AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN

EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctorate of Education

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ABSTRACT

David S. Rutledge. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE
BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. (under the direction of
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The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine whether a significant relationship
exists between the Christian education context of the local church and the Biblical
worldview of high school students. This investigation assessed the Biblical worldviews
of senior high school students who have basic knowledge of Christianity but different
levels of involvement in church-based Christian education. The study used the PEERS
Worldview Test and compared students' scores to their self-reported involvement in the
main worship services, Sunday school classes, and youth services of their churches and
their parents' church attendance. The results showed little to no correlation between
church attendance and the Biblical worldviews of the students in this study. No
statistically significant correlation was found between students' attendance at main
worship services, youth services, or Sunday school classes or the church attendance of
students' parents and the students' Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview
Test.

Descriptors: Worldview, Church Attendance, High School

Dedication

To my wife, without you this dream would have perished and without you life would be nightmarish.

To my parents and siblings, for a lifetime of constant support, encouragement, and love; and for showing me what it means to be faithful servants of God.

To my three kids, without whose loving attention this would have been finished in half the time.

To the countless people who invested precious portions of their life in mine, I hope to do that sacrifice justice.

To the One True God, thank you for everything I have and everything I am.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The research findings about church attendance in the last few years have been staggering. The number of people attending church around the world has been on the decline for 20 years (Altemeyer, 2004) and the research has shown that the United States is no exception (Barna Group, 2011). Although the United States has a high level of overall church attendance compared to other countries, the statistics show a rapid decline in attendance (Barna, 2011; International Social Survey Programme, 1998). Fewer Americans go to church currently than in previous decades (Barna Group, 2011; Davis, Smith, & Marsden, 2002). A study of six major denominations by the Search Institute revealed a considerable difference in the spiritual maturity of those under 59 compared to those 60 and over (Barna Group, 2011). The study also showed that the number of people who identify themselves as Christians has been in decline for 50 years (Barna Group, 2011; Foster, 1994). Barna (2011) reported that the number of Christians who read the Bible, church volunteerism, adult Sunday school attendance, and general adult church attendance have all dropped since 1991.

Students are no exception when it comes to declining church attendance. The religious affiliation of 12th-grade students has been decreasing steadily (Kinnaman, 2011; Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002). Ham and Beemer (2009) showed that students are graduating high school and leaving the church at faster rates than ever before. Only 20% of students who were active in a high-school ministry maintain the same spiritual commitment level after they leave high school (Ham & Beemer 2009). Over half of the students committed to church during high school become separated from the church and do not pray or read the Bible after they leave high school, and 61% of

young adults who once were regular church parishioners have become spiritually

disengaged (Ham & Beemer, 2009). Only 11% of university students attend some type

of church at least 4 times a month (Altemeyer, 2004). Over 43% of students leave church

between the teen and early adult years, and 57% of young people reported that they had

left the church or stopped going regularly compared to when they were 15 years of age

(Kinnaman, 2011). Although many Christians believe that these students simply come

back to the church when they are older, studies have not supported this conclusion

(Bibby, 2002). In a survey of 756 parents who had been raised in the church but fallen

away at a mean age of 21.8, only 21% said that they would probably or definitely return

to church (Altemeyer, 2004).

The statistics have shown a trend that would lead one to believe that fewer

students will be reached each subsequent year (Barna, 2011; Davis et al., 2002;

Kinnaman, 2011; Smith & Denton, 2005; Wright, 2007). Next year's graduating seniors

will understand less about the basics of the Bible than this year's graduates. In addition,

Bible literacy, student retention, and student baptism rates are continuing to decline

(Altemeyer, 2004; Wright, 2007). This present study is focused on a small element of

this larger issue to understand the correlation between Christian education in the local

church and the Biblical worldview development of students.

