marriage.



20% of adult churchgoers claim to have a non-biblical worldview.

***14% of churchgoers qualified as SAGE Cons
—an acronym for Spiritually Active Governance
Engaged Conservative Christians. .***

An additional 36% are Semi-SAGE Cons, people who have adopted many of the beliefs and practices of SAGE-Cons. 50% of adult churchgoers are neither SAGE Cons or Semi-SAGE-Cons.

88%

88% of adult churchgoers believe it is important for Christians to have a biblical worldview. Only 6% believe it is not important.

A majority of adults said they desire their church to offer additional worldview training on social and political responsibility (79%), abortion and the value of life (71%), and human sexuality (68%).



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Among the people who attend Christian church services at least once a month, about three-quarters of them (72%) attend most weeks, while the remaining one-quarter attend roughly once a month.
- About one out of every 10 people (11%) who regularly attend a Christian church claims some religious affiliation other than Christian. The most common alternative affiliations are Muslim and Mormon (each 2%), and Jewish and Buddhist (each 1%). Another 3% say they believe in a deity but are not associated with a specific faith group.
- Among the nine out of 10 who self-identify as Christian, the most common types of Christian church they attend most often were Catholic (31%), mainline Protestant (24%), evangelical (18%), independent or non-denominational (11%), and Pentecostal/charismatic (7%).

WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHURCH

- 68% of adults report that the church they most often attend provides a “comprehensive and thorough” amount of worldview training for children (ages 0 through 12). 19.5% do not believe their church provides thorough worldview training for children.
- 74% say the church they most often attend provides a “comprehensive and thorough” amount of worldview training for teenagers (ages 13 through 18). 15.4% do not believe their church provides thorough worldview training for teenagers.
- 81% say the church they most often attend provides a “comprehensive and thorough” amount of worldview training for adults (ages 19 and older).
- A minority of churchgoers said it was very desirable for their church to provide additional biblical worldview education related to abortion and the value of life (44%), social and political responsibility (44%), or human sexuality (36%). However, a majority of respondents said that further worldview training related to those areas would be at least somewhat desirable to them: social and political responsibility (79%), abortion and the value of life (71%), and human sexuality (68%).

TABLE 1
THE PERSONAL DESIRABILITY OF CHURCH OFFERING ADDITIONAL
WORLDVIEW TRAINING RELATED TO SPECIFIC TOPICS

Area of Worldview Training	How Desirable to You?			
	Very	Somewhat	Not Too	Not At All
Social and Political Responsibility	44%	35%	13%	8%
Abortion and the Value of Life	44	27	15	15
Human Sexuality	36	32	20	13



BIBLE'S TEACHING ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Respondents were asked how clearly and decisively they believe the Bible speaks to each of eight issues. For seven out of the eight, a majority indicated the Bible is clear and decisive. The only issue for which a majority did not say the Bible is clear and decisive was the matter of what types of candidates to vote for. The data found that for each of the eight matters evaluated, significant numbers of churchgoers either do not know or believe the Bible does not address that issue.

- By far the matter churchgoers are most likely to say the Bible addresses the issue clearly and decisively was the definition of legitimate marriage. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) expressed that viewpoint.
- Roughly two-thirds of respondents said the Bible is clear and decisive in relation to religious liberty (69%), divorce (66%), the morality of killing an unborn child (65%), and whether homosexuality is morally acceptable (63%).
- Slightly more than half of churchgoers believe the Bible is clear and decisive in regard to How to know a person's gender (59%) and whether transgenderism is morally acceptable (52%).
- Just 44% said the Bible is clear and decisive regarding what types of candidates to vote for. Just as many said the Bible does not speak to the issue (30%) or they don't know what the Bible says on this issue (11%).

TABLE 2
DOES THE BIBLE ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

Does the Bible Address This Matter?	Clear and Decisive	Unclear or Ambiguous	Does Not Address	Don't Know
The Definition of a Legitimate Marriage	75%	14%	7%	4%
Religious Liberty	69	14	9	8
Divorce	66	18	9	7
The Morality of Killing an Unborn Child	65	15	13	8
If Homosexuality is Morally Acceptable	63	19	11	7
How to Know a Person's Gender	59	15	18	8
If Transgenderism is Morally Acceptable	52	19	20	9
What Types of Candidates to Vote For	44	16	30	11

WORLDVIEW BELIEFS

In 2023, the Cultural Research Center conducted research on how a person can develop a biblical worldview. The research showed that worldview clarity depends on the strength and purity of the philosophical and theological foundations of a person's worldview. George Barna identified seven beliefs without which a person is very unlikely to develop a consistently biblical life of thought and action. These seven cornerstones are:



An orthodox, biblical understanding of God.



