

A MODEL FOR BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT IN EVANGELICAL
CHRISTIAN EMERGING ADULTS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model of Biblical worldview development during emerging adulthood for Evangelical Christians, ages 18-23. Participants ($N = 20$) were Christian emerging adults who were nominated as having strong Biblical worldviews. Data was collected via personal worldview development timelines, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group session with select participants. Analysis of the data was conducted utilizing Corbin and Strauss' (2015) grounded theory analysis protocol. The model generated in this study suggests that maturation in Biblical worldview results from employing various means to process the different prompts that Christian emerging adults encounter. This process is influenced by several factors from individuals' past experiences. Additionally, the model provided further insight into the makeup of a maturing Biblical worldview, including growth in Sire's (2015) three dimensions of worldview and demonstration of the three worldview dispositions: awareness of one's worldview, ownership of the process of worldview development, and a commitment to meaningful processing. This new Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults suggests several important theoretical and practical implications for stakeholders dedicated to helping emerging adults develop a Biblical worldview.

Keywords: Biblical worldview, worldview development, emerging adults, Christian, Evangelical

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the 20 amazing emerging adults who spent an average of over two hours each working with me. You are truly exceptional, and you give me plenty of reasons to be hopeful for the future!

I also dedicate the Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults to the many individuals who are serving the Christian emerging adults of today. Pastors, professors, parents, mentors, leaders—may your efforts at mentoring, teaching, and guiding today's emerging adults bear fruit for years to come.

Acknowledgments

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Dr. Katherine Schultz graciously allowed me to use the *3DWS – Form C*, and provided reports for each of my participants.

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List of Abbreviations

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Three Dimensional Worldview Survey – Form C (*3DWS – Form C*)

Defining Issues Test (DIT)

United States of America (US)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The concepts of worldview and worldview development are relatively new areas of inquiry and understanding in Evangelical Christianity, and even more so in the field of scholarly research. While over the last 50 years significant strides have been made in identifying the components or tenets of a Biblical worldview and in perceiving all of reality through this lens, relatively little attention has been devoted to a research-based understanding of how a Biblical worldview actually develops in individuals over the duration of their lives. The purpose of this study is to contribute additional foundational knowledge to aid in addressing this deficiency.

Chapter One provides an overall framework for this study, which addresses the question of how Evangelical Christian emerging adults further develop a Biblical worldview during the first half of emerging adulthood (ages 18-23). After describing the background for the study, I explain how I as the researcher am situated in relation to worldview development in emerging adulthood. Next, I describe the problem addressed in this study and clearly articulate the purpose of the study. Research questions are identified, as is the overall research plan, including delimitations and limitations. Finally, key terms are defined as they will be used throughout this study.

Background

Since the early 1970s, mainstream Evangelicalism has been marked by increasingly widespread and significant attention to the concept of a distinctively Christian worldview (Colson & Percy, 1999; Holmes, 1983; Naugle, 2002; Percy, 2004; Schaeffer, 1976; Sire, 1997). Standing on the shoulders of early Christian worldview thinkers from the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, such as James Orr, Gordon Clark, Carl F. H. Henry,

Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd, and others (Naugle, 2002; Percy, 2004), contemporary Evangelical thinkers have affirmed that Christianity is more than a set of sacred creeds and practices, and that it provides a comprehensive view of life. According to Naugle (2002), understanding Christianity as a worldview is among the most important developments in recent church history. Sire (2015) defined worldview as:

a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 141)

Many other authors have also offered their own definitions of worldview (Colson & Percy, 1999; Holmes, 1983; Nash, 1992; Naugle, 2002; Percy, 2004; Phillips, Brown, & Stonestreet, 2008), but Sire's (2015) is the only definition that encompasses the three dimensions of heart orientation, propositional truths, and behavior.

Within a relatively short passage of time since the term worldview was introduced in Evangelicalism (see the "Definitions" section below for a description of Evangelical Christians), it has become nearly ubiquitous. One can easily build a personal library containing books on Biblical worldview, attend worldview conferences, and even take university courses that outline the propositional tenets of a Biblical worldview, comparing it to the other worldview options that vie for commitment. Additionally, many Christian K-12 schools and universities have made developing a Biblical worldview in their students a primary aim (Schultz & Swezey, 2013).

In spite of the focus on Biblical worldview in Christian education and the preponderance of resources designed to promote understand the components of a Biblical worldview,

comparatively little attention has been given to understanding how a person actually develops a Biblical worldview across the lifespan. Though some writers and researchers have hinted at how a person comes to understand, embrace, and apply a Biblical worldview (Brickhill, 2010; Ham, Beemer, & Hillard, 2012; Naugle, 2002), a comprehensive framework for Biblical worldview development across the lifespan has not been generated. This lack of a framework negatively impacts efforts at nurturing a Biblical worldview in others, but it is especially detrimental during the critical emerging adulthood phase of life.

Like the concept of a Biblical worldview, emerging adulthood is a relatively new designation for the sociological phase (Arnett, 2000; Smith & Snell, 2009) that spans the ages of 18 to 29. Although previously thought of as young adulthood or extended adolescence, sociologists recognized that neither of these designations is adequate, as the former suggests more stability than is actually present, and the latter tends to carry derogatory connotations, as if someone in this stage has not grown up yet (Arnett, 2000).

Emerging adulthood is a period of significant transition, personal formation, and exploration of possibilities (Arnett, 2007), and much research has focused on individuals in this life stage. However, for the concept of Biblical worldview formation, the results of the research have yielded either disappointing, inadequate, or incomplete conclusions: disappointing, in that many emerging adults are rejecting Christianity, or do not possess a Biblical worldview (Ham et al., 2012); inadequate, in that a reliable measure of a person's worldview has not yet been developed (Schultz & Swezey, 2013); and incomplete, in that many studies regarding emerging adults focus on only limited aspects of worldview development (King, Clardy, & Ramos, 2014; Nather, 2013; Powell, Tisdale, Willingham, Bustrum, & Allan, 2012).

Generating a comprehensive framework for worldview development covering the entire

life span is important. However, given that as many as six out of ten young adults who were involved in church and in other spiritually focused activities as teens do not maintain their faith in emerging adulthood (Uecker, Rengerus, & Vaaler, 2007), it is particularly important to understand the processes and experiences that influence the development of worldview during emerging adulthood. Apparently, there is a disconnect between adolescent faith and the faith of emerging adults, as individuals in their early twenties are leaving the church in record numbers (Astin, 2004; Barna Research Group, 2006; The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008). Given these grim statistics and the significance of the emerging adult years (Arnett, 2000; Parks, 2000), this age span may prove to be the most pivotal in the process of worldview development, and therefore a crucial area for research and theory-building.

Situation to Self

My interest in the concept of worldview development is both personal and professional. I am a father of five children and the superintendent of a Christian school. For both roles, one of my primary goals is to produce emerging adults who possess a strong Biblical worldview, including a commitment to applying that worldview to all areas of their lives. I have found that it is relatively easy to teach the tenets of a Biblical worldview and to motivate children and adolescents to repeat those tenets back to me. It is quite a different matter to nurture a genuine personal commitment to a Biblical worldview that is solidified in emerging adulthood. For me, understanding how a Biblical worldview actually develops will inform every effort at developing a Biblical worldview in my children and my students.

Worldview development is also a process that I have personally experienced and one upon which I have spent considerable time reflecting. During the summer of 1998 when I was 29 years old and at the end of my own journey through emerging adulthood, I arrived at the

conclusion that Christianity is more than a set of sacred beliefs and behaviors. Not long after graduating college with a degree in Bible at age 21, I became disenchanted with the sacred-secular split that I saw in so much of the church, and I resolved to live differently. That resolution initiated almost a decade of searching, throughout my entire emerging adulthood years. At age 29, I re-discovered a textbook from my college philosophy class, *Contours of a Worldview*, by Arthur Holmes (1983). Reading Holmes' (1983) work again ten years later awakened me to the concept of worldview as it relates to my Christian life.

Shortly after, in the summer of 1998 I was studying for a teaching series on the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5-7. It was then that I experienced the revelation that Christianity was a comprehensive worldview and not solely a relationship with Christ, or a means to get into heaven. This new awareness is well documented in my personal journal and teaching notes from that time. Since that awakening at age 29, I have been on a continual journey to understand the fullness of the Biblical worldview and its impact on all of life.

Throughout this process, I have been influenced by books, curricula, Christian speakers, and research during my masters and doctoral programs at Regent University and Liberty University, respectively. I have taught classes on Biblical worldview and been a homeschool conference speaker on the topic of cultivating a Biblical worldview in children. My own home is a constant worldview workshop of sorts, in which we discuss countless topics from a Biblical worldview framework, with my adolescent and adult children, and the various emerging adults who have lived with my family as houseguests from time to time.

However, in all my study and teaching, I have yet to find a comprehensive framework for worldview development and have instead been frustrated as I ask questions that do not seem to have ready answers, such as: How does worldview actually develop? What can parents do to

effectively nurture a commitment to the Biblical worldview in their children? How can K-12 and post-secondary Christian educators do a better job of nurturing a Biblical worldview in their students? How can we avoid the trap of believing that just because a person can recite the propositional tenets of a Biblical worldview, that he or she possesses a well-formed Biblical worldview? I am dissatisfied with the lack of answers to these questions and this is what motivates me to conduct this research.

The core philosophical assumption that I bring to this research is my commitment to the basic components of a Biblical worldview, which provide a reliable over-arching meta-narrative to explain reality (Esqueda, 2014; Naugle, 2002). I believe God created the universe and everything in it out of nothing by the decree of His Word, and that He created everything to be perfect, flawless, and excellent (Genesis 1:1-31). Mankind's choice to disobey God (Genesis 3:1-13) initiated a new reality for the human experience, one marred in every aspect by the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:14-24; Romans 5:12-14; Romans 8:19-22). God's purpose, though, has not been eternally thwarted and via the saving, sin-cancelling work of Christ on the cross, He is reconciling all things to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:12-18; Romans 5:15-19; Colossians 1:13-20), and invites human beings to be involved in this redemptive work (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 28:18-20). The influence of the Kingdom of God can come to bear on all aspects of the human condition on earth (Matthew 6:33; Luke 10:9), though the full influence of the Kingdom will not be experienced until the final culmination of the ages, the revelation of the new Heavens and new Earth (Revelation 21:1) in which the effects of the curse will be eternally removed (Revelation 21:4-5; 22:3), God's enemies will be eternally separated from His presence (Revelation 20:7-15; 21:8), and God's people will enjoy eternal fellowship with Him (Revelation 21:22-26). For the individual who embraces and lives in

agreement with a Biblical worldview, every human endeavor and experience can find proper context and purpose, and ultimately provides the only truly meaningful and lasting fulfillment (Naugle, 2008).

In this grounded theory study I employed a constructivist research paradigm, primarily in that theory was inductively developed from the data, as opposed to deductively applying an existing theory to understand a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). While Sire's (2015) conception of worldview functioned as the working definition of worldview, the development of which was examined in this study, it did not serve as a strictly guiding theory, as is often utilized in other research designs. Instead, it provided a consistent definition for worldview, which was necessary in order to examine what was occurring and has occurred in the lives of the participants. The aim of this study was to generate a model for worldview development, not to test or validate an existing model or theory.

A constructivist research paradigm includes two other significant subordinate assumptions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 2013) which guided my research. First, according to constructivism, any phenomenon results in varied perspectives and interpretation. Since different individuals experience developing a Biblical worldview in different ways and have different perspectives on that experience, I interviewed multiple participants in order to gain a well-rounded and rich description of worldview development. Each interview was much like part of the old story of three blind men describing an elephant: one says it is like a tree; another says it is like a flexible, large branch; and the last says it is like a small twig. When all of these descriptions are put together, the understanding of what an elephant is becomes more fully accurate and rich.

Second, in a constructivist research paradigm, meaning, concepts, and theories are

constructed by researchers out of the varied stories of research participants. The model of worldview development that I created emerged from the participants' stories; I did not merely analyze what others have said about worldview development. Experts in the field of worldview (Sire, 2015) and developmental psychology (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000) informed my research, but did not control it.

While utilizing the assumptions of constructivism for methodological decisions related to this specific study, I do not espouse the underlying constructivist epistemology. In a constructivist epistemology, the accessibility of absolute truth and the validity of meta-narratives are patently denied (Watson & Uecker, 2007). Instead, to the constructivist, truth about the way things really are is a matter of consensus among individuals, not a correspondence with any objective reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). As a Christian, I embrace a distinctively Christian epistemology, a philosophical stance in which truth about objective reality exists and is knowable and accessible via revelation (through Scripture and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit), and via observation of the natural world and rational thought (Knight, 2006). In my research, I have relied upon the full potential of both my (and others') human capacity to reason and God's willingness to reveal the truth about reality.

Problem Statement

Even though the literature is replete with books and curricula that provide the content or propositions that make up the Biblical worldview (Percy, 2004), very little empirical research has focused on how a Biblical worldview, or a worldview in general, is actually formed. In general, the literature is limited to measuring worldview in individuals using one of the few worldview instruments that are available; to investigating various factors that seem to influence the development of worldview (Brickhill, 2010; Rutledge, 2013; Schultz & Swezey, 2013; Van

Meter, 2009); or to measuring some construct related to worldview development, such as identity, moral, or spirituality development, or religiosity in general (Bryant, 2011; Ciarrocchi & Heaven, 2012; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977; Mayhew, Seifert, Pascarella, Laird, & Blaich, 2012; Smith & Snell, 2009). However, without a rich and comprehensive understanding of how a Biblical worldview is actually formed, efforts to develop a Biblical worldview will not be well-informed. This dearth in research may help explain why many emerging adults who self-identify as Evangelical Christians do not subscribe to even the basic beliefs of a Biblical worldview, a reality which is both disturbing and well-confirmed in the literature (Garber, 1996; Ham et al., 2012; Smith & Snell, 2009; van der Kooij, de Ruyter, & Miedema, 2013). Additionally, scant research has been conducted regarding how emerging adults' worldview is shaped, in spite of the significant amount of scholarly attention that is devoted to emerging adulthood (Gutierrez & Park, 2014). The problem this study addressed is the lack of a model in the empirical and theoretical literature explaining how a Biblical worldview develops in Evangelical Christian emerging adults.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model of Biblical worldview development during emerging adulthood for Evangelical Christians, ages 18-23. For this study, Biblical worldview development was defined as the process by which individuals grow in their active commitment to and understanding of a perspective on reality and life that is shaped by the Holy Bible (Percy, 2004; Phillips et al., 2008). The theory guiding this study was Sire's (2015) three-dimensional concept of worldview, as it provides a comprehensive, three-dimensional concept of worldview (Schultz & Swezey, 2013), including the following aspects: heart

orientation, essential propositions, and associated behavioral expressions. According to Sire (2015),

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 141)

Significance of the Study

The results of this study have theoretical, empirical, and practical significance. In terms of theory building, this study resulted in the creation of the Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults. As stated earlier, a model for Biblical worldview development is lacking in the literature. What seems to proliferate instead are the few worldview assessment tools, which have become the basis (or, the operationalization of, the dependent variable) for many of the studies conducted in the realm of Biblical worldview (Brickhill, 2010; Deckard, Henderson, & Grant, 2002; Van Meter, 2009). This model for Biblical worldview development in the emerging adult stage may not only enhance understanding of this crucial stage of development, but may also provide a starting place for expanding the model into a fully-developed theory of worldview development which would encompass the entire life-span.

From an empirical perspective, the literature includes numerous studies that utilize instruments to measure propositional worldview, personal identity, moral choice-making ability, and other similar concepts in quantitative designs (Mayhew, 2012; Nather, 2013; You & Penney, 2011). These inquiries are all related to Biblical worldview development to varying degrees and are helpful. However, the literature does not include qualitative studies on the nature and

dynamics of Biblical worldview development, or worldview development in general, as an overall construct which would serve to establish a stronger base from which quantitative studies can be conducted. According to Tanner (2006), and more recently affirmed by Gutierrez and Park (2014), empirical research on worldview development in emerging adulthood has been minimal. The data collected and the model developed in this study contributes important qualitative empirical data to the literature, which can serve as a basis for further qualitative and quantitative studies, as suggested by Arnett (2006).

In the practical realm, Christian parents, schools, universities, and churches are reporting limited effectiveness in nurturing a Biblical worldview in the rising generation of emerging adults (Ham et al., 2012). It is possible that the lack of understanding concerning how a Biblical worldview develops is part of the reason for this phenomenon. Without having a model for Biblical worldview development, parents, educators, and ministry leaders may be overlooking important concepts as they design and implement curriculum and as they select pedagogies for use in the classroom and other venues. Given that developing a Biblical worldview is an important aim of Christian education in its many expressions (Schultz & Swezey, 2013), curriculum designers and teacher/mentors can benefit from deeper understanding about how a Biblical worldview actually develops.

Research Questions

The central research question and sub-questions for this study are described below.

CRQ: How does a Biblical worldview develop during emerging adulthood in Evangelical Christians ages 18-23?

Sociologists have identified emerging adulthood as a stage in which individuals explore various worldviews and make or affirm belief commitments that will last long into adulthood

(Arnett, 2007; Garber, 1997; Smith & Snell, 2009). While each stage of life offers unique and compelling opportunities for developing or affirming one's worldview, the emerging adult stage is particularly important, as this is the stage of personal development in which, ideally, an individual evaluates his or her worldview and makes necessary adjustments to that worldview prior to committing to it as the foundation of future decisions (Arnett, 2007; Fowler, 1981; Parks, 1986; Parks, 2000; Smith & Snell, 2009).

Participants in this study were those who self-identify as Evangelical Christians, and this delimitation was intentional. As mentioned earlier, significant effort and resources have been devoted to explaining and identifying the concept of worldview in Evangelical circles (Naugle, 2002). As such, the concept of worldview was familiar to Evangelical emerging adults in this study, and data collection among them was natural, without the need to spend extended time discussing or defining worldview.

An individual's worldview is comprised of three central dimensions (Schultz & Swezey, 2013; Sire, 2015): heart orientation, propositional (cognitive), and behavioral. The sub-questions for this study are each based on one of these three dimensions, as follows.

SQ1: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a heart orientation toward God and His truth?

The heart is the center of the human being, and it is from the heart that humans see, perceive, and interpret reality (Naugle, 2002; Willard, 2002). A heart orientation towards God is more than mere assent to the reality of God; it is a pretheoretical posture of worship towards ultimate reality (Sire, 2015), a posture that influences all of life (Naugle, 2008; Willard, 2002). As such, the orientation of one's heart is the originating center for worldviews and any exploration of a person's worldview must take this starting point into account. Observing,

measuring, and understanding a person's heart orientation is dependent upon being able to observe and interpret that person's actions. Therefore, another way to word this question could be, "How do Christian emerging adults describe the impact that their heart orientation has on their thoughts, choices, and actions?" This is consistent with the way in which Scripture explains the connection between the heart and action (Proverbs 20:11; Proverbs 23:7; Luke 6:45).

SQ2: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a commitment to a master narrative or set of presuppositions which is consistent with Biblical revelation?

While a worldview begins with acknowledgement of and a bending of the heart towards some ultimate reality, it also will include an overarching narrative which sets the context for one's life and one's perspective of reality (Naugle, 2002). Sire (2015) calls these narratives orienting patterns, which may be more or less cohesive and may more or less formally mark the passage of time and its relation to the human experience. Also, a worldview will include a set of propositional truth-claims or a body of knowledge that claims to accurately represent reality, or the way things really are (Moreland, 2007). This set of truths may be organized and rational, or it may not be (Sire, 2015; Willard, 2002). According to Moreland (2007), not only is a worldview comprised of ideas, but it is also defined by how those ideas are held together in a rational or an irrational structure. Inquiry into a person's worldview must include probing for the narratives that serve as broad context for that worldview. Further, such inquiry must seek to identify the presuppositions that are held to be true, and the thought structures that organize those presuppositions.

SQ3: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of aligning their behavior to be an accurate reflection of a Biblical worldview?

One's worldview is most externally evident in one's actions; it is the milieu in which one lives, moves, and has being (Moreland, 2007). Thoughts often lead to behavior, whether in spoken in words or acted out by some other mechanism of the human body (Lockerbie, 1989; Willard, 2002). According to Sire (2015), "our worldview is not precisely what we state it to be. It is what is actualized in our behavior" (p. 153). The alignment of behavior with heart orientation and rationally held presuppositions is a significant aspect of a maturing worldview, and the degree of alignment in these three areas is an important area to consider when examining or evaluating one's worldview (Garber, 1996).

Research Plan

This study was conducted utilizing a qualitative, systematic grounded theory design (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Participants were Evangelical Christian emerging adults, ages 18-23 who were nominated as having a Biblical worldview. The setting for the study was the United States, though the actual setting was primarily limited to the northeast region, due to convenience. Data was collected via participant worldview development timelines, interviews, a focus group session, and researcher-written memos. Data was analyzed according to systematic grounded theory data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations are not flaws in a study, but rather intentional choices of the researcher that put appropriate boundaries around the study, enabling it to actually be conducted and completed (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). This study included only professing Evangelical Christian emerging adults as participants. Certainly examining worldview development as an overall construct in all individuals or in individuals from all branches of the Christian faith would have been worthwhile, but to do so would have gone far beyond the boundaries of a doctoral dissertation.

Additionally, as was mentioned earlier, since the concept of worldview has been widely discussed and accepted in Evangelical Christianity (Naugle, 2002; Percy, 2004), participants were quite familiar with the term. This knowledge negated the need to spend significant time orienting them to the concept of worldview, which would have drawn resources of time and effort away from actual data collection and analysis.

While emerging adulthood as a developmental stage comprises individuals between 18 and 29 years old (Arnett, 2000), this study was delimited to individuals who were between the ages of 18-23. The rationale for this delimitation is that the full emerging adulthood age span of 12 years is a large age span, with 18 year olds and 29 year olds being at opposite ends of the spectrum of development during emerging adulthood. Focusing on the entire range of ages in emerging adulthood would have been unwieldy, and also would have increased the number of interviews beyond what would have been possible, given the time and resource constraints of a doctoral dissertation.

Several theorists and researchers in the fields of young adult development, religiosity in young adults, and cognitive development in college students (Parks, 1986; Perry, 1999; Smith & Snell, 2009) delimit their research to this same age group, suggesting that, while emerging adulthood spans the ages of 18 to 29, it is valid to delimit research in emerging adulthood to the first half of that span. Additionally, while worldview development is likely a life-long process (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), the purpose of this study is to examine just one life-stage, that of emerging adulthood. In the future, the model developed in the study could be expanded to include life-stages before and after emerging adulthood.

Finally, I only investigated Biblical worldview development for Evangelical Christian emerging adults in the United States. To have broadened the study to participants outside the

United States would certainly have been valuable, but would also have made collecting and analyzing the data cumbersome and difficult to accomplish in the timeframe allotted for this study (+/- one year).

Limitations are those aspects of a research study that may limit the generalizability or transferability of the results to alternative populations (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). Since theoretical sampling was utilized in this study, the transferability of the results is limited only to populations that closely match the criteria that I established for the participants. Additionally, I chose to delimit the setting to only participants in the United States, meaning that the results may not apply in other geographical or national settings. Since study participants had to have been willing to volunteer to be a part of the study, the results may only apply to individuals who are similar in personality and internal makeup—people who are willing to openly discuss and evaluate their worldview. Finally, there are limitations inherent in qualitative research, such as dependence upon the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses on the timelines and in the interviews and focus group session.

Definitions

The following terms were used throughout this study:

1. *Worldview* – a worldview is an internal, thought-based meta-framework that informs humans' perceptions of reality (Valk, 2013). These meta-frameworks include a set of foundational assumptions about the sense of self, how the world functions, one's unique role and place in the world, what is important and valuable, and what should be given less emphasis (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Pearcey, 2004, Sire, 1997; Wolf, 2011). Formally, Sire's (2015) definition for worldview will be used throughout this study:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 141)

2. *Biblical Worldview* - a “framework of assumptions about reality, all of which are in submission to Christ” (Schultz & Swezey, 2013, p. 232) and are based upon the Biblical narrative of creation, fall, and redemption (Hand, 2012; Naugle, 2002), and which function as a comprehensive guide for choices and actions (Lockerbie, 1989).
3. *Biblical Worldview Development* – the process by which individuals grow in their commitment to, understanding of, and behavioral alignment with a perspective on reality and life that is shaped by the Holy Bible (Pearcy, 2004; Phillips et al., 2008).
4. *Evangelical Christian* – Evangelical Christians are marked by four primary characteristics (Balmer, 2004; Bebbington, 1996; George, Guinness, Huffman, Mouw, Moranda, Neff, & Willard, 2008). First, Evangelicals maintain the conviction that individuals are born with a sinful nature and must be transformed by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ; people are not born Christians and they cannot attain salvation through baptism, church membership or any other good works. Second, Evangelicals strive to actively live out their faith, including practicing consistent obedience to the Bible and spreading the gospel message to lost persons and people groups. Third, Evangelicals unequivocally hold that the Bible is the supreme authority for faith and life,

and the only reliable source of the gospel. Finally, the reality and implications of Christ's death on the cross are central to Evangelicals' faith, theology, and devotional pursuits.

5. *Emerging Adults* – individuals between the ages of 18 and 29. This life-stage is marked by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feelings of being in-between, and numerous possibilities (Arnett, 2007). For the purposes of this study, when the term emerging adults is utilized, it refers to the first half of emerging adulthood – ages 18-23.

Summary

While the concept of Biblical worldview has received broad acceptance and attention among Evangelical Christians, significant attention has not been given to generating an empirical framework for Biblical worldview development. This systematic grounded theory study focused on generating a model for Biblical worldview development in one segment of life-span development, emerging adulthood. Such a model may be extremely helpful in guiding curricular and pedagogical design among those concerned with effectively cultivating a Biblical worldview in future generations of Christians. Furthermore, a well-constructed, empirically-based model of Biblical worldview development during the emerging adult years may serve as a springboard for expanded theory generation for the entire life-span.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review provides an examination of the theoretical and empirical literature related to the study of Biblical worldview development in Evangelical Christian emerging adults. The applicability of theoretical frameworks to qualitative grounded theory is discussed, followed by a brief exposition of the concept of worldview. Next is an examination of five relevant theories, including Sire's (2015) definition of worldview, Arnett's (2000, 2006, 2007) conception of emerging adulthood, Fowler's (1981) and Parks' (1986, 2000) theories of faith development, and Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development. Examination of these theories is followed by a review of research related to worldview development. A brief summary closes the chapter.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical frameworks serve as a lens through which a researcher collects and analyzes data (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). More formally, Anfara and Mertz (2006) defined a theoretical framework as "any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of levels, that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena" (p. xxvii). Since this is a qualitative grounded theory study and my purpose is to develop a theoretical model that does not yet exist, a formal or strictly delimiting theoretical framework will not be employed. Even so, it is impossible to look at data as a researcher with no pre-existing ideas of how to interpret the data; there is no truly objective or non-biased research (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Since I could not approach the data without some frame of reference, several concepts, which are well attested in the literature, informed my research, and are described in the following

sections. Sire's (2015) definition of worldview was the working definition utilized throughout the research. Emerging adulthood as a distinct, chronological life-stage was defined by Arnett's (2000) sociological treatment of what is still commonly referred to as young adulthood. Fowler's (1981) and Parks' (2000) theories of faith development served as backdrops for analyzing the experiences of emerging adults as they develop a Biblical worldview, an experience which seems to have much in common with faith development. Finally, Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development was examined and shown to be insufficient as a framework within which to study worldview development.

Overview of the Concept of Worldview

Over the last 40 years of Evangelical church history, significant focus has been devoted to the concept of a distinctively Biblical worldview. Within just a few decades after the term worldview was introduced to mainstream Evangelical Christianity by Francis Schaeffer (1976), it has become virtually ubiquitous, almost to the point of being a buzz-word, with seminars, books, curricula, and college courses on worldview being plentiful and easily accessible (Percy, 2004). The Evangelical church has discovered, as it were, a way of classifying the component parts of the body of knowledge known as the Biblical worldview, and much energy has been allocated to transmitting that body of knowledge to others. In just the Christian school movement alone, various Christian school organizations, such as the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), suggest that the development of a Biblical worldview is one of the central purposes of Christian schooling (Schultz & Swezey, 2013).

Even with the significant advances made in understanding a Biblical worldview, very few individuals in the Evangelical church are able to offer a substantive or comprehensive definition of worldview (Naugle, 2002). Neither can they identify how they determine whether they have

been successful or have failed in their efforts at nurturing a Biblical worldview in others (Schultz & Swezey, 2013). Further, a comprehensive framework for a Biblical worldview formation has not been developed. Without such a framework, it is difficult to approach worldview formation in a developmental fashion. A framework for Biblical worldview formation would not only explain how worldview is shaped in an individual, but would do so in a way that is faithful to the Biblical view of humanity in general and human development specifically (Schultz & Swezey, 2013).

In general, worldviews are cognitive meta-frameworks that determine and interpret humans' perceptions of reality (Valk, 2013) and form the basis of thought and action. These meta-frameworks are comprised of a set of foundational assumptions concerning the nature and substance of reality, including: a sense of self and one's place in the world, and convictions about what is true, valuable, and good (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Percy, 2004; Sire, 1997; Wolf, 2011).

To help readers understand what makes up a worldview, multiple authors have suggested lists of questions that a worldview answers. Answers to these questions form the basic presuppositions of a worldview, and serve as a helpful tool to compare and contrast different worldviews. Sire (2015, pp. 20-21) offered the following eight questions:

- What is prime reality—the really real?
- What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
- What is a human being?
- What happens to persons at death?
- Why is it possible to know anything at all?
- How do we know what is right and wrong?

- What is the meaning of human history?
- What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with each worldview?

Phillips et al. (2008, p. 9) generated several questions that a worldview answers, though they do so as a list of representative questions, and not a formal, comprehensive list, per se. These questions are classified into broader categories including: origins, meaning, morality, destiny, and identity. The following questions fit into these categories:

- Where did everything come from?
- Is there a God?
- What is the nature of ultimate reality?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What is our purpose?
- Is there right and wrong?
- What does it seem that the world is not as it should be?
- What happens after we die?
- Where is history going?
- What is a human being?
- Who am I?
- How do I fit?

As can be seen from these two representative lists, a person's worldview provides answers to the most important questions that essentially make up one's views on ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Nash, 1992). All three of these philosophical

constructs (ontology, epistemology, and axiology) not only inform one's perspective on reality and life, but they guide one's choices as well. Whether a person realizes it or not, their worldview is a guide for action and not merely thought (Lockerbie, 1989).

The term worldview is roughly parallel to the German word *weltanschauung*, which can be translated as a way of looking at the world (Percy, 2004), and which was first used in the context of philosophy by German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his 1790 work, *In Critique of Reason*. Kant referred to a *weltanschauung* as a priori knowledge with which one approaches life and reason. His description of a *weltanschauung* is awkward in the English translation, but its imagery is brilliant; Kant (1790/1987) described a worldview as a "supersensible substrate" (p. 37). By this he meant the underlying foundation of one's believing, thinking, and acting in life that cannot be readily perceived by the senses. This is consistent with how the term worldview continues to be used today.

Late 18th century theologian James Orr was the first individual in the English-speaking world to pick up the term worldview and begin to use it in the context of Evangelical Christianity (Naugle, 2002). In *The Christian View of God and the World*, Orr (1908) approached the basic Evangelical beliefs not merely as a list of theological propositions, but as an ordered whole and a comprehensive way to view the world. Orr believed that the meaning behind the word *weltanschauung* represented the widest view of the world one could take, in an effort to assemble the component parts of the world into a cohesive whole. He recognized that the mind has a tendency to organize and categorize things, and that this internal process is largely beyond the realm of conscious thought. Orr posited that the hunger to form a worldview is rooted deep in human nature itself.

After Orr (1908), several Evangelical theologians took up the task of elaborating on the concept of *weltanschauung*, continuing to apply it to Christianity. These theologians included Gordon Clark, Carl Henry, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd, and Francis Schaeffer (Naugle, 2002). The influence of these individuals in the 20th century cannot be overemphasized, to the point where no other philosophical school or religion has given more focus to worldview thinking than Evangelicals (Naugle, 2002). Today, there is a virtual plethora of books, curricula, conferences, and entire worldview ministries in the Evangelical world devoted to worldview study and to transferring a Biblical worldview to others. However, even with all the attention worldview has received in Evangelicalism, it is curious that the concept of worldview development has not received the same level of intense focus.

Some scholars characterize worldview as an individual's unique interpretive lens, used to make meaning and to understand one's own place in the fabric of reality (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Worldviews supply perspective on life and death, meaningfulness or nonsense, good and evil, suffering, and the ultimate good of life (van der Kooij et al., 2013). Mayhew and Bryant (2013) posited that an individual's whole personal identity is formed as a result of the interplay between the various components of their worldview.

A worldview however does not solely function as a lens for viewing the world; it is a vision for life that leads to a specific way of living (Lockerbie, 1989; Percy, 2004; Valk, 2013). Worldviews inform both how one views the world and how one acts in the world. According to Naugle (2002) a worldview is a heart-based, cognitively-formed (though not necessarily consciously), meaning-making system which guides the human activities of reasoning, interpreting perceptions of reality, and knowing. Worldviews influence every area of life, determining and shaping what is thought of as meaningful or worthwhile, and those causes

which may require sacrifice. Individuals act according to their worldview, whether they do so intentionally or not (Valk, 2013).

A Biblical worldview in particular is a “framework of assumptions about reality, all of which are in submission to Christ” (Schultz & Swezey, 2013, p. 232). Central to this framework are two foundational truths: (a) God exists, and (b) God is who he has revealed himself to be in creation, the Bible, and the person of Jesus Christ (Phillips et al., 2008). All other components of the Biblical worldview proceed from these two truths. As a meta-narrative, a Biblical worldview is essentially a logical story, made up of three broad sub-narratives: creation, fall, and redemption (Naugle, 2002).

This framework of assumptions about reality goes beyond the Evangelical concept of salvation. Indeed, it is critically important to salvation that a person understand that Christ died for mankind’s sins, and that He is one day going to return to earth. However, it is possible to understand and embrace this, and yet still miss other significant elements of the Christian worldview (Stonestreet & Smith, 2015). For instance, one can be saved and yet completely bypass the reality that God’s original design for mankind is for humans to rule over creation as vice-regents on earth (Genesis 1:28). This truth is certainly not essential for salvation, meaning the act of accepting Christ’s atoning work on the cross to attain heaven after death. However, it is most essential for living a fulfilling, fruitful, and purposeful life to the glory of God while still on earth. Ruling as a fundamental component of being a human being is a far-reaching and dramatic truth; it has impact on every choice, every day. This is just one example of the disadvantages of living life as a Christian without consciously living out a full Biblical worldview.

Sire's Conception of Worldview

For this study, Sire's (2015) comprehensive three-dimensional concept of worldview was used as the central conceptual framework that informs this study. In order to study the development of worldview it is essential to know what it is that is actually being developed. Treatments of worldview in the literature have tended to focus on the cognitive aspects of worldviews—the elements or propositions that make up a person's rational or cognitive view of the world. However, worldviews are not solely sets of cognitively held presuppositions; they have a soft side as well—that of the heart. A comprehensive understanding of the concept of worldviews should also include the heart's involvement in perceiving and interpreting reality. Additionally, as stated earlier, a worldview is a guide for action. A reliable and helpful definition for worldview should address all three of these aspects: heart orientation, truth propositions, and behavioral commitments (Schultz & Swezey, 2013).

According to Sire (2015), a worldview is:

A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 141)

Heart orientation is different from cognition, though the two are closely related.

According to Willard (2002), the heart is the core of a person's being or the executive center of a person's life. It is within the heart of a person that decisions are made, which are evidenced by thoughts, speech, and bodily actions. Cognition, on the other hand is the act of holding a thought or series of thoughts or conceptualizations in the mind for consideration, processing, and/or

extension (Moreland, 1997). In terms of the relationship between heart orientation and cognition, the decisions and affections of the heart influence the way in which one thinks and acts (Naugle, 2008; Willard, 2002). In turn, the thoughts of the individual impact one's decisions (Willard, 2002).

Sire (2015) expanded on this three-fold definition by describing worldviews in more detail. Worldviews find their origin in a priori assumptions, and whether a person recognizes the fact or not, worldviews are the functional foundation for all of a person's thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. They are also comprehensive, in that they relate to all areas of life and reality. Ideally, a person's worldview should be logically coherent. Also ideally, a worldview should conform to reality and accurately represent the way things really are. Finally—and ultimately—worldviews are fundamentally matters of heart commitment.

While Sire (2015) has not offered a model for worldview development, he has acknowledged that a person's worldview is shaped and formed throughout the entire course of life. He pointed to life experience in general, and crisis and ordinary times in particular, as the primary shapers of a person's worldview. Looking at this process as a cycle, a person's actions issue from their heart, and in turn, those actions and behaviors form the heart (Sire, 2015). Sire has also identified social context as a significant shaper of one's worldview.

However, even given these universal influences, Sire (2015) simultaneously pointed to the reality that most people think with their worldview, but that they rarely think about their worldview. In terms of actual formation, Sire's (2015) only specific suggestion was that a person ought to strive to bring all thoughts together into one cohesive whole. He has lamented, though, that most people are not willing to do the heavy and long-term work of actually accomplishing this (Sire, 2015). So, while having offered perhaps the most comprehensive, well-rounded, and

up-to-date conception of worldview, Sire (2015) stopped short of explaining how a worldview is developed.

Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is a recently identified stage of human development, first described by sociologist Jeffrey Arnett (2000). Arnett (2000) characterized emerging adulthood as a time of massive personal change and internal upheaval. Spanning roughly the ages of 18-29, individuals in this period tend to actively, if not consciously, explore the possibilities in life including who they will love, what they will do for work, and upon which worldview they will base the balance of their adult life (Arnett, 2000).

Ideally, emerging adulthood is the stage in which human beings consciously audit their existing worldview and make deliberate choices about what to keep and what to discard. They must honestly assess where they have come from and how their personal history has shaped their perspective on the world. Then, thoughtfully, they must consider how they want to launch into adulthood, and upon what theoretical foundation they will build their adult life—their time of free-agency, when they take responsibility for their choices and live life under direction from an internal set of principles instead of external controls. Arnett (2006) referred to this personal audit and decision-making as constructing a life-plan, which can be seen as closely related to choosing one's worldview.

According to Arnett (2006), there are five main features of emerging adulthood: the age of identity exploration, the age of instability, the self-focused age, the age of feeling in-between, and the age of possibilities. First, emerging adults are in a process of extended identity exploration. Related to the current study, emerging adults actively explore who they are, and a central component of this exploration is the question of what values and beliefs they will hold on

to as they progress into adulthood. For most emerging adults, this involves analyzing the currently held beliefs and values, which in many cases are simply the beliefs and values of their parents. As they are between the direct influence of their parents and the controlling factors that come with adult webs of relationships and commitments, they are free to explore the options for their own lives, trying out different foundations upon which to build their lives.

While seeking their adult identity, emerging adults find themselves in an age of major instability (Arnett, 2006). This makes sense, given that along with active exploration often comes instability. Because life-long commitments (in areas such as love, work, and values) are still being tested and considered, emerging adulthood tends to be relatively unstable, especially when compared with earlier and later periods of development. This instability is particularly noticeable in living arrangements. From their childhood home to college, and sometimes back home again before striking out on their own, emerging adults live in a variety of contexts and communities. This diversity of living arrangements provides an interesting metaphor of the instability that emerging adults experience. The process of choosing a career, a life partner, and a set of values and beliefs can be imagined as experimenting with various places to live.

While not generally selfish in the colloquial sense of the word, emerging adults are highly self-focused, meaning that they have very few commitments or obligations that would provide external controls on their choices and behaviors (Arnett, 2006). They enjoy a significant amount of autonomy, and perhaps more so than at any other period of their lives. In childhood and adolescence, individuals are concerned with external rules enforced by external authority structures, whether they are prone to follow those rules or not. In later adulthood significant commitments and responsibilities that accompany marriage, parenting, and a steady job, tend to guide the choices of individuals. During emerging adulthood, however, external controls are at a

minimum. Therefore, emerging adults can do what they want, when they want, likely more than at any other time of life.

Viewed positively, this time of freedom to be self-determinate adds to the adventure of emerging adulthood, allowing individuals to base decisions on one's own inclinations and priorities (Arnett, 2006). Conveniently, this self-focus also assists emerging adults in the process of discovering and settling their identity—the “who am I?” question. Additionally, the lack of externally mediated commitments affords the emerging adult plenty of time and space to get to the heart of personal identity questions and to pursue opportunities that facilitate self-knowledge.

Arnett (2006) chose the term emerging adulthood to describe modern individuals between 18 and 29 precisely because that is how they tend to feel about themselves; they feel as though they are in an extended season of being in-between. They are not young adults, in the sense that they are junior versions of their future full-adult selves. Nor are they in a stage of extended adolescence as if they are senior versions of their past childhood selves. They are done with the transition of puberty, have completed high school, and likely do not live at home anymore. The reality that their sense of identity is bounded by what they once were and by what they will later become leads to a profound feeling of being in-between.