Background

Autio (2005) supposed that a Biblical worldview was prominent in the hearts and

minds of Americans for about the first 125 years of America's independence. However,

such is no longer the case (Barna Group, 2011, Lyons, 2010; Smithwick, 2008). Clark

(2004) claimed that culture and life in American today are radically different than they

were in the past. In addition to the decline in overall spirituality in America, the religious affiliation of teens is also on a decline (Barna, 2011; Barna Group, 2011; Kinnaman, 2011; Smith et al., 2002). Research has suggested that 90% of students who grew up in Christian homes are discarding their Biblical worldviews (Smithwick, 2008). Barna (2003) reported that only 2% of teenagers who claim to be born again have a Biblical worldview. Furthermore, Mueller (2007) stated,

> As traditional influences weaken, the voices of other institutions become more powerful in their ability to educate and socialize teenagers. Then these voices grow louder as they answer teenager's questions and drown out the voices of parents, schools, and the church. (p. 49)

In addition, Land (2008) indicated that culture is having a greater influence on churches than churches are having on the culture.

In their research on the spiritual lives of American teenagers, Smith and Denton (2005) reported that 84% of U.S. teenagers claim to believe in God, although it is clearly not the God of the Bible. Instead, teenagers have a belief that Smith and Denton called "Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism." It is the view that God exists simply to make their lives better. The God of these teenagers exists to fix their problems and make them happy. Smith and Denton (2005) pointed out that only 8% of teenagers believe in the God of the Bible, pray at all, spend time reading the Bible, and think that faith is important in their lives. Barna (2003, 2011) stated that this is a seminal problem for the church and Christianity as a whole. Students will not be able to live godly lives if they do not know and understand the God of the Bible and possess a Biblical worldview (Barna, 2003).

In Romans 12, Paul addressed the heart of the problem and the framework behind this study when he stated, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (NIV). Paul knew 2000 years ago the basic concept of how people work. When Paul said, "[B]e transformed by the renewing of your mind," he claimed that, to change actions, a person must change thoughts (Wright, 2004). Gabora (2004) supported this idea with the concept that, at the foundation of a person's life, is a basic belief. Commonly called a *worldview*, these foundational beliefs come together to drive the specific actions that a person takes (Gabora, 2004). Every action a person makes is built on basic beliefs (Barna 2003; Cosgrove, 2006; Gabora, 2004; Hiebert, 2008; Nash, 1999; Noebel, 1994). Therefore, it is vitally important that the church be concerned and concentrated on the worldview development of its young people. A person's foundational belief dictates every choice in life (DeWitt, Deckard, Bernadt, Filakouridis, & Iverson, 2003). However, as Dobson and Bauer (1990) said, "Nothing short of a great Civil War of values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly differing and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society" (pg 19). This war, as they put it, is a war "for the hearts and minds of people. It's a war over ideas" (Dobson & Bauer, 1990, p. 19).

Problem Statement

Craig (1984) stated, "Christianity is being attacked from all sides as irrational or outmoded, and millions of students, our future generation of leaders, have absorbed this viewpoint" (p. xiii). Students who attend church in elementary and high school have been leaving the church at a frightening rate (Smith & Denton, 2005). Most youth in

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church today will not be coming to church tomorrow. This statement is not prophesy. It is not prediction. It is what is happening. Two-thirds of the high school and middle school students in church today will not be there in five years (Ham & Beemer, 2009). Barna (2003), Ham and Beemer (2009), Mueller (2007), and many others have agreed: Like the black plagues that almost destroyed an entire generation in Europe, America is now infected with a spiritual black plague (Ham & Beemer, 2009).

Research has addressed general factors that affect Biblical worldview formation (Brickhill, 2010; Bryant, 2008; Dudley & Dudley, 1986; Fyock, 2008; Taylor, 2009), but research solely directed at the Christian education context of the Church is lacking. This present study investigates the effectiveness of Christian education in the Church at conveying a Biblical worldview. This study is focused on students who are seniors in high school, about 17 or 18 years of age. Research has shown that this is the stage of life in which significant erosion of the Christian worldview begins (Astin, 2004).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative research project is to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the Christian education context of the local church and the Biblical worldview of 12th-grade students. The study is designed to provide insight into how different contexts of Christian education in the church influence worldviews.

Significance of the Study

Several studies have examined factors that contribute to worldview development. For example, Taylor (2009) focused his study on the effect of Christian as opposed to public schooling on worldview development. Using the PEERS survey, Fyock (2008)

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examined the effects of the worldviews of teachers on the worldview development of high school seniors in a Christian school. Bryant (2008) focused his study on the effect of particular Bible curricula, denominations, and church attendance on the worldview of students in ACSI schools in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Furthermore, Dudley and Dudley (1986) and Bao, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Conger (1999) researched transmission of religion from parents to students.