All human beings are sinful by nature; every choice we make has moral considerations and consequences.



The consequences of our sin can only be forgiven and eliminated through Jesus Christ. That forgiveness is available only by our personal, sincere acknowledgment and confession of our sins and complete reliance on His grace for the forgiveness of those sins.



The entire Bible is true, reliable and relevant, making it the best moral guide for every person, in all situations.



Absolute moral truth exists—and those truths are defined by God, described in the Bible, and are unchanging across time and cultures.



The ultimate purpose of human life is to know, love, and serve God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul.



Success on Earth is best understood as consistent obedience to God—in thoughts, words, and actions.

Although there are some bright spots, the current survey reveals that many churchgoers do not hold the seven cornerstones. Consider the following:

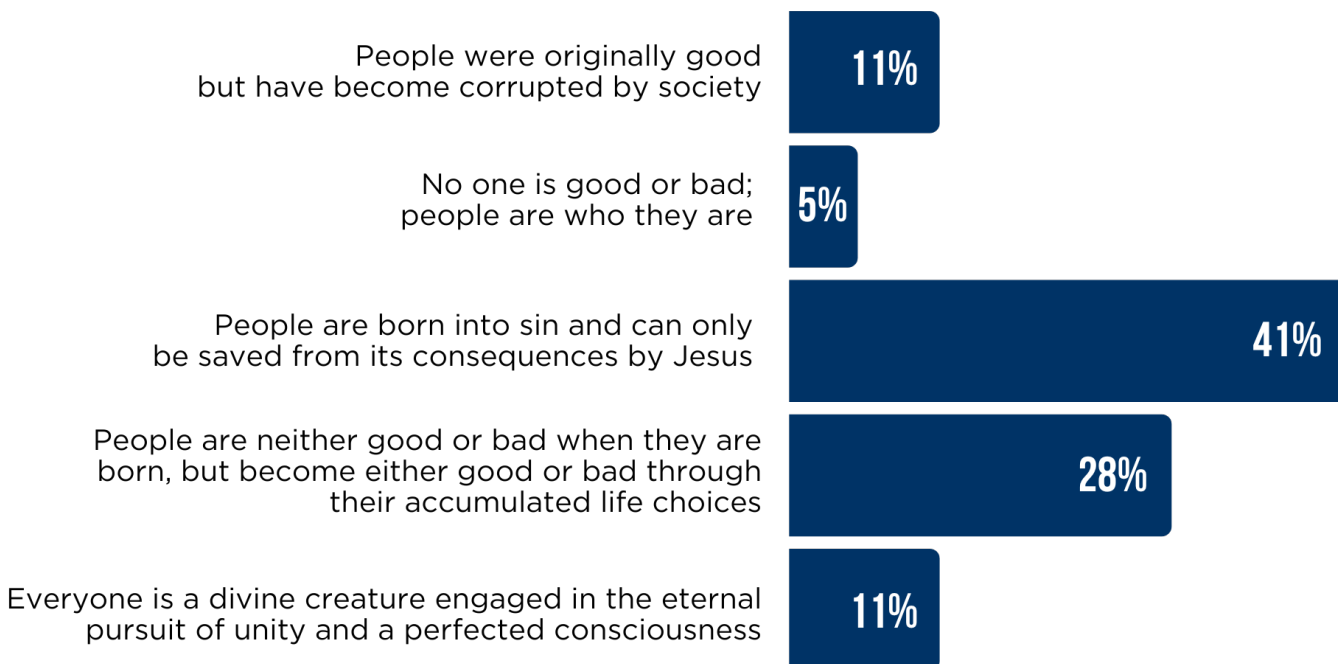
Cornerstone 1 focuses on one's view of God. One of the worldview perspectives that is most solid – but not fully so – among regular churchgoing adults is their idea of God. Two-thirds (68%) rightfully contend that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect and just creator of the universe who rules that universe today. Alternative views of God that Christians in the pews possess are that God refers to the total realization of personal, human potential or a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach (12%), that a higher power may exist, but nobody really knows for certain (9%), that everyone is god (4%), or that there are many gods, each with different purposes and authority (4%).