Factors emerging adults associate with full adulthood include: accepting responsibility for themselves, making independent decisions, and being financially independent (Arnett, 2006). These factors tend to coalesce into permanence over time and are not normally concurrent with a particular event or rite of passage, such as completing college or getting one's first job. Therefore, emerging adulthood is the period of time when individuals progress along a continuum of attaining full adult status. Traveling along this continuum tends to make individuals feel as though they are in long-term transition between two major life stages.

Emerging adults tend to be optimistic and hopeful about the future (Arnett, 2006). Having not experienced the awakening that comes from significant setbacks in pursuing their dreams, emerging adults often hold on to an almost childlike expectation that everything will work out well for their lives and they possess great confidence that they will be able to achieve their dreams. With the freedom that comes with graduation from high school, emerging adults are in a position to shape their own lives by making their own decisions. This is especially important for emerging adults who come from difficult or dysfunctional backgrounds; it is a critical period for expressing resilience as they consciously make decisions that lead to overcoming the limitations and challenges of their past (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Spaulding, Swezey, & Wicks, 2014).

Precursors to emerging adulthood. Human beings do not arrive at the emerging adulthood stage with a blank slate, and therefore the worldview formation that occurs during emerging adulthood is not novel; it is largely dependent upon experiences in earlier life stages. Indeed, emerging adults have been influenced by a childhood replete with cultural and environmental influences and by having walked through a unique set of life events. It is during emerging adulthood that the implications and results of early experiences of life are felt (Tanner, 2006).

Smith and Snell (2009, pp. 232-246) suggested six factors from early life that contribute to a strong religious commitment in emerging adults. While these factors were originally identified in the context of measuring religiosity among emerging adults, religiosity is a component related to worldview. Factors include: religious parents, religious mentors, teenage devotional practice, high teenage importance of faith, and teenagers having many religious experiences.

Emerging adults who grew up in a home with parents who held strong and consistent religious values are more likely to have internalized their parents' worldview. Additionally, they are more likely to possess religious skills and knowledge necessary to live a successfully religious life and to embody the internal orientation and behavioral tendencies which enable them to live out what they have previously been taught. Parents tend to effectively transmit their actual (not their stated, or aspirational) worldview to their children.

Smith and Snell (2009) pointed to religious mentors as the second factor contributing to strong religious commitment in emerging adults. For adolescents, faith thrives in the context of non-parental relationships with other adults in their religious community. In these other relationships, adolescents find sources of support, advice, and help which are consistent with their parents' values, and which in turn nurture the development of a strong religious commitment. This nurture is a result of the perception that involvement in the faith community is rewarding and enjoyable, based on the reinforcement that teens experience in their relationships with adults other than their parents.

In a third factor described by Smith and Snell (2009), teens who engage in regular and intense devotional practice are more likely to be strongly committed to religion than those who do not. The primary devotional practices identified by Smith and Snell (2009) as predicting emerging adult religiosity are personal prayer and reading of Scripture. While it is unclear why these practices promote a lasting commitment to religiosity, it may be that participating in such practices serve to behaviorally fortify one's commitment to the value of religiosity. Additionally, it may be that intense commitment to prayer and Scripture reading during the teen years tends to build a sense of a compounding investment in a way of being which promises a long-term payoff in the form of a more fulfilling life of faith throughout adulthood. Finally, personal investment in

prayer and Scripture reading may strongly define one's identity, and the stronger one's identity in the teen years, the greater the desire to continue and preserve that identity into adulthood.

Beyond religious behaviors, adolescents who placed a high degree of value on their every-day faith tended to maintain that value into emerging adulthood (Smith & Snell, 2009). Generally, when one believes that religious faith is important, accompanying that belief are other, reinforcing beliefs about what is real, good, true, and valuable. These cognitive and emotional forces tend to perpetuate one's faith past the teen years into the emerging adult years.

The final factor, identified by Smith and Snell (2009), is that of teens having many religious experiences, including making a personal commitment to God, having specific answers to prayer, having experienced some kind of supernatural intervention from God, and having significantly moving spiritual experiences. This factor underscores the importance of a faith that is lived, not just believed; as teens' faith is reinforced by genuine religious experiences, it becomes stronger and more lasting.

Emerging adulthood and worldview development. Tanner (2006) suggested that part of the uniqueness of emerging adulthood is in its function as a critical developmental turning point for individuals. Called *recentering*, this turning point involves shifting one's locus of control from others to self, toward the ultimate aim of achieving adult sufficiency (Tanner, 2006; Parks, 1986). For the Christian emerging adult, an additional shift takes place: that of giving over locus of control to Christ, in a fully conscious, voluntary, and considered manner. Tanner (2006) went on to suggest that the close of the emerging adult stage (at whatever age) involves the consolidation of a life-system (worldview) that is organized around an individual's life choices and decisions.

Emerging adulthood is a time when major questions about life and reality are asked and basic beliefs about life and the world are processed and decided upon (Garber, 1996; Parks, 1986). It is a time of crisis, when one grapples with what one believes to be real and true and right. This is a crucial developmental period, when a turn one way or the other is unavoidable (Parks, 2000). Loosed from the predictable, if not stable, moorings of adolescence, marked by the mostly blind acceptance of parents' and/or others' worldviews, the emerging adult is in a period of questioning, seeking, and learning. The choices made during emerging adulthood about what to believe about reality, truth, and ethics will often be the worldview accessories carried through life. Emerging adulthood is not merely a chronological transition, it is the staging ground for all adulthood, or the platform from which the emerging adult is launched into the fallen world.

The early emerging adult years are a time for arriving at internal conclusions about meaning and morality (Garber, 1996). These conclusions offer answers to the fundamental questions of life, such as "What will get me out of bed in the morning?" and "What will I do with the time allotted to me each day?" As the answers to these questions are settled, they become the shaping convictions upon which the rest of life is built (Garber, 1996). As such, Garber (1996) recommended that the emerging adult years are best spent in an environment that will support the quest for answers to life's big questions. Too often, however, emerging adults are not encouraged to ask these questions and to make meaning. Instead they remain deeply entrenched in unexamined religious assumptions, and thus they become easy prey for cynicism or ambivalence (Parks, 2000). However, one of the marks of genuine adulthood is to have personally established what is true and what is valuable, and to have arrived at meaning and commitment based on what one decides is true and valuable. Lasting commitment of this sort

requires prerequisite questioning and ongoing examination of what one holds to be true—one's most fundamental assumptions about life (Parks, 2000). The answers sought should provide coherence for one's thinking and one's living, establishing them as inseparable facets of the same reality. The longing for this coherence is the core task of constructing one's worldview, occurring most consciously and intentionally during emerging adulthood (Garber, 1996; Parks, 2000).

Garber (1996) conducted a long-term qualitative study of an unspecified number of Christian adults who maintained a vibrant Christian faith into middle adulthood. Over the course of several years, Garber utilized unstructured interviews to investigate answers to the following research questions:

- How are we to understand this phenomenon, that some make the connection between belief and behavior in a way that is sustained and some do not?
- What is it that happens when a person, moving from student years to into adulthood, continues to construct a coherent life?
- How does a worldview become a way of life?
- How do students learn to connect presuppositions with practice—belief about the world with life in the world – in the most personal areas and the most public arenas? (p. 47)

The fruit of Garber's (1996) research yielded the suggestion that three central dynamics are at play during the emerging adult years: a conscious pursuit of a coherent worldview, at least one significant relationship with a mentor who lives consistently with that worldview, and a commitment to living a life congruent with one's chosen worldview in community with others who are doing the same.

Further, one's worldview is shaped by the thinkers and theologians one reads, and is deeply impacted by one's social experience (Garber, 1996). Being recognized and invited into the company of meaning-makers by wise and trusted adults is critical to successfully making meaning of one's social experience (Parks, 2000). Unfortunately, while individuals in the emerging adulthood period of development in the early 21st century have more freedom than those of the same age in previous generations, they also have much less support than did those of generations past (Arnett, 2006).

Fowler's Stages of Faith

While grounded theory researchers must be careful not to allow existing theories to completely guide research, two developmental theories offer an overall context in which to consider worldview development: Fowler's (1981) stages of faith, and Park's (1986, 2000) critical years. Both of these theories are based heavily on other theorists' constructs of cognitive, moral, and identity development. Fowler's (1981) theory is based on Erikson (1963), Piaget (1952), and Kohlberg (1981), whereas Park's (1986, 2000) theory is based on Perry (1999), Gillian (1982), Keagan (1982), and Fowler (1981). The comprehensive nature of the background to both of these theories provides confidence that they have considered the major developmental theories and that their (Fowler's (1981) and Parks' (1986, 2000) theories reflect dynamics of those theories. However, what sets these two theorists apart and makes them most applicable for the current study is that they translate and coalesce other theories into the context that they have termed faith development.

At first read, faith development may seem to relate to one's religious identity, as in whether one considers oneself to be a Christian or a Hindu, a Baptist or a Pentecostal. However, as described by Fowler (1981) and Parks (1986, 2000), faith is a much more universal human

experience, not limited by set religious creeds. According to Fowler and Parks, all human beings have or strive for faith, meaning a sense of the inner person's life orientation.

Though Fowler (1981) did not use the term worldview, his explanation of faith is similar to how worldview has been defined earlier. Using language that is similar to how worldview could be explained, Fowler (1981) described faith as: the process of assigning meaning to life and experiences, concerned with ultimate values; a guide for action, and "an active mode of being and committing, a way of moving into and giving shape to our experiences in life" (p. 16).

Fowler's (1981) conception of faith roughly parallels the current Evangelical understanding of worldview, and therefore his stages of faith may provide insight into how worldview develops. Of particular interest for this study is Fowler's fourth stage, individuative-reflective faith, which is often associated with young adulthood, and is outlined below after a brief review of the preceding stages. Fowler (1981) noted that the age spans for each stage are fluid, with the borders between each stage being flexible, to a degree. However, the general age spans included in each stage are largely consistent from individual to individual, though his research did not necessarily include individuals from cultures outside of the United States. A brief examination of the first four of Fowler's (1981) stages follows (including the pre-stage), and is helpful in gaining context for this fourth stage, which is most relevant to the current study.

Primal faith. Fowler's (1981) first stage of faith, which he has considered a pre-stage, is primal faith and extends from birth to age two. During this stage, interactions between infants/toddlers and their primary caregivers are marked, if they are healthy and appropriate, by a gradual establishment of trust on the part of the child (Parker, 2006). In addition to establishing these foundational trusting relationships, in which the infant/toddler finds security and meaning the beginnings of courage, hope, and basic autonomy begin to take shape (Neuman, 2011). These

acquired traits are necessary, at least in a nascent form, in order to progress in healthy manner to the next stage of faith.

Intuitive-projective faith. Fowler's (1981) next stage of faith development, intuitive-projective faith, proceeds from ages two to seven. In this stage, children are captivated by fantasy and imagination; thought processes for children in this stage are free from the boundaries of formal logic. Having difficulty distinguishing between fantasy and reality, children in this stage are unable to fully comprehend concrete causality. They tend to assign meaning to experiences in a very self-centered manner, approaching life as if everyone sees things the same ways they do (Neuman, 2011). God is pictured via the imagination, and as such, children often have fanciful ideas of what God is like (Parker, 2006).

Mythical-literal faith. Children between the ages of five and ten possess mythical-literal faith (Fowler, 1981). As a child develops Piaget's (1952) concrete-operational thought, the ability to consider others' perspectives and to evaluate the consistency of others' actions also develop (Parker, 2006). God is viewed as a cosmic judge who assesses individuals' actions based on the criterion of fairness (Fowler, 1981). During this stage, the development of organized explanations (narratives) for the way things are becomes the primary way children assign meaning to experiences (Fowler, 2000). This is why stories are so attractive to children between five and ten years old. However, the child has not yet crafted or adopted a large-scale meta-narrative in which to place the many "mini-narratives" that make up his or her sense of meaning. Stepping back from experience and reflecting on more comprehensive systems of meaning does not yet occur (Fowler, 2000).

Synthetic-conventional faith. Adolescence is the period in which children develop synthetic-conventional faith, when children become increasingly dependent on others for

influence in the process of forming their view of self and the world (Fowler, 1981). In this stage, inter-personal relationships become the primary influence on the shaping of perspective and meaning. For some children in this stage, the most significant relationship they have is their relationship with God, and so a strong hunger to know God and understand God's perspective on oneself can develop (Fowler, 1981).

As result of the significant gains in formal operational thought processes, adolescents in the synthetic-conventional stage will likely begin to question the validity of both their own and others' assumptions about reality and life (Fowler, 1981). Even so, the formation of complex systems of values and beliefs is primarily a subconscious task in this stage, as opposed to one that is consciously reflective (Fowler, 1981). Many individuals never progress beyond this stage, living life with an unexamined faith (or worldview) serving as the guide for thought and action.

Individuative-reflective faith. The primary characteristics of Fowler's (1981) next stage, which is ideally experienced throughout emerging adulthood, is that of active reflection on one's faith and of making intentional decisions about what values and beliefs about reality should be included in a workable system of meaning. These characteristics parallel the critical transition into possessing a strong sense of personal agency and executive control over one's life (Parks, 2000). As part of this transition, individuals question many of the assumptions that were previously presumed to be true. This questioning is a positive, purposeful, and constructive process—a questioning in order to assess and assemble a more intentional and consistent system of meaning for oneself (Fowler, 1981).

According to Fowler (1981), the individuative-reflective stage can be quite unsettling, both for the individual in this stage and for others in the near environment and this is consistent with others' description of the emerging adult years (Parks, 2000; Perry, 1999). It is a hard and

often tumultuous experience for a person to assume responsibility for what one believes and does. For this reason, many individuals consciously or unconsciously indefinitely postpone walking through this stage; some never progress through this stage at all (Fowler, 1981, 2000). This seems to be consistent with findings discussed earlier, which suggest that a personal crisis of faith is part of the process of developing a comprehensive and consistent worldview.

Parks' Critical Years

Parks (1986, 2000) developed extensive and detailed descriptions of faith, which, similar to Fowler's work, tend to parallel the current Evangelical understanding of worldview.

According to Parks (1986),

Faith is more adequately recognized as the activity of seeking and composing meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience. Faith is a broad, generic human phenomenon. To be human is to dwell in faith, to dwell in one's meaning—one's conviction of the ultimate character of truth, of self, of world, of cosmos (whether that meaning be strong or fragile, expressed in religious terms or secular. (p. xv)

Parks (1986) went on to elaborate on her definition of faith. First, she affirmed that faith is integral to all human life; a person cannot live without having an ultimate center of his or her being. It is also universal, in that all humans seek to make sense of themselves, the world around them, and ultimately, the nature of reality. Wherever a human being lands on each of these issues constitutes faith. Faith however, is not merely a cognitive activity. It guides behavior, both individually and in social groupings.

Next, Parks (2000) posited that the particular forms of faith to which people cling are finite in nature, meaning that faith is symbolized and communicated in tangible ways, through language, ritual, etc. This makes faith, itself an intangible reality, able to be grasped, examined,

and lived out. Finally, faith is dynamic and a person's faith is constantly developing and transforming over the entire life span. These descriptions of faith are similar to how one may describe worldview, and so Parks' (1986, 2000) concept of faith development can richly inform the study of worldview development.

One of the most significant values of Parks' (1986) critical years theory is that it is centered exclusively on early emerging adulthood, the period of lifespan development I have chosen to research in this study. In essence, Parks' took Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development and concentrated it on the ages of 18 – 23. Thus, Parks (1986, 2000) has provided a sense of continuity in understanding faith development in early emerging adulthood, but connects her work directly to Fowler's (1981).

Parks' (1986, 2000) theory of faith development runs on three parallel developmental tracks: forms of cognition, forms of dependence, and forms of belonging. Forms of cognition relate to the epistemological aspects of faith. The next track, forms of dependence, identifies the movement of one's locus of control from external to internal. Finally, forms of belonging unpack how an individual's membership in social groups transform over time.

Forms of cognition. The first track, forms of cognition, begins with authority-bound and dualistic knowing. In this stage, what a person believes, trusts, and knows is inseparably connected to some outside authority. It is a black and white knowing; an either/or, without middle ground. While in this first stage, individuals are very intolerant of ambiguity. However, it does not take long for the emerging adult to recognize that the knowing of childhood (whatever my authority says is right, is right) is not necessarily fully adaptable to the challenges of life outside of the K-12 and immediate family environments. "Established patterns of thinking do not

accommodate lived experience” (Parks, 1986, p. 47). This mini-crisis leads the emerging adult into the next stage of knowing.

Parks’ (1986, 2000) next stage of cognition is that of unqualified relativism, in which knowing is conditioned by the context in which it is constituted. Very quickly, the more childlike forms of knowing can become unraveled as the emerging adult is exposed to alternate ideas and unanticipated realities outside of the relatively sheltered world of childhood and adolescence. Likely for the first time, the individual is forced to think about the nature of ultimate reality and truth is internally challenged. The result of this epistemological upheaval is often that the emerging adult settles the conflict by considering everything to be relative, and that nothing is actually stable. However, this is usually short-lived (Parks, 1986), since pure relativism is impossible to sustain over time. Eventually, one must find some stable ground on which to stand—stable ground that is not plagued by either/or thinking.

Emerging adults can begin to resolve the crisis of the non-feasibility of absolute relativity as they move into Parks’ (1986) third stage in the forms of cognition. Called commitment in relativism, this third stage involves finding bits of solid ground to which one may commit, in a sea of epistemological options, all of which seem to be valid. The emerging adult awakens to the responsibility to actually make choices about where one settles in regards to what is true and right. Parks’ (1986) posited that this first occurs in relation to moral choices, where emerging adults are confronted with heart-wrenching decisions about how to act in certain situations. They long for the ability to make a choice and to stand on that choice. However, believing everything is relative, they think they are unable to commit to a certain choice. This questioning ideally leads to taking personal responsibility for one’s choices, even at the risk of being wrong. The benefits, though, outweigh the risks, as personal agency thrives and grows.

As agency grows and develops in the context of epistemological choices, so does commitment to personal convictions (Parks, 1986) and this is the next stage in the forms of cognition. As emerging adults continue to make choices that prove to be satisfying internally and to align with their perception of the way things really are, confidence grows, leading to convictional commitment. One of the marks of convictional commitment is what Parks (1986) named a second naiveté, where individuals develop a new ability to hear the truth of others without having one's own convictions about truth being threatened. The nascent maturity of this stage allows the emerging adult to fully engage the complexity and mystery of the world around them, along with consciously engaging the process of internal reordering. This internal reordering can cause strong feelings of curiosity, awe, and uncertainty. However, if properly supported by others during this critical stage, the emerging adult can arise out of this stage with a more settled maturity and a greater readiness to settle into the complex interplay of influences and responsibilities that mark full adulthood. Ultimately, for Parks (1986), this transition into the beginnings of adulthood is marked by a growing sense of self-agency and responsibility for one's choices, including the choices about what one commits to believe is true, right, and good.

Parks (2000) further developed the concept of convictional commitment to include two sub stages within the one. The first sub stage is probing commitment, in which the emerging adult begins to tentatively explore new ideas and objects of faith, while remaining close to the commitments of the past. This can be pictured as a toddler exploring a playground's many corners and features, all the while keeping a close eye on mommy or daddy. To the emerging adult in this stage, it seems best to keep all commitments tentative and exploratory in nature.

The second sub stage is tested commitment, which unfolds as the emerging adult begins to accumulate a series of choices that have proven to work well, both in terms of inner

satisfaction and that of appropriate conformity with the individual's sense of how things really are (Parks, 2000). If a choice bears both inner witness and outer fruit, then confidence in commitment grows, leading to a state that Parks calls centeredness, in which the individual feels at home and at peace in the world.

Throughout Parks' (2000) discussion of forms of cognition, the concepts of appropriate mentoring and community support are consistently mentioned. As the emerging adult progresses through the development towards full adulthood, the need for adult-style relationships increases. These mentoring and community relationships do not supplant the self in terms of responsibility for choices. However, they do offer strategic and vital support for the growing emerging adult. Parks (2000) further unpacked this concept of dependence in the next parallel developmental track, forms of dependence.

Forms of dependence. When the naïve and assumed epistemological certainty of childhood and adolescence has vanished, the emerging adult is left with questions about who and what can truly be depended upon. This struggle is captured in Parks' (2000) forms of dependence, and examining these forms can help to build understanding about how an emerging adult feels through the uncertain years of ages 18-23.

The first form of dependence is dependent/counterdependent, in which a person's sense of the truth is fully dependent upon one's immediate relationships and affections (Parks, 2000). As Fowler (1981) stated, the person uncritically accepts that which conventional wisdom considers to be right, true, and valuable. These conventions are often not explicit, but rather exert their influence via unexamined social norms, whether those norms be of a nuclear family, a church, a school, a geographical area, or any other size or shape of community. This dependence continues until there is a yearning to explore and test truth for oneself. This awakening can occur

in the midst of a major life challenge or simply as a growing sense of something else out there. The latter is like a new confidence to simply push away from the familiar, to which one has been tied throughout childhood and adolescence.

In a seemingly paradoxical way, counter dependence is still a form of dependence, as it is a reaction or response to that upon which one was previously dependent. It is not indicative of a new sense of truth or self— it is just a push away from the old. Ideally the individual depends less on doing not what previous authority wanted, and more on taking full responsibility for one's choices. This dependence continues until the time when one is able to include one's own self in the sphere of authority that governs life choices. It is not a rejection of all external authority, but a conscious embrace of the reality that one's own voice should also be heard as decisions are made. "The self can now take more conscious responsibility for adjudicating competing claims" (Parks, 2000, p. 78). Initial inner dependence is extremely fragile, but not in the sense of being weak. Instead, it is vulnerable. However, with time, the emerging adult begins to trust his or her own intuition more and more.

Parks (2000) identified one of the significant struggles in this stage when an emerging adult has to wrestle through the disparity between the needs of the inner person and the external problems that the world faces. An example would be feeling guilty about taking time to consider questions of the existence of God while children are dying of hunger. This draw to honor inner needs while also giving attention to outer demands can be construed as the substance of today's emerging adults' pull towards the "spiritual," as thoroughly documented by Smith and Snell (2009).

According to Parks (2000), inner dependence is a transitional period. Often, the emerging adult in this stage will long to return to an earlier stage of dependence on others. However, the

new level of knowing that he or she has experienced (as a result of progress in forms of cognition) makes such a return difficult. To address this transitional nature, mentoring relationships are key during this phase, though not the hero-worship style of mentoring that adolescents tend to experience, such as with professional sports figures or musicians. Even so, it may be difficult for emerging adults to accept that they still need to consult outside authority, as this can feel like a slide back into dependence. This stage is an awkward time, as emerging adults have moved past dependence on external authority, all the while being not fully prepared for the new challenges of adulthood (Parks, 2000).

After the awkwardness of inner dependence, emerging adults move into confident inner dependence (Parks, 2000), where reflecting on past successful experience in navigating the perceived wilds of adulthood allows them to develop a more fully balanced inner life. In a sense, they achieve the internal status that comes from having been tested, and having passed those tests. The internal agency that has developed, however, does not operate unilaterally; it is now able to give to and take from the surrounding context, being influenced and influencing. However, this process is well balanced, with the self retaining ultimate authority and responsibility for choices.

During the period of confident inner dependence, the emerging adult develops a robust ability to engage in inner self-talk to negotiate the challenges and commitments that pull for attention (Parks, 2000). This self-talk is the means by which the self cultivates an inner life, and is able to hold the competing claims of various authorities in balance. For the Evangelical Christian, this self-talk is part of the process of prayer and communion with God through the Holy Spirit. He helps the emerging adult to evaluate options and to determine the most appropriate way forward and the most appropriate way to classify or assess what has happened in

the past. Parks (2000) suggested that support for emerging adults in this stage should include strong encouragement to master the inner life in order to foster confident inner dependence.

The final stage in the forms of dependence is that of interdependence, which Parks (2000) maintained is most often achieved only in mid-life. Interdependence is when the self and external pressures are held in a living balance. The mature adult self-consciously recognizes the paradoxical reality of genuinely needing others while at the same time needing to stand on one's own.

Examining forms of dependence has emphasized the importance the influence of one's external environment in the process of development. Parks (2000) gives attention to this in the forms of community, in which the meaning individuals compose is largely determined by the relationships and community contexts that make up one's life. "Faith is a patterning, connective, relational activity embodied and shaped not with the individual alone, but in the comfort and challenges of the company we keep" (Parks, 2000, p. 89). In adolescents, the power of relationships is strongly attested in the literature (Parks, 2000). For emerging adults, though, the relationships and connection to community can become less clear. However, even as the emerging adult longs to give full expression to the agency of self, there exists a parallel yearning to belong with others.

Forms of community. The first form of community identified by Parks (2000) is conventional/diffuse community, which is the simple community that arises from an "us and them" perspective on life. Either you're in the group, or you're not. However, as one longs for a more personalized knowing and is exposed to others in new ways through early emerging adulthood, the conventional social ordering is often considered to be suspect. In fact, the initial exposure to individuals who question previous assumptions causes the emerging adult to

question the conventional social categories and stratifications. Quite possibly, the “them” moves closer, while the “us” moves away.

Throughout this process, the emerging adult may move from a well-defined set of community expectations, to a more diffuse or less concentrated form of community, and the emerging adult will begin to establish relationships in a more tentative, cautious manner. This corresponds tightly with unqualified relativism in knowing from Parks’ (1986) forms of cognition. If truth is tentative or open-ended, then any sort of relationship may also be as valid as any other. Parks (2000) strongly asserted that at this stage of development, the emerging adult must be included in network of belonging, as such a network will confirm and affirm the self in generating a more a more mature and adult-like faith.

This leads to the next stage in forms of community, when the emerging adult looks to belong within a mentoring community. A mentoring community is one that is welcoming to the newly formed self (Parks, 2000), and that therefore provides a safe place to exercise and experiment with one’s faith. Being surrounded by mentors does not mean one is surrounded by people telling the emerging adult what to do. Rather, the emerging adult is surrounded by individuals who are proactively supportive of emerging adult development and who model the kind of life that the emerging adult wishes to live.

Parks’ (2000) final two stages of community are the inevitably ideological stage and the self-selected group stage. To be inevitably ideological means to rationally structure one’s beliefs about oneself and the world, and to settle upon the ideals that will guide the balance of one’s life. One’s identity becomes wrapped up in what one believes to be true, right, and valuable. As the emerging adult settles these life questions, a growing sense of value is attached to associating with a group that shares those perspectives. The emerging adult at this stage is ready to take on

the full cognitive, emotional, and behavioral demands of full adulthood, and ideally is able to tolerate others' faith perspectives, without compromising personal convictions about the nature of reality.

Parks' (1986, 2000) forms of cognition, dependence, and community along with Fowler's (1981) stages of faith affirm that emerging adulthood is a critical and transformative time (Arnett, 2000). Additionally, these two theories offer a helpful backdrop to my study of worldview development in emerging adults. These theories seem to be similar in some ways to worldview development, but for unknown reasons, neither theorist opted to use that term, though it certainly was in use while they developed their theories.

To develop a model for Biblical worldview development for Evangelical Christians, neither Fowler's (1981) nor Parks' (1986, 2000) theories are adequate as strict theoretical frameworks. From their writing, it is not possible to determine with certainty their own personal worldviews. This is a fundamental problem, as the definition and conception of worldview itself is worldview-dependent (Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2015). While Fowler's (1981) and Parks' (1986, 2000) theories are instructive, they are insufficient for application to the distinct process of Biblical worldview development in Evangelical Christian emerging adults.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development also may inform an understanding of worldview development, as they explain the progressive development of an individual to employ moral reasoning in the process of making decisions. However, Kohlberg's (1981) theory is not sufficient as a framework for worldview development, as it only examines one aspect of a person's development that is related to worldview—one's growth in decision-making capacity.

Kohlberg (1981) identified six stages of moral development: obedience and punishment orientation, self-interest orientation, interpersonal accord and conformity orientation, authority and social-order maintaining orientation, social contract orientation, and finally, the universal ethical principles orientation. These six stages are categorized under three broader levels, of pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. As a human being progresses through each of these stages, moral dilemmas are settled using progressively more mature and complex moral reasoning, moving from the strict obedience orientation of the first stage, to the final stage where an individual employs reasoning based on universal ethical principles.

Kohlberg's (1981) theory rests on the presupposition that justice is the essential characteristic of moral reasoning. However, this presupposition has been challenged by other theorists, most notably Gilligan (1982), who took issue with the fact that Kohlberg mainly focused on men when developing his theory, resulting in an androcentric theory. Alternatively, Gilligan (1982) offered another theory of moral development, which rests on a more feminist approach to moral reasoning, including the ethic of caring as the basis of moral decision-making.

Ultimately, Kohlberg's (1981) theory may offer another lens through which some facets of worldview development can be examined. However, moral development, or the progressive ability to employ moral reasoning in decision-making, is only one facet of worldview development, and as the literature suggests, moral reasoning is actually dependent upon one's worldview. The literature also includes several studies in emerging adults related to Kohlberg's (1981) theory, frequently utilizing the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which is a qualitative test used to assess one's level of moral development.

Schlaefli, Rest, and Thoma (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of 55 studies that utilized the DIT as the instrument of assessment. Various age groups were represented in the studies,

including emerging adulthood. Results suggested that moral development educational programs have the greatest impact on participants who are over 24 years of age. However, the authors also determined that none of the studies under consideration actually showed a strong, direct connection between moral education programs and actual behavior. As the concept of moral decision making was explained, they imply that moral decision making is actually worldview-dependent, though they do not use the term worldview. Instead, Schlaefli et al. (1985) suggest that part of the decision-making process is drawing upon one's internal "moral sensitivity" and "moral motivation" (p. 348). These two concepts are issues of worldview. The first relates to how a person views moral standards in general, and the second would include a person's heart orientation. Therefore, moral development is based on worldview, thus suggesting that it is appropriate to consider worldview development as a separate and prerequisite construct, prior to assessing one's moral development.

In a study that employed a quantitative, descriptive research design, Nather (2013) examined the stages of moral development in 90 male college students, ages 17-23, as compared to their level of education. While most of the students in the sample were rated at Stage Four (authority and social-order maintaining orientation) of Kohlberg's (1981) six stages, there was no statistically significant difference in scores on the DIT among the students in each of four years of college. However, Nather (2013) did suggest that educational interventions can positively impact moral development and that moral judgment develops in the context of socialization/enculturation, which is a foundational purpose for higher education. Again, this suggests that moral development is worldview dependent.

Finally, You and Penney (2011) conducted a correlational study of 628 university students, comparing scores on an updated version of the DIT with student participation in

theology and philosophy classes as well as community service projects. Results of the study suggested that as students take more theology and philosophy courses, and as they participate in community service, their moral reasoning capacities increase. Once again, one can infer that moral reasoning is directly impacted by study and experience in worldview-related concepts. This study overtly establishes the connection between specific college courses which are saturated with worldview content (philosophy, theology, ethics) and corollary increases in student moral reasoning.

Related Literature

In order to effectively nurture a Biblical worldview in others, one must first understand how worldview actually develops. Unfortunately, research on worldview development is scarce, both from the secular and the Christian perspective. Extensive online searches for keywords *worldview* and *worldview development* yielded only one relevant article (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), and that article did not offer much in terms of how worldview develops.

The literature does include several articles reporting on studies that examined the influence of various factors/variables on a person's worldview. However, none of these articles explain how worldview develops; it seems that the authors and researchers simply assume that it does, that external factors influence its development, and that it can be measured once it has. In spite of this lack, reviewing the literature on factors that appear to influence worldview can still be instructive and can possibly offer clues to how worldview develops.

Mayhew (2012) examined the predictors of ecumenical worldview development in a longitudinal study of undergraduate students ($N = 1,392$) from 126 institutions, with ecumenical worldview being defined as a worldview that allows for varying faiths to coexist, and that promotes an acceptance of others' spiritual convictions. Conclusions from the study suggest that

emerging adults examine and refine their worldview as they encounter difficult questions about their religious beliefs, a process categorized by Mayhew (2012) as religious struggle. Emerging adults' experiences of cognitive dissonance or conflict can lead to deep learning. In a later study including 1,071 college students, Mayhew and Bryant (2013) concluded that adults can assist emerging adults to clarify their worldview and solidify their commitment to that worldview by encouraging the evaluation of competing worldviews in a respectful and open-minded manner.

One researcher (Brickhill, 2010) utilized comparative data analysis to examine the interplay of four independent variables (church attendance, type of elementary school attended, personal faith commitment, and parent beliefs) with the worldview of middle school students ($N = 192$). Results suggest that only church attendance and personal faith commitment have a statistically significant impact on worldview. However, Rutledge (2013) demonstrated from correlational research that students' ($N = 91$) participation in education programs in their local church and their parents' record of church attendance did not influence the students' worldview. Alternatively, in a micro-ethnographic study with a purposive sample of 14 Christian school students in grades 9-12, Van Meter (2009) determined that families in general do exert influence on their children's worldview.

Taylor (2009) compared worldview assessment scores of 12th grade students who had differing worldview training (Christian school experience and public school experience), but who had generally similar church experiences in a non-experimental research design ($N = 164$). Results of the study suggest that Biblically integrated classes have a positive impact on the development of the Biblical worldview in high school students. Additionally, results indicate that when worldview training in the school and the church is consistent (Taylor, 2009), students perform better on worldview assessments.

According to research on undergraduate campuses conducted by Mayhew and Bryant (2013), coercion had a negative impact on individuals' worldview commitment. Students who experienced what they perceived as negative pressure to conform to a certain worldview tended to be less committed to their own worldview, when compared to others who were given the freedom to explore alternate worldviews. Further analysis suggested that the more students engaged in religious activities, the stronger they were committed to their chosen worldview.

Swaner (2007, 2012) reviewed the literature on college students' cognitive, moral, and civic development. Swaner (2012) concluded that these theorists and others identify a common "developmental arc" in which students progress towards more "complex ways of thinking, knowing, and making meaning" (pp. 75-76). This includes areas such as cognitive, ethical, moral, faith, and racial identity development. Swaner (2012) pointed to the impact of college attendance on fostering increasing complexity in multiple dimensions of student development, for which there is much empirical research (Pascarella & Terenzi, 2005; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

One significant developmental theme found in the literature directly related to worldview formation is the experience of crisis of belief, particularly in older teens and emerging adults. This crisis comes as one is confronted with opposing truth claims. The crisis need not be initiated by some kind of interpersonal confrontation; it can be brought on simply via thoughtful examination of, or exposure to, worldviews that are different. Not all such crises, however, result in growth in commitment to one's worldview. In order for the crises to have positive results, they must be accompanied by appropriate support systems (Mayhew, 2012), such as mentoring relationships with older adults (Garber, 1996) and environments that are welcoming to authentic questions about truth.

As a culmination of years of studying and teaching in the academe on worldview, Valk (2013) described several challenges related to outlining, committing to, and living out a Biblical worldview:

1. The pedagogy in many churches leaves emerging adults perplexed, and does not equip teens and emerging adults with the skills needed to translate truths learned in church into everyday life.
2. Government-sponsored education does not generally encourage adolescents to ask the important questions about life.
3. Adolescents and emerging adults often classify their religious life as merely attending church.

As a result, emerging adults of today have a very limited perspective of how their worldview influences their lives.

Summary

This literature review confirms the need for a uniquely Evangelical Christian theoretical model of Biblical worldview development in emerging adults. While many scholars and practitioners have given attention to the concept of worldview or to concepts closely related to worldview, a comprehensive and clear model for Biblical worldview development does not exist. Sire's (2015) three-dimensional conception of worldview framed my research. While examining how a Biblical worldview develops in Evangelical Christian emerging adults, I needed to know what I was looking at, and Sire's definition provided that clarity. Emerging adulthood is a unique timeframe of human development, and Arnett's (2000, 2006, 2007) conception of this stage helped to delimit my research and to provide understanding about the experiences the participants shared with me. Fowler's (1981) and Parks' (1986, 2000) theories of faith

development provided some backdrop for my research, offering helpful insight into other important and closely related phenomena that occur during emerging adulthood. Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development has been classified as insufficient as a theoretical framework for worldview development, since gains in moral development are predicated on the worldview foundations that are also developing. Finally, the review of the relevant research literature demonstrated that worldview development is an under-researched phenomenon, thus clearly showing the gap in the literature that I addressed with this study. Ultimately, my goal was to help adults in positions to support Evangelical Christian emerging adults to do so with more understanding of the processes that emerging adults go through as they grow through these critical years.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to generate a model of Biblical worldview development for Evangelical Christians during the life stage of emerging adulthood. This study was conducted utilizing a qualitative grounded theory design. In this chapter, I focus on the research design, research questions, my role as researcher, the participants, the methods of data collection and analysis, and finally, a discussion of the procedures employed to increase trustworthiness of the results and the ethical considerations of the study.

Design

The qualitative method of inquiry is ideally suited to the study of how a Biblical worldview develops in emerging adults, since a comprehensive model of worldview development does not exist, and the construct of worldview itself does not easily lend itself to quantitative inquiry (Arnett, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is not concerned with numbers and charts. Rather, it is about getting close enough to people to effectively capture their stories, to find meaning in those stories, and to consider how those stories are alike and how they are different. As a result of this kind of analysis, one can better understand the question of how processes actually happen, as opposed to simply answering the question of what happened (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

For this study, I collected and analyzed individuals' stories about how they are presently developing a Biblical worldview during one important stage of their lives—the early emerging adult years (ages 18-23). These stories were collected via timelines, interviews, and a focus group. Once collected, the stories (data) were closely examined and compared to develop a model for how a Biblical worldview develops in emerging adulthood.

The specific qualitative research design chosen for this study is grounded theory. Grounded theory is appropriately used when a researcher intends to go beyond describing a phenomenon to actually generating a model or theory that adds to, explains, or depicts a specific process (Creswell, 2013). If my goal was to describe the experience of Biblical worldview development, phenomenology would be an appropriate research design. However, my intention was to create an actual model of the process of Biblical worldview development, which I did create from the stories of the study participants. By employing inductive analysis and reasoning, the individual stories suggested the contours of one larger story that may explain how a Biblical worldview generally develops in emerging adults. This is the essence of grounded theory research-- the theory or model that explains a process is grounded in the data that is collected from individual experiences and perspectives, and which is analyzed in a systematic and yet fluid manner (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Grounded theory finds its origin in the work of sociology. Anselm Strauss, one of the early pioneers of the grounded theory method, worked together with Barney Glaser in an extensive research project in the 1950s and early 1960s, which became the precursor to modern grounded theory research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Together, they published a work detailing their methodology, aptly entitled, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Juliet Corbin eventually came into a collegial relationship with Anselm Strauss after he and Barney Glaser were no longer working together on joint research projects (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Ultimately, Strauss developed a more systematic approach to grounded theory, whereas Glaser's approach became much more constructivist in nature (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Corbin and Strauss (2015) collaborated to refine the systematic grounded theory method, which eventually resulted in several editions of their *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and*

Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. Though Anselm Strauss died in 1996, Juliet Corbin continues to update their classic work with new editions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

I chose to utilize Corbin and Strauss' (2015) method of grounded theory for several reasons. In my first qualitative research course at Liberty University, Creswell's (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* was the primary textbook. Creswell (2015) frames grounded theory around Corbin and Strauss' philosophy and methods, and so my first exposure to grounded theory was to their approach. Then, as I pursued grounded theory method for my study, I read and re-read Corbin and Strauss' (2015) most recent edition, finding it to be both accessible and practical. Finally, my dissertation consultant (and committee chair) and my second committee member both endorsed Corbin and Strauss' (2015) approach to grounded theory, as it provided more focus on systematic procedures and therefore more support for the novice researcher.

The ultimate product of this grounded theory research is a model explaining how a Biblical worldview develops in Evangelical Christian emerging adults. Many scholars and researchers have offered definitions for the word theory. Kerlinger (1986) suggests that a theory is "a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena" (p.9). Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, and Karnik (2009) propose that the meaning of theory in empirical research is "to provide a framework within which to explain connections among the phenomena under study to provide insights leading to the discovery of new connections" (p. 198). More simply, Creswell (2013) understands a theory to be an explanation of how some process or action happens. Anfara and Mertz (2006) prefer to avoid technical definitions for theory, and instead describe theory as "an expression of someone's

profound insight into some aspect of nature and a fresh and different perception of an aspect of the world” (p. xiv).

At its most fundamental level, developing a theory involves moving from the concrete to the abstract, using increasingly generalizable language to describe some aspect of reality. This journey (from concrete to abstract, and from sensation to theory) includes the intermediate steps of analyzing data to identify concepts, which are then clustered into constructs, the relationships among which are formed into broader propositions. When these propositions are compared with one another to find the logical interrelations among them, the product is a theory (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Corbin and Strauss (2015) follow a similar progression as outlined above, but their terms are slightly different: first concepts, next categories or themes, then core categories which coalesce into theory. For this study, I utilized Corbin and Strauss’ (2015) nomenclature.