Brickhill (2010), using the Kruskal-Wallis Test, examined the influence of frequency of church attendance, personal faith commitment, parent beliefs, and type of elementary education on middle-school students. Brickhill's study addressed a gap in the research by specifically examining the influence that frequency of student attendance, type of student attendance, and parent attendance in Christian education in a church had on the Biblical worldview development of 12th-grade students. Knowledge in this area of study may help educators in the church develop students who hold to a Biblical worldview.

Research Questions

This project was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ2. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ3. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ4. What is the relationship between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldviews?

Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses aligned with the research questions for this study are as follows:

H1. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldview score on the PEERs Worldview Test.

H2. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H3. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H4. No statistically significant correlation exists between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

Identification of Variables

This study is influenced by two main variables.

Independent variable. The four independent variables in this study address attendance in the Christian education context of church. Three independent variables refer to students' attendance in the Christian education context of the church. These three independent variables are: main worship service, Sunday school, or youth service. To

qualify as a regular church attendee, a student must have attended, on average, at least three meetings a month or more for the previous 4 years in one of these contexts.   For the forth independent variable, students were asked about the frequency of their parents' church attendance. The same church-attendance definition for students was applied to parents. These data were collected through a self-reporting survey taken by the students at the beginning of the worldview test.

Dependent variable. All students participating in this project took a Biblical worldview test. The purpose of this test was to measure the level of Biblical worldview each student had. The PEERS Worldview Test produced by the Nehemiah Institute was used for the project. This 70-item test measures Biblical worldview philosophy in five areas: economics, politics, religion, education, and social issues (Nehemiah Institute, 2011). The test was administered in the online format to 12th-grade students in a computer lab during their Bible class period by the teacher for that class. Each teacher followed a specific guide published by the Nehemiah Institute. The reliability and validity of this test are discussed in detail in the methodology section of this research.

Definitions

The following definitions of terms are pertinent to this study. The terms are used according to these meanings throughout this study.

Worldview. A *worldview* is a system of beliefs about the nature of man that develops into a way of life (Brickhill, 2010; Noebel, 1994).

Biblical worldview. A *Biblical worldview* is a system of fundamental beliefs that are consistent with the evangelical understanding of the Bible. This worldview believes

the Bible is authoritative and accurate in its teachings and it contains the absolute moral truth for life (Smithwick, 2008).

Main worship service. The main worship service is the main gathering of members of a church, usually held in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, and involves teaching and different forms of worship.

Youth service. A *youth service* is a meeting directed specifically at students of high-school age for the purpose of general spiritual development. This service is often led by a youth pastor and can include games, events, activities, worship, and teaching.

Sunday school class. A Sunday school class is a meeting focused on teaching different aspects of Christianity and religious education.

PEERS Worldview Test. Created and published by the Nehemiah Institute in 1986, the PEERS Worldview Test measures an individual's worldview compared to a Biblical worldview. The test evaluates a person's worldview according to five main subcategories: politics, economics, education, religions, and social issues. Each individual receives a score in these subcategories and a composite score that is a compilation of the subcategories. The composite score on the 70-item PEERS Worldview Test can range from -100 to +100 and fall into one of four worldview classifications: Biblical theism (70-100), moderate Christianity (30-69), secular humanism (0-29), and socialism (< 0) (Smithwick, 2008).

Biblical theism. Biblical theism is:

[a] firm understanding of issues as interpreted from scripture. The individual is allowing the scriptures to guide his reasoning regarding ethical, moral and legal

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issues to determine correct or incorrect thinking. Truth is seen as absolute for all

ages for all time. (Smithwick, 2012, p. 7)

Moderate Christianity. Moderate Christianity is considered having

[b]asically, "one foot in the Kingdom and one foot in the world." A blended view

of God as creator and ruler, but man as self-determiner of the world. This

position generally sees God as supreme in matters of religion but not concerned

with matters related to governments, economics and to some degree education.

(Smithwick, 2012, p. 7)

Secular humanism. According to secular humanism, "Man is supreme. By

chance, the Human race has evolved to the highest form of life, but has responsibility to

see that lower forms of life are not abused by man. The masses are more important than

the individual" (Smithwick, 2012, p. 7).