**WHICH OF THESE DESCRIPTIONS COMES CLOSEST
TO WHAT YOU, PERSONALLY, BELIEVE?**



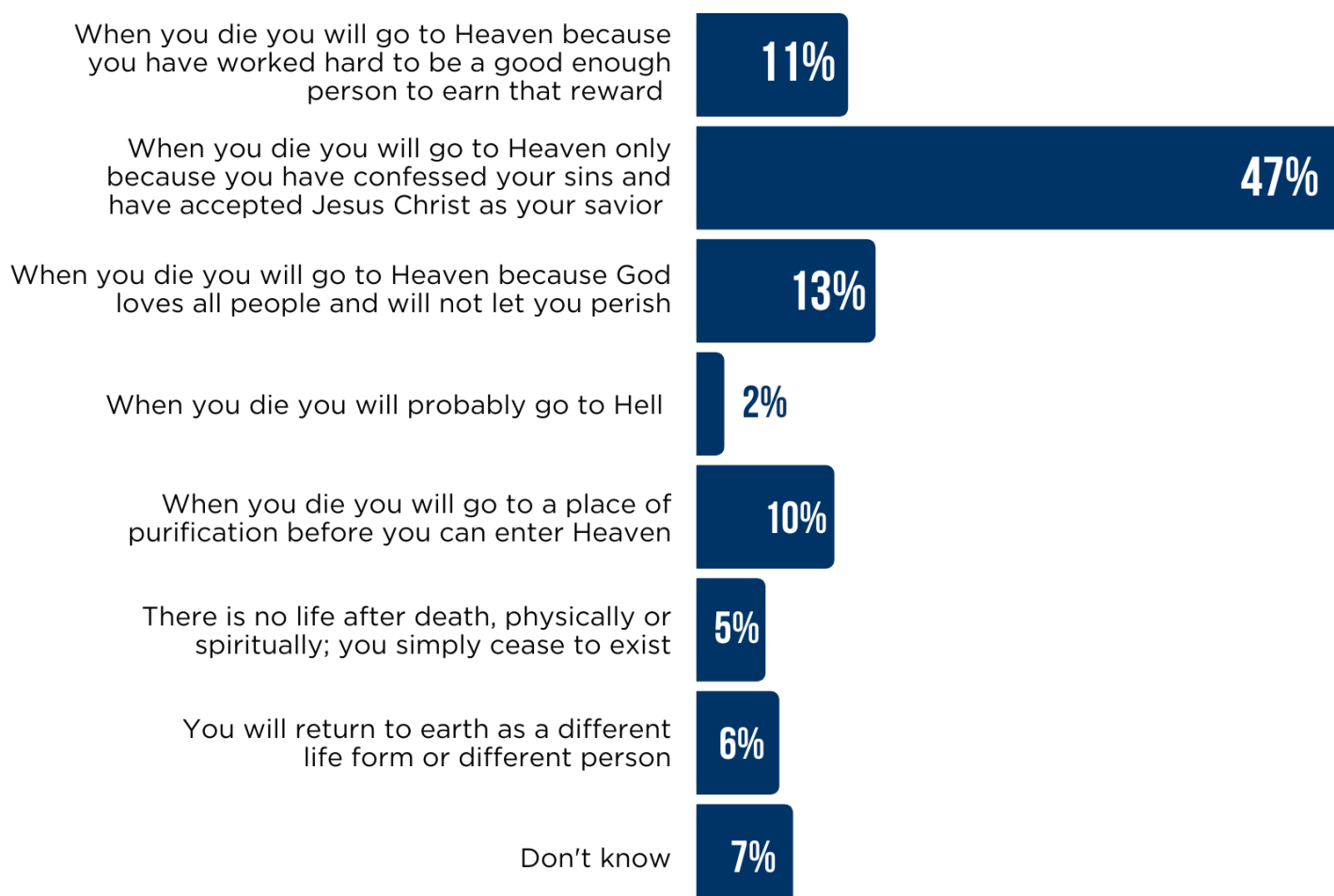
Cornerstone 2 focuses on one's view of the human condition. Only a plurality of churchgoers (41%) described the human condition as “people are born into sin and can only be saved from its consequences by Jesus Christ.” The majority of churchgoers chose from various other perspectives such as the secular humanist idea that “people are neither good nor bad when they are born, but become either good or bad through their accumulated life choices” (28%), the Marxist view that “people were originally good but have become corrupted by society” (11%), and the Eastern Mystical notion that “everyone is a divine creature engaged in the eternal pursuit of unity and a perfected consciousness” (11%).

WHAT OF THESE STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW OF THE HUMAN CONDITION?