Grounded theory is unique among qualitative research designs on two important counts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). First, in grounded theory, the theory that is generated emerges from the concepts, themes, and core categories that come directly from the data itself. This is as opposed to analyzing data with a theoretical framework already firmly fixed in the researcher’s mind. While others’ theories certainly inform the data collection and analysis in grounded theory, the researcher is careful not to allow those theories to control or impose boundaries upon the process. Second, in grounded theory, the normally separate and distinct processes of data collection and data analysis are fully interrelated and approached using the constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). As data is collected, the process of analysis begins simultaneously, and both processes continue almost seamlessly throughout the entire study.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How does a Biblical worldview develop during emerging adulthood in Evangelical Christians ages 18-23?

Sub-questions

SQ1: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a heart orientation toward God and His truth?

SQ2: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a commitment to a master narrative or set of presuppositions, which is consistent with Biblical revelation?

SQ3: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of aligning their behavior to be an accurate reflection of their worldview?

Setting

The broad setting for this study is the Evangelical Christian community in the United States of America (U.S.). While Evangelicalism in the U.S. is certainly not monolithic, individuals, churches, and denominations, which would be classified as Evangelical, tend to be relatively homogeneous in their beliefs and practices (Smit, 2013). Study participants were recruited from all regions of the U.S., allowing for the subtle variations in Evangelicalism that would be based on geographical location. However, the geographical disbursement of the participants was not as wide as I had anticipated, and this is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

For the actual data collection, the setting was the natural and normal setting in which the participants reside. For qualitative research, it is important to collect the data as close to real life

as is possible (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Individual participant timelines were created by the participants in the setting of their choice. Written instructions for completing the timeline included encouragement to do so in a place, time, and fashion that would most naturally facilitate reflection for them as individuals. For some, this could have been a library; for others, they may have completed the timeline outdoors or at their favorite coffee shop.

The setting for interviews and the focus group session was Internet-based video calls using Zoom, a web-based video conferencing application. Using a web-based tool for interaction helped to make this study possible by not limiting me to interviewing participants in my local area. Additionally, virtual communication settings are common for modern emerging adults (Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014), which positioned the data collection in a natural and normal environment for them.

Participants

Participants in this study were 20 Evangelical Christian emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 23, all of whom were nominated on the basis of the criteria described in Table 1 below. A total of 46 potential participants were nominated by 12 nominators. Two nominees responded that they were too busy to participate in the study and 24 did not respond to the invitation to participate. Overall, the participation rate among those who were nominated was 44%.

Table 1

Criteria for Participation

Criteria

-
1. Self-identify as Evangelical Christians living in the US
 2. At least 18 years old, but not older than 23
 3. Known by others as having a well-developed Biblical worldview, meaning they:
 - a. Have a strong heart-orientation towards God and His Word
 - b. Espouse the basic truth propositions of a Biblical worldview
 - c. Embody a commitment to living out the implications of a Biblical worldview in all areas of their lives
 4. Willing and able to participate in distance-based or in-person interviews and focus groups
-

Recruiting participants via nominations limited the number of potential participants who may not have been committed to a Biblical worldview, as nominators were asked to recommend individuals who had a reputation as persons who were committed to a Biblical worldview. In this regard, nominations from others to some degree mitigated the problem of self-nomination, in which a person may represent oneself in a favorable way or in a way that the individual assumes the researcher would like them to be.

Some participants were previously or currently known to me, and this served to enhance the rapport I had with them during the course of this study. However, I did not accept nominations for emerging adults who are in any position of sub-ordinance to me, meaning they could not be my own children or current students in the school over which I am the

superintendent. Additionally, they could not be current employees at my school or at the church that sponsors the school.

The mean age of participants was 20 years and eight months, and the median age was 20 years and five months, placing both the mean and the median in approximately the middle of the age span to which this study was delimited. The oldest participant was 23 years and seven months; the youngest was 18 years and one month. The sample included 12 males and eight females, 60% and 40%, respectively, and the sample was primarily Caucasian, making up 90% (18) of participants, with one participant (5%) being Hispanic and one (5%) African-American. Two participants were married (not to each other); the other 18 were single and never married.

In terms of other demographic information, participants averaged approximately two years and five months of post-high school education. Participants were from several regions of the United States: Northeast, 70%; South, 15%; Midwest, 10%; and West, 5%. Church affiliation of participants was as follows: United Methodist, 5%; American Baptist Church, 5%; Presbyterian Church in America, 5%; Evangelical Free, 5%; no response, 5%; other, 10%, independent or non-denominational, 15%; and Assemblies of God, 35%. Complete demographic information for participants is in Table 2, which is included on the following two pages.

Table 2

Demographic Data for Participants
(Continued on next page)

Name	Gender	Age (Y/M)	Ethnicity	Region	Church Affiliation	Years of College	Major	College/University	K-12
Abby	F	18/4	Caucasian	W	Presbyterian Church in America	<1	n/a	n/a	H
Cheryl	F	20/5	Caucasian	M-W	Evangelical Free	2	n/a	C	H
Crystal	F	21/11	Caucasian	M-W	Independent or Non-denominational	>4	Business Administration	C	C
Carissa	F	23/7	Caucasian	S	Pentecostal	<1	n/a	n/a	P
Darren	M	19/7	Caucasian	N-E	Independent or Non-denominational	2	Youth and Family Studies	C	C
David	M	18/7	Caucasian	S	Christian/non-denominational	<1	Psychology	C	H
Jacob	M	20/11	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	3	Pastoral Ministry	C	P
Jared	M	19/3	African American	N-E	Assemblies of God	1	Pastoral Ministry	C	P
Joshua	M	23/9	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	>4	Bachelors in Theology	C	C/P
Keith	M	21/8	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	3	Pastoral Counseling	C	P/H
Kevin	M	22/10	Caucasian	N-E	Independent or Non-denominational	4	Religion	C	H/C
Mark	M	20/5	Caucasian	N-E	Independent or Non-denominational	3	Petroleum Engineering	S	C/P
Marshall	M	22/1	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	3	Youth Ministry	C	P
Marty	M	22/0	Caucasian	S	Independent or Non-denominational	>4	Finance	S	H
Missy	F	19/9	Caucasian	N-E	Independent or Non-denominational	1	n/a	C	P/C
Philip	M	20/6	Hispanic or Latino	N-E	Pentecostal	2	Mechanical Engineering	S	P
Shae	F	21/11	Caucasian	N-E	American Baptist Churches, USA	>4	Music and Biblical Studies	C	H
Shawna	F	18/5	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	<1	n/a	C	C

Name	Gender	Age (Y/M)	Ethnicity	Region	Church Affiliation	Years of College	Major	College/University	K-12
Thomas	M	21/1	Caucasian	N-E	Assemblies of God	2	Pastoral Ministry	C	P
Tiffany	F	18/1	Caucasian	N-E	United Methodist Church	<1	n/a	n/a	H/P/Ch

Note: For **Region**, W = West; M-W = Midwest; S = South; and N-E = Northeast. For **College/University**, C = Christian college or university and S = secular college or university. For **K-12**, H = homeschool; C = Christian school; P = public school; and Ch = charter school.

Theoretical sampling was employed, which is a method of sampling that is informed and guided by the concepts and themes that emerge from the focus of the study, the research questions, and the data itself (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Patton, 2015). Snowball sampling also occurred, as participants nominated other participants, who were then qualified for the study (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

I chose to work with participants who are presently in the emerging adult stage because I desire data that is fresh and current, as opposed to data that would constitute reflections and remembrances of past developmental processes. Qualitative research is more reliable when conducted as close to the real life context of the experience as feasible (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Depending solely on retrospection would have injected significant additional bias into the study, and it would have been virtually impossible for participants to reflect on experiences from early emerging adulthood without interpreting and then communicating about those experiences through the lens of their current stage of worldview development. While it was somewhat difficult for participants to deeply reflect on their current stage of worldview development, the interview questions were constructed and presented in a way that was intended to elicit fruitful and accurate introspection.

Determining whether or not an individual has a well-developed worldview is a significant

challenge (Schultz & Swezey, 2013), and is part of the motivation for this study. However, to establish a basic baseline for possessing a Biblical worldview, emerging adult participants were asked to complete the 3-Dimensional Worldview Survey – Form C (*3DWS-Form C*) (Schultz, 2013). Results from the *3DWS-Form C* were scored by the author, who was paid a fee for each survey scored. See Appendix B for a sample score report.

While no survey can determine an individual's worldview with full accuracy, the *3DWS-Form C* instrument is based on Sire's (2015) three-fold definition of worldview, and includes questions that probe for heart orientation towards a Biblical worldview, cognitive commitment to the basic propositional truths in a Biblical worldview, and behavioral commitment to choices that reflect a Biblical worldview, which is consistent with the purpose and research questions of this study.

Schultz' (2010) original *3DWS*, a 76-item instrument, was created for use with secondary students, and was piloted with 52 high school students at a Christian school located in the upper mid-west of the United States. Before the pilot test, the *3DWS* was subject to expert review to assess the instrument's clarity and relevance, and only minor changes were made to the instrument. Internal reliability of the pilot study produced a Cronbach's alpha of .919, which was far above the target of .70. The instrument consists of three subscales, the heart orientation subscale, the behavioral subscale, and the propositional subscale. Each of these subscales also produced acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores for internal reliability. After the pilot test, the instrument was ultimately revised to include 73 items, and several of the items were revised to reflect results of the expert review and the pilot study.

For a doctoral dissertation, Morales (2013) gained permission from Schultz to test the *3DWS* with postsecondary students. In order to be used in a college student setting, a revised

version of the instrument was developed, the Three Dimensional Worldview Survey – Form C (*3DWS-Form C*, Appendix A). The revised version was subject to expert review and approved by those experts for use in a Christian higher education setting. The instrument was also reduced to 74 items and the three components (subscales) were renamed as a result of comments from the expert reviewers and the results of principal component analysis. The *3DWS-Form C* was administered by Morales (2013) to 427 students in a Christian university in Virginia, all of whom had either taken in the past, or were currently enrolled in, a Biblical worldview course at the university.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the instrument. For the total scale, Cronbach's alpha was .785 and for the subscales, it was .923 for non-Biblical convictions, .860 for behaviors, and .647 for Biblical convictions. Overall, the instrument was determined to have acceptable construct validity, even with the low Cronbach's alpha for the Biblical convictions subscale. Morales (2013) offered two suggestions for further refinement of the *3DWS-Form C*: considering how to more accurately measure heart orientation and examining the practice of reverse scoring to determine its impact on results of taking the instrument. As of the date of the current study, no further revisions have been made to the *3DWS-Form C*, and so it was used in its present form, with permission from the author (Appendix A). In spite of the instrument's limited effectiveness in accurately measuring heart orientation and its limited use in only two doctoral dissertations, it still seems most closely correlated with the purpose and scope of this study (Morales, 2013). Perhaps the results of this study can yield helpful suggestions for further refinement of the *3DWS-Form C*, though that is not a central purpose of this study.

It is widely understood that assessing an individual's worldview is very difficult, especially with a quantitative instrument (Schultz & Swezey, 2013). The best way to understand

a person's worldview is via incarnational research (or ethnography – see Creswell, 2013), where the researcher can actually live and work with an individual over a period of time in order to gain an authentic, comprehensive, life-based picture of a person's heart (D. Naugle, personal communication, January 23, 2015). However, such research is not consistent with the time and resource constraints of a doctoral dissertation, and so have used Schultz' (2013) revised instrument served as a tool for confirmation of a potential participant's commitment to a Biblical worldview. The instrument was not used to qualify participants, but was a means of triangulating the collected qualitative data.

Results of the administration of the *3DWS – Form C* with the sample from this study can be found in Appendix C. Schultz' (2010) scoring protocol includes individual scaled scores for each subscale, and an overall composite score, which is the sum of the three subscores. Additionally, each subscore includes a corresponding textual rating of *poor*, *good*, or *very good*. Unfortunately, results from other administrations of the *3DWS – Form C* with similar samples have not been published, as the instrument is still in early stages of use and refinement. Therefore, results from this sample cannot be compared to other results.

Results of the *3DWS – Form C* from this study sample suggest that these participants have a strong Biblical worldview, thus providing an important confirmation of the nominators' positive opinion of the worldview of each participant. Overall, the sample scored extremely well on all subscales and on the composite score. Out of 60 total subscale scores only five of those scores (8%) were rated less than "very good," which is the highest possible rating. The five ratings that were not "very good" were rated as "good," and no subscores were rated as "poor."

Participation in this study (not including time spent on creating the timeline, since there was no way to gather that information) involved an average of one hour and 12 minutes per

participant, with the individuals who were a part of the focus group averaging a total of two hours and 26 minutes. I estimated that participants would complete their timeline in approximately one hour, so the estimated time of participation would be two hours and 12 minutes for general participants, and three hours and 26 minutes for the five participants who were also in the focus group.

Procedures

This section outlines the procedures utilized in this study. After applying for and receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix D), letters of inquiry describing the study, outlining the criteria for participation, and soliciting nominations were sent to the potential nominators (Appendix E). Nominators included: a college professor, a worldview ministry leader, a Christian school director of development, a children's ministry leader, a young adult pastor, a sport ministry leader, a pastor's wife, a Christian business person, a Christian college vice-president of student life, and two of the study participants who nominated friends after their own interview. Two individuals who were asked to serve as nominators (one college professor and one college financial aid director) declined the request and did not provide any nominees. Each participant was also asked to provide names and contact information of others who may have been interested in participating in the study, a form of snowball sampling (Patton, 2015); only two participants nominated others.

Inquiry emails to nominators were followed-up with phone calls, emails, and Facebook messages, as necessary. As each nomination was received, I sent via email a request for participation to the nominees, which thoroughly explained the study, including criteria, time demands, requirements, etc. for participation (Appendix F), as well as a copy of the actual consent form (Appendix G). The request also included a suggestion for an initial phone call to

discuss the study and to ensure that the nominee understood the requirements for participation, and to begin the process of developing rapport. A spreadsheet was used to keep track of nominee contact information and to track completion of the various facets of participation.

Once a nominee provided consent to participate, I asked the participant to sign and return the formal informed consent form which had already been sent to the participant via email. Follow-up emails, phone calls, and text messages were used to follow-up with potential participants who did not return the completed the consent form prior to commencing involvement in the study. Consent forms were stored digitally; no correspondence or collection of consent forms or timelines was done on paper. Multiple contacts, including phone calls, text messages, emails, and Facebook messages were required to solidify commitments from participants and to schedule the various components of participation. Text messaging proved to be the most efficient means of securing commitments to participate and to schedule interviews.

After securing each individual's commitment to participate, an email was sent which outlined the steps involved in the study (Appendix H). The first step was to complete a basic demographic survey (online, via ZoHo, Table 3) to enrich and provide context for the qualitative data that was later collected. On the survey, participants were asked to provide basic information about their area of residence, age, gender, ethnicity, college enrollment (if applicable), and current denominational affiliation. Next, they were asked to complete the *3DWS-Form C* online (via ZoHo, Appendix A).

Table 3

Basic Demographic Survey

Questions

1. Name
 2. Gender
 3. Age in years and months
 4. Ethnic Background
 5. Denominational affiliation (if applicable)
 6. Years of education completed, beyond high school
 7. Degree and major
 8. Location of primary address (by region of US)
-

After completion of demographic survey and *3DWS-Form C*, participants completed and returned the worldview development timeline (Appendix I). In conjunction with communicating about the timeline, interviews were scheduled and conducted as soon as practical after receiving the timeline, with transcribing, coding, constant comparison, and theoretical memoing occurring throughout the data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I, as the researcher, transcribed the first two interviews, to immerse myself in the data and to get a feel for the process of transcription. However, after experiencing the time and effort required to produce a transcript, I decided to work with an online transcription service. I utilized Rev Transcription Service, which produced excellent, confidential transcripts in a short amount of time and at a reasonable rate. After the transcription of each interview was completed, participants were provided with MS Word copies

of their interview transcription to allow them to suggest edits, clarifications, or changes. None asked that any changes be made.

After most of the interviews were conducted, transcribed, and analyzed, 10 participants who seemed to be especially rich sources of data were invited (via email) to participate in a focus group session. Five participants responded that they would like to be a part of the focus group, which was held via Zoom shortly thereafter.

The Researcher's Role

As the researcher in this study, I was the primary human instrument for data collection (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015), via direct interaction with the participants in the interviews and in the focus group experience. I did not recruit participants over whom I have any form of leadership or authority, including current students at Smithtown Christian School, my own biological children, or current employees of Smithtown Christian School.

My life situation and background well situated me to be the researcher for this inquiry into Biblical worldview development among emerging adults. Closest to home, I am a parent of five children, ranging in age from 12 to 23, with three children currently in the emerging adult stage. Additionally, my family has had, and currently has, non-family emerging adults living with us from time to time as houseguests.

As parents, we have made Biblical worldview development a primary focus of our household and the discipleship of our children. We homeschooled our children for 11 years prior to my assuming the position of superintendent at a large Christian school on Long Island, NY. Throughout the years of homeschooling and in subsequent years, though in different forums, we have purposefully engaged our children in study and discussions about Biblical worldview. We have read multiple books about Biblical worldview together as a family, have watched the Truth

Project, a video-based Biblical worldview teaching series produced by Focus on the Family. We regularly discuss books and movies to discern the worldview driving the authors/writers/actors, and daily devotions and dinner conversations regularly involve worldview themes. We regularly read articles from *World Magazine*, and my wife and I are very involved in our children's academic studies, consistently looking for opportunities to teach or discuss Biblical worldview themes in all academic disciplines. While not as formally or extensively as Francis Schaeffer's *La'bri*, we have followed his lead and we purposefully use our household as a Biblical worldview academy for our children, our guests, and ourselves.

In my professional life, I have been involved in vocational church ministry, my family's construction company, and a national leadership consulting/training business startup. I have also taught extensively about Biblical worldview themes, in local church ministry, homeschool conferences, and as a guest speaker in many different venues. My vocational experience has exposed me to many varied applications of Biblical worldview, from living out a Biblical worldview in the home improvement trades, to motivating and equipping crowds numbering in the thousands.

Of particular relevance to qualitative inquiry is my background as a certified leadership coach and coach trainer. In those capacities, I learned and extensively practiced the skills of asking powerful questions and listening attentively. Additionally, I spent several years teaching adult learners to do the same as part of a national coach training organization. I also served as an adjunct professor at the University of Valley Forge in Phoenixville, PA, teaching both undergrad and graduate students the heart and skills of leadership coaching. These experiences proved to be of incalculable value in the process of collecting and analyzing qualitative data via interviews and the focus group.

I am an ordained minister in the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, an independent network of Pentecostal churches throughout the world. As such, I have served as a full-time pastor in two churches, with responsibilities in church-based education, discipleship, and youth ministry. This experience, in addition to the training I received in Bible college, has equipped me with a significant degree of Bible knowledge, skills in Biblical interpretation, and experience in walking with Christians of all ages through the process of developing a Biblical worldview, and teaching others to do the same. I have taught dozens of Bible, parenting, and worldview courses, and have led over 1,000 small group Bible studies throughout my adult life. These experiences have given me both wide and intimate exposure to the processes people go through as they mature in their faith and their commitment to a Biblical worldview.

Data Collection

The following outlines the methods that were used to collect the data for this study. No data was collected until Liberty University IRB approval was secured.

Personal Worldview Development Timeline

All participants in the study completed a written worldview development timeline (Appendix I), which became part of the qualitative data. Documents can provide a rich source of data for analysis and guidance for additional paths of inquiry (Patton, 2015). However, at a more fundamental level, document-based data collection can be much less obtrusive than direct observation or conversation (Patton, 2015). For instance, a participant may be more comfortable at first writing about his or her personal worldview formation, instead of talking about that process. Additionally, by the time the participants were interviewed they had already been vulnerable to some level. The timelines were a rich source of data, and participants were more vulnerable in writing than I had expected. The timelines not only provided useful qualitative

data, they also served as effective preparation for the interviews as they prompted the participants to begin thinking about their worldview development.

The instructions for the timeline worksheet were provided for review to an expert in qualitative research and an educator who teaches emerging adults. Specific feedback on clarity of instructions and feasibility/ease of completing the worksheet was solicited, as well as any other feedback the reviewers had. Additionally, two non-participant emerging adults were asked to complete the worksheet and provide feedback about both the instructions and the experience of completing the worksheet. Based on this feedback, minor changes in wording were made to the instructions prior to sending them to participants.

Creating a timeline can be an effective way to visually organize rich data, and can be a means to highlight important events in an individual's life in chronological order (Berends, 2011; Kolar, Ahmad, Chan, & Erickson, 2015; Patterson, Markey, & Somers, 2012). Timelines also help to facilitate accurate recall and sequencing of life events and can foster the placement of significant events or developmental milestones into the larger context of the overall construct being researched (Gramling & Carr, 2004). Patterson et al. (2012) suggested that timelines are most valuable when they are constructed in conjunction with a more comprehensive data source, such as interviews. When used effectively, timelines can help to situate life events in developmental stages, which is particularly relevant to this study (Kubiak, 2005). Timelines can also help to foster a sense of direction for the interview, prompting the participant to reflect and consider life events prior to being asked the interview questions (Kolar et al., 2015).

In a study related to substance abuse and treatment, Berends (2011) found that utilizing timelines allowed for more organized and rich analysis of the data gained from subsequent interviews. Additionally, underlying factors and the relationships between discrete events were

more readily identified. Berends (2011) concluded that coupling timelines with subsequent interviews increases quality of data collected during the interview and is an ideal approach when a researcher's aim is to generate a rich description of an individual's perceptions and experiences. This is consistent with Jackson (2012), who suggested that timelines aid individuals in reconstructing their past and in reorganizing their perceptions and experiences in the broader context of their various environments.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews with emerging adults were held via Zoom (with the exception of one participant, who I met at a local restaurant for our interview) and at the convenience of the participants. Each interview was video and audio recorded using Zoom's built-in recording feature, and I also recorded each interview using my iPhone's recording app in order to have a back-up recording in the event that Zoom malfunctioned or the Internet connection was lost. An interview guide was used for the interviews (Table 4), to ensure that the same general lines of inquiry were followed in each interview while at the same time allowing for spontaneous inquiry based on participant answers and feedback. Another advantage of utilizing an interview guide is that it forces the interviewer to carefully think through in advance how to best use the limited timeframe of a typical interview (Patton, 2015).

The interview guide was reviewed by two experts, one in qualitative research and one in Biblical worldview. The experts were asked to evaluate the questions according to the criteria of clarity, logic, developmental appropriateness, and relevance to study topic and research questions. Subsequent to the expert reviews, small changes in the interview guides were made as appropriate. Once the interview guides were finalized, one pilot interview with a non-participant was conducted to practice using the questions and to gain feedback from an actual emerging

adult on the suitability and answerability of the questions. As a result of the pilot interview, no edits or changes were made to the interview guide.

Table 4

Interview Guide Questions for Participants

Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. Please walk me through your worldview development timeline.
3. Of the formative experiences you identified on your timeline, which would you say were the most significant?
4. What made them significant?
5. Is there something else you would like to add to your timeline that you haven't already written down?
6. Experts suggest that a person is often not aware of his or her worldview and its influence on his or her life and choices. On a scale from one to five, with one being very unaware and five being completely aware, how aware are you of your worldview?
7. Describe your worldview.
8. Ideally, part of becoming an adult involves the process of examining and evaluating one's worldview. Where are you in that process?
9. How does your parents' worldview compare to yours?
10. Think about a friend who also has a Biblical worldview. What formative experiences do you think they would want to tell me about?
11. Tell me about the struggles you've experienced-- since graduating high school-- as you have worked out your worldview.

12. What questions, if any, came up for you as you developed a Biblical worldview?
 13. If you were a parent of a 19-year-old, how would you help her as she develops a Biblical worldview?
 14. Imagine you're being interviewed at a youth conference, in front of thousands of Christian young people. What would you want to tell them to expect to experience as they develop their worldview over the next few years?
 15. I'd like to ask you a question that will prompt you to put everything together, so to speak. Reflecting on your lifetime of experience developing a Biblical worldview, what advice would you give to Christians your age as they develop their worldview?
 16. This next question is unique in that it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your worldview to change or develop over the next several years?
 17. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question... What else do you think would be important for me to know about the development of your worldview?
-

Questions one through five are knowledge questions (Patton, 2015), and were designed as follow-up questions to the worldview development timelines that had previously been created and submitted by the participants. These questions were intended to be relatively straightforward and non-threatening, and served to help develop rapport between the participant and myself (Patton, 2015). The questions were adjusted as necessary for each participant, based on the data included on each individual timeline.

Fowler (1981) suggested that for adolescents, the formation of complex systems of values and beliefs is primarily a subconscious task. Only after one progresses out of synthetic-

conventional faith does a person begin to develop a deep awareness of one's faith. With this new awareness comes the capacity to consciously reflect on one's faith and to make intentional choices about what to include in a workable system of meaning. Furthermore, Sire (2015) concluded that components of a person's worldview may be consciously or unconsciously held. Therefore, it was important to ask questions that helped participants reflect on their level of awareness of their own worldview and on the progress they have made in examining and evaluating their worldview. Questions six through eight were designed for these purposes.

Question nine invited the participant to reflect on his or her worldview as compared to his or her parents' worldview. Several studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between an individual's worldview and that of his or her parents (Brickhill, 2010; Kimball, Boyatzis, Cook, Leonard, & Flanagan, 2013; Perkins, 2007). Probing about parent worldviews helped to discover a more complete picture of influences on worldview development.

The 10th question invited the participant to take another person's perspective, which is often helpful in gaining new insights (Patton, 2015). It is also a non-threatening question, allowing the participants to talk more in-depth about the phenomenon of worldview development, without requiring them to be highly vulnerable. Question 10 did help keep the interview moving along in an engaging fashion and yielding valuable data. This was particularly important given the nature of the question that follows.

Question 11 is the first question that required a relatively high degree of vulnerability, and for this reason, I chose to not ask it until the interview was well underway. By this time in the interview, a good rapport was established (Patton, 2015), and therefore the participants were willing to share more intimate details about their struggles in developing a Biblical worldview.

For several researchers, personal struggle is an important component of worldview development (Bryant, 2011; Fowler, 1981; Mayhew, 2012; Mayhew et al., 2012).

Questioning truth seems to be a key element of the passage from an adolescent faith to an adult faith (Fowler, 1981; King et al., 2014). Question 12 was designed to elicit some of the questions participants may have asked as part of the process of developing their worldview. I was particularly attentive to the concept of cognitive dissonance that such questions can cause (Bryant, 2011; Ciarrocchi & Heaven, 2012; Fowler, 1981). I was also prepared to probe further with the participants in order to gain additional data about how they felt about and how they responded to questions that were suggested by becoming exposed to alternate worldviews held by others (Mayhew, 2012; Mayhew et al., 2012).

Questions 13 and 14 were designed to put participants into role-playing contexts, which helped the participants to think more deeply about their own worldview development by inviting them to step outside of themselves and become an observer, or co-researcher (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Questions 15 and 16 put the participant in the role of expert on worldview development, which is yet another way to elicit different and valuable data. To encourage maximum value from these questions, I have crafted them to include prefatory statements, which helped to transition the participants into the role of expert (Patton, 2015).

Question number 17 is a one-shot question, designed to give the participant one further opportunity to offer valuable insight (Patton, 2015). This one-shot question also served as the closing question, giving the participant freedom to add to what was already said, keeping him or her in the role of expert on his or her own life and story (Patton, 2015). From my experience in asking thousands of such questions as a life coach, I've found that these one-shot, parting

questions often yield a tremendous amount of valuable information, when the interview or discussion could very easily have been otherwise shut down.

Throughout each interview, I sought to build rapport and neutrality. Rapport was built by being genuinely friendly, engaging in active listening, and by exhibiting respect for the individual (Patton, 2015). Being as conversational as possible was another way to build rapport (Kvale, 2007). In an effort to keep obstacles to rapport to a minimum and to be as present as possible in the conversation, I did not physically take notes during the interview but instead relied solely on the recording for my data collection.

Neutrality involves creating a climate in which the participant feels free to answer the questions and tell me anything without having a sense of either my favor or my dissatisfaction (Patton, 2015). Without intentionally focusing on neutrality, it would have been easy to allow my judgments of the participants' answers to be apparent, which could have nudged the participant towards shutting down instead of opening up, especially if those judgments were negative. Both rapport and neutrality require the interviewer to be very attentive to the ethos, texture, and life of the conversation, and to make any necessary adjustments to the questions used and/or the tone and pace of the interview (Patton, 2015).

Theoretical Memoing

Writing memos was a helpful tool for reflection and theory construction (Appendix J.). Memos are written by the researcher concurrently with data collection and analysis, and serve to: (a) facilitate open exploration of the data, (b) identify and track emerging properties and categories, (c) make comparisons and suggest questions; (d) expand or elaborate on the paradigm or emerging concepts and constructs, and (e) generate an overall narrative (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Charmaz and Bryant (2008) add several other benefits of consistent memo writing,

including: keeping researchers highly engaged with the data and the emerging themes, helping to identify gaps in analysis and theories, providing blocks of writing for eventual inclusion in research reports, and encouraging researchers to write in a progressive, developmental fashion, where the conclusions emerge concurrently with the research and analysis.

Focus Group with Select Study Participants

Focus groups are essentially interviews with a small group of individuals that encourage a variety of perspectives to be shared (Patton, 2015). Given that the constructivist paradigm assumes the social nature of knowledge, the focus group with select participants provided a paradigm-appropriate additional data source (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Though a focus group is essentially an interview, the difference between the focus group and the individual interviews is that participants get to hear, reflect on, and respond to one another's answers.

According to Patton (2015), focus groups offer qualitative researchers several important benefits. First, since multiple participants can be interviewed at once, focus groups offer a cost and time effective way to collect data. Second, focus groups enable the researcher to observe diverse perspectives about a shared experience. Next, the interaction between participants that occurs during a focus group greatly enhances the data that is collected. Fourth, in the course of a focus group interview there will inevitably be times of silence or even avoidance of certain topics. These can be revealing and rich sources of additional perspective. Another benefit of focus groups is that analysis can occur even in the midst of the actual focus group meeting, as the researcher assesses the interaction and synergy between participants. In an individual interview, the researcher is more immediately involved in the conversation, whereas in a focus group, the researcher can stand a bit distant to watch and listen, while still maintaining a posture of

authentic immersion. Finally, focus groups tend to be enjoyable for the participants and the researcher, as the social nature of human beings is drawn out and celebrated.

Ten participants who provided rich data in their interviews were invited to participate in the focus group, and five participants responded in the affirmative and participated in the focus group. Had more individuals responded positively to my invitation, I would have held a second focus group. A focus group interview guide was prepared to aid in keeping the group tightly focused, as focus is the key to successful focus groups (Patton, 2015). At the same time, the focus group experience should be comfortable and enjoyable, so that individuals feel free to share, without feeling pressure to reach a consensus on certain questions as if they were a voting body (Krueger & Casey, 2008). Questions for the focus group interview guide were generated after individual interviews were conducted, informed by the data that was collected from the individual interviews. Table 5 lists several questions that were pre-planned and later used as a guide for the focus group interview, though additional questions were also asked.

Table 5

Interview Guide for Focus Group

 Questions

1. What did you learn about your own worldview development in your one-on-one interview?
 2. What relationships were most influential in your worldview development?
 3. If you attended a Christian high school, what did your teachers do to help you and your friends to prepare for developing your worldview after graduation?
 4. Imagine that you all live together in the same dorm at a Christian college. How would you support one another in the process of developing your worldview?
 5. What do you all feel parents can do to support their children's worldview development during the emerging adult years?
 6. If you were assigned as a team to create a strategy for mentoring Christian emerging adults, what might that look like?
-

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed as data was collected using the grounded theory framework, steps, and techniques outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015). As a starting point, I recorded and had transcriptions made of all interviews and the focus group. After transcription, participants were provided with a copy of the transcription in MS Word format, along with a request that they review the transcription to ensure that everything captured in writing accurately reflected the content of the interview. When I sent the transcription, I reminded the participants of the standards of confidentiality that I employed. Participants were given the freedom to suggest

changes, additions, or deletions to the text, which provided for them a confirmation that I was indeed striving to be as accurate and truthful as possible in the data that is collected. No participant offered any changes or edits to the transcripts.

Qualitative data for this study included: written worldview development timelines, individual interview transcriptions, the focus group transcription, and memos written by me throughout the course of the study. All data was imported into the Mac version of *ATLAS.ti* (version 7, 2015) qualitative data analysis software application. While I prefer a pen and paper approach to written work, I adapted to a digital approach for several reasons. First, I can type faster than I write, which makes for more efficient use of my time. Second, I have come to rely on the ability to edit and change text immediately and completely, making for a cleaner and more organized workspace. Finally, and most importantly, composing and tracking writing electronically allows for infinitely easier searches and much more robust organizational schemes.

Using *ATLAS.ti* to analyze data did not in any way replace my role as the analyst. Instead, I utilized the software to aid in storing, retrieving, coding, comparing, contrasting, and linking data (Patton, 2015). While it took a degree of extra discipline and energy to learn to use the software appropriately, the resources spent in doing so resulted in more resources being devoted to the actual human analysis.

Before engaging in formal coding, I read a timeline or transcript straight through to fully immerse myself in the data. After doing so, each data source followed a standard course of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), beginning with identifying lower-level initial concepts (open coding). Next, I identified themes to which the concepts seemed to point (axial coding, or developing concepts). From those themes, core categories began to emerge (generating a

conditional/consequential matrix, or analyzing data for context). Finally, I integrated the core categories into a visual model for Biblical worldview development (integration).

Open Coding

Open coding involves a very detailed analysis of a data source, examining individual bits of data and devising concepts that can stand for blocks of similar data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Open coding began with reading through the timelines and transcriptions in a first pass over the data (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) aptly terms the initial data sources as “undigested complexity of reality” (p. 553). This micro-analysis involved digging deep into the data to discover initial concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). It was wide open, detailed, and exploratory, but at times ended up being an extended rumination on one word or phrase.

During this initial stage of coding, it was essential that I maintained a strong awareness of my academic, philosophical, and experience-based biases. As much as possible, I sought to set aside my understanding of the theoretical frameworks I had studied, so that I would not allow my a priori assumptions to have undue influence in this first examination of the data. While I know that one can never be free from all bias, my goal was to approach the data with as open a mind and heart as possible (Creswell, 2013). To aid in this process of pursuing objectivity, I employed member checking (see section on Credibility, below) and I specifically asked God for the ability to see and perceive clearly the reality of what the participants said and what they did not say.

The first product of open coding was a set of initial codes that was continually refined throughout the analysis process. These initial codes stood for concepts contained in the data and were generated by deep reading of the data, reflection on the meaning behind the actual words, and asking questions of the data. As multiple interviews were coded, I began the process of constant comparison between and among the data sources (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Since my

goal was to create a developmental model for one stage in the overall process of the formation of a Biblical worldview, I was particularly attentive to words in the data that reflected time or chronology.

The final product of open coding was a set of almost 275 codes that represented concepts contained in all the data sources (see Appendix K for the first set of codes developed as a result of open coding). One particularly important type of code is an *in vivo* code, which is a concept that is in the actual words of the research participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). *In vivo* codes are important in that they involve very little interpretive bias, since they reflect the actual words of the participant, verbatim. One helpful example provided by Corbin and Strauss (2015) is when a research participant might say “I came to terms with...” An obvious and helpful code for this would be, “coming to terms with...” instead of attempting to generate a code in my own words. *In vivo* codes helped to ground the analysis deeply in the data itself, and many of the initial codes were *in vivo* codes, as can be seen in Appendix K.

Axial Coding

After open coding was completed for the data sources, axial coding commenced. If the analysis process was to be pictured as a funnel with open coding at the widest part, axial coding would be the middle section of the funnel; more narrow than the initial exploration and coding, but not as narrow as subsequent steps. Axial coding involves relating and developing concepts derived from the data to one another to develop patterns and constructs by grouping concepts identified in open coding, while elaborating on initial codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Often, when the initial codes were compared with other codes, they were changed or required further elaboration. This process continued the technique of constant comparison. The product of axial coding was a list of categories of data and emergent themes, which were essentially

combinations and re-combinations (patterns) of the original concepts discovered and developed during open coding (Patton, 2015). See Appendix L for a list of categories generated from axial coding, along with the codes under each category.

While working on axial coding, I was keenly aware of the tendency to approach the data from a purely logical or linear perspective. Effective identification of patterns and categories required what Patton (2015) terms abductive analysis. Essentially, abductive analysis involves taking tentative themes and patterns back into the data, to test their validity within the context of the data itself (Patton, 2015). Purposefully employing abductive analysis helped to prevent me as a novice researcher from moving too quickly from data to theory building.

As axial coding progressed, I was sensitive to the concept of saturation. Saturation is the point in analysis when no novel concepts are emerging in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). While it is important to be looking for saturation during open coding, it may not become apparent until the researcher begins to look for patterns and broader themes in the codes. Saturation was reached after 18 participant interviews and the focus group session were conducted and coded. At that point, I decided to wait to conduct the final two interviews of my originally projected 20, until after I created the first draft of the model, the conditional/consequential matrix.

Appendix M contains the final working list of categories and codes, which was further refined as the model was eventually created and checked against the data. As I continued with the data analysis and began to create the model, codes and categories were frequently collapsed or renamed, and codes were often moved back and forth between different categories. The final code list included seven categories and 54 codes; the initial list of codes after open coding contained almost 275 codes.

Creating a Conditional/Consequential Matrix

Once axial coding was complete, I created a conditional matrix of themes and concepts, which located the data in the broader context of the phenomenon being studied. A conditional/consequential matrix was a nascent, tentative version of the eventual model of Biblical worldview development that emerged. This matrix was a first attempt at explaining the contextual/causal relationships that were becoming evident in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In other words, the conditional/consequential matrix was a beginning assembly of categories into core categories, accompanied by tentative representations of cause and effect relationships among the categories and themes. Patton (2015) calls this a process-outcome matrix, which represents the linkages between themes according to whether they are part of the process or the outcome of the phenomenon of interest. The matrices that were created included both textual and visual representations of the relationships among and between themes. See Appendix P for examples of the progression of matrices.

Diagramming proved to be particularly appropriate during the later stages of data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Besides offering an alternate way of looking at data and emerging themes, diagrams can help to identify breaks in logic or gaps in relationships. Once diagrams begin to take shape, a researcher is well on the way to developing theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Diagramming can also provide a needed break from immersion in text-based analysis.

Integration

The final, culminating phase of grounded theory data analysis is integration, which occurs as the researcher moves to the narrowest part of the funnel. Core categories are finalized, and interrelationships between and among them are refined to the level of a central model for the phenomenon under consideration. Integration involves reviewing all data analysis, including

coded, themes, core categories, memos, and preliminary diagrams (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This phase of the process demanded significant time for reflection, which for me took the shape of significant summative, synthesis-oriented journaling and drawing various iterations of diagrams.

The process of integration involved linking categories around core concepts/constructs and a theoretical model for Biblical worldview development during the emerging adult years was developed and refined (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The evolving model was applied back to the data and earlier categories to ensure that it truly emerged from the data itself, and to test its validity. Also, the new model underwent significant refining via checking for gaps in logic, filling in those gaps, and acknowledging the limits of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The nascent model was depicted in a diagram accompanied by a 12-page synthesis of the results of data analysis.

After drafting the synthesis of the results, I completed the final two interviews to test the model. After coding the final interviews, I was confident that the model was appropriate and effectively captured the concept of worldview development. The model was also sent to three individuals for review and suggestions: an expert in qualitative research, an esteemed, published author on the concept of worldview, and a college professor who teaches worldview courses. Input from the reviewers was assembled and helped to refine the model further to its current form and content. The model was also sent to all participants as a form of member checking. Only one participant provided feedback, and that feedback was positive and did not offer any new insights, but did serve as confirmation of the applicability of the model.

Memoing and Constant Comparison

Through the entire data analysis process, I continued to memo (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), and employ the constant comparison method. Memos are written records of the analysis process and were formally written and dated (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Memos produced during data collection and analysis actually became additional data sources, and were subject to the same analysis procedures as the timelines and the interview and focus group transcripts.

Constant comparison is an analysis technique that involves comparing the data to other data and to emerging categories and themes (Creswell, 2013). Employing constant comparison through the data collection and analysis process is critical to grounded theory begins the process of identifying and describing important relationships from the very start. Memoing about those relationships provided a rich written record of potential components of the model that was ultimately developed.

Trustworthiness

Corbin and Strauss (2015) eschew typical criteria for trustworthiness, and instead focus on the concept of quality, which they acknowledge is difficult to explain. However, they do suggest that quality research will deeply resonate with the readers' and the participants' own life experiences. Additionally, quality research will stimulate further research into the same phenomenon. I kept these facets of quality research in mind throughout the study, and sought to produce a work that will indeed deeply resonate with my readers and participants, and stimulate additionally research into the phenomenon of how a Biblical worldview develops, across the lifespan. I did, however, still pursue specific methods of establishing trustworthiness, as outlined below.

Credibility

Credibility was pursued in several ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). I employed a form of member checking, by providing transcripts of individual interviews and the first draft of the model to the participants for confirmation of truthfulness, accuracy, and applicability. After coding the first few data sources, I employed rater tests by inviting an expert in qualitative research to review and confirm my coding scheme. The rater's analysis closely mirrored my own coding scheme, providing confirmation of my analysis.

During analysis, and particularly during the integration stage, I triangulated the data via multiple means of data collection including written timelines, interviews, a focus group, and memoing (Patton, 2015). Additionally, throughout the analysis process, I consulted on a regular basis with an expert in qualitative research, who holds an Ed.D. and has taught qualitative research on the graduate level (Patton, 2015). Finally, I invited select Biblical worldview experts to examine and evaluate the emerging model of Biblical worldview development, for the purpose of gaining feedback and input (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Biblical worldview experts included one individual with a D.Min. who teaches worldview studies at a Christian college and one who holds a Ph.D., is a distinguished professor of philosophy, and is a published author in the field of Christian worldview.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability ensure that others can understand the processes used in collecting and analyzing the data in this study. To facilitate this, I kept an audit trail, or running log, of my work as a researcher in this study. Additionally, I have included in the Appendices a representative transcript from an interview (Appendix N), a sample timeline (Appendix O), various iterations of my coding schemes (Appendices K, L, & M), and examples of "in-process"

diagrams used while developing the final model of Biblical worldview development (Appendix P).

Transferability

To provide for maximum transferability of the results of this study, I focused on generating a thick explanation for how Biblical worldview develops in emerging adults. I also sought to have maximum variation among the participants (male/female, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, denominational background, region of residence, educational background, etc.). Unfortunately, I only achieved significant variation on gender, denominational affiliation, and educational background. Additionally, as a model for Biblical worldview development began to take shape, the evolving model was provided to the expert reviewers at various intervals. Feedback was requested, and, as appropriate, integrated into the model.

Ethical Considerations

As a foundation for ethical research, no data collection occurred prior to IRB approval. Signed informed consent forms were collected from each participant, and participants clearly understood the purpose and scope of the study. Pseudonyms were used for the emerging adult participants to protect confidentiality. Electronic data was password protected, and no hard copies of any participant data were collected. Interview guides were carefully constructed to avoid creating a sense of coercion in the interviews. Finally, I did not invite individuals to participate in the study who are my own children, who are current students or employees of the school at which I serve as superintendent, or who are employees of the church which sponsors my school.

This study involved minimal risk to participants, risks which are no greater than normal life. Risks of feeling uncomfortable with the study and with sharing personal information were

mitigated by my approach to the participants, which was highly relational and non-threatening. Additionally, I did not deliberately seek to obtain sensitive or risk-bearing data. I was sensitive to participant feelings, as I understood that the questions used in the interviews were at times difficult to answer, and certainly yielded sensitive personal data. Finally, I frequently reminded the participants of the confidential nature of the timelines, interviews, and focus group, and of how the information they provided would be used.

Summary

Chapter Three provided information regarding how the grounded theory research design was utilized for this study, the purpose of which was to develop the Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults. Further, I provided extensive details about my research design, the primary and secondary research questions, my role as the researcher, the participants, the methods of data collection and analysis I employed, and how I ensured maximum possible trustworthiness for the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to create a model for Biblical worldview development in Evangelical Christian emerging adults. Chapter four provides a comprehensive explanation of the results of this study. The chapter begins with a description of each participant. Next, I explain the model of worldview development generated in the study, which is grounded in the data generated from the timelines, interviews, and the focus group experience. Finally, the central research question guiding the study, as well as the three sub-questions are answered.

Participants

The 20 emerging adult participants in this study were all Evangelical Christians who possess a strong Biblical worldview, as nominated by leaders, teachers, pastors, and friends. The following is a brief description of each participant, listed in alphabetical order by pseudonym.

Abby

At 18 years old, Abby was homeschooled for all of her K-12 years, and after high school spent a semester studying Biblical worldview at a national worldview ministry. Of that experience, she wrote, “Here is where I finally understood God as Father, not ‘merely’ the Creator of everything around us. Also, that there are so many questions in life that I’ll never be able to answer them all.” She was nominated for participation in this study by a leader from that same ministry. Abby, who is Caucasian, was born and raised in a healthy and strong Christian home in the Western region of the United States and attends a church that is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in American. She has not yet begun to attend college.

Crystal

Crystal is a 21-year-old, Caucasian graduate from a Christian university, with a degree in business administration. Crystal comes from a strong Christian family, lives in the Midwest, and identifies her church affiliation as non-denominational/independent. She attended Christian school for her entire K-12 education, and was nominated for participation by Marty, also a participant in this study.

After high school, Crystal spent three months studying worldview at a national worldview ministry. These three months of intensive study yielded rich dividends in her life, and in her timeline she wrote:

It presented the questions of what is love and what does it mean to love, what is life and what does it mean to have a good life? It set me on course developing who I was and what I believed outside of my family.

Carissa

Carissa, who was nominated for participation in this study by her former pastors' wife, is a Caucasian, 23-year-old mother of two small girls, and has been married to her husband for six years. She is the only participant who has children, and one of two who are married. Growing up and still living in the south, Carissa attended public schools and was raised in a very challenging family situation, in spite of her parents' commitment to Christ and to making sure that Carissa was in church regularly. At church, Carissa found the support and affirmation she lacked at home, which had a significant shaping influence on her life. In her timeline, she wrote of the leaders of her church, that "they cared for me corrected me, taught me and loved me." Carissa did not attend college and attends an independent Pentecostal church.

Cheryl

Raised and still living in the Midwest, Cheryl is a 20-year-old Caucasian female with two years of college completed. According to her written timeline, Cheryl had an exceptional upbringing in her family and in the broader community. In her timeline, Cheryl wrote, “[I] grew [up] in a close-knit homeschool community, learned about the Bible from my parents, spent abundant time in nature, loved the outdoors, thrived with my close friends, and loved my siblings in a playful, thoughtless way.” Cheryl’s education prior to college included a few worldview training and leadership classes. After completing her homeschool high school, she attended a full semester of training at a national worldview ministry. Currently, she is studying English at a Christian liberal arts university in the South, attends an Evangelical Free church, and was nominated for this study by a leader of a national worldview ministry.

Darren

Darren lives in the Northeast, and has completed two years at a Christian college in the same region. He is a 19-year-old Caucasian male, and comes from a committed Christian household, though his parents did not become believers until adulthood. In his pre-teen years, Darren regularly memorized Scripture and participated in two mission trips to Mexico. During this season of his life, he recalls very positive feelings towards the church and God. However, Darren does not have many specific memories from this time of his life and during his interview, he suggested that “sometimes it’s not so much what we remember, but those things can . . . cultivate how you think later.” For his K-12 education, Darren was in a Christian school, and is currently involved in an independent/non-denominational church. Darren was nominated for this study by a professor at his college.

David

David is a Caucasian 18-year-old living in the South and has completed one year of college at a large Christian university in the Southeast, including one semester on campus and one semester online. His background includes a tight-knit Christian family in which he was homeschooled and mentored. However, David was not only influenced by his family, he was also profoundly influenced by his homeschool cooperative group in his teen years, which he identifies on his written timeline as his first exposure to other thoughts and worldviews. His father, who nominated him for this study, served as his pastor throughout much of his childhood, and still functions as David's primary mentor. David is involved in a non-denominational church.

Jacob

Jacob was nominated for this study by the Vice-president for Student Life from his Christian university, located in the Northeast. He is 20 years old and has completed three years of undergraduate education as a pastoral ministry major. Jacob and his three siblings were raised by a single mom, and he classifies his family as a poor/lower middle class Caucasian family. In spite of his difficult home situation, he was brought to church as a child by a Christian family he knew. Describing that experience, Jacob wrote,

I was kind of a lost kid from a broken background. Going to church. . . kind of open my eyes to what a different culture, a different view of what other people can be like. I just grew up in a hateful home, so going to church, I got to see the world of love... It's the realm that I never really experienced when I was home, at least growing up.

Jacob attended public school for his K-12 education and currently attends an Assemblies of God church.

Jared

Jared is a 19-year-old African American male who has completed one year of college at a Christian university in the Northeast. He is studying to be a pastor, and was nominated for this study by his university's Vice-president for Student Life. Jared had a difficult childhood, being raised by a single father after his mother left the family when he was a young boy. Though his father was a Christian and raised him to know Christ, Jared did not commit his life to the Lord until he was befriended by the character coach on his high school football team. He immediately immersed himself in a local church youth group, which helped his newfound faith to flourish. In thinking about the impact of his youth group, Jared wrote in his timeline that, "I always had moral convictions about certain things, but hanging out with the right people definitely helped to confirm those and it allowed me to stay on the right track." Jared attended public school for his K-12 education, and was raised—and still lives-- in the Northeast. Jared is involved in an Assemblies of God church.

Joshua

At 23 years old, Joshua is a graduate from a Christian university in the Northeast, and is currently a first year M.Div. student in a prominent theological seminary in the Northeast. He is Caucasian and was raised in a Godly home in the Northeast. Joshua spent most of his K-12 years in Christian schools, but graduated from a public high school. He had a number of significant positive relationships in his growing up years. One such relationship was with a friend, of whom he writes in his timeline, "He is my best friend and a true role model and encouragement. He has been one of the most transformation[al] and formative people in my life... I would most definitely not be the same person without [him]." Joshua was nominated for participation in this study by Jacob, another study participant, and he is involved in an Assemblies of God church.

Kevin

Kevin, a Caucasian male, lives in the Northeast and has been married for one year, the second of two married participants. At 22 years of age, Kevin has completed his undergraduate degree in religion at a large Southeastern Christian university. Kevin comes from a Godly family, with parents who consistently applied Scripture to the dilemmas of daily living. Of his parents, he remarked in his timeline that, “their passionate search for truth and devotion to finding it in the Scriptures shaped the atmosphere I grew up in.” His K-12 education included both homeschooling and Christian school, and in the latter he experienced prevalent hypocrisy, but it did not turn him off from the faith because he was in a “good home and faithful church that gave [him] an example of Christian living.” Kevin is deeply involved in a non-denominational independent church, and he was nominated for this study by a friend of his, who is a children’s ministry director at another church.

Keith

Keith is a Caucasian, 21-year-old senior completing his studies in pastoral counseling at a Christian university in the Northeast. He is involved in an Assemblies of God church, the same denomination in which he was raised by his ministry-oriented family in an inner city in the Northeast. About growing up as part of a ministry in the inner city, he wrote the following in his timeline: “I have much more understanding of the heart and culture of the inner city, as well as the struggles people face. Being a part of a Caucasian family doing inner-city, urban ministry has definitely shaped me in ways I am grateful for.” Keith was homeschooled for his middle and high school years, after completing elementary school in his local public school district. His university’s Vice-president for Student Life nominated him for this study.

Marshall

At 22 years old, Marshall is a Caucasian senior in a Christian university in the Northeast, studying youth ministries. In describing his family on his timeline, Marshall says that it was “a solid family, of which I am super thankful for and blessed with... number one reason other than Jesus why I am who I am today,” and he refers to his upbringing as “church-centric” because of all the time his family spent involved in ministry. Marshall attended public school for his K-12 years in the Northeast. He is currently involved in an Assemblies of God church and plans to go into full-time ministry with youth. Marshall was nominated for participation in this study by the Vice-president of Student Life at his university.

Mark

Mark, a Caucasian male, was born and raised in the Northeast and attended both Christian and public schools for his K-12 education, graduating from a Christian school. His experience in high school had a large impact on his worldview. In his timeline, Mark recounted some of how his high school formed his worldview:

The school stressed the idea of formulating our own ideas and thoughts about God and shaping our worldview. They explained to us what a worldview was, and not only wanted us to have that knowledge, but they wanted us to be able to defend and articulate it, understanding it on a deeper than just surface level.

Later, Mark wrote of his youth group experience: “I began to tie a lot of knots together about being a follower of Jesus, and I realized the impact one could have on things just by being a leader.” He is currently 20 years old and in his second year of studies in petroleum engineering at a secular university in the Northeast. Mark was raised in a strong Christian family and is

currently involved in an independent/non-denominational church. He was nominated for this study by a director of development from a Christian school.

Missy

Missy is a 19-year-old Caucasian female who has completed one year of college at a Christian university in the Midwest. According to her timeline, Missy struggled tremendously during the first few weeks of college with being away from home and being exposed to significant new experiences. However, persevering through her struggle allowed her to grow “more than [she] can tell.” Through her relationships at college, she has “learned that being a Christian does not equal one way of living.”

Growing up with “two spiritually mature and intentional parents,” Missy was raised in the Northeast and attended Christian schools, with the exception of 2 years of high school in a public school prior to returning to Christian school for her junior and senior years. Missy attends an independent/non-denominational church, and was nominated for this study by a Christian school director of development.

Marty

Marty, a Caucasian male, is 22 years old and a senior at a large southern secular university, studying finance. He has done additional post-high school study (one semester) at a national worldview ministry. Marty’s family background includes a very intentional Christian home and he was raised in the South. One of the unique elements of Marty’s background is the amount of worldview training he experienced prior to the emerging adult years. Homeschooled through middle school, Marty participated in a cooperative in his church for his entire high school experience, the curriculum of which was centered on Biblical worldview. In reflecting on this background, Marty said, “I’ve had very consistent good training and also good input coming

in for many, many years. It's not to say it's sunk in. It hasn't, and it's just starting to." Marty was nominated for this study by a leader at a national worldview ministry.

Philip

Philip is a 20-year-old Hispanic male who has completed two years of engineering studies at a public community college in the Northeast. He is active in his church (an independent Pentecostal church) and is currently being mentored by his young adult pastor, who also nominated him for this study. Of his young adult pastor, Philip in his interview stated, "I saw that he was here to help... he's sowing into me... He really put time into his schedule to be able to disciple me," and he counts that relationship as one of the most impacting relationships in his life. Philip comes from a Christian background, and he states that his father was a significant mentor throughout his childhood. For his K-12 years, Philip was educated in public schools.

Shae

Shae was born and raised in the Northeast and is a Caucasian 21-year-old female. She is completing dual undergraduate degrees in Biblical studies and music as a senior at a Christian college in the Northeast. Shae was raised and homeschooled in a healthy and committed Christian family, with both parents very involved in vocational ministry. After a period of struggling with some negative character issues in her mid- to late- teens, Shae awakened to the need to make her salvation her own. Referring to this time in her development, she stated, "It was at this point that I realized accepting Christ as my Lord and Savior wasn't just about going to heaven instead of hell, but about completely changing the way I lived my life, and [this reality] affects every decision." Currently, Shae attends an American Baptist church, and was nominated for this study by the director of children's ministry from another church.

Shawna

Shawna is a Caucasian, 18-year-old female from the Northeast. She is involved in an Assemblies of God church, and was nominated for this study by a development director at a Christian school. Shawna is a sophomore at a Christian college in the Northeast, and she attended a Christian school since the fourth grade. Her solid Christian family was and still is a strong influence on her faith and worldview. Shawna considers her mother to be the most influential person in terms of shaping her worldview. For her timeline, she wrote,

Though I found the majority of what she was teaching me for most of my life very annoying (generally because it restricted me in some way), her wisdom and her discussions with me... have become some of the things that I cherish the most... she always wants me to evaluate what I allow to seep into my conscious[ness] through what I see and hear.

Tiffany

Tiffany is 18 years old, is Caucasian, and was raised in a “God-loving” family. She has a varied educational background including homeschooling, public school, and a charter school, which is based on the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy. In her teen years, Tiffany attended a Christian service camp during multiple summers. The camp involved spending a week together with other teens, learning about God and serving the community through organized service projects. Her conception of the purpose of the camp is “so you understand why you’re doing the camp... to not conform to the world and [then] use your hands to help others, and serve.” Tiffany was nominated for this study by a development director at a Christian school, and she has not yet begun to attend college. Living in the Northeast, Tiffany attends a United Methodist church.

Thomas

Thomas is 21 years old, Caucasian, and was raised in the Northeast. He attends a Christian university in the Northeast, and is a pastoral ministry major. As he spoke about the future, he said in his interview, “I kind of see God progressing me, getting me ready for the rest of my life.” Further demonstrating a reflective posture, he sees each new experience as a place where he can gain new perspective on life. For his church involvement, Thomas is connected to an Assemblies of God church, and he was nominated for this study by the Vice-president for Student Life at his university. Thomas comes from a committed Christian family and he attended public school growing up.

Results

Biblical worldview development for Evangelical Christians in the emerging adult years is a complex interplay of new experiences, constructive responses to those experiences, and resultant developmental progress, all of which are influenced, or framed, by one’s past experience. One does not simply decide to develop a Biblical worldview, and then instantaneously do so. Rather, it is a process over time, which involves growth in a person’s commitment to, understanding of, and behavioral alignment with a perspective on reality shaped by the Holy Bible (Pearcy, 2004; Phillips et al., 2008).

This developmental process involves prompts, which are experiences and choices that have the potential to challenge or nudge an individual towards development, and means, which are constructive and intentional actions a person takes to process new experiences to arrive at new, more mature, and more Biblically consistent conclusions, commitments, and behavioral patterns. As a person consistently and authentically engages prompts, a more sophisticated and complete Biblical worldview is shaped. Ideally, the patterns and habits established during

emerging adulthood will be continually practiced throughout the remaining years of adulthood, leading to the development of an ever-maturing Biblical worldview.

Figure 1 below provides a graphical representation of the Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults, as generated in this study. Since the process of Biblical worldview development is not necessarily linear, but rather a series of inter-related experiences and actions, the graphical model needed to reflect this reality. As such, gears were chosen to represent the concepts that emerged from the data, showing both their individual components and also demonstrating how they function together as actual gears do in larger mechanical systems.

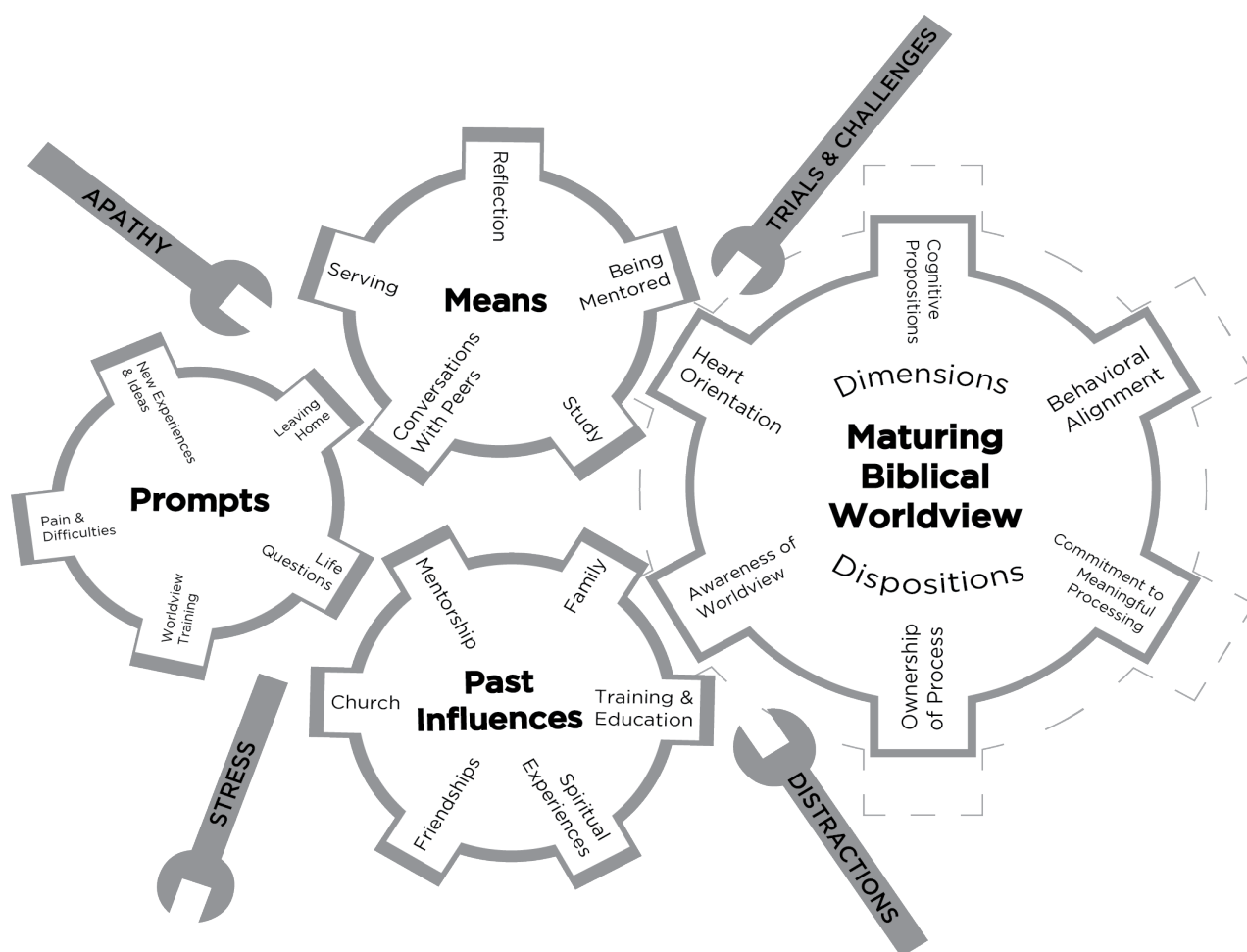


Figure 1. Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults.

The goal of effective Biblical worldview development in the emerging adult years is to produce a serviceable “gear” of maturing Biblical worldview, made up of Sire’s (2015) three dimensions of worldview and of three core dispositions, which were identified in this study. This gear, then (which is surrounded by a dotted line, suggesting future growth) in turn impacts and drives the mechanism of future worldview development. Maturation in one’s Biblical worldview is prompted by certain conditions and experiences, nurtured through effective means of processing the prompts, and threatened by common derailers. In addition, each component of the process is influenced by experiences from childhood and adolescence.

Past Influences

Emerging adults do not arrive at age 18 with a clean worldview slate, as if they begin the process of worldview development as they receive their diploma on the day of their high school graduation. Participants in this study were aware of the shaping influences that preceded emerging adulthood. While they were not a monolithic group with identical past experiences, a fairly consistent profile emerged from analysis of the data. Most often, participants grew up in stable, solid Christian families, were very involved in the church, had significant and memorable spiritual experiences, received Biblical worldview education and training, enjoyed positive Christian friendships, and had multiple adult mentors.

Family. Not surprisingly, all of the participants noted that their family had major influence on their worldview. Seventeen out of 20 of the participants identified their family as a strong Christian family, and most noted that their parents took intentional steps to train them in a Biblical worldview.

Keith clearly stated that his strong Christian upbringing was the most significant formative influence on his worldview. “My parents have shaped most of my beliefs today,” he

said, when explaining their impact. Cheryl echoed Keith, when she said that growing up in a Christian family was one of the biggest influences on her worldview. As Kevin was reflecting on creating his timeline, he expressed a similar perspective, when he stated,

I don't think it's possible to separate who I am today from the family that I grew up in and my parents' attitude towards the world and towards going to church and towards raising us to believe God and take him at his word and always accept the authority of Scripture even before you understand how it works out, but taking it in faith that it does work out.

There's no way to remove who I am from that.

Kevin understands and values the influence of his upbringing in a strong Christian home. Cheryl shared similar sentiments when she said, “I wouldn’t be who I was if it weren’t for my parents and the way they taught me.”

Many other participants spoke in similar ways about their upbringing, in terms of the spiritual training and excellent support received at home. When attempting to classify his childhood, Marty stated that he believes he is in the “hundredth percentile of kids that have been raised in [strong Christian] homes, and [he is] so thankful to have that support.” Missy added that her parents have been the most influential people in her life, and that she was raised in what she called “a bubble.” Her upbringing was marked by measured exposure to the world’s influences, and she “thrived under [her parents’] safe, Biblical, and challenging learning environment.” Others also mentioned the concept of an upbringing that shielded them from negative outside influences, and those that did had a positive, grateful perspective on their upbringing. Tiffany summarized this concept well when she said, similar to Missy, “I was like, in my bubble, and it was great.”

All but three participants in this study came from strong Christian homes, where parents provided strong Biblical instruction to their children and sheltered them from the full brunt of impact from negative outside influences. Additionally, parents tended to actively model a Biblical worldview for their children. This healthy, Godly upbringing continues to influence them, even though most participants are no longer living at home.

Church. In addition to participants' families profoundly influencing their worldview, all of the participants in the study were actively involved in the church throughout their childhood and adolescence, even in the case of the three individuals who did not come from strong Christian homes. Some participants, like David, whose father was the youth pastor in his church, recalled "always being at church." Similarly, on his timeline Kevin reminisced, "I grew up going to church on a weekly basis. More often than not, we were at church multiple times a week for potlucks, services, local outreaches, etc." Philip also was involved in church activities and in serving. He remembers that as a young teen he "began to do skits at my church, began to learn how to serve the body of Christ and give up my time."

Keith's view of his upbringing in church is that that experience was all-pervasive. Connecting his childhood with his current worldview, he stated, "Everything that I do is grounded in Evangelical Christianity... as I've grown up in pretty much that culture all my life." Participants in this study were not just attendees at church; as children and teens, they and their families were heavily involved in the life and ministry of the church. This involvement continues to influence them today.

Spiritual experiences. Participants' pre emerging adult years were marked by significant spiritual experiences, including commitments and major turning points. Of note is the reality that every one of the participants had made a commitment to Christ, or became born again, prior to

emerging adulthood. Thus, the faith of these emerging adults was a continuation and extension of a childhood or adolescent initial faith commitment, along with subsequent spiritual experiences. Spiritual experiences included baptism, sensing a call from God to a particular vocation, rededications to the Lord, participating in worship services, and engaging in personal discipleship programs.

Participants were readily able to reflect on how these kinds of spiritual experiences were instrumental in shaping their worldview. Cheryl observed, “I think maybe the most direct shaping influence would be when I was around 14 and had an experience of rededicating my life to Christ. That was definitely part of what made my worldview my own and made it mean something to me.”

Five participants experienced a season of neglecting or walking away from their Christian commitment, only to subsequently return. Those who walked away from Christ during their teen years came to a point of crisis, where they recognized their spiritual condition and took active steps towards restoration through repentance and reconciliation. Most often, the catalyst for this restoration was someone else—a friend, a parent, etc. Darren credits his girlfriend with helping him get back on the right path. David had a very frank and open conversation with his parents about his issues, and their acceptance helped him to turn “back to what [he] was taught long ago, and [he] had a pivotal point in [his] life once again.”

Spiritual experiences were important parts of participants’ childhood and teen years, establishing important foundations for their worldview in emerging adulthood. Participants were able to articulate how those experiences influenced their worldview then, and how they continue to influence their worldview to the present day.

Friendship. Participants readily identified the influence that their childhood and teen peers had and continue to have on their worldview. This influence could be either positive or negative. On the negative side, several commented on how their peer group influenced them away from commitment to Christ and challenged their growing Biblical worldview. David shared that relationships with girls was what contributed to his downfall in his teen years. Jared identified his peer group as the cause of his “journey into a secular mindset” in his middle school years.

Most often, though, the Christian emerging adults in this study had long-term friendships that contributed positively to their worldview. Cheryl sees her teen friendships as elements that were challenging her to “live out her faith, despite the costs,” and pointed to the value and impact of merely being around such “good Christian friends.” Philip added to this idea of being around the right people by stating, “you become who you surround yourself with.” For many participants, the influence of good friends continues into emerging adulthood, shaping their worldview.

Missy identified the long-term impact that friends from her teenage years continue to have on her life when she said, “my three best girlfriends grew up in church with me. To this day, every conversation we have centers around God.” Shawna demonstrated sincere appreciation for her long-term friends connecting those relationships to her personal growth, saying, “I will always be immensely thankful for the relationships I have through [her Christian school]... some of those people have forced me to learn more than I ever thought I would.” Jared expressed that he was aware of this dynamic when he was younger, which guided him in his selection of friends. He characterized that selection as a “day by day process” of choosing friends

wisely—friends who would help to positively shape his life in the desired direction, over the long term.

Training and education. Individuals in this study came from varied educational backgrounds: some were homeschooled, some went to private Christian schools, some attended public schools, and some were involved in two or more types of educational settings in their K-12 years. For those that attended public school, they did not identify any positive shaping influences from their time there. At best, one participant said that her two years of public high school were “good,” as they exposed her to what the world was really like. More often, participants noted the negative impact of public schooling, such as was the case with Jared, who said that in middle school, “I witnessed my first fights, drugs, and kids proclaiming to have sex.”

Participants from homeschooling and Christian school backgrounds recalled many positive worldview-shaping experiences from their education. Several participants attended the same Christian school, and all of them had very positive reports of the worldview shaping that they experienced at that school. Shawna said,

I can attribute the majority of what I learned and the basis of my worldview in and of itself to the education I got there, because the Christian worldview is everywhere in everything we learn there. Which was really great, because we were taught how to recognize it in every single subject and how to see God in absolutely everything. I think that one thing, out of everything on [my timeline], that’s probably the most impactful because it gave me such a basis of knowledge and then how to think Biblically as well. In describing her experience at the same school (which began in the 11th grade), Missy stated, I soon came to realize that not only is God involved in all aspects of life; He is also the reason for each element of life. To fully understand each subject, we must know the

source of the knowledge: God. Through [my school], I was given several opportunities to express my beliefs. I was asked questions for a video, spoke at [a speech event], and gave the salutatorian speech, to name a few. I loved [my school]. The faculty and staff cared about my growth as an individual and I strove to surpass their expectations of me. I thrived under their safe, biblical, and challenging learning environment.

Several participants were homeschooled, all in devout and intentional Christian families, and they highly valued their experience in homeschooling and how it influenced their worldview development. David saw homeschooling as a continuation of his parents' influence on his worldview during early childhood. Later, he was homeschooled via a Christian homeschooling cooperative, which he credits with shaping both his social skills and his Biblical worldview. Additionally, in that co-op he was exposed to new ideas from other families, which he says helped to shape and solidify his own developing worldview.

Several participants, from both homeschool and Christian school backgrounds, had the benefit of worldview-focused training during their teen years, which, according to them, laid a valuable foundation for the worldview development they'd later experience throughout emerging adulthood. For example, Marty's entire high school homeschool curriculum, with the exception of math and science, was a rigorous, formal worldview studies curriculum taught in a co-op by the assistant pastor at his church. Marty was required to read numerous books, answer in-depth questions about his reading, write extensive papers, and engage in a high level of critical thinking. His exposure to the concept of worldview was so extensive, that Marty could say that by the time he was 18 years old, he was "very, very familiar with the word worldview."

Not unlike Marty's experience, several participants attended worldview conferences and took worldview-focused courses in their homeschool or their Christian school. As a teen, Abby

attended a national worldview ministry's one-week program four years in a row, and of that experience she says, "these years opened my eyes to the reality of philosophical and theological differences of opinion. It helped me mature my understanding of what I believe and why I believe it."

Many of the participants in this study were well acquainted with the worldview concept by the time they were 18 years old, and had spent considerable time studying the Biblical worldview. This exposure to worldview helped prepare them for the continued development of their worldview during emerging adulthood.

Mentorship. Participants in the study frequently mentioned mentors from their past as having a part in their worldview development. These mentors included parents, pastors, family friends, teachers, and a coach. Joshua recognized that his youth pastor had a strong influence on his worldview development as a teen, via several different forms of mentoring:

He would give me tasks. He would prepare a Bible study, and he would walk me through it and help me with it. It was one way where he believed in me... I really loved punk music for a time. Really loved it. He would come to my punk shows, just being a presence. I was trying to find my identity in that culture. He was like, "Okay, I'm going to just be there and just be a sounding board to bounce things off of." It was just this loving presence. He would encourage me, but at the same time, he would always speak, very clearly, truth into who I really was.

In thinking about her experience being mentored, Missy identified older friends and adults in her church that invested in her life. Missy considered the mentoring relationships that she had at church, even from the age of about six years old, to be the primary reason that her church experience was so instrumental in shaping her worldview. She specifically recalled how

her parents' peers took an interest in her and consistently engaged her in conversation, and were readily available to discuss any questions that she had. These mentors did not merely answer her questions; instead, they helped her find the answers on her own. As a result of her experiences being mentored as a child and teen, Missy asserted, "it's a lot harder to find the answers and to discern what's true without having others helping you along in that."

Philip considered his father to be the most influential mentor from his childhood. In one endearing account from his childhood, Philip shared how he and his father would walk to church together. As they walked, his father would bring up a Scripture or a Biblical topic for them to discuss or a Scripture to memorize. Philip remembers these times as extremely important for his worldview development, as he learned to think deeply about Scripture and how it applies to every area of life. He told of a recent scenario in which a Scripture that he memorized on those walks to church burst into his memory as he was discussing something with his peers several days prior to our interview. In Philip's words, his "father established a good foundation" for him. In the focus group, Marty said that the connection "between mentoring and [having] a solid foundation is very strong."

Prompts

As individuals come close to aging out of their late teen years and moving into emerging adulthood, they begin a journey into unfamiliar territory. Emerging adulthood is replete with daily opportunities to go new places, see new things, and be confronted with decisions to be made, decisions for which the individual is now responsible. This new territory and new responsibility for choice-making can be unsettling and produce significant anxiety. Even so, with a new sense of freedom and fresh optimism, participants faced the struggle of learning to

navigate emerging adulthood with the advantage of a solid foundation for their maturing worldview, as evidenced by how they described their childhood and adolescence.

For participants in this study, these encounters with the unfamiliar became prompts, or catalysts, to process through the reality of what they encountered, allowing their understanding of the world around them to be further shaped and refined. Rather than simply walking through new things blindly and without awareness, participants deeply considered the new realities they faced, informing their consideration with the truth they understand from Scripture and their past experience. The data from the interviews, timelines, and the focus group suggest several common prompts that are springboards for processing, resulting in incremental development of their worldview. These prompts include: leaving home, encountering brand new experiences and ideas, engaging in worldview-related training, facing pain and difficulties, and considering big questions about life.

Leaving home. Leaving home is one of the rites of passage for emerging adulthood, whether that leaving is literal or figurative. As older teens begin to make choices about college, career, etc., they are leaving the age of childhood and adolescence and are beginning to contemplate what their lives will (and should) look like as adults. For most participants in this study, at or around 18 years old they physically left home to attend college or get married. A few participants still live at home, but even while living with their family, they began to make decisions pressed upon them by the approach of adulthood. For those in the study who did stay home physically, they did so only temporarily while they decided where to go to college or what to do as a next step in life.

The decision to leave home is itself a major step in moving towards a more mature worldview. Shae shared how important that decision was to her, and to those in her circle of

friends. For her, leaving home was a big catalyst for developing her worldview, as she was forced to make decisions and consider things in a new way that she wouldn't have had to, had she stayed at home. Shae strongly believes that leaving home gave her “the freedom and ability to process through things... to figure it out on [her] own [without] the help and aid of [her] parents and family.” She agreed that an individual needs to think about more than just what is financially the best decision (staying home or leaving), but to consider what one needs in terms of freedom to expand their worldview, and whether that process is best served at home or away from home.

When Shawna first left home for college, she experienced something similar to Shae. Leaving home and her parents became a prompt to examine what she herself believed. In reflecting on this experience, she said, “One of the biggest things that I've found when I got to college [that pushed me to examine and evaluate my worldview] was how much I had relied on what my parents thought and believed while I was in high school.” Shawna reported that this recognition caused her on multiple occasions to stop and question herself, “Wait, is that really what I believe?” This was particularly true when she first arrived at college, as part of the transition away from home. Currently, Shawna said, “I think I've hammered out some of the details [of my worldview],” but that it's definitely “ongoing, but I think it was more rigorous at the beginning when I first came.” Joshua echoed Shawna's perspective when he wrote in his timeline that it was at college “that I first experienced living on my own,” and in it was in that context that “God began to transform my mind.”

One of the participants who did not physically leave home yet was Tiffany. As a senior in high school, she was still considering her options for college. However, she did decide to attend a new church, one that her parents did not attend. In her interview, she shared that she did so

because she was looking for a church that was more conversational, in which she could engage people in discussion about Biblical themes and topics, rather than just “being preached at.” For Tiffany, this enables her to process her own worldview in a manner more consistent with her personality. Though she did not leave home yet, Tiffany was beginning the process of making decisions on her own, metaphorically “moving away” from her parents. Whether participants stayed at home like Tiffany, or moved away, there was a season of making their own choices, and these choices became prompts to evaluate and expand their worldview.

New experiences and ideas. One’s world is greatly expanded after leaving home, and this exposure to new ideas and experiences is a significant prompt for further worldview development. In terms of groundedness, this code (New Experiences and Ideas) was identified over 122 times in the data, making it a major element in participants’ post-adolescent lives. From being exposed to new and different people and places, to encountering unfamiliar ideas and belief systems, participants in this study reported that these encounters were an important prompt towards developing their worldview.

Participants expressed their exposure to new people, places, and ideas in various ways, but a common thread among those descriptions was the learning and growth that followed these encounters. In his timeline, Marshall described what it was like to intern in a region of the country in which he had never spent time: “This was an incredible experience, learning about a new place and so many new things.” Similarly, Keith stated that his college experience “has really opened [his] eyes to a whole new world.” For Keith, though, his college was only about two hours in distance from where he grew up, and was a part of the same denomination of his home church. So, even with many familiar components in his college, he classified his encounters with new people and ideas as “a whole new world.”

Several participants identified short-term, cross-cultural mission trips as significant prompts in their worldview development. Of his experience on such trips, Thomas said,

It was something that I felt changed the course of my thinking, even about things here. Maybe I had an experience in a different country about other people, but I came back and now I see Americans differently. Now I see... my family differently and how I interact [with them].

Jacob had similar conclusions about his mission trip to India. He said,

It really was a great way to really understand another culture outside of America... It helped me see the world... and just the whole idea of what consumerism is and that whole idea of being appreciative of what we have and how this world has so much... It helped me see a different perspective of what life really could be like this way and that way.

Others reported similar experiences with mission trips, and classified them as “eye-openers” as well.

In encountering new people and places, participants were exposed to ideas that were new to them. As they spoke or wrote of exposure to novel ideas or worldviews, they tended to speak positively of the results of those encounters as important catalysts for their worldview development. In the focus group conversation, Kevin shared about how exposure to new people and ideas can help to shape one’s worldview.

Any time you have a discussion with someone who holds an entirely different world view from you, or any time you're in a class or reading a book where it's a thorough discussion of a world view that you don't personally identify with, it's always expanding your horizons in the sense that it gives you an opportunity to see things from a different

vantage point and to put yourself in someone else's shoes. . . Certainly, there have been books that I've read or just people that I've had conversations with that have clarified my worldview by giving me an opportunity to step outside of my worldview. I think that's the key is that when you encounter something in a class, in a book, with a person where it forces you to not dwell within your own worldview, you come back to your worldview and can see it a little clearer because you removed yourself from it. . .

Jacob confirmed Kevin's perspective when he suggested that Christian emerging adults should be intentionally exposed to people with differing worldviews and ideas. Jared agreed with this concept, saying in his interview,

I really try to intentionally place myself in a circumstance that I'm going to be challenged to think critically. It's easy to [not] think when you're not necessarily forced to think. When you're surrounded around like-minded people, you don't have to think differently. You don't have to think about issues in a hard way because everyone is thinking the same. You can just conform to what everyone's doing.

Worldview training. Another way in which participants were prompted to engage in worldview development, was in formal worldview training contexts, such as extended conferences and university classes. All of the participants who attended Christian universities were required to take a course on worldviews. Additionally, many participants voluntarily participated in extended worldview conferences, such as the one-week, two-week, or semester-length programs offered by one of two national worldview ministries. Of note is the fact that only one participant had no formal worldview training at all, either in adolescence or in emerging adulthood. These training experiences included both in-depth examinations of the components of a Biblical worldview and exposure to the tenets of opposing worldviews.

Missy was required to take a worldviews course in college after having attended a Christian high school that focused on Biblical worldview. However, she recognized a major difference in approach to worldviews between high school and college. As she reflected in her interview on this difference, Missy noted that in high school, the emphasis was on deep understanding of a Biblical worldview, whereas in college, the focus of the course was on a deep understanding of alternative worldviews:

Being able to put myself in the other systems... this course especially has also really helped me understand my own worldview, and that's because I was becoming able to kind of step out of mine and, as much as that's possible, to understand others.

Crisis and pain. Several participants in this study recounted life crises, which served as prompts to re-evaluate what they believed or to discover answers to questions that arose from the crises or painful circumstances in which they found themselves. In his interview, Jared described the constructive role that crisis and pain can play in the process of worldview development:

I feel like people are totally refined under fire. It's really tough to figure yourself out when you're not forced to figure. It's tough for you to figure who you are without being put to the test, you know? Like an athlete . . . You're never going to find out if you make . . . if you ever make the team for the New England Patriots, if you never go out to a try-out, right? You're just be an athlete. You just be a guy saying like, "I'm an athlete, like I say I'm a professional but I actually never tried out to make the team. I just think I am this thing."

I feel like that's what it is for so many of our lives, you know? Until we go through something that is going to test us, we're never really know if we're really who we say we are. We can say we're strong. We can say we're loving. We can say we're trusting,

until we go through something that challenges us to defend those. I think pain is that challenge. Pain is the challenge that It'll let someone know who they are, who they are, because in the good times, you can tell yourself whatever you want. You haven't went through the try-out yet, you know? I think pain is paramount.