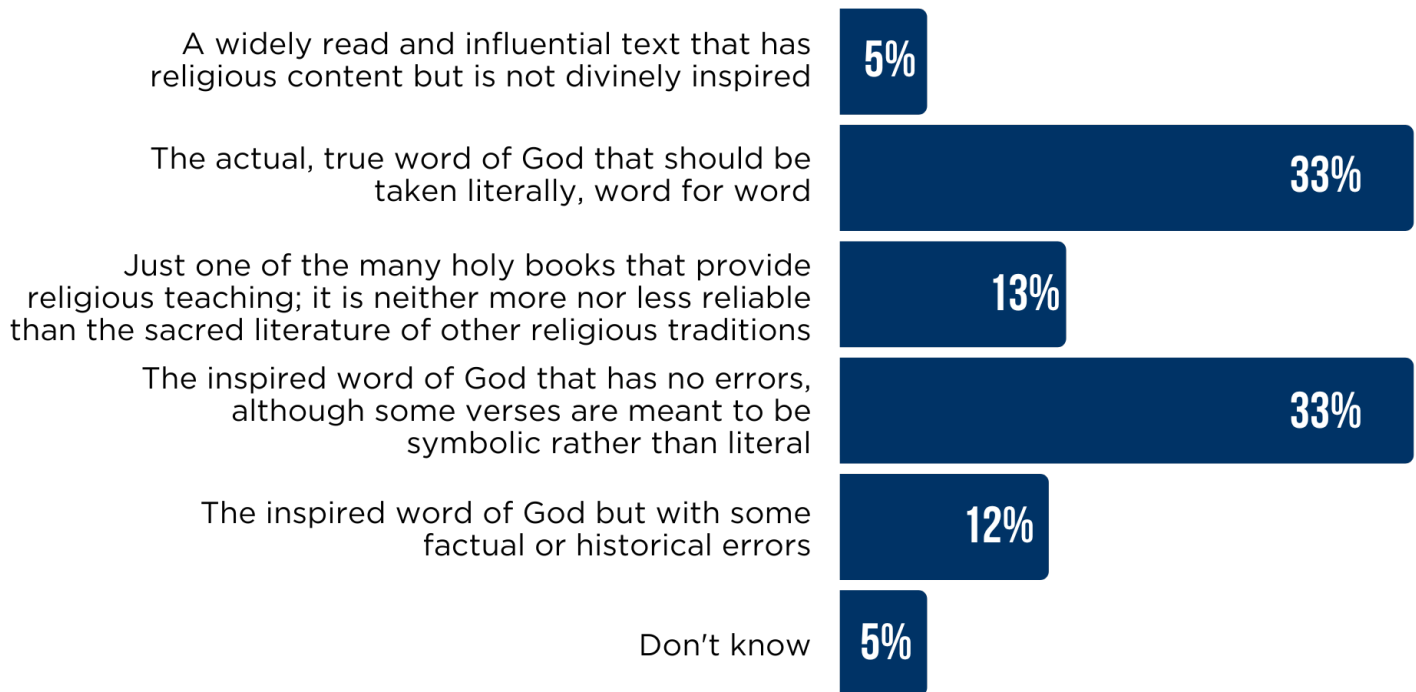
Cornerstone 3 focuses on salvation. It startles some observers to realize that among most of the people who regularly attend church services – and have been doing so for years – their salvation through Christ is not secured. In this study, as usual, we found that less than half of the church regulars (47%) believe they will live in eternity with God because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Other widespread views about life after death included the notion that they will go to Heaven because God loves all people and will not let them perish (13%), they will experience Heaven because they have worked hard to be a good enough person to earn that reward (11%), that they will go to a place of purification before entering Heaven (10%), they will be reincarnated (6%) or that they will simply cease to exist (5%).

**WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES WHAT
YOU BELIEVE WILL HAPPEN TO YOU AFTER YOU DIE?**



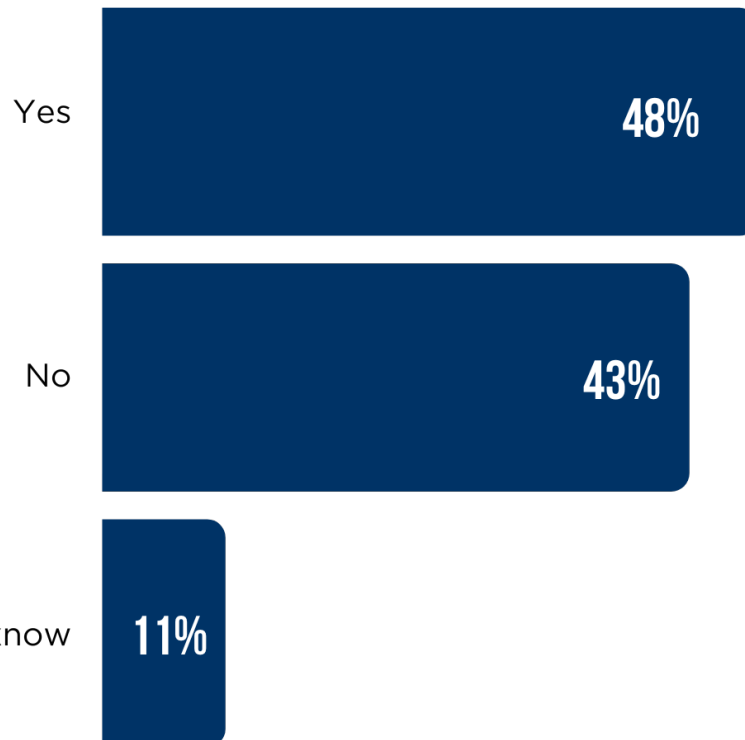
Cornerstone 4 focuses on the Bible. Two-thirds of adult churchgoers are evenly divided between believing the Bible is either the actual, true word of God that should be taken literally, word for word (33%), and those who describe it as the inspired word of God that has no errors, although some verses are meant to be symbolic rather than literal (33%). The remaining respondents believe just one of the many holy books that provide religious teaching; it is neither more nor less reliable than the sacred literature of other religious traditions (13%), it is the inspired word of God but with some factual or historical errors (12%), or it is a widely read and influential text that has religious content but is not divinely inspired (5%).

**WHICH OF THESE DESCRIPTIONS COMES CLOSEST
TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?**



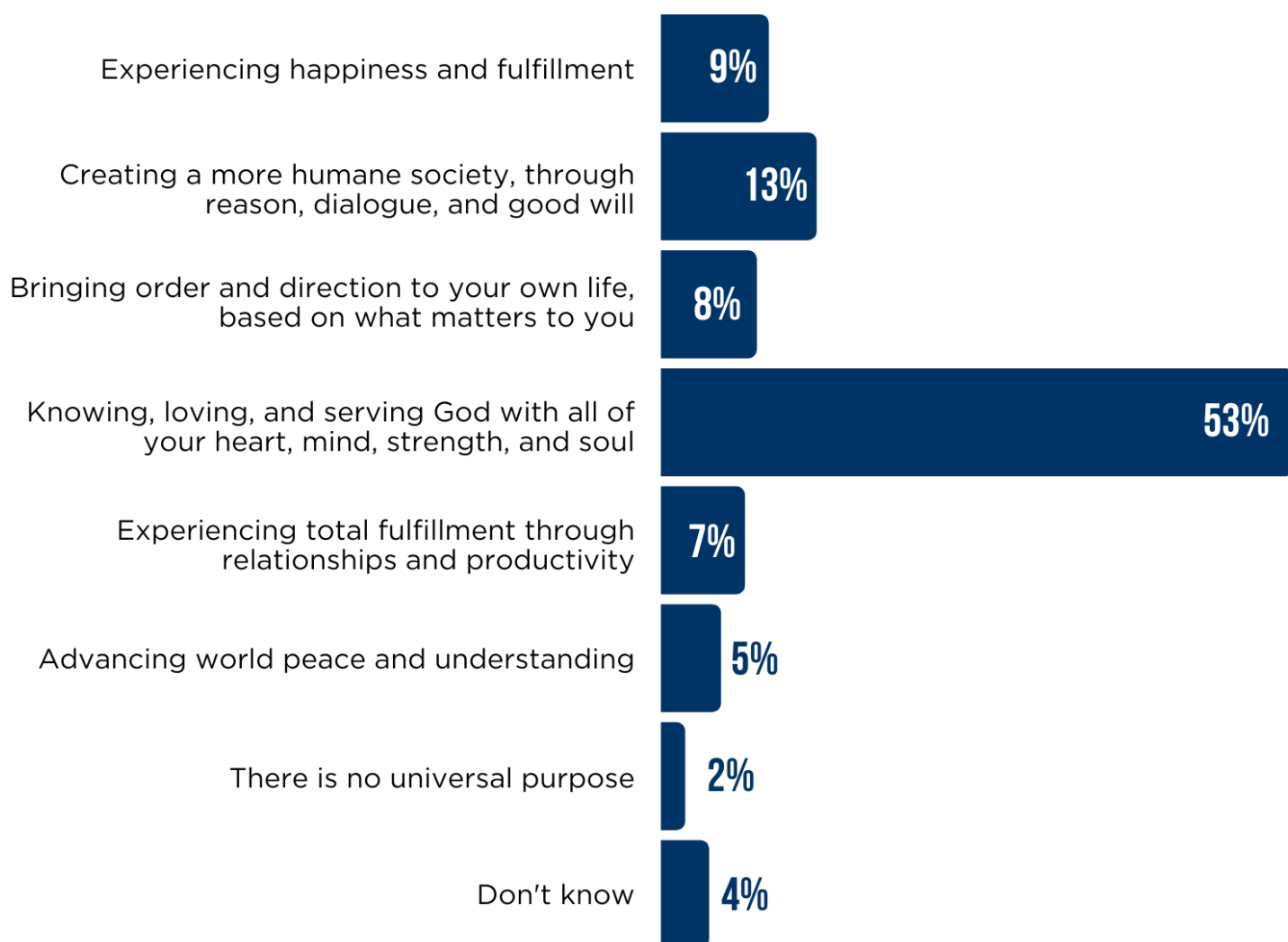
Cornerstone 5 focuses on the existence of absolute moral truth. A plurality of churchgoers (48%) agreed that “there are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time; moral truth is up to each individual.” In contrast, just 43% of Christian churchgoers disagreed with that notion, while 9% said they did not know.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND COMMITMENTS, WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE NO MORAL ABSOLUTES THAT APPLY TO EVERYONE, ALL THE TIME?