Shae walked through a season of painful crisis, and her experience validates what Jared was saying. On her timeline, she wrote,

My best friend in college came out as a lesbian and another of my close friends realized that he was an atheist and had never been a Christian. These events made me question what I actually believed. I realized that much of what I claimed to have faith in was only because I had grown up with it and didn't know anything else. I went through a couple months thinking, reading, and praying. I was ready to throw it all in the bag and walk away from Christianity. However, through faculty and staff at the college and family and friends I rediscovered the truth I had learned when I was growing up and renewed my faith in Christ.

In her interview, Shae summarized her how the pain of those crises ended up helping her by saying, "It really pushed me to think"; it forced her to consider what she believed about things that she had only considered in the abstract. Having two friends in her Bible school essentially turn their backs on their faith caused major upheaval in Shae's own faith, and that upheaval resulted in a time of extended inquiry and pursuit of truth. Her experience with pain demonstrates how such experience can propel a person forward in their worldview development, providing they engage the pain in appropriate ways. Crystal's perspective on pain echoes Shae's conclusions; she believes that when individuals do not deeply engage challenge and difficulties, they miss out on an important motivation to evaluate and refine what they believe.

Questions. As Christian emerging adults engage in new experiences and more mature thinking, they also begin to consider significant questions. Participants in this study reported that having questions was a major prompt to their worldview development. Several participants said that questions are so important that emerging adults actually need to learn how to ask good questions as an aid to developing their worldview. To them, a question is a starting point for inquiry on a concept that they may not yet understand—a means to “dive into” or “wrestle through” things, as Crystal put it in her interview (Appendix Q contains a representative list of specific questions that participants reported having at this stage in their worldview development).

Kevin offered a fairly in-depth analysis of how questions prompt him to develop his worldview:

I wanted to have good answers for the challenging voices at school whether it be classmates or professors. I wanted to have good answers for myself and for them. It was challenging but not frightening in the sense that, "Oh my goodness. What if [what] I believe is not true?" I was prepared enough by what I had been taught thus far to not be swept off my feet with doubt. I just try to dig in to, "All right. If this is the question and I don't know the answer, what is the answer?" It was a “rise to the occasion” and learn the answers to the questions you're being pressed with.

Participants reported that these questions, which are all directly related to one’s view of the world, were strong catalysts for probing deeper in order to find answers, some of which they have not yet discovered. However, the reality of having the questions propelled them to seek answers. In this way, they served as prompts to worldview development, as Crystal shared in her interview: “Really... as you're specifically developing your worldview, there's going to be challenges [and] you're going to have questions that you can't answer immediately.”

Means

Evangelical emerging adults with a strong Biblical worldview are not passive objects of experience, merely being acted upon by the prompts they encounter. Those in this study were also actors in the process of developing their worldview. Their experiences became catalysts for action on their part, prompting them to do something with and about what they were seeing, experiencing, or feeling. Though the level of awareness of how this action actually contributed to the development of their worldview varied from individual to individual, participants in this study were able to readily talk about what they did in response to the prompts of leaving home, encountering new people and ideas, having questions, and walking through crises and pain. Several common means surfaced from the data—means that participants used to process their experiences and which aided them in growing in the three worldview dispositions (awareness of worldview, commitment to meaningful processing, and ownership of the process) and the three worldview dimensions (heart orientation, cognitive propositions, and behavioral alignment).

Conversations with peers. By far, the most common and significant means of processing prompts was conversation with peers. This concept was identified over 100 times in the data, and without exception, every participant placed the highest priority and importance on the activity of talking through their experiences, struggles, and questions with close peers. For the unmarried participants, these were their close friends, and for the married participants, they identified their spouse as the most significant peer with whom they processed the prompts. Whether through formal small group experiences in their church or dorm, or through casual discussions at coffee shops, the Evangelical emerging adults in this study all cited conversation with peers as the most important means of processing their experiences.

Marshall described the value of having a close-knit group of friends with whom to process life experiences in this way:

It's those close knit real intimate times together with people. Those have become the most shaping times for me, I think. . . . Yeah there might be something that happens in a chapel service or church, but in the end of the day, taking those things, getting together with people in a two-three or a little bit larger small group setting and really actually sharing these things and sharing life together.

Through this statement and others like it, Marshall pictured a small group of friends as the ideal venue in which to process life experiences and to discuss questions, saying things like, "hey, the other day this happened and what do you think about that? Can you help me?"

When discussing the value of talking through things with friends, Jared recognized that he simply "loves learning from people." Surrounding himself with strong Christians, Jared "slowly started to change [his] thinking... it was definitely a day-by-day process." The picture that emerges from Jared's experience is that as he spent time discussing his experiences and his questions with positive and Godly peers, his thinking literally changed. Though it wasn't immediate or dramatic, slow, incremental changes were occurring in how he thought about the world and developed his worldview.

Shae considers her conversations with peers to be extremely important in the development of her worldview. These conversations were sometimes planned, and other times spontaneous, in contexts such as waiting for a class to start or while relaxing together after classes. She described the value of conversations with peers in this way: "I think it definitely does help process for me. I'm an audible processor. Hearing myself say it and hearing others say things helps me to process through things."

Marty was one of the participants who spent an entire semester learning with a national worldview ministry. However, when asked about what was most impacting about his time there, he said, “some of the interactions that I had with the people, that was the main thing,” even more impacting than were the hours and hours of excellent lectures he attended. Now later in his emerging adult years, Marty still craves community, and is constantly seeking to surround himself with peers who will be a positive influence on his life and his thinking. As he wrestles through the process of deepening his worldview, he longs for more connection with peers, knowing that it is in those relationships that genuine change can happen. Cheryl had a similar perspective: “I’m struggling with something, I love to talk about it.”

Talking with friends can either be a challenge to or a confirmation of what one believes. Shawna said,

I think in some cases it strengthened my worldview because in the places where I don't know enough, that's one of the things that forces me to go learn and find out. Then the places that I am really sure it reinforces what I believe because I have to explain why I believe it. That's super helpful for me.

Shawna went on to remark that most of her processing occurs with close friends, as opposed to alone. Tiffany said that her thinking works much better when she’s doing it out loud with friends. Finally, Philip stated that his group of friends “really helped shape a lot of my worldview, because we were really asking some tough questions.”

Reflection. The second means of processing that emerged from the data was internal reflection, which is “the act or process of thinking carefully or deeply about a particular subject; contemplation, deep or serious thought or consideration” (“Reflection,” 2016). While talking with friends could be considered a form of reflection, this second means is the reflection that a

person does on their own, and includes the intentional and focused times of thinking as well as the background thinking that humans can do even while they do other activities.

It was common for participants to remark that they would be “constantly thinking” about a topic for extended periods of time. Crystal said, “The reflective part of me is... I don’t let it go until I can find an answer to it... I think about it... I ponder it.” She added, “I’m a person who processes things, and it takes me a solid couple of days.” When faced with a major crisis in understanding what he believed about a certain subject, Keith said that “for the next week or two, [I was] just not... able to be at peace because that was always at the back of my mind, no matter what I was doing.” In response to an interview question about how he arrives at conclusions about what he believes, Darren said, “I also just think. I love to think. I’m a delivery driver, so if there’s something on my mind, I think about it.”

Some participants identified journaling as an effective aid for reflection. In his interview, Joshua said,

Journaling is really good. If you journal more, you can write down thoughts, set them aside, and look at them and say, ‘Oh man, I feel this way about the situation, but is that really true?’ It takes a second to step back and look at it.

Crystal also said that she journals to facilitate her reflection.

The Christian emerging adults in this study were thinkers, and internal reflection is an integral part of how they process their experiences and their questions. Jared, in considering how he would advise a Christian teenager to focus on worldview development, said, “I would say [that] to do it well [develop a Biblical worldview], I would really challenge people to think about what you believe. Think about your core values, your core commitments, your worldview.”

Study. Closely related to reflection, study was the third means that emerged from the data. Study involves utilizing outside resources to inform one's reflection, such as books, Internet resources, and Scripture. All the participants cited the importance of utilizing good resources outside of themselves to help interpret their experiences and settle the questions that arise in their lives and they devoted significant time to study.

When Shae was wrestling with the question of free will versus predestination, part of the process she used to reconcile her beliefs was to study the subject. "I would read a lot," she said, "I would read... different commentaries and theologians and the Scriptures, and comparing and contrasting verses and what the Bible has to say about that." Others reported research as part of their toolkit for resolving difficult questions. For many, the Internet is a primary source of knowledge, including podcasts, articles, and videos.

Books were a significant resource for many participants. On his timeline, Keith mentioned *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis and *Christian Counseling* by Gary Collins as influential books in his life. Others noted that books were critical in their worldview development, exposing them to alternate ideas and providing in-depth analysis of the Biblical worldview as well. Though he grew up a "classic case of *SparkNotes* and *CliffNotes*," Joshua ended up becoming a voracious reader in college, at the prompting of one of his professors. As a result, he has read many books that have helped to shape his worldview, such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Dante's *Inferno*, and various Greek classics. Reading Dante, in particular, prompted Joshua to switch his major to theology, "because [he] felt as though [he] needed to work on the head a little bit more."

Being mentored. The fourth means whereby Evangelical emerging adults develop their worldview is by being mentored, which was so significant in the data that I developed a separate

coding scheme in order to explore the elements or forms of mentoring during emerging adulthood that were most helpful in the process of worldview development. Experiencing mentoring relationships was also identified as an important past influence in the lives of participants. This is significant to note, as it seems that mentoring throughout the life stages of childhood, adolescence, and emerging adulthood is a consistent and fundamental factor in developing a Biblical worldview. Also, it may be that because many of the participants reported having significant and fruitful mentoring relationships in earlier life stages, that they were more naturally inclined to view and value mentoring as an effective means of development in their emerging adult years. This possible connection points to the reality that past influences still have an ongoing impact in the lives of emerging adults in this study.

The word mentoring was loosely used by participants in this study to refer to building relationships with older and/or wiser, more experienced individuals who were a support to the process of worldview development in any number of ways. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that states that young adults want to be independent of adult influence, participants in this study highly valued mentoring relationships, and those relationships provided a plethora of benefits and supports for the participants. Most commonly, mentors were either pastors or other ministry leaders, or participants' fathers. Other, less mentioned mentors were teachers, authors, and mothers, and one coach.

Mentoring took many shapes and played different roles in the participants' lives. Mentors provided specific, overt guidance in the process of worldview development, including being a safe relationship in which to ask questions, to hear the truth, and to be listened to. Cheryl described the ideal mentoring relationship for emerging adults. To her, she would want someone to be "open to lots of questions from the get go," and to be comfortable talking about anything.

Joshua recalls that his youth pastor from his late teen years would “encourage [him], but at the same time, he would always speak very, very clearly truth.” Shae, when thinking about the value of mentors, said,

So to have somebody sit down and listen to you and know that they're actually listening and taking in what you're saying and thinking about it, it shows that they care about you as a person and they want to see you work through this and get through it on the other side of it.

Additionally, mentors were valued for simply being supportive to the participants as growing individuals, investing time, prayer, and encouragement into the relationship. Jared mentioned his mentoring relationship during his senior year of high school with the character coach on his football team. “Over the season,” he recalled, “he [the character coach] was just there all the time [for me].” Shawna’s mother is one of her key mentors, and her role as a mentor primarily involves providing strong prayer support for Shawna. During her early emerging adult years, Crystal became connected to her first mentor. Reflecting on that relationship, Crystal stated, “She and I went through Scriptures and the book by Chuck Colson, *The Good Life*. We talked about life and what was going on and she encouraged me in Scriptures and in my daily walk with God.” During the focus group, Kevin said, “The bulk of the good decisions that I’ve made have come from the prompting of wiser and older individuals that I’ve decided to actually listen to.... I’m a fan of those that have lived more than I have.”

Effective mentors were ones who asked powerful questions and did not force their opinions or stances upon the participants. Missy appreciates mentors who don’t necessarily answer questions directly, but who probe her heart and mind with further questions. “The reason that works so well,” she posits, “is because then they [the ones being mentored] have to process

through and understand it actually to give [an] answer back.” When asked how in the future she would mentor an emerging adult, she stated that she would “let them make mistakes and give them that freedom of being wrong and learning things in a difficult way.” Missy learned the value of this approach through her parents, who as they mentor her, “let [her] struggle through questions that [she has] or decisions [she has] to make, and not making them for [her].” She further believes that if a person is really looking for truth, they’ll find it, so mentors can be released from the pressure of having to see the people they’re mentoring always get things right, including components of their worldview.

Providing guidance in the worldview development process and a good model of pursuing and living out a Biblical worldview were the final two components of mentoring that helped participants to effectively process their life experiences. In the focus group, Missy said that because of the example of older Christians in her life, she was able to steer clear of wrong decisions throughout her late teens. On his timeline, Kevin identified his previous youth pastor as a significant mentor, and one who helped him learn how to dig into Scripture for himself. Kevin also suggested that “walking beside someone who... has been living the way that you want to live is always very helpful.” Jared reached out to his pastor to ask him to be his spiritual coach. He agreed, and every week they meet to go through part of a book together, and to talk about life. “He really helps me to see life from a Biblical perspective... it’s really good to have a leader walk with you through life,” Jared concluded.

Serving. The fifth means of responding to worldview development prompts was active serving of others. Participants suggested that serving in ministry or becoming involved in relationships where they functioned as the mentor, instead of the one being mentored, accelerated their own worldview development. This points to the idea that worldview

development is not best done passively, but that putting ideas and thoughts into practice is critical to growing in awareness, processing, and ownership. After describing the mentoring relationship that he has with his pastor, Jared followed up by stating that his pastor is now challenging him to find a person that he (Jared) can mentor. Jared sees this as an important way to keep learning and growing.

Missy explained some of the benefits of reaching out to those who are younger to mentor them. She said that emerging adults should “find the younger people that you want to invest into, too, because it’s a really good practice and they’re going to challenge you. They’re going to ask you questions... that are going to really make you think.” Missy went on to suggest that when emerging adults mentor someone else and can’t come up with an answer to a difficult question, they can in turn reach out to their mentor for help. She describes this as a “chain of relationships in your life that you learn from and you just bounce things off of and they bounce things off of you.” In describing this dynamic in this way, Missy identified how valuable serving others via mentoring is for one’s own developing worldview.

Serving as a leader was also noted as a good means to develop one’s own worldview. Mark is a leader of a campus ministry on his secular college campus. Being a leader forced him to take initiative in getting to know students from all different backgrounds, which in turn, prompted him to consider his own beliefs and values. Additionally, Mark recognized that serving in leadership has forced him to be more proactive in understanding Scripture, as opposed to just attending a Bible study.

Jacob is the leader of a homeless ministry for his university. Engaging with the culture of homelessness has helped him to process the brokenness of the world and the hurt that so many

people carry, resulting in a new humility for him. According to Jacob, his worldview is being shaped as he leads others to serve those that are most in need.

Of particular significance to several participants was being called upon, whether in public or in smaller settings, to share what they believed and how their worldview had been shaped. Missy was required to share her worldview story at college during her freshman year, and she considers this experience to be a form of reflection on her own development. For Jared, sharing his testimony enables him to reflect as well, remembering the shaping influences in his life, when perhaps he would not regularly do so. Tiffany appreciates being asked to share her story or her views on issues, as she “can hear herself thinking when [she’s] talking out loud.” Darren said, “I definitely talk to people about my story a lot,” and he sees doing so as a support to effective reflection.

Derailers

Worldview development for the Christian emerging adult is not an automatic cycle of prompts and constructive responses to prompts. Participants also identified several obstacles to worldview development. Additionally, they saw the influence of these obstacles in their peers who did not seem to have a well-developed Biblical worldview. Four main derailers, pictured as wrenches in the graphical model, surfaced as a result of analyzing the data in this study: apathy, stress, distractions, and trials and challenges.

Apathy. Chief of the obstacles identified by the participants was apathy, where individuals see no reason to intentionally and carefully develop their worldview. According to the participants, many emerging adults just don’t care about their worldview and its impact on their choices, and they are content to float through emerging adulthood aimlessly satisfied with their lives. In describing apathy towards worldview, Shae termed it “contentment and laziness,”

and went on to explain, “The biggest thing that I have seen with people around me is they get either content where they’re at in their Christianity and they don’t see a need for change, or they get lazy.”

Mark also recognized apathy as a barrier to Biblical worldview development. In his interview, he said, “I feel like a lot of students here are very complacent with their walk so there’s no need to reflect on anything because they’re not growing. They’re just stagnant so it’s like, ‘Okay, I’m a Christian. I go to church on Sunday, so there’s no need to reflect on how I got here.’”

Stress. Almost as significant a barrier as apathy is stress. The challenges of emerging adulthood translate for many individuals into unmanageable stress. This stress, caused by life management issues, school deadlines, work commitments, relational difficulties, etc. (all being experienced in new and deeper ways during emerging adulthood) robs a person of internal resources that are necessary for intentional worldview development. When a person is bogged down by urgent crises, it is easy, according to the participants in this study, to ignore the important tasks involved in reflecting on experience and settling what one values, believes, and will do as a result of that experience. Instead, life is a series of automatic or unconscious reactions to stressful situations, lived with little intentionality or focus. It is not hard to imagine how a person bound by stress would be limited in his or her ability to think through life’s big questions and to interact with peers and mentors around such questions.

As a resident assistant at his university, Thomas had significant experience working with younger students, helping them with the adjustment to college life. His insight into the derailing impact of stress is poignant:

I've understood there's an incredible amount of stress and I understand that goes throughout life, like it's probably going to get more as life goes on. That's fine. I just think that it seems like the majority of people that I talk to about what they believe and why they believe and why they do certain things is almost clouded by stress. They don't know how to deal stress so they don't even get to the shaping of what they believe which is unfortunate because they'll make a decision and obviously most observable is they do something stupid inappropriate or against rules and but I think even more than that, that a lot of students, silently just [say], "I don't know how to deal with what's going on in life so I don't even care about what I believe." Stress of life has almost overwhelmed them to the point where [they say] "Why do I even have to believe something?"

Tiffany took the subject of stress and made it more personal, as she confessed in her interview, "I can be very self-centered in that kind of way where I don't always think about [my worldview]. I'm more focused on [the fact that] I have all these things I need to do." Later in the interview she added, in reference to other emerging adults she knows that "it can be like... they're kind of weighed down. They're kind of like being pushed down, and they can't really see what's happening above that... and they're just stranded." Tiffany concluded that for people who are stressed by juggling too many commitments and expectations, "They're kind of worried about how they're going to be perceived, rather than how they're going to perceive the world."

Distractions. Successful navigation through emerging adulthood and towards a mature Biblical worldview is not only subject to sabotage by stress, it can be equally derailed by distractions. The Oxford English Dictionary ("Distractions," 1989) defines distractions as "the drawing away of the mind or thoughts from one point or course to another" (p. 863). The new and seemingly limitless experiences and options of emerging adulthood supply numerous

opportunities for 18- to 24-year-olds to have their thoughts drawn away from the important task of developing a Biblical worldview. Participants acknowledged this reality, and they perceived a pronounced lack of ability to manage distractions well in the lives of their peers who were not as actively committed to intentional Biblical worldview development as they themselves are. As Keith remarked, “There is always something to distract you and catch you up,” and he spoke of these distractions employing the metaphor of a rising tide, in which a person gets swept away. This imagery captures the essence of how distractions can draw individuals away from a focus on developing their worldview.

While distractions or options that compete for space in one’s mind can come in virtually any form, participants most often cited social media as a major distraction. In his interview, Philip stated that “social media is an insane hindrance for [emerging adults].” When asked how she would warn teenagers getting ready to enter emerging adulthood, Cheryl said, “For a Christian kid... the biggest thing is distractions... the Internet is a huge distraction.” In the context of advice for other Christian emerging adults, Cheryl went on to speak generally of anything that draws one’s attention away from God and specifically of various forms of media, such as television that take “your focus off of your core values.” To Cheryl, life must be lived in alignment with one’s core values, if one expects to develop a Biblical worldview, and managing distractions poorly is a major hindrance to doing so.

Trials and challenges. Though trials and challenges can be a prompt to further Biblical worldview development, they can also stymie progress. Participants shared many accounts of individuals they knew, and sometimes even of themselves, who were impeded in their worldview development by trials and challenges to which they failed to respond in appropriate, constructive ways.

David shared that trials in the form of bombardment from the world's thinking patterns can seriously derail a person's Biblical worldview development. He shared the story of a cousin who went to a secular university and was not at all prepared for the battle that she would face. "The people that were influencing her," he said, "were just bad people... focusing on [how] to ruin people's lives, because it's like they just totally crushed what she believed... and [what she believed] was just torn down by the world." Based on what his cousin experienced, David offered this advice to teens as they move into emerging adulthood:

They have to know that there are going to be trials in the world, and the world is going to try to tear you down... there is a war going on, and unless you're firm in your faith and you know what you believe and why you believe it, then the world is just going to eat you up and then spit you right back out.

While sin did not come up as a major challenge among participants, several male participants identified struggles with pornography and/or sexual activity as an enormous problem. Jared shared how being involved in sexual activity in late middle school significantly and negatively shaped his worldview for many years following his first sexual encounter. "That had a huge part on my worldview because... it's like you look at the world and women in a different way." Joshua also identified sexual sin as a major impediment to his worldview development. On his timeline, he wrote, "I was around 15 years old when I first was exposed to pornography. This was one of the worst mistakes of my life because I have since struggled with it. It was during this year that I was first awakened to the reality of sexuality. Unfortunately, this was in a really negative way."

Maturing Biblical Worldview

The aim of Biblical worldview development for Evangelical Christians in the emerging adult years is not a fully-formed or complete worldview. Indeed, none of the participants felt that their worldview was finished being developed, and they all expressed a desire and an intention to keep growing, as pictured in the graphic (Figure 1) by the dotted lines surrounding the gear of maturing Biblical worldview. Cheryl shared,

I think in a general sense, my worldview is pretty developed... [but] I definitely want to continue thinking about certain things and keep reading about them, but as far as the basic truths of life I feel pretty secure... I think I really want to grow in specific areas of my worldview, though... as I become an adult.

Like Cheryl, other participants also expressed a sense of continual maturation as opposed to finality. The developmental goal, then, in emerging adulthood (as demonstrated by participants) is to exhibit a maturing Biblical worldview marked by three dimensions of worldview, as identified by Sire (2015) and by possessing three core worldview dispositions, as identified in this study.

Sire's three dimensions of worldview. Sire's (2015) first dimension of worldview is cognitive propositions, or truth claims that a person believes to indeed be true. The second dimension of worldview is heart orientation, which is a person's inner inclination towards an object of faith or worship. Behavioral alignment (with one's heart orientation and one's set of truth claims) is the third dimension of worldview. Participants in this study exhibited all three dimensions of worldview in varying degrees.

Participants referred to concepts related to their heart orientation (121 occurrences) and their behavior (114 occurrences) most often. Cognitive propositions, mentioned 79 times in the

data, seemed by virtue of frequency of coding to be less important to them. Participants were very interested in talking about what they love and desire, and how their behavior aligns with their worldview. They were also able to see when they (and others) made behavioral choices that are not consistent with what they say they believe about life and reality.

Cognitive propositions. All of the participants spoke confidently about what they believed to be true in a number of areas central to one's worldview. For example, Marshall was very conversant in the concept of looking at all of history as a big God story, with major sections of that story being, "creation, fall, rescue, and restoration." Jared believes that "this earth should be a representation of the things in Heaven," providing evidence that he understands God's purpose for creation. When asked what makes up her worldview, Shawna readily replied, "I think the biggest part would be sola scriptura, that I very strongly believe everything that's in the Bible," demonstrating a resolute confidence that the Bible is the inspired word of God. She added, "There are aspects of God character that I can't understand as a finite person," a clear statement of belief in the transcendence of God (Appendix R contains a representative list of truth claims made by participants during interviews or on their timeline).

With their grasp of truth claims that fundamentally align with a Biblical worldview, participants did not characterize their emerging adult years as a season in which they acquired much new knowledge. Instead, they viewed it as a season of deepening and expanding the things they already knew to be true. In our interview, I asked Shae how much of what she knows to be true was developed in her after the age of 18. She answered,

I would say the head knowledge... was basically 75-80% drawn out in high school and middle school... I would say my four years in college and now out of it, the rest of it has been colored in and added to. Now, not only do I know what I believe, but I know why I

believe it and I've worked through it on my own... as far as I can say, this is what I believe and I'm ready now to go out and declare it... I think I'm almost there... there's a few puzzle pieces that need to get fit in as I'm processing through stuff, but I think they're smaller pieces that... don't matter as much. I would say for the most part, the pillars of my worldview are in place.

Marty expressed a similar perspective about new truths learned during emerging adulthood. In talking about his experience at a worldview ministry's full semester program, he said, "I loved the lectures, but what they did was reinforce what I had already been taught and knew and heard in a little bit of a different context." Cheryl's words confirmed Marty's and Shae's, when she said, "I think there's a lot of development there yet, but I'd say I'm feeling pretty well developed as far as what I believe about the Bible, what I believe about God, what I believe about the nature of people." For this dimension of worldview, the emerging adult years are not so much a season of gaining new knowledge, but of understanding at a deeper and more experiential level what was previously learned.

The truth claims offered by the participants in the focus group and interviews and on their timelines were largely theological in nature, or truths related directly to God and His character (Appendix R). When prompted to share statements that represent their worldview, with no direction or guidance on what category of statements, the participants tended toward the theological. Only rarely did they venture into other domains of a comprehensive worldview, such as ontology, axiology, epistemology, or other categories of worldview application, such as worldview statements related to economics, law, politics, or psychology. This could be an evidence of a lack of significant life experience in participants, or it could demonstrate that their worldview thinking is still tethered first and foremost to overt theological truths. With time and

experience, it is likely that they would see how theological truths about God and His character and His purposes impact and apply to other realms of life.

Marty, who had studied nine arenas of life impacted by one's worldview earlier in his emerging adult years, concluded in his interview: "I'm just now starting to desire to go back and learn the nine different worldview [applications], because I'm seeing it in college." Having a basis in worldview understanding, Marty felt like he needed to go back and revisit worldview concepts, now that he was seeing them in action in his secular university.

Heart orientation. Of the three worldview dimensions, participants spoke most often of matters of the heart (121 occurrences in the data). Matters of the heart, in relation to worldview, pertain to individual's inner inclinations, desires, and propensities. Participants spoke often of the orientation of their heart as compared to the other dimensions of worldview. They spent considerable time discussing their core motivations and their choices, and many acknowledged being in a season of their development in which they must wrestle through understanding and committing to the implications of living life with a heart that is fully committed to Christ.

Participants understand their core motivations and inclinations to be related to the concept of the heart, frequently using the term heart as a synonym for the core of their being or their inner motivations. In describing his career aspirations, Marshall summed up his perspective by saying, "I think that may be where my heart is." Essentially, he was saying that his core motivation or inclination was to simply to help others. Kevin was also able to sum up his heart inclinations, even using that phrase to describe the core of his motivations: "There's something in me that the inclination of my heart is to dig in and to know more." For Cheryl, she characterized what is known in the heart as "the deepest knowledge... whether or not [a person] realized the facts of a situation." These Christian emerging adults seem to understand that the

heart is the core of their being, and they are concerned to have their heart inclined in a proper direction.

Choice making, as a function of their heart, is another area of understanding that was maturing in participants. In his interview, Keith said, “Not to over-spiritualize, but I really do try to run every decision and thought process I make through the filter of Scripture and what Scripture has to say about it.” He made this statement in response to my question, “Tell me what are some of the real foundational core pieces of your worldview.” To Keith, the way in which he makes decisions is central to his worldview. Since he did not list any propositional truths, it would appear that Keith has a well-developed conception of the central place choice-making has in his worldview.

When Marshall was prompted to reflect on how young people can develop a sense of ownership for their worldview, he spoke in terms that demonstrated an understanding of how choice-making is central to one’s worldview:

I would come back and... with all these [possible options] in mind, let me go back to Scripture and say, ‘God, as I’m going through these things can you reveal to me this truth and how it applies to me best? I’ve been given the freedom to make these choices [about what is right and good].

In saying this, Marshall overtly connected intentional, thoughtful choice-making (a function of the heart) to one’s worldview.

When talking about the concept of the heart, participants most commonly discussed the struggle of figuring out what a full heart commitment to Christ looks like, in emerging adulthood and beyond. Cheryl confessed to struggling with commitment to Christ during her early emerging adult years. However, in her heart, she was consistently drawn towards what was right,

good, and true. On her timeline, when describing her worldview development, she wrote about how reading works of classic literature such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Princess and Curdie*, caused her to want “desperately to be good and pure, like [their] characters.”

Others were more direct in communicating their heart’s desire to live like Christ wants them to live. Jacob called his struggle with this desire a crisis, and in his interview he reflectively asked the question, “How can I live according to what I call myself as a Christian?” Shae recorded on her timeline that after reading Charles Sheldon’s *In His Steps*, she understood that “my life should be different if I claimed to follow Christ. It was at this point that I realized accepting Christ as my Lord and Savior wasn’t just about going to heaven instead of hell, but about completely change the way I lived [my] life and affects every decision.”

Marshall stated this truth dramatically when he said, “If I’m going to follow Jesus, that means a full surrendering of every part of life.” This understanding of the core of his worldview and his choices has initiated for him a quest to answer the following question: “How does all of life change because of that statement that Jesus is Lord, in my thoughts, attitudes, everything?” Like many of his peers in this study, Marshall grasped the concept that the inclination of his heart (where he sets his affections) will impact everything else in life. Participants in this study see that their heart is the core of their worldview and they embrace the struggle to understand how their heart guides their thoughts and actions, and how to bring their hearts to a place of proper orientation and inclination.

Behavioral alignment. The third component of worldview is that of behavioral alignment with one’s heart orientation and the cognitive propositions one holds to be true. Participants were very concerned about having a life-style (patterns of behaviors or habits) that are consistent with what they say is most important to them and what they say they believe to be true. Missy stated

in her interview that “I think your actions are a lot more of a reflection of your worldview... I think that who you describe [yourself as]... is usually a little bit different from who you actually are.” She further stated that if one really wants to dig into another’s worldview, they might find that “maybe you don’t really believe what you say you believe because you are living a lot differently.” This was consistent with what she wrote in her timeline about the linkage between the heart, the head, and behavior: “People make choices based off their values and those choices reap consequences, shape relationships, and determine one’s life course, beneficial or harmful.”

Participants were quick to identify hypocrisy (inconsistency between what they say they value or believe, and their actions) in themselves and others. Lack of behavioral alignment with one’s heart orientation and the things one knows to be true was problematic for the participants. In the focus group, Marty said, “As soon as you see an inconsistency with the word and deed, all of a sudden, the first thing to go is the credibility of the word.” When Philip was talking about a time in his life when he was not living in a way that was consistent with what he said believed, and what he wanted to do, he admitted that he was a “hypocrite.” When I asked Keith if his friends struggle through issues related to their behavior aligning with their beliefs, he answered that, “it doesn’t seem... to those people that it bothers them or really conflicts them... I don’t really see an attempt to struggle or work through it.” He stated this with a degree of frustration and disgust in his voice, elements of communication that one cannot pick up when simply reading his words.

In her timeline, Carissa often spoke of the challenges she had as a child watching hypocrisy in the church, and how her experiences have shaped her commitment to not demonstrate that same hypocrisy. In speaking of her husband and herself, she said, “It’s really important to us that what we’re doing behind closed doors matches what we’re putting out there

for other people [to see].” As an example of how she wants to live, she said, “If I get stressed out and my kid walks in and I just lost it and scream, how can I show them true repentance if I don’t go to them and tell them, ‘You know, I’m sorry and I’m really going to work on not doing this?’”

In addition to being able to identify hypocrisy and inconsistency, participants longed for a life of consistency and integrity, where their heart, the truths they hold to be true, and their behavior all aligned. Joshua demonstrated a deep understanding of the dynamics involved in this concept of behavioral alignment when he said,

I suppress a lot of times my inner heart, because I want to do something, versus when I submit the inner heart, and I find that my heart is much more in line with the good things and the things that are truth [cognitive propositions]. When I suppress the heart, I find myself chasing after things [behaviors] that aren’t as good.

Commonly, participants described this longing for consistency in the form of questions. For example, Marshall asked, “How does all of life change because of that statement that Jesus is Lord, in my thoughts, attitudes, everything?” Further, in musing about consistency in life, Marshall said, “If we’re say[ing] that we’re going to love each other, if we say we’re going to do this or do that, we’re going to actually practice it.” Marshall sees close relationships as critical to worldview – behavior alignment. He suggests that when seeking to live out one’s beliefs, a person should develop a close group of friends with whom one can “come back to that same group of people and say, ‘I had this conversation. This is how it went. What do you think about the way I handled that? How it went?’ Then continuing that process of experiencing, and coming back to talk about it... just continuing to solidify it that way.” For Marshall, concrete experiences

of consistency among values, beliefs, and behavior are a major priority in developing a Biblical worldview.

Kevin also sees value-belief-behavior alignment as a non-negotiable facet of a well-formed worldview. When he sees someone who has not “put too much work into discerning what their actions and thoughts and worldview should be by studying the word,” he concludes, “I don’t think they’ve pursued a Biblical worldview.” In saying this, Kevin equates a commitment to consistency among the dimensions of worldview as synonymous with actually pursuing a Biblical worldview. It is as if he would say, “If one doesn’t pursue consistency among the three dimensions of worldview, one is not pursuing a Biblical worldview.”

Cheryl is one who considers consistent action to be the natural outgrowth of a value or a belief. One example she gave in her timeline was that of volunteering at a prayer rally against abortion. This behavior was a result of a realization of the truth of abortion, which led to a heart orientation against abortion, which ultimately led to her becoming involved in activism against abortion. While at a national worldview ministry, Cheryl recalls “learning about the horrors of abortion industry, [and feeling] a burning fury for the first time.” Carissa also took intentional steps to align her behavior with her values and beliefs when she and her husband began advocating for a bill in their home state related to gay marriage. She said, “We were very big supporters of this resolution. We were at the county clerk meetings. We were talking to people about it, because it’s very important.” Both Cheryl and Carissa are examples of participants who took specific steps to align their behavior with what they said they believed and what they valued.

Three worldview dispositions. The three worldview dimensions discussed above are actual component parts of a person’s worldview. In a complementary way, three worldview

dispositions also emerged from the data. A disposition is a tendency or inclination to value something, or to do something; or an inherent quality (“Disposition,” 1989). The three worldview dispositions that emerged from the data were: awareness of one’s worldview, commitment to meaningful processing, and ownership of the process. These dispositions were present in each participant, though the degree to which they were present varied from participant to participant.

Awareness of one’s worldview. Participants in this study were aware of their own worldview, though at times it took some effort for them to answer specific questions about their worldview. However, with additional prompts and time to discuss their worldview, they were able to articulate what they believed to be right, true, and good about many areas of life. Among the participants there was variability in awareness, as evidenced by their answers to a specific question: “How aware are you of your worldview?”

David, who is 18 years old, answered that he was not very aware of his worldview until he took a worldviews course during his first semester of college. As a result of that class in which his professor helped him to understand the concept of worldview, David stated that things came together for him in that class. Similarly, Philip stated that he became aware of his worldview in the emerging adult years as a result of being in a small group at his church, where his peers consistently talked about worldview issues. This experience exposed him to the term worldview and helped him to recognize that he had a worldview and how that worldview impacted his actions. After a few years of involvement in a small group where these kinds of discussions are normal, Philip stated, “I feel like I’m coming to the point where I’m going to have a very concrete idea of what my worldview is.”

Others offered what appear to be contradictory answers to the question of awareness, expressing a doubt concerning their awareness, and then going on to describe their worldview fairly comprehensively. For example, Marshall first said, “I don’t know necessarily how well developed my worldview is.” However, he immediately described his worldview as simply “Jesus is Lord.” Marshall sees that simple phrase as the “lens through which I’m viewing the world,” and he is actively seeking to figure out what that means “for how [he] feels about politics or homosexuality or this or that.” So, though his first response to the question of awareness was uncertain, the more he talked, the more it seemed that he was indeed aware of his worldview and how it should be growing and expanding. Marshall is looking forward to being out of school, to that he can continue “to be equipped, and [continue] to be in a space where [he] can continue to wrestle through these things as [he] continues to experience more things in different ways, being out of school.” Carissa’s interview was similar to Marshall’s. At first, she rated her awareness a “five or six out of ten,” but then proceeded to describe her worldview in detail. She later admitted, “I’ve never been asked that question.”

Kevin was also tentative in his assessment of his worldview awareness, but who was able to talk fluently about the concept of worldview in general and then his own worldview in particular. He also expressed that though he’s done quite a bit of work in thinking through the important questions in life, such as what is true, what is important, what to do with his career, how to spend spare time, etc., he still has a way to go in thinking through such questions and others. “It certainly feels like we’ve done a lot of work in that area. It also feels like we’re far from done,” he concluded.

Jared expressed awareness of his worldview when on his timeline, before being asked about awareness, he wrote, “I think that everyday my worldview is being molded, formed, stretched, and challenged.” Later, in his interview, he said,

I would say that I’m pretty aware [of my worldview.] I’ve only really become aware since being at [my college] and really challenging myself to be aware, because I really try to intentionally place myself in a circumstance that I’m going to be challenged to think critically... As a Christian, I feel like I’ve really been trying to develop a worldview that is Biblical, and not separate anything from Christ.

Others answered the question of awareness in similar ways. “I would say I’m fairly aware,” Shae said, adding, “I know there are moments and areas that I’m not as much aware, but I would say I’m mostly aware.” She later said,

I think there's still a few puzzle pieces that need to get fit in as I'm processing through stuff but I think they're smaller pieces that they don't matter as much. I would say for the most part, the pillars of my worldview are in place and I'm ready to be there.

Overall, while participants were tentative in claiming their level of awareness, they all expressed that they were indeed aware of their worldview and that they are aware that their worldview is in need of further development. They also looked to the future with hopeful expectation of continued growth and maturing of their worldview.

Commitment to meaningful processing. The second disposition of a maturing worldview is that of being committed to meaningful processing. To varying degrees, participants evidenced a strong commitment to engaging in meaningful processing. The fact that they were willing to participate in such a rigorous study, with a time commitment of over two hours suggests that these Christian emerging adults are comfortable with processing their experiences and ideas.

Again, though the process itself was difficult, and several participants remarked about how hard it was, not one of them gave up or did not follow through with all facets of participation. In telling their stories to me, it was obvious that they also were emerging adults who were reflective and enjoyed talking about tough questions. They were truly committed to meaningful processing.

Participants readily discussed how they processed through worldview questions, and without much prompting spoke in terms related to the means of worldview development described earlier in this chapter. Crystal captured the concept of commitment to meaningful processing, when she said, “The reflective part of me is I just don’t let go until I can find an answer to it, whether that means if something really bothers me, or really. . . not bothers but I question or [I’m] intrigued.” Others were just as tenacious. Darren had this to say about himself: “I’m don’t make rash decisions that are just wily. I think about something.”

Thomas’s timeline was noteworthy. Instead of simply listing formative events and relationships, he categorized his timeline into four major categories. When I asked him about the categories, he shared, “I’ve always viewed my life in those four categories as being what makes me up: relational, physical, mental, and spiritual,” demonstrating a commitment to thoughtful reflection over time. Keith also demonstrated a tenacity in meaningful processing when he told a story about thinking through and mulling over a question constantly over the course of weeks. In referring to a challenging worldview question, he said, “probably for the next week or two, just not being able to be at peace because that was always on my mind, not matter what I was doing.” But beyond thinking, Keith also dove into study of Scripture and various articles to resolve his question.

Most of the participants noted that completing the timeline was relatively easy, and that both the timeline and the interview were enjoyable experiences. Missy said, “I would say it [the

timeline] was fairly easy because it's something I've thought about before." Marty, however, recognized that he has entered a period of life when he is more reflective than in previous life stages. "Something's changed," he said, "and I have a different take on life, and I think it's just the season that I'm going through... being in a reflective stage where I can learn from what I'm going through and learn from even the past." Describing the process of completing his timeline, Marty said, "I did say in the middle [of doing it] how was just difficult. I don't think I said that out loud, but [the process] was very good. I was smiling the whole time." In the middle of answering a question, Abby remarked, "This is very enjoyable!" At the end of her interview, Carissa concluded by saying how enjoyable the process was. Comments like these affirm that the participants in this study enjoyed the rigorous questions and prompts that caused them to reflect on their worldview development, suggesting also the likelihood that they enjoy meaningful processing in general.

Participants also made statements about finding fulfillment in meaningful processing activities outside of the formal structure of this study. Abby stated, "I really enjoy philosophy and that type of thing." Jacob said that he likes to research things. Both Missy and Mark spoke of how much they enjoy talking through difficult questions with others. Reading and learning in general was high on Keith's list of activities in which he likes to engage. This group of emerging adults showed definite commitment to and enjoyment of meaningful processing.

Ownership of the process. The final disposition of a maturing worldview was ownership of the process. Participants consistently noted the importance of owning the process of pursuing further development of their worldview. For an individual to own the process means that they do not see themselves as passive—they become responsible actors in their worldview development. Multiple times, participants referred to challenges or experiences that prompted them to take

ownership of their own development, and they spoke of this in contrast to when they were children and teens, when their parents, or others, seemed to be more in control of their development.