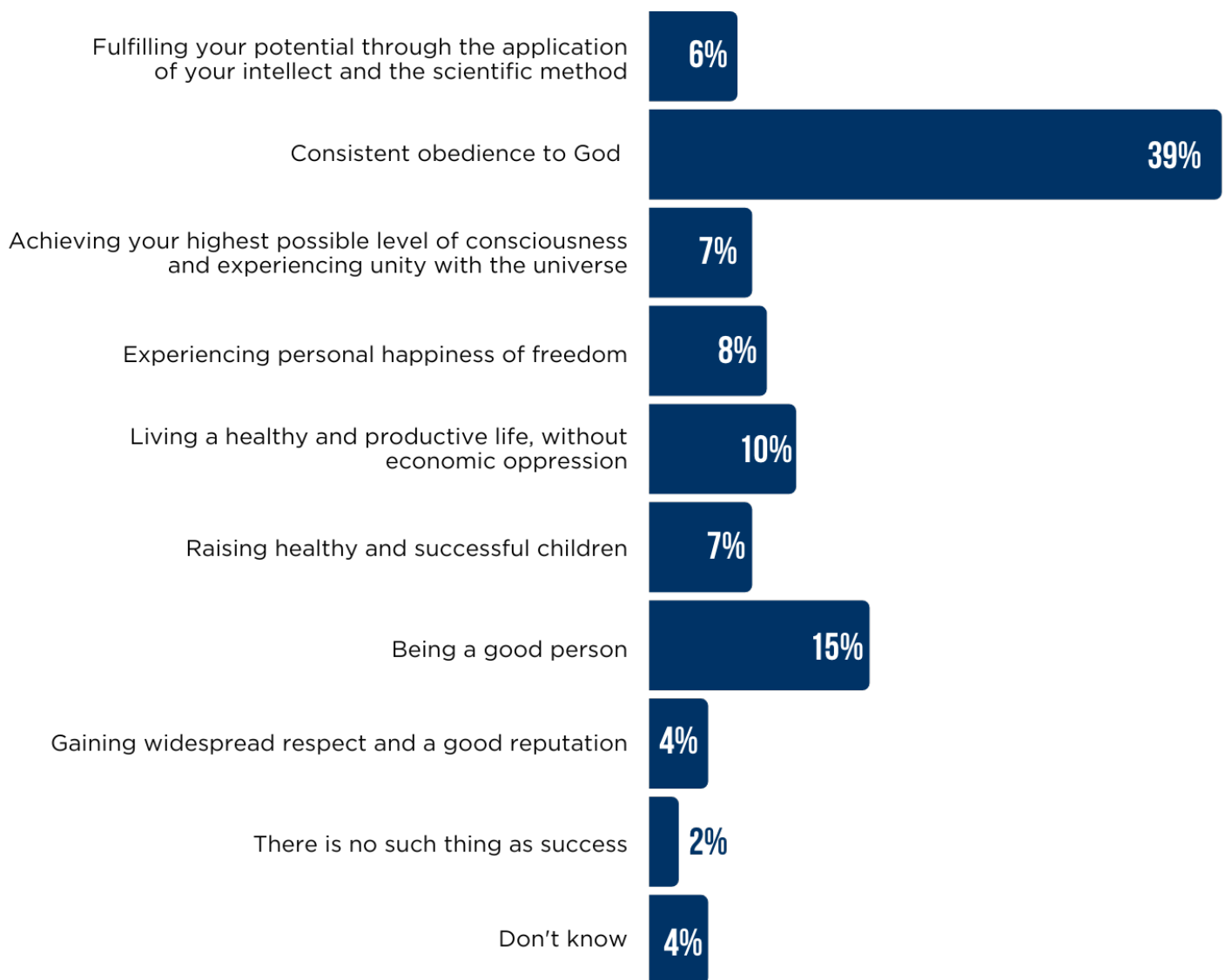
Cornerstone 6 focuses on the purpose of human life. Only one-half of churched adults (53%) listed “knowing, loving, and serving God with all your heart, mind, strength, and soul” as the general purpose of life for all people, regardless of their culture. The other half of people regularly attending church services said that purpose is creating a more humane society, through reason, dialogue, and good will (13%), experiencing happiness and fulfillment (9%), bringing order and direction to your own life, based on what matters to you (8%), experiencing total fulfillment through relationships and productivity (7%), and advancing world peace and understanding (5%). Shockingly, when asked if they were “searching for your purpose in life,” among churched adults, nearly two-thirds (63%) admitted they are still searching for their purpose in life.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF LIFE
FOR ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR CULTURE?**