Kevin had significant insight into the concept of owning the process of developing one's worldview. In his interview, he said, "If you want to help someone with their worldview development... it has to be done in a way that forces them to take responsibility for it. Someone who doesn't want to develop or think about their worldview isn't going to." Marshall remembers coming to a point in his late teens when he recognized that his spiritual and worldview development was a process that he needed to own himself. Since that time, he has proactively sought to continue learning and growing in his worldview. Jared, at 19 years old, also recognized that he is in control of his own worldview development. He said, "I'm at a point in life where I'm going to process things on my own and no one's going to be able to just tell me something is right because they say it is."

Several participants noted the difference in their ownership of the worldview development process between when they were younger and now in emerging adulthood. Shae said that various trials in life "kind of helped force me to think through what I believe and actually come to my own understanding apart from just the influence of what I experienced growing up." When asked how she would help her future children assume ownership for their worldview development, she said,

I know that through my experience I had to work through it on my own and I know they're going to have to work through it on their own. I can't tell them what to believe... I can tell them truth and offer it but know that I'm not going to be able to control them in that regard.

This transition of coming of age in terms of responsibility for worldview development was prevalent with all participants in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions which guided my inquiry into worldview development in Christian emerging adults were largely answered in the explication of the model above. However, to aid in clarity, they are repeated here with succinct answers.

Central Research Question

The central research question addressed in this study was: How does a Biblical worldview develop during the emerging adult years in Evangelical Christians ages 18-23? The Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults outlined in this chapter essentially is the answer to this question. This model suggests that in the normal course of life in emerging adulthood, Christian emerging adults are confronted with various categories of experiences that prompt them to evaluate those experiences and their own values, beliefs, and behaviors in light of those experiences. For Christian emerging adults with a strong Biblical worldview, their response to these prompts is to engage in means of processing which facilitate effectual reflection, leading to them to alter their hearts' inclinations, to arrive at new conclusions about what is true, and to adjust their behavior to accurately reflect the inclinations of their heart and propositions they consider to be true. As they do, they enhance and deepen the three dimensions of worldview in their own lives and they become more seasoned and practiced in the three dispositions of a maturing Biblical worldview.

Sub-Question One

The first sub-question was: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a heart orientation toward God and His truth? Participants in this study were aware

that the inclination of their heart is an important component of their worldview and they had all settled on a firm commitment to orienting their entire being toward God and His truth. All participants easily spoke of when they first committed their entire being to Christ, and when (as applicable) they recommitted their lives to Him, if their hearts had strayed from that commitment. They described the process of developing this kind of God-ward heart orientation in terms that provided evidence that they knew that the core of their being was continually being shaped, and that they were active participants in that shaping. They spoke frequently of worship and other spiritual disciplines as important facets of orienting their heart towards God. In addition, they reported that God Himself had been an active player in drawing their hearts to Himself, through conviction of sin and affirmation of His love and His plans for them. Participants also clearly understood the need for personal repentance when their heart was drawn in other directions, towards inappropriate relationships or towards wealth, for instance.

Sub-Question Two

The second sub-question was: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of developing a commitment to a master narrative or set of presuppositions which is consistent with Biblical revelation? The concept of master narrative was suggested by the literature on worldviews. However, only one participant was conversant in the concept of a master narrative, using the term “story” frequently in his interview and his timeline, referring both to the flow and experiences of his own life and to God’s overarching plan for human history. All participants recognized that having a mature Biblical worldview required them to settle upon the truth in all areas of reality to which they were exposed. They described that process in terms heavily weighted towards experience, where their encounters in life prompted them to evaluate and adjust what they believed to be true, as necessary. They utilized study, reflection, discussion,

being mentored, and serving others as means to process their experiences and arrive at new conclusions or to affirm their previously held conclusions.

Sub-Question Three

The third and final sub-question which guided this study was: How do Christian emerging adults describe the process of aligning their behavior to be an accurate reflection of a Biblical worldview? Behavior was extremely important to participants in this study. They were highly sensitive to what they called hypocritical behavior in themselves and others, when a person's stated values and beliefs did not match up with their actual behavior. They described the process of aligning their behavior to be an accurate reflection of a Biblical worldview as a cycle of making choices and then processing those choices (and the results of their choices), which consisted of thinking and talking about their behavior and seeking to make adjustments where their habits and lifestyle did not align with a Biblical worldview. No one in this study exhibited a lack of desire to make changes in their behavior when necessary. Indeed, they all expressed a strong commitment to live lives of integrity, with as full an alignment as possible among their values, their beliefs, and their behavior.

Summary

This chapter provided a thorough description of the Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults. First, all participants were described as individuals, including selected quotes from timelines, interviews, and/or the focus group which provided insight into who they are and how they think. Next, the model of Biblical worldview development was explained. Finally, research questions were reviewed and answers were provided—answers that briefly summarized the sections of the model related to each question.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to generate a model for Biblical worldview development in Evangelical Christian emerging adults, between the ages of 18 and 23. Chapter Five begins with a summary of the study's findings, as outlined in the model that was generated. Next, relevant theories and research from the review of the literature in Chapter Two are re-visited in the light of the results of the study. Next, theoretical and practical implications are offered, after which, limitations of the study identified. Finally, I suggest areas for further inquiry and the chapter concludes with a final summary of the study.

Summary of Findings

This central aim of this study was to generate a model of Biblical worldview development in Evangelical Christian emerging adults. After collecting and analyzing a significant amount of data from participant timelines, individual interviews, and a focus group session, the Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults was created. The model includes four central components: past influences, prompts, means, and a maturing Biblical worldview.

According to the results of this study, Biblical worldview development in the emerging adult years involves encountering various developmental prompts in the form of new experiences and ideas, pain and difficulties, worldview training, life questions, and leaving home. However, these prompts are not experienced with a blank worldview slate, and in Christian emerging adults with a strong maturing Biblical worldview, several positive influences from their past continue to shape the way they experience new prompts in emerging adulthood. These influences include: being raised in a Godly Christian family, being heavily involved in the church, being

mentored by parents and others Christian adults, participating in Biblical worldview-based education and training, maintaining Godly friendships, and having many important spiritual experiences. All of these help to shape the nascent Biblical worldview basis from which individuals encounter new developmental prompts in emerging adulthood.

Individuals who are maturing in a Biblical worldview harness the growth opportunities afforded by these prompts and engage in effectively and actively processing such experiences through several means. These means include: talking with peers, being mentored, reflecting, studying, and serving others.

Ultimately, the aim of Biblical worldview development during the emerging adult years is to possess a maturing Biblical worldview, which is marked by ongoing growth in the three worldview dimensions (cognitive propositions, heart orientation, and behavioral commitments) and the three worldview dispositions (awareness of worldview, commitment to meaningful processing, and ownership of the process of worldview development). This growth in turn results in a more stable, tested, and practiced Biblical worldview basis upon which to engage future and different prompts, which will continue to occur throughout adulthood.

Discussion

Theory and research specifically on Biblical worldview development is scant. However, as identified in Chapter Two, several theories do relate to Biblical worldview development. In addition, a small number of empirical studies contribute to understanding about how worldview develops. This section is comprised of reviews of the theories and several of the research studies discussed in Chapter Two, comparing them to the results of this study.

Sire's Three Dimensions of Worldview

Sire (2015) suggested that an individual's worldview consists of three core dimensions: heart orientation, truth propositions, and behavioral commitments, expanding significantly on his first edition of the book *Naming the Elephant* (Sire, 2004). Different from how the concept is approached in much of the popular literature and curricula on worldviews, Sire was not content to classify worldview as merely propositional in nature. Rather, he included the heart orientation and behavioral components, resulting in a more robust, albeit complex, description of worldview than was previously in use.

Working with the emerging adult participants in this study has confirmed that worldview is indeed a three-dimensional construct. Participants seamlessly spoke of all three dimensions in the course of our conversations, often jumping back and forth among them without even acknowledging that they were doing so. Interestingly, the very dimension that many authors and researchers seem to consider to be the most central component one's worldview (cognitively held truth propositions) was the dimension that participants spoke of the least in the course of their involvement in the study. Based on how often they were mentioned, participants were more interested in talking about their core motivations (heart orientation) and their behaviors, and how both of those are tested and developed in emerging adulthood. Overall, the way participants explained and described their worldview provides evidence that Sire (2015) was accurate in his definition of worldview as being three-dimensional.

In describing his revised definition of worldview, Sire (2015) alluded to each of the three dispositions identified in this study: ownership, awareness, and a commitment to meaningful processing. However, these dispositions were not specifically named or characterized as dispositions the way they have been in this study. First, Sire (2015) claimed that a worldview is a

commitment, but not necessarily one that is consciously chosen; for most people, they have not actively taken ownership of their worldview, but instead simply live from it. By implication, Sire (2015) is suggesting that this situation is not the ideal and does not lead to developing a well-formed worldview. The opposite then is the ideal: that individuals will carefully choose their worldview and continue to choose to evaluate and refine their worldview. This fits my concept of the disposition of ownership as a mark of a maturing Biblical worldview.

Sire (2015) also wrote negatively of the common reality of individuals who are not even aware of their own worldview. Sire (2015) asserted that people do not normally think about their worldview, though they always think with their worldview. By logical extension then, these same individuals would also not be aware of the worldview development process in which they are inevitably a player, albeit a passive one. Without awareness of one's worldview or the process of worldview development, it is unlikely that an individual will possess a well-formed, maturing Biblical worldview at all. The opposite seems to also be true: If individuals are aware of their worldview and of the reality that their worldview is always being developed and refined, then it is likely that those individuals would be the kind of people who can pursue and possess a maturing Biblical worldview.

Finally, Sire (2015) also hints at the disposition of commitment to meaningful processing. In the context of a discussion relating to the subconscious commitments that drive and direct individuals, Sire (2015) stated, "This commitment is usually subconscious, but it can be made conscious by self-reflection. Worldview analysis itself can aid us in becoming more conscious of what that commitment has been, is now, and may become through further reflection and decision" (p. 144). This self-reflection and "further reflection and decision" refer to the same basic concept as the disposition of commitment to meaningful processing, and Sire's comments

establish it as a positive and necessary characteristic of one who is intentional about worldview development.

Sire (2015) only mentions these three dispositions in passing, and he doesn't identify them as a discrete set of concepts essential to Biblical worldview development. The results of this study extend Sire's (2015) work by assembling these dispositions into such a set, and by situating them alongside his three dimensions of worldview categorizes them as necessary facets of a maturing Biblical worldview. The result is that individuals are not left without guidance regarding how to nurture the development of the three dimensions of worldview in their lives. Instead, they are provided with knowledge about the specific dispositions identified in this study which can be examined, evaluated, practiced, and to a degree, mastered, and which lead to growth in the three dimensions.

Emerging Adulthood as a Distinct Life-Stage

Arnett (2006) posited that the previous designation of 18–29 year-olds as young adults is insufficient to identify the true dynamics of this age grouping. Instead, he suggested that this stage should be called emerging adulthood, capturing the sense that these years are in-between years, as opposed to junior adult years as the term young adulthood implies. Arnett (2006) classified emerging adulthood as the life stage when individuals are no longer adolescents, but also not yet adults.

Participants in this study were in the early half of Arnett's (2000, 2006) emerging adulthood, and they exhibited the characteristics that he identifies as common in this age, though perhaps not to the same degree that Arnett's theory would predict. They are in a stage of significant transition in their lives (Arnett, 2006), when they are: exploring new options for their beliefs and their choices (their identity), unstable, as compared with their childhood and

adolescence, self-focused, with few factors for decision-making other than themselves, feeling in-between and not in one life stage or another, and finally, optimistic about the future. These characteristics were evident in the lives of participants in this study, and the fact that they were Evangelical Christians who were nominated as having a strong Biblical worldview seemed to have little impact on whether or not they experienced these dynamics in the emerging adult years. Participants' experiences and feelings were largely consistent with Arnett's (2000, 2006) descriptions and results of this study affirm that Arnett's theory is applicable to Christian emerging adults.

However, careful examination of the stories of the participants in this study shows that Arnett's (2006) description of the emerging adult years is not wholly sufficient as a framework to understand the experience of all Christian emerging adults who possess a maturing Biblical worldview. Participants in this study were exemplar representatives of Christian emerging adults. So, while exhibiting the characteristics that Arnett (2006) describes, they also show evidence of other characteristics that mediate or temper their experience in the emerging adult years, particularly related to the first three facets of Arnett's theory. Regarding exploring new possibilities for one's identity, Arnett (2006) characterizes this exploration as an authentic quest to find new options for life, a quest in which one experiments with alternate identities. While the Christian emerging adults in this study reported exploring options for how to view themselves, they were not doing so as part of the process of actually selecting new options. Instead, they were investigating other ideas in order to confirm, enrich, and expand their previously chosen convictions and beliefs, or their core identities. Emerging adults with a strong Biblical worldview had already established their core identity as individuals made in God's image, subject to His law and His ways, and redeemed through the saving work of Christ. The impact of

having this identity issue already resolved cannot be overstated. Even though they were challenged by the new experiences of emerging adulthood, they were relatively stable when compared to the way in which Arnett (2006) describes the identity explorations of emerging adults in America in general. This is likely because participants in this study were purposefully selected via nomination according to rigorous criteria, which sets them apart from the average Christian or non-Christian emerging adult.

A similar difference surfaces when Arnett's (2006) second characteristic of emerging adulthood is compared to the participants in this study. All of the participants had experienced significant changes in the dynamics of their daily lives, including those who were younger emerging adults and who were still living at home. However, it would not be accurate to say that they were in a period of instability. Interestingly, they seemed to be quite stable, even in the midst of much personal growth and some degree of upheaval. None of the participants reported feelings of significant instability, in spite of feeling a sense of growth and development and recounting numerous challenges they faced on the pathway to growth. Apparently, these individuals possessed a stabilizing factor in their lives, one that perhaps Arnett (2006) did not consider in the development of his theory. All of the participants were remarkably consistent in their faith in God and they pointed to Him as the bedrock of their lives and as the source of their strength. It would seem that a view of God as real and as willing and able to support and help individuals, key concepts included in a Biblical worldview, has a stabilizing effect on individuals, even in the midst of an uncertain season of new experiences and challenges.

Finally, Arnett's (2006) third facet of emerging adulthood is that of being self-focused. Being self-focused does not mean being selfish, as in childhood, nor does it necessarily mean being narcissistic. According to Arnett (2006) it represents considering oneself as the primary

determinant when it comes to decision-making in a wide range of arenas. The image is that of a person moving away from the external controls of childhood and adolescence, and instead making choices for and according to controls located within oneself. Participants in this study did identify this season of life as very self-directed, and analysis of their interviews suggested they possess a high level of personal agency. However, that is not a complete picture of how they are making choices. As individuals with a strong Biblical worldview, they readily understood and articulated the reality that they were not exclusively self-focused in Arnett's (2006) sense, but were instead focused on different and higher criteria for decision-making. First and foremost, they were concerned with aligning their lives around God's eternal wisdom in general, and His plans and purposes for their lives specifically. They were not looking within for guidance, and this stands in sharp contrast to Arnett's (2006) conception of emerging adults throwing off the constraints of their adolescence and experiencing a new-found freedom to be self-determinant. So, while Arnett's (2000, 2006) theory of emerging adulthood does offer a helpful framework to understand the emerging adult life-stage in general, it is not sufficient as a theory to explain all of the nuanced dynamics of Christian emerging adults who possess a strong, maturing Biblical worldview, which significantly impacts how they experience emerging adulthood.

Fowler's Faith Development Theory

Fowler (1981) developed a theory of faith development that defines the concept of faith in terms similar to how worldview is defined. To Fowler (1981) faith is the process of "assigning meaning to life and experiences, concerned with ultimate values, a guide for action, and "an active mode of being and committing, a way of moving into and giving shape to our experiences in life" (p. 16). Fowler suggested that individuals go through a predictable set of six stages in

their journey to a mature faith: intuitive-reflective, mythic-literal, synthetic-conventional, individuative-reflective, conjunctive, and universalizing.

Fowler's (1981) fourth stage, called individuative-reflective is most relevant to the worldview development processes that individuals in this study experienced in the emerging adult years. This stage ideally involves active reflection on one's faith and making intentional decisions relative to the values and beliefs that should be included in one's workable system of meaning. The model generated in this study confirms this general idea about the process that occurs during emerging adulthood. According to my model, individuals with a maturing Biblical worldview are prompted by life experiences to reflect on the truth and the meaning of those experiences, and to come to new or refined conclusions about what is true, valuable, and/or right. In this specific sense, Fowler's (1981) conception of the fourth stage of faith development is relevant.

Participants in this study consistently identified questions as key prompts for reflection. Fowler (1981) also identified questions as a central dynamic of his fourth stage of faith, questions that lead to positive, purposive, and constructive processing. This too was confirmed in this study. Additionally, Fowler's (1981) understanding of the purpose of questions and reflection was similar to what I found among my participants: it is a questioning in order to assess and assemble a more intentional and consistent system of meaning for oneself and not merely a questioning for the sake of questioning.

Fowler (1981) describes the fourth stage of faith development as tumultuous, since individuals become unsettled in what they believe as they assess and evaluate previous assumptions about life. Participants in this study confirmed that the prompts towards development of their worldview had unsettling effects. However, with the strongly positive

influences experienced by the participants, only one of them spoke of being unsettled in terms quite as drastic or severe as did Fowler (1981). Among Christian emerging adults with a strong Christian background, solid training, positive friendships, church involvement, and authentic spiritual experiences, there was much less of a sense of tumult than what Fowler (1981) suggested in the fourth stage of faith development. It would seem that with a solid Christian background, Christian emerging adults are well equipped for the challenges that characterize Fowler's (1981) individuative-reflective faith.

In the final analysis, Fowler's (1981) faith development theory is simply not adequate to explain the phenomenon of Biblical worldview development, though it does offer some clues as to how a person may experience Biblical worldview development. Though beyond the scope of this study, it is likely that Biblical worldview development also proceeds along a series of stages or periods similar to Fowler's (1981) stages. However, since a Biblical worldview is such a unique and complex construct, made up of three dimensions and three dispositions, and since worldview as defined in this study is different from Fowler's (1981) definition of faith, a unique set of developmental stages for Biblical worldview is necessary. Understanding Fowler's work is certainly helpful and can yield clues to how persons develop in the realm of the spirit, but it is insufficient as it stands to offer comprehensive answers to questions about how a Biblical worldview develops over the lifespan.

Parks' Critical Years

Parks' (1986, 2000) work focused exclusively on the same age range as this study, 18-23 year-olds. Like Fowler (1981), Parks (1986) offers a definition of faith that has some similarities to the concept of Biblical worldview; it is essentially an individual's conviction about the nature of truth, self, the world, and the cosmos. Parks (1986) also acknowledges that faith is not merely

a cognitive activity, but is a guide for behavior as well. For Parks (1986, 2000), faith development between the ages of 18 and 23 runs along three parallel tracks: cognition, dependent, and belonging.

The experience of participants in this study was roughly consistent with Parks' (2000) three tracks. They were wrestling with the epistemological aspects of what is true and right, they showed evidence of moving from external controls for the choice-making to internal controls, and they expressed strong interdependence with their friends as they develop their worldview. Thus, Parks' (1986, 2000) overall framework of development was demonstrated among the participants in this study. However, the applicability of Parks' (1986, 2000) theory is limited in its application to Biblical worldview development, as was Fowler's (1981), since, her conception of faith is not defined as worldview has been defined by Sire (2015), and her analysis and synthesis do not take into consideration the supernatural dynamic of a Biblical worldview.

One particular facet of Parks' (1986, 2000) framework which is directly applicable to Biblical worldview development is that of mentoring. Mentoring is actually one of the core concepts in Parks' (2000) suggestions for how to best support emerging adults as they progress in their development. This theme was strongly affirmed in this study, as being mentored was one of the primary means whereby participants processed their life experiences.

In her book, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, Parks (2000) spends considerable time explaining how mentoring supports emerging adults' faith development; likewise, participants in this study spent considerable time describing the profound influence that mentoring had on their worldview development thus far. Since this study dealt with the construct of Biblical worldview development, as opposed to a generic faith, the facets and practices of effective mentoring as

outlined in the model of Biblical worldview development are more directly and completely applicable to Christian emerging adults, than is Parks' (1986, 2000) model.

Research on Biblical Worldview Development

As explained in Chapter Two, there are very few reports of research on Biblical worldview development in the literature. Most of the related literature deals with some measure of individuals' commitment to the propositional aspects of a Biblical worldview, or to concepts that are related to, but not identical to Biblical worldview development. This study was unique, as I was unable to locate any other qualitative research specifically on Biblical worldview development.

The model generated in this study can ideally provide a small step forward in understanding how a Biblical worldview develops over the lifespan, beginning with the critical life stage of emerging adulthood. Comparing the model with the research that already exists, however, does yield some interesting points of connection. For instance, a few researchers (Mayhew, 2012; Mayhew & Bryant, 2013) suggested that religious struggle was a common component of the process young adults undergo as they solidify their worldview. This is similar to my conclusion that one of the prompts for worldview development is being confronted with new ideas, particularly ideas that challenge one's worldview.

Additionally, my research serves as a validation of several researchers' conclusions concerning the impact that certain variables have on an individual's worldview or their spiritual commitment (Brickhill, 2010; Smith & Snell, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Van Meter, 2009). Variables that were found to positively impact the spiritual lives and worldview commitments of individuals included: parental faith commitment, religious mentors, childhood faith commitment,

spiritual experiences, church attendance, and worldview training. All of these factors emerged in this study as important Biblical worldview development influences in the lives of participants.

Of particular note is the consistency of my conclusions with those of Garber (1996). However, we arrived at our conclusions from very different data-gathering starting points. Garber (1996) asked middle-aged Christians who had maintained a vibrant faith and a strong applied Biblical worldview over time about their lives as emerging adults, some 20 years or more earlier. He found three common factors among them. During emerging adulthood, they were personally committed to living out a Biblical worldview, they had mentors who modeled living out a Biblical worldview, and they were immersed in a community of like-minded peers. I found these same factors, as reported by the emerging adults who participated in this study. So both in retrospect (for Garber's [1996] participants) and in current experience (for my study participants), these three factors are reported as crucial to long-term commitment to living out a Biblical worldview.

Implications

The primary theoretical implication that follows from the results of this study is that Biblical worldview development is a long-term process, and that process itself is in a sense a goal as well. Stated another way, one does not arrive at some fixed point in time when a Biblical worldview is fully possessed. Instead, individuals who enter emerging adulthood with a nascent but solid Biblical worldview, and who are committed to ongoing development, progress through emerging adulthood and beyond continuing to develop and mature their Biblical worldview. Unfortunately, much research and discussion regarding Biblical worldview seems to suggest that a person either does, or does not have a Biblical worldview, and that that worldview can be measured on an assessment taken at a fixed point in time. The model I derived from my analysis

of the data suggests that one does not actually arrive at fully possessing a Biblical worldview, at least not by the time an individual is 23 years old. Based on my research and conclusions, a more accurate goal or aim for the emerging adult years is to possess a maturing Biblical worldview. I discuss the practical applications of this theoretical implication shortly.

A second related theoretical implication is that while a maturing Biblical worldview includes the three dimensions outlined by Sire (2015), it also includes the three dispositions identified in this study. Commitment to meaningful processing, awareness of one's worldview, and ownership of the process emerged in this study as critical dispositions that individuals with a maturing Biblical worldview exhibit. While the three dimensions (heart orientation, truth claims, and behavioral patterns) are important characteristics of a worldview, the three dispositions are also important and their presence indicates a strong propensity towards continued growth and development. The dimensions and dispositions work together, and all must be nurtured if one is to have a maturing Biblical worldview. The practical implications of this theoretical implication is also discussed in the sections below, organized according to the various stakeholders who likely are concerned with Biblical worldview development.

Christian Parents

The results of this study affirm that Christian parents play a foundational role in preparing their children to develop a maturing Biblical worldview throughout the emerging adult years and beyond. The model developed in this study strongly suggests that experiences prior to emerging adulthood have a significant impact on worldview development throughout emerging adulthood. As such, parents can proactively arrange their children's experiences in such a way that they are well prepared for what they will experience in emerging adulthood.

First, parents can endeavor to ensure that they themselves are intentionally and consistently pursuing maturity in their own Biblical worldview. Participants consistently pointed to the faithful example of their Christian parents and the strength of their home life as important influences on their worldview development in emerging adulthood. Of note is the number of times participants mentioned the concept of “growing up in a bubble” as a strong positive factor in their worldview development. To participants in this study, “growing up in a bubble” meant being intentionally sheltered from ungodly influences in media, friends, etc., being consistently exposed to that which is good, right, and beautiful, from a Biblical perspective, being homeschooled or attending Christian school, and having parents that were intimately involved in discipling them. Paradoxically, I have found that many parents are concerned about the supposed negative repercussions of raising their children with limited or carefully managed exposure to media and non-Christian friends, as if sheltering them from negative outside influences will somehow prove to be a handicap in the future. Results of this study suggest that that is not true, and that providing a wholesome and protected environment in which to grow up is actually part of preparing children to continue to develop a Biblical worldview in their emerging adult years.

Two of the male participants readily acknowledged challenges that arose in their lives as a result of pornography use in their adolescent years. Given the prevalence and availability of pornography online, it is likely that others in the study also struggled with pornography. Others admitted to significant issues with a range of sexual sins, and they understood how engaging in sexual sin distorted their view of themselves, God and others, and how it ultimately impacted their worldview. Parents ought to be aware of the reality of sexual temptation and the barrage of pornographic images with which young adolescents are faced, and take proactive steps to prepare their children for the sexualized culture that they will face as they grow up. From teaching

children about healthy sexuality and God's view of sex early on, to closely monitoring computer and media usage, parents should be actively involved in shaping and protecting their children in this area that is so fraught with peril for young Christians.

Second, Christian parents can purposefully provide opportunities for their children to learn about a Biblical worldview, both at home and in other settings, such as church, Christian school, and in worldview-specific training entities and events. Most of the participants in this study had significant experiences in Biblical worldview training during their adolescence, and some even identified Biblical worldview training elements in their elementary years. Clearly, formal training in Biblical worldview establishes an important foundation for later worldview development. One participant's homeschool experience was completely integrated with Biblical worldview study. Others took Biblical worldview training classes at their local church or were in Christian schools that offered Biblical worldview classes and whose curriculum was infused with Biblical worldview teaching, across all academic disciplines. Some participants went to Biblical worldview camps. Parents wanting to train their children in Biblical worldview can find numerous resources and opportunities for doing so. Even simply having intentional discussions around worldview topics can be an important means of Biblical worldview training; the dinner table can be as valid an environment for worldview development as is the most formal class.

Next, Christian parents can help facilitate the development of positive, Godly peer relationships for their children. Instead of indiscriminately allowing their children to choose their own friends, they can arrange time together with peers who come from homes that also place a strong emphasis on Biblical worldview development. Homeschooling cooperatives, Christian schools, and church children's and youth ministries are ideal venues in which parents can encourage their children to develop friendships.

Additionally, parents can help to keep friendships consistent over time. Several participants spoke of long-term Godly friendships which continue for them into emerging adulthood, and these same friendships have become, at least to some degree, the context in which they process through the various prompts identified in this study. Conversely, parents ought to be watchful for friendships which are not helpful in the process of developing a Biblical worldview or which tend to pull a child away from a Biblical worldview. Friendships in childhood and youth become a significant past influence for emerging adults, and parents are uniquely positioned to help ensure that that influence is one that positively impacts their children's worldview development.

Another way in which parents can lay a dependable foundation for their children's future Biblical worldview development is to encourage relational connections with other Christian adults. All of the participants in this study reported that the community of faith around them played a formative role in their pre-emerging adult years. It seems that being in relationships with non-parental adults who share their parents' worldview can serve to enhance and confirm the lessons individuals learn at home. This broader network of relationships with other adults can provide a consistent environment of worldview integrity, where children and youth are surrounded by a chorus of voices and diverse examples which all point in the same direction.

Finally, Christian parents can ensure that their children are provided with many opportunities to experience God for themselves and lead them to making an early commitment to Him. While emerging adulthood can be a tumultuous and frightening season of life, participants in this study had steady ballast in their lives—ballast provided by a deep and authentic spiritual life. For the vast majority of participants, that spiritual life of living faith was not a new reality to them. Instead, it was a continuation and a maturation of a long-held faith, nurtured and

developed first in childhood and adolescence. Parents can play a key role in establishing such a faith, by encouraging active involvement in the life of a church, being available to provide spiritual counsel, and taking the lead in demonstrating how to pursue the Lord through developmentally appropriate spiritual disciplines. Any efforts parents can expend to help their children know God for themselves and nurture an authentic relationship with Him can bear significant fruit later in emerging adulthood.

Churches and Young Adult Ministries

The church should play an active role in the Biblical worldview development of Christian emerging adults. This role can begin in children's and youth ministries, by focusing on worldview themes that relate to all three of the worldview dimensions. Children's and youth ministry leaders should regularly assess the degree of balance in their attention to the three dimensions, ensuring that they are not emphasizing one at the expense of the others. Additionally, these leaders can begin to inculcate the three dispositions by including in their planning, age-appropriate activities that will promote worldview awareness, meaningful processing, and personal ownership for one's worldview development.

Young adult ministry leaders are in a unique role, walking alongside Christian emerging adults as they evaluate and refine their worldviews in the critical years of 18 to 24. Based on the model created in this study, young adult ministries should evaluate their priorities to be sure that they are ministering to emerging adults in ways that assist them to respond positively to the worldview development prompts they are experiencing and also in ways that elicit practice in the means of processing the prompts identified in this study. First, young adult ministries should place significant emphasis on helping emerging adults establish and maintain authentic friendships with other Christian emerging adults, which can become environments for the kind of

discussions cited as so valuable to the participants in this study. As an outgrowth of this emphasis, young adult ministries should give ample time to discussion and processing, in addition to time spent in more passive modes, such as in large-group teaching settings.

Young adult leaders can create opportunities to mentor emerging adults by spending time with them individually, guiding them in the worldview development process, and simply being available to them. Participants in this study cited mentoring as an extremely important aid to processing their experiences. While time-consuming and potentially challenging, these one-on-one relationships can bear rich dividends in emerging adults' worldview development, as they provide a safe, nurturing, and personalized environment in which individuals can ask questions and receive support as they pursue answers to those questions. Of note is the preference of participants in this study that these relationships do not necessarily need to be sources of answers. Rather, they prefer an approach to mentoring that is much less directive, and much more marked by a coaching ethos, where an individual comes alongside of another as an experienced fellow-learner, as opposed to an accomplished expert. Knowledge of this fact can serve to alleviate the pressure that can prevent someone from mentoring someone else—the unrealistic pressure to have all the answers and to fix another persons' problems. This was not what participants valued; they simply wanted to walk with someone who was a bit farther along on the journey, but who still had much to learn and who was willing to do so with someone by their side.

Participants shared that they often found themselves lacking good resources to aid their study of Biblical worldview themes and issues. Young adult ministries can help address this problem by providing tools and training on how to find valuable resources for worldview development. They can also arrange to have experts in various fields related to Biblical

worldview speak to their members, providing access to individuals that the average emerging adult would not have the means to contact. Developing a rich repository of resources and referrals for emerging adults is a meaningful way to support their worldview development.

Mission trips and other service opportunities were cited among participants as pivotal experiences in their worldview development. Young adult ministries can provide the framework and the specific opportunities to experience cross-cultural missions, and can help to leverage those experiences as important prompts for worldview development. Facilitating service opportunities is something that a formal ministry is in an ideal position to do. Many individuals would have a difficult time arranging a trip on their own, and would welcome the opportunity to become involved with a trip that was being planned by a ministry and which included friends and acquaintances as fellow-participants. Such trips can provide meaningful opportunities for shared experience and reflection, and the deepening of relationships with positive peers and mentors.

Finally, in addition to aligning activities and programs to give emerging adult experiences and practice in employing the means identified in this study, young adult ministries should give attention to nurturing in their members the dispositions of a maturing Biblical worldview. Emerging adults would benefit from being challenged and equipped to: understand the contours of their own worldview, exercise deeper levels of ownership of their own development, and commit to meaningful processing. For example, a young adult ministry could offer members the opportunity to take the *3DWS – Form C* worldview assessment and then encourage individuals to reflect on their results, particularly in considering their perspective on the accuracy of those results. Then, leaders could provide small group or one-on-one coaching experiences to assist members in developing specific plans to address areas of weakness. Finally, the relational context of the ministry would offer accountability for any action steps that

members determined to be appropriate for themselves. As they make progress in processing through their findings, members could report back to the group, articulating their thoughts which in turn would lead to more effectual processing. Viewed through the lens of the model created in this study, young adult ministries could become key mechanisms that facilitate the cyclical and consistent turning of the worldview development gears in emerging adults' lives.

Christian Schools

Over the last few decades, Christian schools in general have made Biblical worldview a centerpiece of their vision and mission statements, and this is obviously a good trend. However, there is a significant lack of clarity on the ends they're actually trying to achieve in their students. As a Christian school superintendent myself, I have always put developing a strong Biblical worldview in our students at the top of our priority list. However, I'm not sure that I haven't inadvertently promised more than we can actually deliver. The model I generated as a result of this study suggests that graduates from high school do not yet possess a well-developed Biblical worldview, at least in the sense that they are ready to be deployed into the world fully-formed in this regard. On the contrary, this new model suggests that 17 and 18 year-olds are just beginning the process of developing a mature Biblical worldview. At best, a Christian school graduate may possess the fundamentals of a Biblical worldview, but such a worldview certainly will not have been evaluated, tested, refined, and solidified as result of the experiences of emerging adulthood.

Christian schools can (and should) still be focused on developing a Biblical worldview in their students. However, perhaps they can be more realistic in what to expect. For instance, instead of claiming that they produce graduates with a well-formed Biblical worldview, they can make the more attainable and credible claim that they "produce students who are well prepared

for the next stage of their worldview development.” They can make their aim to deploy into the world young people who are equipped with a good understanding of the three dimensions of a Biblical worldview and who are well-practiced in the three dispositions necessary for further Biblical worldview development. Working backwards from that more developmentally appropriate aim, they can then choose curricula and pedagogies that are consistent with the kind of preparation they hope to provide for their students.

In order to help construct a solid Biblical worldview foundation, curricula in Christian schools should be overtly focused on Biblical worldview integration. Results of this study suggest that the elementary and secondary school years are important years for establishing in young hearts and minds the propositions of a Biblical worldview. This does not happen by accident; every opportunity should be taken to present, explain, expand, and fortify the Biblical perspective on reality, as reflected in each subject area. It could be said that God has something to say about every subject area, and every subject area has something to say about God, and Christian schools can highlight and leverage this reality.

Beyond content, however, pedagogies should be aligned to support Biblical worldview development. While lectures and readings both have a place in worldview development, the means whereby teachers engage their students in more active learning is equally important. Pedagogies should be maximally engaging to the students, and pedagogies which emphasize experience, reflection, interaction, collaboration, and presentation should be preferred, or at least used in proportional measure to less engaging pedagogies. Using such methods in developmentally appropriate ways and consistently over time can build in students a readiness to employ the more sophisticated means of processing worldview development prompts that they will encounter in the emerging adult years.

Christian Colleges and Universities

When Christian emerging adults go on to higher education at Christian colleges and universities, they are in an exciting and challenging stage of their worldview development. Christian colleges can capitalize on the unique developmental readiness in college students and provide intentional, planned instruction in their worldview courses on how worldview actually develops. Worldview courses should include units on development of a Biblical worldview, just as psychology courses include a strong focus on human development. Further, instead of a primary focus on the propositional truths contained in a Biblical worldview in worldview classes, instructors help students to grow in the three dispositions through activities and assignments tailored towards that end. Additionally, colleges could expand that practice to the entire curriculum, including meaningful processing in all coursework. Every course offered in a Christian college should have specific and intentional Biblical worldview elements that require students to think through, articulate, and perhaps even defend their beliefs about how a Biblical worldview informs the subject matter of that specific course or discipline. These kinds of pedagogical practices can help students to become more aware of their own worldview, give them practice in meaningful processing, and also take greater ownership for the process of evaluating and refining their worldview.

Mentoring was a significant means whereby participants processed their life experiences. Christian colleges should continue to give priority to outside-the-classroom interactions between professors and students, providing a context for mentoring to take place. Further, training for resident assistants could include instruction and practice in the art of mentoring, so that older, more experienced students can mentor younger students. As this study suggested, serving as a mentor was actually part of an individual's worldview development process. By having older

students intentionally mentor younger students in worldview development, a cycle of development can be created and sustained as an overall part of the college culture—a cycle in which all who are involved are benefitted.

The emerging adult years are an ideal time for individuals to be exposed to worldviews that differ from their own, as this exposure serves as a prompt for worldview development. Christian colleges should offer ample opportunities for students to encounter alternative worldviews. This exposure can come via lectures or special events where individuals who do not possess a Biblical worldview can address students about important cultural issues, framing these issues according to their own worldview. Debates and symposia can also facilitate exposure to different perspectives. Finally, students can be required to participate in service-learning experiences in various classes, which have been shown to be highly effective in helping students to engage ideas and worldviews that are different from their own, thus aiding their own worldview development (Swaner, 2007). All such experiences of exposure to individuals with different worldviews should include required follow-up reflection exercises, which results from this study have shown to be an effective means for maturing one's worldview.

Christian Emerging Adults

The final group of stakeholders related to this study is perhaps the most obvious: Christian emerging adults. Whether they fully realize it or not, they are working through the process of responding to new experiences and encounters, ideally with the aim of continuing to develop a perspective on, and a way of living in, the world that is consistent with truth as revealed in Scripture. The results of this study suggest that they can be actively involved in their worldview development and that as they pursue proficiency in the three dispositions and seek to

align their heart orientation, the truth claims they embrace, and their behaviors with Biblical truth, that their worldview will continue to mature and expand.

The model generated in this study suggests that Biblical worldview development will continue after emerging adulthood. Participants reported that they do not feel completely satisfied with their worldview, as if they have arrived at some ideal state. They readily acknowledge that they anticipate continued development of their worldview in the future, as they are prompted to do so by new challenges, new experiences and ideas, further training, new and more sophisticated life questions, and more distance between them and their adolescence. Christian emerging adults should understand that this season of development is not an isolated or momentary phenomenon. To the contrary, Biblical worldview development began for them long before emerging adulthood and will continue long after emerging adulthood. While this is a time of evaluating, consolidating, and refining one's worldview, Christian emerging adults should be encouraged to know that they do not have to get everything correct, in the short term. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of recommendations for Christian schools, the goal for development in this season should not be a complete Biblical worldview, but rather a maturing Biblical worldview, with an emphasis on the ongoing nature of the process.

In each of the interviews conducted for this study, participants were asked what advice they would give to other Christian emerging adults as they entered this life stage. They were asked this question as a means to approach their own worldview development from an outside perspective, and this was fruitful in terms of yielding important data on the overall concept of Biblical worldview development. However, the answers to this question can also be considered as direct recommendations to other Christian emerging adults. Advice from participants revolved around the central themes contained in the model created in this study: become aligned with

friends and mentors with a strong Biblical worldview, expect challenges and embrace conflict as an opportunity to grow, beware of distractions, look to mentor others as a part of one's own worldview development, and finally, put significant effort into studying and examining a Biblical worldview.

Limitations

All qualitative research is subject to common limitations (Creswell, 2015). For instance, the researcher is depending on participants being honest in their responses to questions as they share their stories. Additionally, researchers are subject to their own bias, and must constantly guard against their own biases bleeding through as choices are made about what data to collect and how to collect it, and in the course of data analysis. These limitations result in tentative findings and suggestions, which can only gain additional validity as other researchers confirm the findings in other similar inquiries.

This study was marked by a few additional specific limitations, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. First, though there was good variety among the participants in K-12 educational backgrounds, denominational affiliation, and gender, there was very little variety in ethnic background and geography. The sample was overwhelmingly Caucasian and most of the participants were from the Northeast region of the United States. These characteristics of my sample may be a significant limitation, as the experience of developing a Biblical worldview may not be the same for an African American as it is for a Caucasian American, and it may vary according to region of the country as well. Additionally, only one of the participants who was over 18 years old did not attend college. Certainly, attending college has been shown to have a major impact on an individual's development, and so it is likely that individuals who attend

college experience the development of their worldview differently than do non-college attenders (Swaner, 2012).

Another limitation came from the nomination process. Even though a total of 12 individuals provided nominations, there was not an even spread of participants from those 12. Three of the nominators provided a total of 12 successful nominations, meaning that over half of the participants came from only three relational networks, each of which was based in a specific organization. For example, one of the nominators provided five successful nominations, all of whom attended the same college. Another provided three, all of whom had been a part of the same national worldview ministry. The other provided four, three of whom attended the same Christian school. Since these three groups of participants experienced very similar training and educational experiences, the results of the study may not be generalizable to others who did not have similar experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

The result of this study, the Model of Biblical Worldview Development for Christian Emerging Adults, is only a small beginning step in addressing the larger need for a birth to death model of Biblical worldview development for people of Christian faith. As such, many valid options for future research can be explored. For instance, studies with a similar study design (allowing for differences in maturity and age of participants) could be conducted with children, teens, older emerging adults, and other individuals throughout adulthood. Over time, this could be an effective pathway to generate a birth-to-death model for Biblical worldview development in Christians.