Cornerstone 7 focuses on the definition of success. Even churchgoers have a skewed idea of success. A scanty 39% concurred that it is best defined as “consistent obedience to God.” The remaining six out of 10 were surprisingly evenly divided among various competing options, such as the comforting Moralistic Therapeutic Deistic ideal of “being a good person” (15%), the Marxist goal of “living a healthy and productive life, without economic oppression” (10%), the postmodern expectation of “experiencing personal happiness or freedom” (8%), the Eastern Mystical objective of “achieving your highest possible level of consciousness and experiencing unity with the universe” (7%) and the secular humanist pursuit of “fulfilling your potential through the application of your intellect and the scientific method” (6%).

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE
BEST INDICATOR OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE?**



FAITH PRACTICES

Two-thirds of the respondents (65%) claim they read or study the Bible every week. 84% of evangelicals claim they read or study the Bible every week (compared to 80% of Pentecostals, 61% of Mainline Protestants, 63% Independent/Non-Denominational and 62% Roman Catholic).

Not surprisingly, since the survey was among churchgoing adults, four out of five claimed to be deeply committed to practicing their religious faith. Among the one in seven (14%) who did not claim to be deeply committed, people 18-29 years old (25%) were among the more common segments.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

- Churchgoers claim to be consistent voters. Of those interviewed, 94% said they are registered to vote. Close to half (43%) claimed they vote in every election, including both primaries and general elections. Half as many (22%) said they vote in all general elections and most primaries. Slightly fewer (15%) said they vote in most general elections and some primary elections. Only 7% described their voting as covering some general elections and not many primary elections, while the remaining 8% said they vote whenever they feel it is important or convenient.

OF CHURCHGOERS INTERVIEWED, 94% SAID THEY ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE



22 PERCENT SAID THEY VOTE IN ALL GENERAL ELECTIONS AND MOST PRIMARIES



- About half of the churchgoers (51%) said they determine how to vote mainly based upon what the Bible teaches about the issues and candidate character. Among SAGE Cons, 89% made such a claim, while 66% of Semi-SAGE Cons also embraced the statement.
- About half of all churchgoers (54%) said they currently pay either “a lot” of attention to news related to government and politics (27%) or “quite a bit” of attention (27%). The most common response was to pay “some” attention (30%), while lesser numbers said they do not pay too much attention (16%) or none at all (4%).
- 54% of churchgoers pay “a lot” or “quite a lot” attention to news related to government and politics. 16% pay “not too much” or “none at all.” 30% indicate they watch “some” news related to government and political.
- When asked to describe their views on fiscal and social issues, 29% said they are consistently conservative, 19% claimed to be consistently moderate, and 16% self-identified as consistently progressive or liberal. A large share of the church adults claimed to vary their ideological bent based on the issue in question. The remaining adults said they either don’t pay much attention to the issues (5%) or are not sure where they fall on the ideological spectrum (4%).
- Three out of every 10 churchgoers (30%) said they prefer socialism to capitalism. Half of the survey respondents (50%) said they rejected that preference, with a substantial share of church regulars (20% saying they did not know whether they prefer socialism to capitalism).