To add more validity to the results of this study, studies like it could be conducted with a more heterogeneous sample, in terms of ethnicity and region of residence. Additionally, studies

could be conducted with participants outside of the United States. Finally, studies could focus on individuals who did not attend college at all through the emerging adult years. These and countless other permutations of this study design would be helpful in building a body of literature on Biblical worldview development in Christian emerging adults.

Similar studies could also be conducted with emerging adults who are not Christians. This would contribute to an overall worldview development model, which could likely be different from the model in this study, which is only related to Christian emerging adults. As discussed earlier, not only is there scant research in Biblical worldview development, not much exists in the arena of worldview development in general.

Summary

This grounded theory study contributed the Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults to the literature, and was the first to identify and name the three dispositions of a maturing Biblical worldview: awareness of one's worldview, commitment to meaningful processing, and ownership of the worldview development process. Christians between the ages of 18 and 24 who are known to possess a strong Biblical worldview enter emerging adulthood with positive influences from their pasts—influences that provide a solid basis for further worldview development. As they progress through the emerging adult years, they encounter various prompts, which cause them to employ effective means of processing those experiences, thereby evaluating and refining their worldview. As these Christian emerging adults continue to engage these prompts with effective means of processing, they deepen and expand their Biblical worldview, which is comprised of three dimensions and marked by three dispositions. In turn, their maturing Biblical worldview forms the basis for

encountering additional prompts and employing more practiced means of processing throughout the rest of their emerging adult years, and beyond.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

3DWS – Form C

3-Dimensional Worldview Survey – Form C

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Instructions:

- As you respond to the survey questions, you should read each item carefully, but do not spend too much time on any one item. Most people will get the most helpful and accurate results if they give their first response to the question.
- Everyone is likely to have different strengths and opportunities for growth, so be honest, both for yourself, and with the answers you give. Don't be overly hard or overly easy on yourself.
- Many of the questions ask for your opinion, preference, or actions. There are wide differences on these issues among Christians, so do not try to guess at the "right" answer. Instead, be as honest as you can, so that the results of your survey are as accurate as possible for where you are today. As you mature in your faith, you will probably find that your answers to some questions change—you would have answered differently a year ago, or a year from now. That is normal.

Section I

Instructions: In this section, you will answer questions based on your level of agreement with a series of statements. Fill in the bubble in the column for the answer that is closest to your view about the statement in the first column. Read each questions carefully, but do not spend too much time on any one statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. History is a random series of events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. There is a constant spiritual battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. In confronted with a moral dilemma, I figure it out by discovering what will help the most people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The Holy Spirit is a symbol of God's presence rather than a living being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. We can interpret current events as expressions of God's will.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Jesus Christ is important in my life today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The best source for determining if something is morally right or wrong is the law of the land.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The Bible is more like a good story that teaches moral lessons than a historic record of real people and events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. A person can earn eternal salvation by being good, for example by doing good things for other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. God created everything.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. I am the one who ultimately determines what is right or wrong for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. There is no way to decide which of the many competing worldviews is true.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. All medical research that promotes our knowledge of science is valuable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Sexual behavior outside of marriage is wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Every life has value, whether unborn, disabled, sickly, or in any other way limited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Muslims, Christians, Jews, and all other people pray to the same God, even though they use different names for their God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Two people could define truth in conflicting ways and both still be correct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. If people will only work hard enough, their cooperation could result in a perfect society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I can know what is morally right and wrong for other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Entertainment has great power to captivate the imagination, and should therefore be treated with great respect and thought.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. If someone wrongs me, then I will want to get even.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. The Bible is true because I believe it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. A well-run government can solve all problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I can tell if something is morally right by whether or not it works in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I am waiting to have sex until I am married, no matter what.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. People are not morally responsible for their actions if they are so poor that the only way for them to eat is to steal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. The meaning of words depends on each reader's interpretation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Most people are basically good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. God is a personal being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Everything belongs to God: for example, my computer, my phone, my clothes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Medical treatment should be given based on who would bring the greatest benefit to society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. The best source for determining if something is morally right or wrong is the Bible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. God is important primarily because faith in Him makes us more civilized and psychologically healthy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. I would marry someone of another faith if I were in love.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Every woman should have a right to abort her fetus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. All cultures are morally equal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. I believe that when I die I will go to Heaven because I have been a good person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. God is actively involved in the universe today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. The Bible is true in all of its teachings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. I feel that no one has the right to tell me what to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. The devil is a symbol of evil rather than a living being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. I believe that when I die I will go to Heaven because I have been going to church pretty much all my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. God is one God who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. God holds all human beings accountable for their behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
47. When Jesus Christ was on earth, He lived a sinless life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. The standard for truth is when I feel it to be true in my heart.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section II

Instructions: In this section, you will answer questions about the frequency with which you do two religious activities. Fill in the bubble in the column for the answer that is closest to your actual participation in the activity.

49. I read or study the Bible.	<input type="radio"/> about 10 hours or less a year	<input type="radio"/> about 1-2 hours a month	<input type="radio"/> about 1 hour a week	<input type="radio"/> about 15-30 minutes a day	<input type="radio"/> more than 30 minutes a day
50. I attend a church worship service.	<input type="radio"/> less than once a month	<input type="radio"/> about once a month	<input type="radio"/> about 2 times a month	<input type="radio"/> about 3 times a month	<input type="radio"/> every week

(continued)

Section III

Instructions: in this section, you will answer questions based on how frequently you have various thoughts, preferences, or experiences. Fill in the bubble in the column for the answer that is closest to your actual level of experience, not what you think it should be. Read each question carefully, but do not spend too much time on any one statement.

	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
51. I work with other Christian believers for the purpose of introducing unchurched people to Jesus Christ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52. My interactions with non-Christians are likely to demonstrate that I am a Christian.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53. I enjoy talking with one or more of my friends about spiritual things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
54. I feel frustrated when my individual right to choose what I want to do is limited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. I question the goodness of God because I know that evil exists.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. In everyday activities, for example, doing homework, I deepen my relationship with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57. I look forward to the time when I can take a break from going to church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58. When I watch a sporting event, I get more involved than when I attend a worship event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59. When I see inconsistencies at church between what people say and what they do, I want to stay away from church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60. When I make decisions, the biggest factor is how it will affect my relationship with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
61. I stand up for what is right even if my friends don't join me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
62. When I have questions about how I should live my life, I look for answers in the Bible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
63. I freely forgive those who hurt me even when the hurt they have caused is very great.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
64. I only spend my money on what will benefit me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65. When something offends me, it keeps irritating me whenever I think about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
66. I find the Bible is relevant to my daily life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
67. In my prayers, I actively seek to discover the will of God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
68. When I do something wrong, I respond cheerfully and humbly to discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
69. I enjoy participating in a worship service with other believers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
70. Repentance is part of my private prayers to God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
71. I think about passages I read in the Bible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
72. I enjoy being with other believers, whether or not we are doing religious activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
73. I spend time thinking about the sermon after I have left the church building.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
74. I do without things I want in order to give sacrificially to the work of God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
75. Beauty is only a matter of personal opinion: there is no such thing as objective beauty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
76. When I hear about natural disasters, I do something to help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B

Sample 3DWS – Form C Report (used and reproduced with permission)

3D Worldview Survey Results

Name: [REDACTED]

Survey Date: March 21, 2016

Participant ID: ERD20160318

Propositional Dimension **very good**

Your responses tend in the direction of a Biblical worldview on 34 out of 43 propositional items. That indicates that you probably have a very good knowledge of Biblical truth.

Behavioral Dimension **very good**

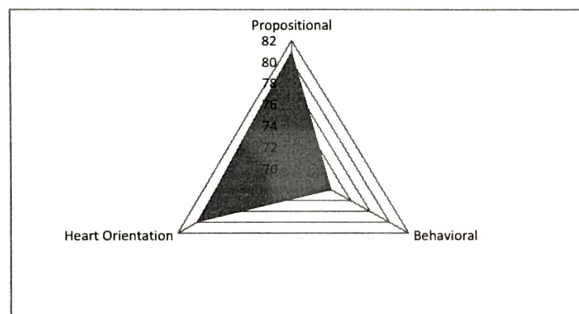
Your responses tend in the direction of a Biblical worldview on 12 out of 13 behavioral items. That indicates that you probably have a very good record for living out Biblical truth.

Heart Orientation Dimension **very good**

Your responses tend in the direction of a Biblical worldview on 18 out of 20 heart-orientation items. That indicates that you probably have a very good inner attitude about God, Jesus, and the things the Bible says.

Now look at your detailed score and the picture will show you how well your scores are in balance with each other. The more your triangle is shaded, the better your results.

Propositional	Behavioral	Heart Orientation	Composite
81	74	80	235



Comments:

Your highest dimension subscore is for the Propositional Dimension at 81.
Your lowest dimension subscore is for the Behavioral Dimension at 74.
Your average dimension subscore is 78.3.

Commendation:

When the propositional dimension is your highest score, you are to be commended for how well you are learning about the Bible and God. Continue to "present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Cautions:

When the behavioral dimension is your lowest score, you would probably benefit by remembering that we are warned against "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:2-5).

When the propositional dimension is your highest, be careful to keep your knowledge in perspective: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Opportunity for Growth:

If you want to improve in the behavioral dimension, think about how you can connect what you know with what you do: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22).

APPENDIX C

3DWS – Form C Results

Table C1

3DWS – Form C Results

Participant	Propositional		Behavioral		Heart Orientation		Composite
	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	
Abby	79	VG	68	VG	66	G	213
Carissa	86	VG	78	VG	75	G	239
Cheryl	92	VG	68	VG	79	VG	239
Crystal	81	VG	74	VG	80	VG	235
Darren	77	VG	84	VG	79	VG	240
David	78	G	71	VG	74	VG	223
Jacob	80	VG	81	VG	80	VG	241
Jared	83	VG	80	VG	80	VG	243
Joshua	80	VG	70	VG	77	VG	227
Keith	82	VG	80	VG	77	VG	239
Kevin	94	VG	83	VG	87	VG	264
Mark	86	VG	65	VG	75	G	226
Marshall	83	VG	76	VG	83	VG	242
Marty	93	VG	77	VG	85	VG	255
Missy	94	VG	78	VG	90	VG	262
Philip	86	VG	77	VG	82	VG	245
Shae	86	VG	77	VG	74	VG	237
Shawna	81	VG	68	VG	82	VG	231
Thomas	86	VG	90	VG	89	VG	265
Tiffany	64	VG	68	VG	69	G	201

APPENDIX D

Liberty University IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 24, 2015

Roger C. S. Erdvig
IRB Approval 2361.112415: A Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical
Christian Emerging Adults

Dear Roger,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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APPENDIX E

Letter to Potential Nominators

Dear _____,

My name is Roger Erdvig and I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University working on my dissertation entitled, “A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW IN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN EMERGING ADULTS.” As part of my research, I am interviewing Evangelical Christian emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 23. The reason I’m writing is to ask you if you would consider providing me with the names of individuals who you feel may be a good fit from my study.

The criteria for being a participant are as follows. Participants will:

- Self-identify as Evangelical Christians living in the US
- Be at least 18 years old, but not older than 23
- Be known by others as having a well-developed Biblical worldview, meaning:
 - Participants will have a strong heart-orientation towards God and His Word
 - Participants will espouse the basic truth propositions of a Biblical worldview
 - Participants will embody a commitment to living out the implications of a Biblical worldview in all areas of their lives
- Be willing and able to participate in distance-based or in-person interviews and focus groups

Participants will not be under any coercion to participate in the study, and I have secured approval from Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board to conduct this research. All participants will sign a consent form, and will fully understand the risks associated with being involved as a participant in a qualitative research study.

If you know of any individuals who fit the above criteria, and whom you believe would be a good fit for participation in my study, would you consider returning this form with names and contact information? I appreciate your willingness to consider helping me with my dissertation, and contributing to an important area of inquiry.

Nominator Name: _____

Nominator Email: _____

Nominator Phone: _____

Potential Participant #1:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Potential Participant #2:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Potential Participant #3:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Thank you for your help. Please use the back of this form if you need more space, and please feel free to call me at 631-312-3006 if you have any questions.

The individual overseeing this research is the dissertation committee chair, Dr. James A. Swezey. You can reach him with any questions at jaswezey@liberty.edu.

APPENDIX F

Letter of Inquiry to Potential Participants

Dear _____,

My name is Roger Erdvig, and I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. An acquaintance of yours, _____, suggested that you may be a good fit for a research study that I'm conducting for my dissertation. I am studying how a Biblical worldview develops in individuals between the ages of 18 and 23. Not much research has been done in this area, and I'm developing a model for Biblical worldview development that would help families, churches, schools, and worldview ministries understand how to best help post-adolescent young people to grow in their commitment to a Biblical worldview. That model will be based on the input of people like you, who already have a solid Biblical worldview. You have been nominated to participate in my research study based on the following criteria:

Participants will:

- Self-identify as Evangelical Christians living in the US
- Be at least 18 years old, but not older than 23
- Be known by others as having a well-developed Biblical worldview, meaning:
 - You have a strong heart-orientation towards God and His Word
 - You espouse the basic truth propositions of a Biblical worldview
 - You embody a commitment to living out the implications of a Biblical worldview in all areas of their lives
- Be willing and able to participate in distance-based interviews and focus groups

If you agree that you fit the above criteria and are willing to consider being a part of this study, I'd love to schedule a time when we can visit by phone to talk about more of the details. The maximum time commitment for participation is approximately five hours, and those hours would take place over at least several weeks.

Participation involves:

- Completing a brief online demographic survey and online worldview assessment -1 hour
- Completing a personal worldview timeline – 1 hour
- Participating in a one-on-one interview with me, via Zoom – 1 hour
- Reading the transcript from the interview and providing me with feedback -1 hour
- Possibly participating and a follow-up focus group discussion, via Zoom – 1 hour

If you're interested, please send me an email with your contact information (email and phone number), and I'll get back to you to set up a phone call within 3 days. Also, attached to this email is a document entitled "Informed Consent," which contains the official invitation to participate, along with the specifics of what is involved in the study. If you are interested in participating, I'll review the information in the Informed Consent with you when we talk on the phone. Thanks for considering working with me on this important project!

Roger Erdvig

rerdivg@liberty.edu

APPENDIX G

Consent Form for Study Participants

A MODEL FOR BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT IN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN EMERGING ADULTS

Roger C. S. Erdvig

Liberty University

Department of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the development of Biblical worldview in Evangelical Christian emerging adults. You have been purposefully selected to participate because you are an emerging adult who is known to possess a strong Biblical worldview. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Roger C. S. Erdvig, Liberty University, School of Education

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual model for the development of Biblical worldview in Evangelical Christian emerging adults, ages 18 – 23.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Complete an online demographic survey and worldview assessment; complete a worldview development timeline; and participate in one individual interview, with the possibility of being asked to participate in a focus group discussion.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The risks to you as a participant are no more than would be encountered in everyday life. The benefits for you include greater self-awareness about where you are in the process of Biblical worldview development and the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to contribute knowledge to an important field of inquiry. The proposed benefit to Christian leaders in families, schools, churches, and para-church ministries will be a greater understanding of how Biblical worldview develops in the post-adolescent years.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. A pseudonym will be used for individual participants. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in the study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with your place of employment, your school (if applicable), or Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Roger Erdvig. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me via email: rerdvig@liberty.edu, or via cell at 631-312-3006.

The individual overseeing this research is the dissertation committee chair, Dr. James A. Swezey. You can reach him with any questions at jaswezey@liberty.edu.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this study, including having my interview and focus group session (if applicable) audio recorded.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H

Next Steps Letter

Great to talk with you, XXXXX... thanks for being willing to be a participant in my study.

Here are your next steps:

1. Return to me a copy of the signature page of the consent form, which I am re-attaching to this email. This signifies that you understand the study and are agreeing to participate. You can sign it, and text a picture of the signature page to me.
2. Complete short demographic survey at the following link (5 minutes or less): <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/6BCIoI>
3. Complete Worldview Assessment at the following link (30+/- minutes): <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/80DXgf>
4. Complete written timeline project, as per the attached instructions (60+/- minutes).

After these 4 are complete, we can schedule the interview, which is normally done via ZOOM video conferencing. Thanks again, and please call/text/email me if you have any questions.

Have a great evening!

Roger 631-312-3006

APPENDIX I

Instructions for Completing Worldview Development Timeline

On this worksheet, please identify the key milestones, experiences, and processes which have influenced the formation of your worldview. A worldview is a foundational outlook on reality and life, and which functions as a guide for living. Arrange key milestones, experiences, and processes chronologically, as if you were creating a full timeline of your life, to the current date. Examples of milestones, experiences, or processes include your salvation date; family influence (such as family faith and church background, family devotions, etc.); schools attended; influential mentoring and peer relationships; worldview classes, books, or resources that have influenced you; etc.

For anything that you perceive as an influence that does not fit neatly on a timeline, please feel free to simply list them in the space provided. You may add as much or as little detail as you like, and your creativity is always welcomed! Your timeline will be part of the data that I collect and analyze as I develop a model of Biblical worldview development, and may serve as a guide for some of the questions I will ask you in our interview.

When you are finished with your timeline, please mail it to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope or scan it and send it to me digitally.

APPENDIX J

Sample Memo

Memo: June 13, 2016

I am at a challenging point in my analysis. With 263 codes, I need to begin the process of paring them down once again. However, this time, since I have completed all of the open coding for my first 18 participants plus my 1 focus group, I am feeling overwhelmed by the number of codes and feel reluctant to eliminate and combine them for fear that I'll irretrievably alter my coding scheme.

To move ahead, I'm going to attempt to create a diagram...

Part of the problem is that I feel like all I'm doing is describing the phenomenon, as in phenomenology. I'm not clear on how to go from thick description to model or theory. There seems to be no set process yet— more like commonalities among participants that seem to rise to the surface.

One of the central themes in the process section is the theme of talking with close friends. This pervades just about every one's story. Talking with others seems to be critical, whether it be friends, mentors, or people with other worldviews.

APPENDIX K

Initial Coding Scheme

ATLAS.ti Report

Model of Worldview Development

Codes, after open coding 18 interviews and timelines and the focus group session.

Report created by Roger Erdvig Sr. on Jun 8, 2016

1. Actions: Church/ministry involvement
2. Actions: Coaching someone else
3. Actions: Expressing beliefs
4. Actions: Mission Trips
5. Actions: Seeking a mentor
6. Actions: Sharing testimony
7. Actions: Worldview-related activism
8. Advice: Be a mentor
9. Advice: Be aware of consequences of actions
10. Advice: Be open and flexible
11. Advice: Be prepared to change your worldview if necessary
12. Advice: Be willing to change
13. Advice: Continue to look for truth
14. Advice: Danger of distractions
15. Advice: Expect Battles of Life
16. Advice: Expect challenges of emerging adulthood
17. Advice: Expect Confusion
18. Advice: Expect doubts
19. Advice: Expect people to try to entice you away
20. Advice: Expect to have worldview challenged
21. Advice: Expose to worldview concepts
22. Advice: Find a mentor
23. Advice: Find peers who will influence positively
24. Advice: Finding answers outside the church
25. Advice: Go to a college that shares your values
26. Advice: Guard against Compromise
27. Advice: Prepare to have questions
28. Advice: Watch for hypocrisy
29. All of my life I have enjoyed conversations with people that are older than me
30. Catalyst: Being missional
31. Catalyst: Confronted with Alternate Worldviews
32. Catalyst: End of the rope
33. Catalyst: Exposure to new experiences/ideas
34. Catalyst: Friends left the faith
35. Catalyst: Growing Unrest
36. Catalyst: Internal conflict
37. Catalyst: Others living well

38. Catalyst: Pain
39. Catalyst: Questions
40. Catalyst: Recognition of aging
41. Catalyst: Revelation from Holy Spirit
42. Catalyst: Salvation
43. Catalyst: Wanting to move ahead in life
44. Characteristics: Being Vulnerable
45. Characteristics: Exploring Ideas
46. Characteristics: I tried to see my life in this process of story
47. Characteristics: motivation: preparation for future
48. Characteristics: Personification of the World's influence
49. Characteristics: Similar worldview to parents
50. Characteristics: We want people to be able to relate to us
51. Characteristics: Almost gave up
52. Descriptor: Most people are not listening
53. Descriptor: Okay with not having answers
54. Descriptor: Participation as intervention
55. Descriptors: Completing timeline was tough
56. Descriptors: Desire for Community
57. Descriptors: Emerging adulthood like trying out for a team
58. Descriptors: It's been exhausting.
59. Descriptors: lack of awareness
60. Descriptors: Lack of reflection
61. Descriptors: Let me take that and let me look at it through the lens of my own story and say how is this true for me?
62. Descriptors: Owning the process
63. Descriptors: Struggle to answer question in interview
64. Development: Ability to reflect
65. Development: Anticipating future growth
66. Development: Awakening
67. Development: Awareness of Personal Worldview
68. Development: Awareness of Process
69. Development: Clashing worldviews
70. Development: Comfort with Uncertainty
71. Development: Identity
72. Development: Personal ownership
73. Development: Thinking in categories
74. EA: Exploring options
75. Factors of Influence: Christian College
76. Factors of Influence: Christian Family
77. Factors of Influence: Christian Friends
78. Factors of Influence: Education as a worldview shaper
79. Factors of Influence: Maturity/Level of Education
80. Factors of Influence: Observing others
81. Factors of Influence: Other people
82. Factors of Influence: Overwhelmed by Secularism

83. Factors of Influence: Parents
84. Factors of Influence: Personal experience
85. Factors of Influence: Secular university
86. Factors of Influence: Sexual Activity
87. Factors of Influence: strong church family
88. Factors of influence: Strong Family
89. Factors of Influence: Teachers
90. Factors of Influence: The World
91. Factors of Influence: Values
92. Factors of Influence: Worldview Training
93. For me, I'm starting to understand that there's more to the world than I can see around me.
94. I can hear myself thinking when I'm talking out loud
95. I definitely think the foundation's incredibly important and I think the world's just going to get more sinful.
96. I never plan to stop learning
97. I speak those truths over my life, because I want to get it from the cognitive to the heart
98. I think about a sixth of the student body is doing it, half wants too, and the other half is either stressed doesn't care, wants to have fun.
99. I think the crucial years are younger than what I am
100. I thrived under their safe, biblical, and challenging learning environment.
101. I was raised in a bubble; it was great!
102. I've been raised like questions aren't something to be feared.
103. If you can't say something simply then you shouldn't be saying it at all
104. InterVarsity's taught me that not all Christians are white, conservative republicans
105. It looks like doing it and surrounding yourself in a lifestyle of it
106. Mentoring: Accessible
107. Mentoring: Affirmation
108. Mentoring: Allow to make mistakes
109. Mentoring: Asking powerful questions
110. Mentoring: Authors/Heroes
111. Mentoring: Being Coached
112. Mentoring: Being equipped as a leader
113. Mentoring: Can't tell them what to believe
114. Mentoring: Challenge to excel
115. Mentoring: Challenge to process/reflect
116. Mentoring: Direction through experiences
117. Mentoring: Encouragement to move into situations where worldview will be challenged
118. Mentoring: Encouraging
119. Mentoring: Encouraging good friendships
120. Mentoring: Father
121. Mentoring: Fellow learner
122. Mentoring: Guidance in exposure to other experiences
123. Mentoring: Guidance in Worldview Process

124. Mentoring: Help to find answers
125. Mentoring: Hospitality
126. Mentoring: Investment of Time
127. Mentoring: Listening
128. Mentoring: Modeling
129. Mentoring: Mother
130. Mentoring: Pastor
131. Mentoring: Peer-mentoring
132. Mentoring: Place to ask questions
133. Mentoring: Prayer
134. Mentoring: Providing resources
135. Mentoring: Serving together
136. Mentoring: Sharing stories
137. Mentoring: speaking truth
138. Mentoring: teacher
139. Mentoring: Understanding Scripture
140. Mentoring: Validating mentee's experience
141. Mentoring: Walking alongside
142. Mostly, I would say that my well-founded parents, my close groups of friends, my conservatively minded schools, and my close-knit church family shaped me into who I am.
143. Obstacle: No challenge to consider worldview
144. Obstacle: Pride
145. Obstacles: Being self-centered
146. Obstacles: Broken families
147. Obstacles: Complacency
148. Obstacles: Contentment with where they're at
149. Obstacles: Going through tough times
150. Obstacles: Habits of thinking/Acting
151. Obstacles: lack of community
152. Obstacles: Laziness
153. Obstacles: Meeting others' expectations
154. Obstacles: Narrow view of life
155. Obstacles: No one to help with transitions into adulthood
156. Obstacles: Not knowing how to read/study Bible
157. Obstacles: Not wanting to deal with sin
158. Obstacles: Pride
159. Obstacles: Questions
160. Obstacles: Stress
161. Obstacles: Time pressure
162. Obstacles: Worldview Seepage
163. Past: Awana
164. Past: Christian Education
165. Past: Church Involvement
166. Past: Classical education
167. Past: Consistent good input

168. Past: Familiarity with the term worldview
169. Past: Family Devotions
170. Past: Family of Origin
171. Past: Homeschooled
172. Past: I'm not fearful of my past, because I know that its' molded me to the person I am today
173. Past: Love for Discussion
174. Past: Memorizing Scripture
175. Past: Mission Trips
176. Past: Negative influence of peer group
177. Past: Parents Passionate about worldview
178. Past: Period of cynicism in teen years
179. Past: Period of Falling Away
180. Past: Period of Tuning Out parents
181. Past: Positive Friendships
182. Past: public school
183. Past: Service Camp
184. Past: Sheltered while growing up
185. Past: Spiritual Experiences
186. Past: Trials
187. Process: Being in leadership
188. Process: Compare Scripture with Experience
189. Process: Considering options
190. Process: Consulting experts
191. Process: Cycle of experience and reflection
192. Process: Debating Beliefs
193. Process: Examining merits of other worldviews
194. Process: Exert Effort to know the truth
195. Process: Exposure to different worldviews
196. Process: Good resources
197. Process: Immersion in truth
198. Process: Independent Study
199. Process: Intentional conversation with someone new
200. Process: Journaling
201. Process: Kingdom choices shape worldview
202. Process: Lay good foundation before EA
203. Process: Leaving home and parents
204. Process: Nature as an aid to reflection
205. Process: Observing consequences of worldviews in others
206. Process: Prayer
207. Process: Questions as aid to building worldview
208. Process: Reading
209. Process: Repetition of Truth Claims
210. Process: Research
211. Process: See how others developed their worldview
212. Process: Serving

- 213. Process: Spending time with people with different worldview
- 214. Process: Spiritual disciplines
- 215. Process: Studying Scripture
- 216. Process: Subconscious gesticulating
- 217. Process: Talking with close friends
- 218. Process: Talking with mentors
- 219. Process: Thinking through things internally
- 220. Process: Time
- 221. Q: abortion
- 222. Q: Alcohol
- 223. Q: Calvinism vs. Arminianism
- 224. Q: Creation science
- 225. Q: Eternal security
- 226. Q: Free Will
- 227. Q: God outside of time
- 228. Q: Having Questions
- 229. Q: Homosexuality
- 230. Q: How do I trust God with all my heart?
- 231. Q: How to be financially successful and a Christian
- 232. Q: How to convince someone my worldview is right
- 233. Q: Lack of provision
- 234. Q: Lies of Prosperity
- 235. Q: Life purpose
- 236. Q: Loving God, but not all saved
- 237. Q: Nature of human personality
- 238. Q: Nature of Truth
- 239. Q: Problem of Pain
- 240. Q: Science meshing with Christianity
- 241. Q: Suffering
- 242. Q: Suicide
- 243. Q: What does it mean to be set apart?
- 244. Q: What does it mean to follow Christ?
- 245. Q: What does the NT church really look like
- 246. Q: Why does God take us where He does
- 247. Q: Why doesn't God stop the bullying?
- 248. Q: Why don't more people believe in Christianity
- 249. Q: Why is wisdom hard to gain
- 250. Q: Young adulthood is a time of major questions
- 251. Stress of life has almost overwhelmed them to the point where it's like why do I even have to believe something?
- 252. There are so many questions in life that I'll never be able to answer them all.
- 253. They're kind of like being pushed down, and they can't really like see what's happening above that.
- 254. They're kind of worried about how they're going to be perceived rather than how they're going to perceive the world.
- 255. This is very enjoyable

256. Worldview Concepts: Behavioral Expressions
257. Worldview Concepts: Central Presuppositions
258. Worldview Concepts: Components of Interviewee's worldview
259. Worldview Concepts: Definition
260. Worldview Concepts: Faith v. Worldview
261. Worldview Concepts: Heart Orientation
262. Worldview Concepts: Story/Narrative as an organizing principle
263. Yeah I'm excited but I'm nervous, and unsure at the same time.

APPENDIX L

Initial Categories and Codes

Pre EA Shaping Influences

Code	Groundedness
Family of Origin	89
Church/ministry involvement	40
Spiritual Experiences	27
Trials	22
Good foundation before EA	19
Influence of peer group	16
Christian school	14
Homeschooled	10
Period of Falling Away	10
Public school	7

Catalysts for Development

Code	Groundedness
Exposure to new experiences/ideas	46
Pain/Trials	23
Questions	9
Desire to move ahead in life	6
Revelation from Holy Spirit	4

Developmental Arc

Code	Groundedness
Ability to reflect	45
Awareness of Personal Worldview	45
Awareness of Process	43
Lack of reflection	25
Owning the process	24
Comfort with Uncertainty	19
Awakening	17
Being Vulnerable	13
Common EA Characteristics	8
Desire for Community	7
Similar worldview to parents	4

Current External Shaping Influences

Code	Groundedness
Worldview Training	74
Exposure to different worldviews	44
Others	36
Christian college	13
Challenge to Worldview	12
Secular university	3

Processes/Means/Activities

Code	Groundedness
Talking with close friends	80
Reflection on Experience	64
Study/Research	62
Questions as aid to building worldview	29
Studying Scripture	29
Talking with mentors	24
Involvement in Serving Others	21
Prayer	18
Leaving home and parents	16
Expressing/explaining beliefs	14
See how others developed their worldview	6

Derailers

Code	Groundedness
Laziness/Contentment	14
Stress	12
Battles of Life	11
Distractions	9
Confusion	8
Sinful Choices	8
Lack of resources	3

Mentoring

Code	Groundedness
Mentoring: Guidance in Worldview Process	36
Mentoring: Investment of Time	29
Mentoring: Modeling	25
Mentoring: Place to ask questions	24
Mentoring: Father	17
Mentoring: Pastor	17
Mentoring: Encouraging	11
Mentoring: Asking powerful questions	10
Mentoring: Challenge to excel	10
Mentoring: Listening	6
Mentoring: Serving together	5
Mentoring: Being Coached	3
Mentoring: Prayer	3
Mentoring: allow to make mistakes	2
Mentoring: Being equipped as a leader	2
Mentoring: Peer-mentoring	2
Mentoring: speaking truth	2
Mentoring: teacher	2
Mentoring: Authors/Heroes	1
Mentoring: Mother	1

Worldview Concepts

Code	Groundedness
Worldview Concepts: Heart Orientation	114
Worldview Concepts: Behavioral Expressions	108
Worldview Concepts: Components of Interviewee's worldview	84
Worldview Concepts: Central Presuppositions	77
Having Questions	48
Worldview Concepts: Definition	11
Worldview Concepts: Faith v. Worldview	7

APPENDIX M

Final Categories and Codes

Derailers

Name	Groundedness
Derailers: Trials and Challenges	25
Derailers: Apathy	22
Derailers: Distractions	17
Derailers: Stress	12

Developmental Arc

Name	Groundedness
Dispositions: Awareness of Personal Worldview	86
Dispositions: Ability to reflect	75
Dispositions: Owning the process	33
Development: Common EA Characteristics	33
Development: Awakening	20
Development: Being Vulnerable	15

Means

Name	Groundedness
Means: Talking with close friends	105
Means: Study/Research	95
Means: Reflection	77
Means: Involvement in Serving Others	38
Means: Being Mentored	26
Means: Prayer	20

Mentoring

Name	Groundedness
Mentoring: Guidance in Worldview Process	40
Mentoring: Investment of Time	31
Mentoring: Place to ask questions	29
Mentoring: Modeling	26
Mentoring: Father	18
Mentoring: Pastor	17
Mentoring: Challenge to excel	14
Mentoring: Encouraging	13
Mentoring: Asking powerful questions	12
Mentoring: Listening	7
Mentoring: Serving together	5
Mentoring: Being Coached	3
Mentoring: Peer-mentoring	3
Mentoring: Prayer	3
Mentoring: teacher	3
Mentoring: allow to make mistakes	2
Mentoring: speaking truth	2
Mentoring: Mother	1

Past Influences

Name	Groundedness
Past Influences: Family of Origin	101
Past Influences: Church/ministry involvement	48
Past Influences: Education/Training	37
Past Influences: Spiritual Experiences	32
Past Influences: Others	30
Past Influences: Trials	22
Past Influences: Good foundation before EA	19
Past Influences: Period of Falling Away	12

Prompts

Name	Groundedness
Prompts: Exposure to new experiences/ideas	122
Prompts: Questions	95
Prompts: Worldview Training	82
Prompts: Pain/Trials	27
Prompts: Leaving home and parents	18
Prompts: Desire to mature	6

Worldview Concepts

Name	Groundedness
Dimensions: Heart Orientation	121
Dimensions: Behavioral Alignment	116
Dimensions: Cognitive Propositions	79
Worldview Concepts: Components of Interviewee's worldview	93
Worldview Concepts: Definition	17

APPENDIX N

Sample Transcript of Interview

(Note: Identifying information is removed.)

Roger: Here we go. Okay. Thank you for being willing to work with me on this project. We'll start out tonight with you. Just give me a brief intro to who you are, your age, where you are at in life right now, the significant things going on in life right now.

Kevin: Okay. I'm Kevin. I'm 22, about to be 23 at the end of March. I'm out of college. I spend most of my time at work. It feels anyway. Sure, a lot of it is sleeping too, but most of my waking hours are at work and my [inaudible 00:00:57] doing ordinary home things. Other than that, it's largely church-based activities whether it be Sunday morning doing some of the music there or Sunday evenings helping to organize the community groups that we have going at the church. I don't know.

Roger: Right...

Kevin: What else would you like to know?

Roger: No. That's a good start. I had a chance to read through your timeline which I appreciate you putting the work into it that you obviously did.

Kevin: A non-linear timeline.

Roger: Yeah, that's fine. Believe me, I've gotten handwritten crazy looking ones. I've gotten some several non-linear ones so you're not the only one. I get a whole variety of them. Just curious of the forming reformative experiences that you outlined on your [inaudible 00:02:01] timeline, talk to me maybe about one or two that you would consider to be the most significant shaping influences on your worldview specifically.

Kevin: What I discovered as I wrote it out is that I don't think it's possible to separate who I am today from the family that I grew up in and my parents' attitude towards the world and towards going to church and towards raising us to believe God and take him out his word and always accept the authority of scripture even before you understand how it works out but taking it in faith that it does work out. There's no way to remove who I am from that. Other than that which I express in a lot of different ways.

There is a church that we went to when I was probably 12 or 13. It's XXXX. Like I wrote down, the youth pastor there, I did a one on one discipleship meeting on a weekly basis with him for . . . I don't really know how long it was. I want to say at least a year. That was really important in shaping the way I continue I appreciate and learn to understand scripture and give it a priority. Those are all really foundational. Those cemented the value of God's word. That wasn't done apart from relationship with God.

I didn't grow up in a touchy feely nebulous kind of atmosphere. My parents are very analytical. Facts are good things. The way that I learned to have a relationship with God was through a serious consideration of scripture. Instead of how do you feel about this, it was, what do we see, what does it mean and what does it mean to do it.

I don't necessarily know where I'm going with that beyond saying that, it wasn't that there was a legalistic emphasis of doing what the word says by the letter of the law. It was that, your relationship with God has to be very real but it's also married to a very strong and thoughtful look at what the Bible says.

Roger: Would you say that that perspective or component of your worldview has lasted through just as strong until today?

Kevin: Yes. The thing that changed were the depth at which I could explore that mindset because when I went to . . . I was older high school when I start to read different things like C. S. Lewis and a lot of Tim Keller and a lot of John Piper. Real thinking people who introduced the idea to me that even if you don't start from scripture, what God says makes a lot of sense and that good logic matches nicely with biblical thinking. That you can arrive at the conclusions and make them judge you don't need to speak in Christian terms to come to very Christian conclusions.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That sounds like there's been a steady influence throughout your life, both from your home and then also you said, from this mentoring or discipling relationship that you had with that pastor that XXXXX church. As you did your timeline, how did you go about doing it?

Kevin: I thought your suggested topics of what to include and I just typed next to them and then got rid of the rest of the peripheral wording that you had in there. I took your headings and build them out using those points to expand upon.

Roger: Okay. Did you do it alone? Did you talk to anybody about it? Was it something you did . . .

Kevin: I did it over the course of maybe two days by myself on lunch.

Roger: How would you classify the process in terms of the ease of doing it?

Kevin: It's a lot of fun because you don't usually think like that about yourself. It wasn't difficult but it was . . . I don't know. It guess I was surprised by how much there was to look at and I got to consider myself blessed as I walk through a lot of it. It wasn't difficult.

Roger: Those memories of those formative experiences were readily accessible to you and you were able to access them right away as opposed to really have to think and labor over it.

Kevin: Yeah. Once you got started thinking about, "All right. Where did I go to school? Where did I go church? What was the attitude of the home I grew up in?" those are pretty clear. I think it's because my family's focus has always been how can we live in a Godly way. It wasn't hard to come up with the string of events that built that into my life because it wasn't hidden. It was never a hidden part of life. It was always pretty much the forefront.

Roger: Experts in worldview and in development of young adults suggest that most people, let alone young adults, but certainly young adults, are not really aware of their worldview. Some are not even aware that they have a worldview. In terms of your own personal awareness of the fact that you have a worldview and then two, the awareness of what makes up your worldview, comment on those two things.

Kevin: You're asking me, am I aware that I have a worldview?

Roger: That would be the first question.

Kevin: Yes. I think a lot about why I think the way I think. I don't know why but it's partially because I want to make sure I'm thinking in a right way. I want to make sure that I'm not just going on feelings. I want to make sure that I'm making decisions that are actually right. The only way to . . . I check myself like, why am I thinking this way. What is it that made me come to this conclusion? There are plenty of times I don't think that through but I just want to be careful not to walk through life too aimlessly. I know that my inclinations aren't going to lead me in the right direction most of the time so I try to think about it.

Roger: That answers the first one that you are pretty aware that you have a worldview. Then, the second question would be how aware are you of the components or pieces of your worldview?

Kevin: I become more aware of the components of my worldview when I'm faced with something that I may or may not have been faced with before. It depends who I'm talking to or what life's throwing at me, whether or not I'm aware of my worldview in different areas. Can you expand the question? I think I'm having trouble getting to the bottom of what you asked.

Roger: Sure. If you were to have to . . . I'm not going to ask you to do this so don't worry. If you were to have to articulate the components or the contours of what you believe to be true about the world, just the pieces that make up your worldview. I guess what I'm trying to ask, would you be able to articulate what you believe about the world around you? Not just theology, but the overall prospective on the world in reality.

Kevin: To some degree, if we're thinking, do I think man is naturally good or naturally . . .

Roger: Yeah, those kind of things.

Kevin: . . . evil. Do I believe in a certain kind of government being better than another? Am I aware of those components? I think I'm at least mildly aware of a lot of them. I knew that the way I view the world, it's like we were saying, my dad was saying, "I want to think rightly and so, everything is theology to some degree." Most of my thinking has come out of reading the word or reading a book that's about applying scripture or about the way the different truths play out in politics or in philosophy or in all these different areas.

When I think about the different contours or aspects of my worldview, the way I come about it, it's usually from truth perspective. I don't know. I don't read philosophy just to hear what people have to say to develop a worldview on different topics. I tend to focus on scripture and teachings that I'm hearing from Christian individuals and preferably things that I can see, how they poke with other word and applying those things to different parts of life. I don't know if I answered the question.

Roger: Yeah. That's great. If you compare or think about the young adults in your sphere of influence, what percentage of them would you say have a really well thought out biblical worldview as oppose to those who do not have that?

Kevin: Let's see. Of the ten people that I'm thinking of and not some of the people that I grew up with but the people I'm around now who are my age, the majority of them would tell you they want to do what's right and that, yes, God gets to decide what's right, but I don't think they put too much work into discerning what their actions and thoughts and worldview should view by studying the word. I don't think they've pursued a biblical worldview.

Roger: What keeps people from doing that, your average person that you know? Why don't they?

Kevin: I don't think a lot of people realize just how applicable God's word is to them. I think they don't know how to read it and they haven't been willing to give it the time that it takes to study. I think that most people are not fortunate enough to grow up in a house where that was a priority to think in a Godly way, and so their immediate reaction is all together different than mine would be because I'm very predisposed to looking to the word for answers and because of the way I grew up. Most of the people that I know right now, I don't think that's their predisposition. It's either to listen to themselves or to listen to whatever seems normal.