ABORTION

Following the Dobbs decision on June 24, 2022, states around the country have considered new legislation related to life. Whereas progressive states like California have liberalized their abortion laws, states like Florida and Iowa have moved to enact greater pro-life protections. Given that the life issue has received outsized attention over the last year, churchgoers were asked a series of questions related to their beliefs on life.

- About one out of every six churchgoers (16%) admitted to having ever paid for, encouraged, or chosen to have an abortion.
- When asked to describe their position regarding abortion and life, the largest share (36%) said they are “pro-life, with some exceptions or limitations” while one-quarter (27%) claimed to be “pro-life, without exceptions or limitations.” An additional 5% claimed that they “lean pro-life but could be convinced otherwise.” The pro-abortion segment included one in seven (14%) who identified as “pro-choice, with some exceptions or limitations” plus 8% who identified as “pro-choice, without exceptions or limitations. There were 5% more who said they “lean pro-choice, but could be convinced otherwise.” Leaving out the leaners, who typically are immobilized by the issue in question, that leaves 63% identifying as pro-life, 22% as pro-choice, 10% leaning one way or the other, and 5% who did not know where they stand.
- The type of information that has the most influence on the views of churchgoers regarding abortion and the value of life are their moral and religious beliefs (71%). Influencing just a fraction of the church community were their political and policy considerations (11%) or public preferences and opinions (11%). Another 8% did not know what was influencing their abortion positions.

- Slightly more than four out of 10 churchgoers (44%) indicated that their church provided a sermon or teaching about abortion in a weekend worship service during the past 12 months. That claim varied by the type of church attended. A majority of Catholics (54%) credited their church with doing so, but none of the Protestant church segments hit 50%. Among the Protestants, 45% who attend a Pentecostal church said they had received such a sermon, trailed by evangelical (41%), mainline (36%), and independent churches (32%). Overall, just 38% of adults attending a Protestant church said they had been taught on abortion in the past year.
- About one-third (31%) said they would prefer that their church preach or teach about abortion in the weekend worship service more often, while 13% said they would prefer such teaching less often. A plurality said they would like sermons on abortion about as often as their church has provided them in recent years. (There were 8% who said they did not care how often the topic is preached about, and 8% said they did not know what they would prefer.) The adults most interested in getting such sermons more often were those who attend Catholic churches (41%), while adults aligned with mainline churches were the least interested in increasing the number or frequency of sermons on abortion (24%).
- A small majority of churchgoers (58%) said they want their church to do more than it currently does to help or support women who have an unplanned pregnancy. Few people (6%) said they want their church to do less for them, while about three out of 10 (29%) said their church should simply maintain what it is currently doing.
- There was little consensus about what the Bible teaches regarding abortion. The most common view, held by one-third (35%) of churchgoers, is that abortion is not acceptable under any circumstances. Slightly more than half as many (19%) believe the Bible says abortion is acceptable only when the life of the mother is endangered. Other views included believing the Bible says determining whether or not to have an abortion



is up to the couple involved (10%), abortion is acceptable if the child will be born with significant physical or mental challenges (7%), that abortion is acceptable under any circumstances (6%). One-quarter of respondents ducked the question, with one out of seven saying the Bible offers none of those perspectives (14%) and one-tenth saying they don't know what the Bible teaches on this subject (9%).

- Two-thirds of churchgoers (65%) claim the Bible identifies when human life begins, with one-fifth (21%) saying it does not, and 13% admitting they do not know. Among those who claim the Bible does define the beginning of life, half says it identifies the moment the female egg is fertilized (52%). Less than one out of 10 gave each of six other specific times, headed by the point at which the embryo/fetus reaches viability (7%) and six weeks after the fertilization of the female egg (6%). There were 12% who suddenly backed off and said the Bible is not specific on this matter along with another 8% who said they do not know.

**ONE-THIRD OF CHURCHGOERS BELIEVE THAT ABORTION
IS NOT ACCEPTABLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