Roger: Let's assume for a moment that one of those average people whom you described decided, "You know what? I think I want to develop a biblical worldview. I think I want to become someone who uses scripture as the bar for all of my decision and all of my prospective." They came to you and said, "How do I start doing that? How do I change my automatic immediate responses?" What would you say?

Kevin: First and foremost, they're going to need help from someone other than me in a sense that they need to ask God to do the work that they're desiring because it's a Godly thing.

It's something God can get behind. I request that he would be happy to answer and bring [supervision 00:19:40] but . . . I mean, depending on who it is and what their situation is, I would be more than happy to make it a point to partner with them and pick a starting point in the word to read together and to discuss not so that I can impart my wisdom but so that they can read it and then just process through it. At this point, try to ask good questions to help them hear the holy spirit in terms of how it directly applies to their life.

I think walking beside someone who is a little bit knowledgeable and has been living the way that you want to live is always very helpful. If someone came to me asking or telling me they wanted to do that to gain a biblical worldview, I would try to offer myself to them as a tool for them to build that. Other than that, I think it also depends on the person. It depends. If they're really bright, they're going to be looking for a different level of resource than someone who doesn't necessarily love to learn information.

The two types of people can come to the same beliefs but one wants to know a lot more detail than the other, I guess. I wouldn't point someone who tends in a more simple faith direction. I would point them towards C. S. Lewis because they'd probably just be overwhelmed. They don't need all that ins and outs. It makes it more confusing to them than it needs to be.

To someone that I know is a big reader or very much a thinker, I wouldn't point them to someone who tends to be . . . I wouldn't point them to a resource or a pastor that tends to just give truths to live by but doesn't really give sound back up even if the truths are 100% true and 100% accurate, if I could determine that. Knowing the person, trying to guide them towards a resources that match the kind of person they are and trying to offer myself as a resource, being able to just take questions and help them think through whatever they're up to.

Roger: That's good. I heard some very specific things in there that are helpful. The idea of walking along with somebody who has already walked that pathway who's living out that kind of worldview. We're talking about connecting them with resources that match their kind of person they were. Certainly, you lay their initial foundation of scripture being obviously the place to start. That's a pretty well rounded approach to helping someone actually change the way they think so that it then has impact in their worldview and ultimately on their behavior on how they respond to life situations. Can you define the concept worldview?

Kevin: Your worldview is the framework for much you think. It's what supports your actions. It's what make sense of your actions. It's when . . . I've this [scaffolding 00:24:26] picture. It's all the things that you believe to be true or whether you thought about it or not that affect the way you live in the world.

Roger: That's a great definition. As you've been refining and developing your worldview since graduating from high school, what are some of the major challenges or major questions that have come up in that process that you have to wrestle through?

Kevin: I went to community college for the first two years of college which was a much different learning environment that I had been in because I had been in Christian schools. I wouldn't say I was sheltered. I didn't live in a Christian bubble at home. I wasn't protected from the idea that there are many other belief systems but I did grow up in a Christian environment. It didn't shock me that there were bunch of people out there living differently but I had never had to face it in a personal way. Going to college and taking a philosophy course is 101 kind of stuff and the predisposition was very anti-God, anti-scripture as any kind of authority.

I had to walk through the question of, how do I know that the bible is reliable, what makes what I believe any more valid or trustworthy than what these people are saying. Again, that's when turned to reading different people's work and learning about textual criticism and the church had a lot of classes on, answers in Genesis material to deal with the evolutionary perspective versus the 68 creation perspective.

Roger: I'm hearing you say that being exposed for essentially the first time in an adult environment, being exposed to things that run contrary to your worldview that you grew up with, proved to be challenging and cause to questions.

Kevin: Yeah. I knew that I wasn't going to change my mind about what I believed because I had enough in me. I had enough proof for myself so that there was substance there and that I just needed to learn what the substance was. I wanted to have good answers for the challenging voices at school whether it be classmates or professors. I wanted to have good answers for myself and for them. It was challenging but not frightening in the sense that, "Oh my goodness. What if I believe is not true?" I was prepared enough by what I had been taught thus far to not be swept off my feet with doubt. I just try to dig in to, "All right. If this is the question and I don't know the answer, what is the answer?"

Roger: It was more a challenge in the sense that it was a rigorous process but it wasn't a challenge to your worldview per se where you would have given up a component of your worldview.

Kevin: By enlarged, there were definitely times when I don't know if everybody has this but there were definitely times where I would entertain the thought of, let's just say for a moment, none of this is true. Scary thought. There was always something that would happen or that I would ran across that reminded me that there's no way this isn't true. It always made me laugh every time for giving anytime to the thought. For me, it wasn't a scary "my world is falling apart because people are challenging it" kind of thing. It was more of a rise to the occasion and learn the answers to the questions you're being pressed with.

Roger: The most comprehensive and contemporary definition of worldview from a Christian writer is James Sire. It includes that really three essential components. It includes your [inaudible 00:31:21] of your heart. The direction which will goes your . . . Where do you find your convictions? That will be your heart. The next will be basically essential truth propositions. The things that you know to be true and real. Then third, it's your behavior. Your patterns of behavior, relatively predictable patterns of behavior that emerge from those two other. He would say, that's a person's worldview.

As you press in to those challenges, would you be able to identify maybe some specifics of how that process built upon or galvanized your heart perspective, your truth, the things you knew to be true or your behavior. I don't that's a little convoluted challenging question.

Kevin: The first one is the inclination of your heart. I think I've been given a . . . What I've always find life giving is discussing matters of faith, discussing the word. There's something in me that the inclination of my heart is to dig in and to know more and to not just so that I know it but so that I can change my behavior based on what I know so I can help other people understand what God would have them know and what should be plain in scripture. Being challenged for me kind of [splurge 00:33:45] on the inclination of my heart towards those things because it was just an opportunity to know more about the word and to help other people understand those things as best I could. That's the first one.

The second one was truth claims. Out of the inclination to learn comes learning. They were definitely being challenged and wanting to dig in, meant unearthing a lot of evidence and facts and details that definitely reinforce and change some of the things I held to be true. I try to think of something else on that front. I feel like I need to come out from a different angle.

Roger: We'll circle back around to that. That's fine. Anything that you saw in your behavior that that process would have altered?

Kevin: That's harder to think of because a lot of behavior just happens. I don't know.

Roger: Let me ask it this way. This might be a fun way to approach it. If you can think of something you did today, either something you said or some behavior, some choice you made that had behavioral consequences, or not consequences but implications; if you can think of a behavior you exhibited today, and then trace it back to either a truth proposition or a heart inclination, would you be able to do that?

Kevin: Sure.

Roger: Give me an example.

Kevin: What I'm thinking of is, it's easiest to tie down to a truth proposition or belief that something is the case. Just recently, I've been a little bit lax on the bible reading that I

wanted to do, and so today on lunch, the first thing I did was set myself up to read the word for a little while because I believe that I seek first the kingdom of God, all the things that I would be chasing after with the first half hour of lunch, all the necessities and, "Well, I got to get this done, that done and the other thing done," if I try to seek the kingdom of God first, all those things will work themselves about. There will be a plenty of time for that. I believe that is true. Therefore, I chose to put those earth things aside and read.

Roger: Would you say your decision to do that was based on the kind of thinking overtly that you just demonstrated with me or was it more, I just really need to do this and you did it?

Kevin: Recently, I've really had to think about it in terms of this is what I believe but it's not how I feel and I need to choose to do what I believe instead of what I feel.

Roger: That's really cool.

Kevin: It feels a lot like tooting my own horn because it just happens to be a situation and I picked it because it's really easy to trace, but there are plenty of other times where I don't do what I believe because I'm doing what I feel like doing which I guess shows you what I believe at least in that moment. Yes, that particular instance, I walked myself through choosing to do what I believe is true instead of what felt most urgent the way I just articulate it.

Roger: That's fascinating and that demonstrates a high degree of awareness of how your worldview is expressed in the patterns of actions and habits that you have. Ideally, part of the process of becoming a full-pledged adult, whatever that actually means and whenever that actually happens, is the process of examining and evaluating your worldview and then making some decisions about your worldview that some change or refinement in preparation for really fully engaging in adulthood kind of free agency so to speak.

I'm just curious, where you would perceive you are in that process? I'll ask you again real simply. Part of becoming an adult is inventorying, evaluating, and refining your worldview and then using that as a basis from which you live the rest of your adult life, generally speaking. Where you at in that process?

Kevin: There are number of things that XXXXXX and I have thoroughly thought about in terms of what do we believe is true, what do we believe is important and what does that mean about the direction we're going to go with our careers, how are we going to spend our spare time, what we're going to invest in. We've definitely thought through what's important here, what is true, and what does that mean for what we need to invest in now. We thought about a lot of that. It's an ongoing thing.

Roger: But you've done a lot of work in that area already?

Kevin: I think so. It certainly feels like we've done a lot of work in that area. It also feels like it's far from done.

Roger: Do you think that's normal or that it feels far from done?

Kevin: I might worry if it felt done.

Roger: Fast forward for a minute and imagine you and XXXXXX as parents of an 18, 19, 20-year old. I know it's hard to imagine but it's going to come quickly. How do you foresee you most effectively helping your 18, 19, 20-year old child as they go through the process that you're currently in of refining, evaluating, assessing your worldview?

Kevin: Wow. That's almost the same question as saying, if you could go back five years and tell yourself something. I think that it's definitely a skill set that needs to be developed. The ability to realize that what you're doing stands from a belief. I don't know. I guess I would want to help them and it's something that I would hope would be infused in their upbringing is this understanding . . .

Roger: I think that's a good assumption.

Kevin: . . . not something that you can start when they're 18 and 19, or else you're almost ship wrecked.

Roger: Assuming that you did lay a really good foundation in your parenting, building a good worldview in your kids, what then would you do 18, 19, 20 years old?

Kevin: Coaching. To tell you the truth, as a non-directive but helpful questions that lead to discovery about what's in your heart, where you're going, how you think about things, what's important to you? All right, should that be important to you? What are you going to compare it to? You're going to look at the word to see if it should be important to you.

By the time someone is 18, I think that is the best way to do it, is to be non-directive and be purposeful to try and draw out of them the things that they might not realize about themselves on their own.

Roger: You're saying basically, take a coaching approach which I happen to understand.

Kevin: Yeah, I'm glad.

Roger: Yeah. You don't have to explain that too much.

Kevin: The more I learn about coaching, the more it helps me think about myself. It helps me . . . It's a very effective way to get people thinking about who they really are. Then, once you know who you really are, you're probably should be a little scared because you're going to realize things that maybe you don't like and you're going to realize some things

that are really important to you and are good. It's draw out of them who they really are and then, present them with the fact that they get to choose what they're going to do with that information.

Roger: Another question that [inaudible 00:45:46] with same lines in a sense that it forces you to think from a whole different perspective. If you were invited to the XXXXXX Youth Group because they were doing a series on biblical worldview, and so you found yourself in front of a bunch of 11th and 12th graders and your topic was to talk to them about how they can best prepare for the 18, 19, 20-year old years in terms of developing and refining their worldview, how would you instruct your counselees, kids to prepare? What would they be setting themselves up to face in those all important years?

Kevin: I'll tell you, my first thought is that I don't think I could do much from a platform. I don't think I could do much from a platform. I think I could tell them these are good resources. I could say, here's my story. I could do all kinds of things and present them with all kinds of facts and information and tactics for whatever and I don't think it would make much of a difference if there wasn't really good one on one follow up with anybody who was interested in taking responsibility for their worldview and for that part of their life. Personally, I don't think that I am a from the [inaudible 00:47:50] teacher person. I would prefer, again, to . . . I don't know. I guess I said what comes to mind.

Roger: That's great. If you were one on one with an 11th grader and talking about worldview development over the course of 18, 19, 20 years old, what would you warn them of like if you said, "This is most important. You really got to watch out for," what would it be?

Kevin: You've got to watch out for the things that you think you know and the things you think you've thought through that you haven't really. I don't know how you know what those things are until they strike you but . . .

Roger: How do I become aware of those things if I'm an 11th grader looking forward to 18, 19, 20 years old? How am I going to know those?

Kevin: You'd know it when you try to come up with good answers to hard questions and you don't have them. That's when you know that your simple answer that used to be fine isn't enough anymore. It's something that you haven't personally thought about yet.

Roger: I hear you warning me that I'm going to face questions that are going to challenge some of my fundamental beliefs.

Kevin: Yes. They don't have to be questions that are post to you directly. They could just be questions that come up. It's anytime you encounter an opposing lifestyle, it's something the people at work or the people at school who live in a very different way that brings up questions whether questions are being asked or not. Yes, the more you see, the more

challenged you will be because you will encounter a lot of different people doing a lot of different things for a lot of different reasons.

Roger: That's helpful. In the biggest picture of you, just pull back again and hopefully even our conversation may have spark some additional thoughts perhaps, in closing, what else do you think I need to know as a researcher about worldview development or refinement in your age bracket, right where you are today? What do I need to know?

Kevin: Worldview development and refinement right where I am today. I think if you want to help someone with their worldview development and they're my age, particularly if they're older, by that meaning slightly coming to the end of their formal education and upbringing portion of their life, that being the definition older, it has to be done in a way that forces them to take responsibility for it. Someone who doesn't want to develop or think about their worldview isn't going to whether you . . .

I mean, yes, things can change in people. They can come across information or have an interesting teacher that awakes and interesting things that they didn't have an interest in before, but I think it has to be the content and the path to whatever information you want them to know or skills you want to give them, it has to be presented in a way that weeds up the people that just don't care and really helps the people that want to take responsibility for it. I don't know what to do about the people that just don't care.

Roger: Yeah, me neither.

Kevin: I don't want to think of it as a lost cause but until they care, it feels like a lost cause to try and get them engaged on the issue. I think there's always an opportunity to see who is paying attention, who does want this information and how can I honor their interest and give them something that they can take and run with. By the time you're my age, there's no reason for anybody to be spoon feeding things to you. It's encouraging and life giving and you feel like people have confidence in you and that you're capable when someone just present things in a way that force you to take responsibility for [word 00:54:18]. I don't know how to say it any differently. That's not really specific beyond an approach.

Roger: That's very helpful.

Kevin: The more I learn about . . . I mean, not everything. The more I learn about just trying to behave like an adult human being, trying to be a husband, trying to be eventually a father, trying to be a leader in the church, you don't have to take on the burden of making everything go right but you have to take on the responsibility of doing everything you can do under your control.

You got to get rid of the excuse mentality and adapt to the, "I am responsible," mentality, [weeding 00:55:33] the way that crashes you because God is responsible for outcomes. You are responsible for you. Maybe we waste our time to some degree

focusing on people that just aren't interested yet and when they are interested, welcome them, focus on them, but for now, build up those who are willing to take responsibility.

Roger: Yup. Those are the last words on the subject from Kevin today.

APPENDIX O

Sample Participant Timeline

(Note: Identifying information is removed.)

Worldview Timeline – Missy:

1. I was born into a Christian family, to two spiritually mature and intentional parents. I have one older sister, one younger sister, and one younger brother. My parents have been, without a doubt, the most influential people in my life. I do not recall a time in my life when I did not respect or trust them. I do not share endless personal feelings with them, but I almost always seek their counsel before making a big decision. My worst punishments were the lectures that articulated their disappointment in my actions. They parented me and my siblings with a foundation of trust and very few clear-cut rules. They trusted our ability to self-govern until we proved otherwise. They created few strict household rules because they believed that we were able to use our own discernment. For example, I never had a curfew. However, after multiple nights of coming home after 12am I had several serious conversations about my whereabouts and who-about resulting in restrictions on my social life.
2. I was enrolled into a private, Mennonite school for kindergarten through eighth grade (with the exemption of being homeschooled in 7th grade). I was raised in a bubble; it was great! Until high school, 95% of the human interaction I had was in a Judeo-Christian atmosphere. I had weekly Bible memory assignments since 1st grade. The school dress code was shoulders covered and long skirts, even for sports. The Mennonite culture, and therefore my school, encouraged a strong work ethic, community, morality, and accountability.
3. I accepted Christ as my Savior at the age of 6. It was in my bedroom with my sisters and Dad during a nightly prayer tradition.
4. We left our Mennonite church and joined five other families in founding a non-denominational church. Over the past 13 years, the people that joined XXXXXXXXXXXX have become my family. My three best girlfriends grew up in church with me. To this day, every conversation we have centers around God. This family is filled with men and women that poured truth into my life without reservation. Multiple people have sent me letters and care-packages since I moved to XXXXX for college. These packages are only a small demonstration of the deep and loving relationships weaved throughout the congregation. Beyond XXXXXXXXXXXX being my family, the sermons are void of fluff. Since a very young age I took my Christianity serious in my everyday actions because of peer influence and because of the teachings I received at church. We went through a two-year series on marriage throughout the Bible. Although I was and am single, I learned about the necessary self-sacrifice every relationship requires.
5. After graduating 8th grade, my parents allowed me to choose which high school I wanted to attend. I chose the local public school: XXXXXXXX High School. I wanted to gain

perspective and live in a world outside the Christian sphere. I definitely received the experience I was hoping for, and more. I met many people who called themselves Christians, but lived a different lifestyle. For the first time I had to decide that I would be willing to live differently from my peers based on a higher standard. I chose to be different, and people noticed. Another thing I realized during those two years was that I could feel the negative, depressive spirit of the ungodliness around me. My faith was challenged and strengthened, but I knew that if I wanted a stronger foundation I could no longer go to school at XXXXXXXX.

6. Beginning freshman year, I spent 95% of my Saturdays at a local farmer's market selling chicken. Market helped me mature. My boss and my co-workers were some of my favorite and most influential people in my life. Many people do not like working at market, but I absolutely loved it! It was my escape. One full day of the week I had no access to the Internet, no connection to school, just work. It helped develop my worldview because I learned how living a modest, humble life could hold endless value.
7. Two weeks before my junior year in high school, I made the decision to transfer to XXXXXXXXXXXX [Christian School]. My dad had told me that "Now is your time to be influenced, so that you can grow a solid foundation and influence others." XXXXXXXX taught academics through the principle approach method. At first, I was overwhelmed with the amount of scripture reading and biblical application. However, I soon came to realize that not only is God involved in all aspects of life; He is also the reason for each element of life. To fully understand each subject, we must know the source of the knowledge: God. Through XXXXXXXX, I was given several opportunities to express my beliefs. I was asked questions for a video, spoke at the XXXXXXXXXXXX in 2014, and gave the Salutatorian speech, to name a few. I loved XXXXXXXX. The faculty and staff cared about my growth as an individual and I strove to surpass their expectations of me. I thrived under their safe, biblical, and challenging learning environment.
8. I had never planned to go to college, but I prepared just in case. My senior year of high school I visited XXXXXXXX University in January. A few months later, I made the decision to attend in the fall. Those first two weeks were the hardest in my life. I felt no peace about being in XXXXXXXX; I had no peace about being in college. However, in the past year and a half I have grown more than I can tell you. I have been in community with other believers that come from numerous backgrounds. Through them, I have learned that being Christian does not equal one way of living. I come from a very legalistic, conservative background with little lenience for other interpretations. The problem is that there are many non-essentials in the Bible and from those come many interpretations on the proper application. Here at XXXXXXXX, I have been taught to always ask questions; to challenge what I "know" is true. Another note is that I have worked at XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX since coming to XXXXXXXX. In those work places, I witnessed countless times the consequences of non-biblical worldviews. People make choices based off their values and those choices reap consequences, shape relationships, and determine one's life course: beneficial or harmful.

9. I cannot well pinpoint in one page how I came to believe what I do. Mostly, I would say that my well-founded parents, my close groups of friends, my conservatively minded schools, and my close-knit church family shaped me into who I am. I would say that the most important years of my life were the first 10ish. It was then that I realized actions have consequences, and I made the choice long ago that I did not like the negative consequences. I learned to care about my choices and how they affected others. I learned that the best way of living was taught by Christ, and I wanted to follow his example.

APPENDIX P

Progression of Model Diagrams

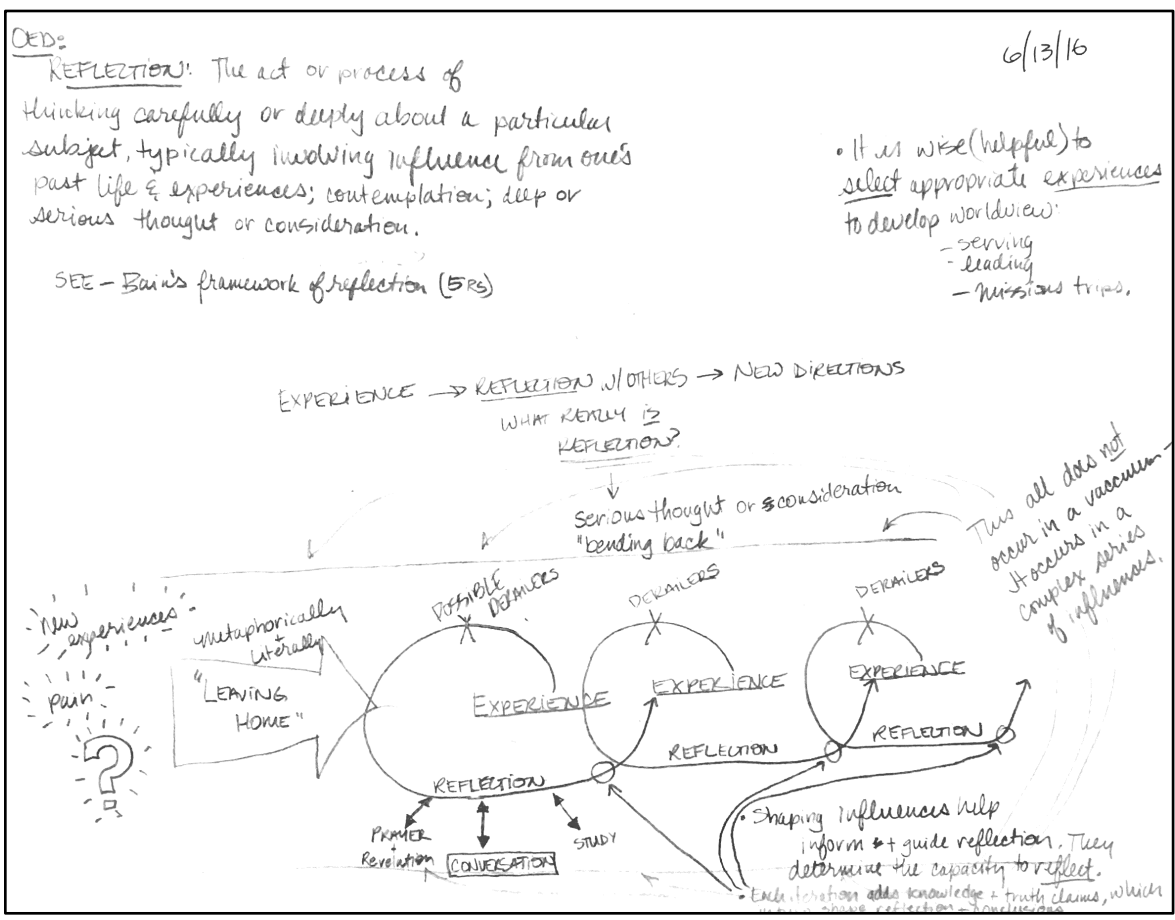


Figure P1. Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults, Version 1.

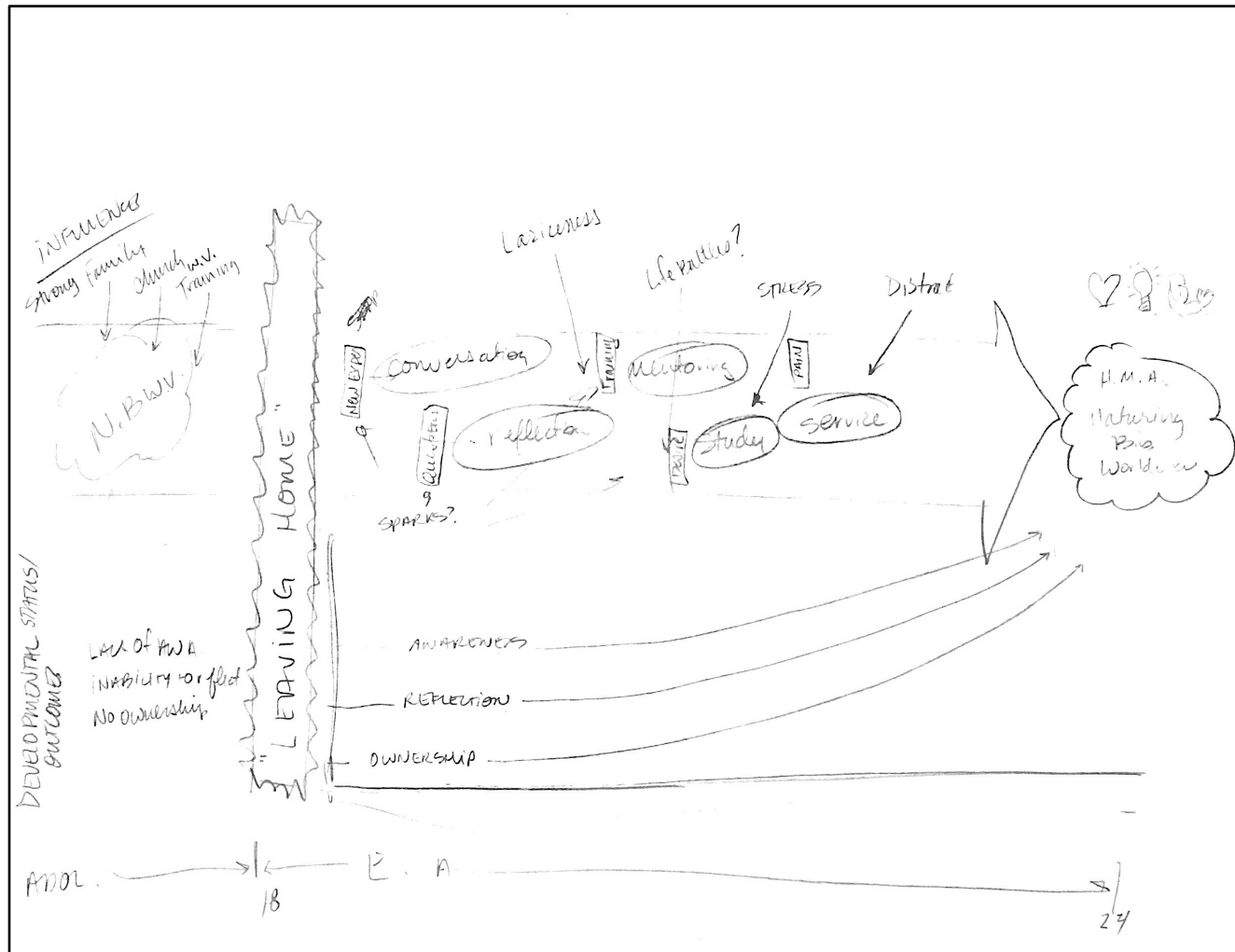


Figure P2. Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults, Version 2.

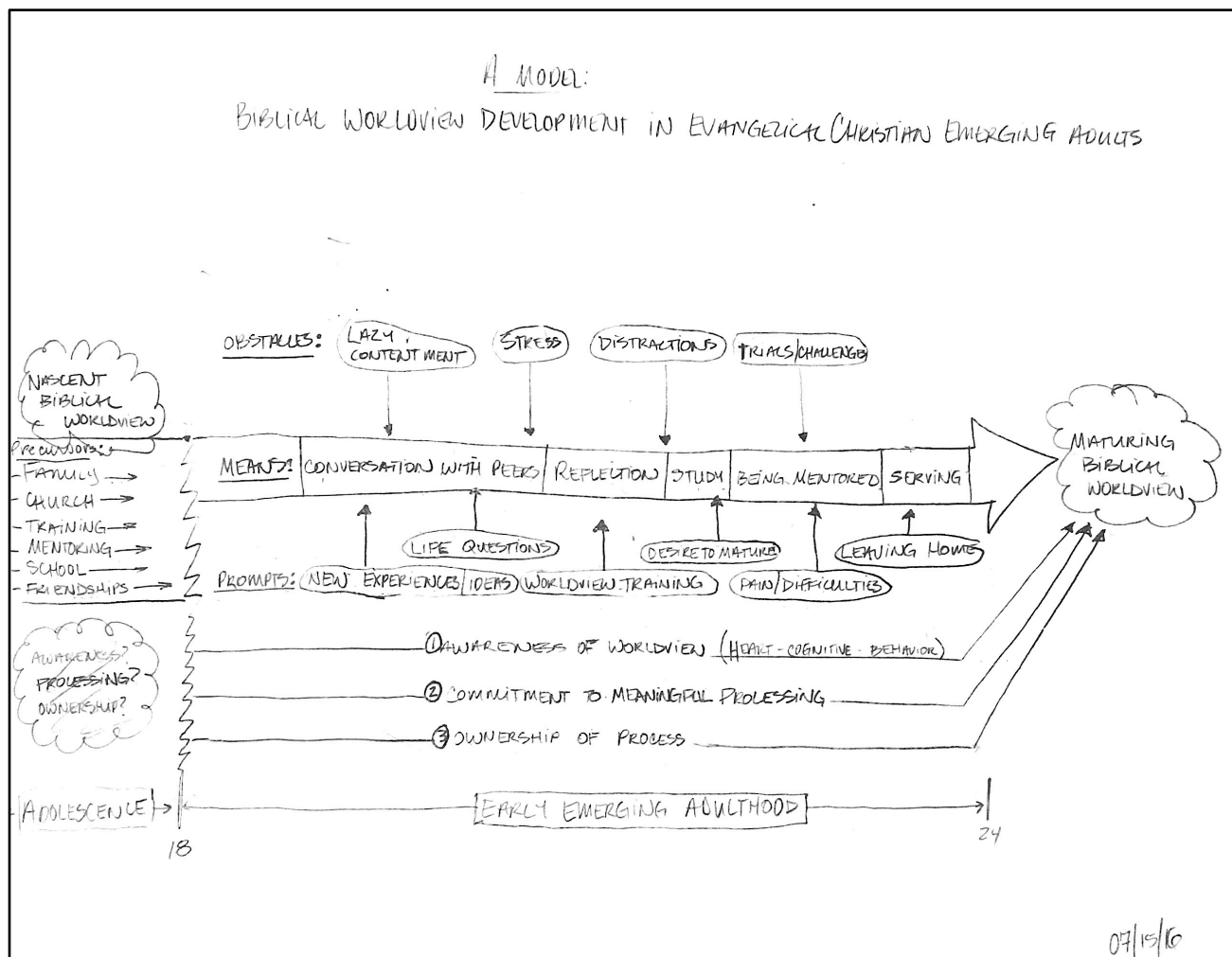


Figure P3. Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults, Version 3.

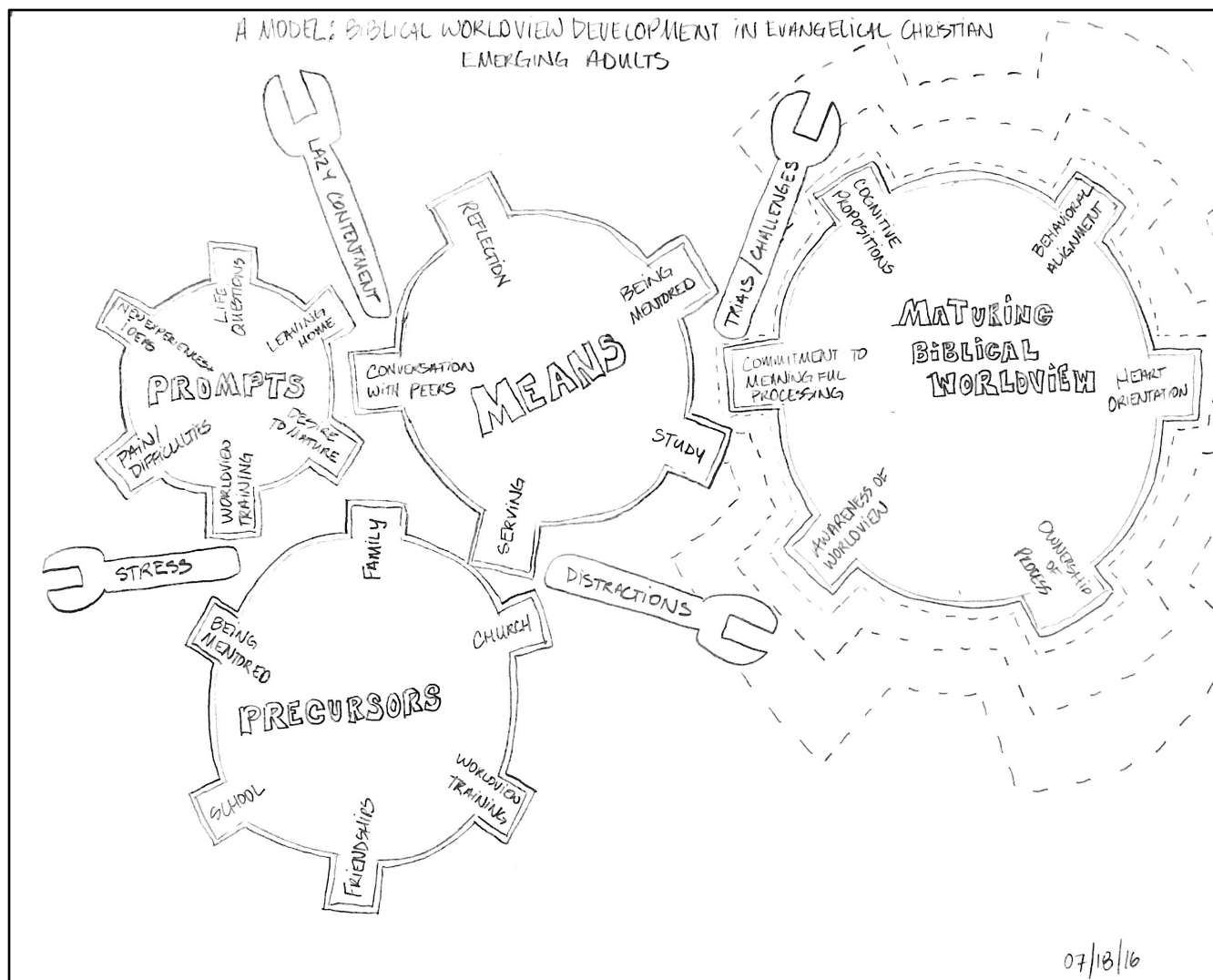


Figure P4. Model of Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults, Version 4.

APPENDIX Q

Representative List of Questions from Participants

The following is a representative list of worldview-related questions asked by participants.

(Some have been paraphrased or reworded for clarity.)

1. What is God's perspective on homosexuality? (Shae, Jared, Carissa)
2. What is the difference between Protestants and Catholics? (Shawna)
3. When Christ says, 'on earth as it is in heaven,' what does that look like in our life, our finances, our government, our interactions with others? (Jared)
4. What is God's will for my life? (Philip, Mark)
5. What does life look like with Jesus as Lord? (Marshall)
6. Why do some professions allow people to make more money than other professions? (Mark)
7. Why does God allow people to reject His salvation when He says He wants all people to be saved? (Shae)
8. Why does God allow people to commit suicide? (Shae)
9. What do I really believe? (Jared)
10. Is Biblical creationism true? (Philip)
11. Which is correct, Calvinism or Arminianism (predestination or free will)? (Keith, Shae, David)
12. How much of the world can we handle before we break that command of don't be part of the world but be of the world? What does it mean to be a Christian in a non-Christian world?" (Jacob)
13. How do I know the Bible is real? (Kevin)

14. What does it mean to say that God is “outside of time?” (Keith)
15. Is it okay for Christians to use alcohol? (Marshall)
16. How can I mesh the world’s ideas of success and the Bible together? How do Jesus and Tony Robbins meet? (Marty)
17. What is my purpose in life? (Abby)
18. What does the New Testament picture of the church really look like? (Keith)
19. A big question about worldview, is how do you convince someone that yours is right? (Jared)
20. Why can’t I have an old head on a young body? (Marty)
21. Why would a good God let bad things happen? (Cheryl)
22. If Christianity is true, why don’t more people believe it? (Cheryl)
23. Why do some people prosper, and others struggle financially? (Philip)
24. What does it mean to trust God with all your heart? (Mark)
25. Why does God take us places He takes us? (Mark)
26. Why do I believe what I believe? (Crystal)

APPENDIX R

Representative List of Participants' Truth Claims

The following is a representative list of truth claims posited by participants, either in their interviews, the focus group, or their timeline. These have not been edited, but are exact quotes.

1. "We'll never be perfect... but we should be growing closer and closer in our relationship to Him." (Shawna)
2. "Not only is God involved in all aspects of life; He is also the reason for each element of life." (Missy)
3. "People make choices based off their values and those choices reap consequences, shape relationships, and determine one's life course: beneficial or harmful." (Missy)
4. "Stealing is wrong." (Missy)
5. "He teaches us to obey Him, but He doesn't require it in order for us to receive His love." (Missy)
6. "God gives seasons in life to us to teach us." (Thomas)
7. "I know that there are things that are true, even if I don't believe them." (Thomas)
8. "Whatever life throws; God has a purpose for all of us." (Thomas)
9. "In the presence of God, people change." (Thomas)
10. "We are created by God. Every one of us is uniquely made." (Thomas)
11. "By myself I am nothing, but with God, I could do anything." (David)
12. "The mission of God transcends context." (Marshall)
13. "Each of our stories fits into that bigger story... [of] creation, fall, rescue, and restoration." (Marshall)

14. "We are all in this process of restoration back to what we once were." (Marshall)
15. "All people matter and are precious to God." (Keith)
16. "God is, He is a merciful God. His love is unconditional." (Carissa)
17. "We believe very firmly in the grace of God, that our sins are covered and that through Jesus Christ we can do anything." (Carissa)
18. "Our ultimate search is for love." (Carissa)
19. "The only place you're going to find true love is in Christ." (Carissa)
20. "For any relationship to work out, two people have to fight." (Jared)
21. "This earth should be a representation of things in Heaven." (Jared)
22. "Trusting God doesn't mean life problems go away." (Jared)
23. "Trusting God doesn't mean you're going to get the things you want, but it means that you get this peace of just knowing that God is good alone and not good based off of my circumstances." (Jared)
24. "People are totally refined under fire." (Jared)
25. "Nothing is coincidence in this world." (Shae)
26. "God has given us responsibility and if we can be trusted with that then we have freedom in Christ not to sin of course, but to live responsibly before him." (Shae)
27. "Wisdom is gained through experience as well as knowledge." (Marty)
28. "There are things that are correct and good about the world." (Marty)
29. "Suffering is never arbitrary." (Marty)
30. "There are aspects of God's character that I can't understand as a finite person."
(Shawna)
31. "Sometimes it's good to be wrong so you can learn your lesson." (Missy)

32. "If we don't do a good job of that sometimes, or a lot of the times, or all the time, He still loves us." (Missy)
33. "He teaches us how to obey Him, but He doesn't require it in order for us to receive His love." (Missy)
34. "Not only is God involved in all aspects of life, He is also the reason for each element of life." (Missy)
35. "People make choices based off their values and those choices reap consequences, shape relationships, and determine one's life course: beneficial or harmful." (Missy)
36. "Whatever life throws, God has a purpose for all of us." (Thomas)
37. "When we're born, we don't have a worldview because we have no conscious[ness]." (Jacob)
38. "It's the environment in which we're in, which we're influenced by, which builds each and every person's nature differently." (Jacob)
39. "The only peace I'm going to have is really to just release and not question why, but to be okay with the unknown." (Jacob)
40. "It's best for the economy, for the family and the government to have a system of biblical morality." (Mark)
41. "Jesus is so much bigger than just some political party or some religious denomination." (Mark)
42. "It's not that Jesus has this list of rules that makes your life unhappy. He's preventing you from doing these things because He knows it's not going to make you happy; it's not going to make you fulfilled." (Mark)
43. "You always have faith in something." (Mark)

44. “The more faith you have in God, the more your worldview. . . The more missional I think you'll see the world or the more you'll see your part in the world.” (Mark)
45. “[There is] one Trinitarian God who is loving and interactive in creation, and has an eye for beauty, and loves his creation, and has an overarching plan for where it's going to go.” (Abby)
46. “What we need and what we really value the most is what we will allow to shape us.” (Joshua)
47. “There's this core, who you are at the very being, the person's spirit-man.” (Joshua)
48. “There's different level of moral obligations for people.” (Darren)
49. “There could be inaccuracies in scripture because it's not a historical book.” (Darren)
50. “Creation took millions of years.” (Darren)
51. “My ultimate purpose isn't to make money or have a big business or even be extremely successful wealth-wise and money-wise, but rather to develop good relationships, develop friendships, treat employees well.” (Crystal)
52. “I believe in absolute truth.” (Crystal)

APPENDIX SPermission to Use and Reproduce 3DWS-*Form C* and Sample Score Report

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To: Roger C. S. Erdvig



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