Socialism. Socialism refers to holding the belief that

[m]ankind cannot prosper as individuals acting alone. A ruling authority is

necessary to ensure that all facets of life are conducted fairly and in harmony.

The authority must be the state (civil authorities) with the elite of society serving

as its leaders. (Smithwick, 2012, p. 7)

Research Plan

This investigation assessed the Biblical worldviews of senior high school students

who have basic knowledge of Christianity but different levels of involvement in church-

based Christian education. The study used the PEERS Worldview Test and compared

students' scores to their self-reported involvement in the main worship services, Sunday

school classes, and youth services of their churches and their parents' church attendance.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss prior research and understanding related to the concept of a worldview. This literature review is focused on defining and understanding the elements of a worldview. It includes explanation of the Christian worldview and its comparison to several other major worldviews.

The review also addresses the current state of worldviews among adolescents and general factors that influence worldview development. In addition, it includes descriptions of worldview testing instruments. The literature review is focused on the theoretical framework, defining a worldview, the state of worldviews in America, and general factors that influence worldview development.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

A *worldview* is a system of beliefs about the nature of man that develops into a way of life (Brickhill, 2010; Noebel, 1994). Nash (1992) affirmed, "In its simplest terms, a worldview is a set of beliefs about the most important issues in life" (p. 16). As many have stated, it is the pair of glasses that put the world in focus. (Barna, 2003; Cosgrove, 2006; MacArthur, 2003; Nash, 1999; Sunshine, 2009). Ochs (2009) explained, "Our worldview is the picture we paint of reality" (p. 465). Wolterstorff (1984) elaborated on this idea when he stated, "In weighing a theory one always brings along the whole complex of one's beliefs" (p. 66). In addition, Geertz (1973) described worldviews as both models of reality and models for action, claiming they provide people with the blueprints that guide behavior.

Furthermore, Bertram-Troost, Roos, and Miedema (2007) stated that at the foundation of every person's life is a worldview. This worldview is developed into a value system about the morality of the world (Wolters, 2005). This value system then dictates the decisions and actions in a person's life (Hiebert, 2008). Therefore, as Nash (1999) stated, every choice and action that a person takes is derived from basic beliefs. Gabora (2004) explained that human life is a bottom-up interaction; it is not a top-down process. In other words, it is the basics of belief that determine morals and actions (Wolterstorff, 1984). As King Solomon said in Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (NKJV).

The concept of a worldview is not new. It was written about over 2000 years ago as one of the tenets of Christianity in the book of Romans, Chapter 12. The book of Romans was written by the Apostle Paul (Romans 1:1). Known as Saul, prior to his conversion to Christianity, he claimed to be a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a true blood Hebrew and a Jewish religious leader of his time, a Pharisee (Philippians 3:5). Paul was born a citizen of Rome and converted to Christianity on a road to Damascus. He went on to write a large portion of the New Testament around A.D. 60 (*Unger's Guide to the Bible*, 1974). Wright (2004) considered the book of Romans one of Paul's most comprehensive writings on Christianity because it completely presented the doctrine of the Christian faith. The book of Romans is focused on presenting the redemption of God through Jesus Christ (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2000, *Unger's Guide*, 1974).

At the beginning of Romans 12, the Apostle Paul transitioned his book from a section on theology (chapters 1-11) to a section on more practical actions (*Unger's Guide*, 1974). At this transition in chapter 12, Paul wrote, "[B]e transformed by the

renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2, NIV). Wright (2004) claimed that Paul

confirmed the concept of a worldview by stating that the renewal of the mind enables a

person to transform the way he or she behaves. For Paul, the mind and body are

interconnected, so changing basic beliefs directly affects the bodies' actions (Wright,

2004).

Stevenson (1987) summed up the importance of understanding worldviews:

"Different views about human nature lead naturally to different conclusions about what

we ought to do and how we can do it" (p. 4). According to Hiebert (2008), the teaching,

conveying, and transferring of ideas must be taken seriously. A person's entire life is

based on fundamental beliefs (Hiebert, 2008). Therefore, the church must understand its

part in passing on the Christian worldview. Thus, this present research is important to the

Christian community and the overall body of literature.

The notion of a worldview has gained prominence in the last few decades, but the

concept has had a rich history. Sire (2009) asserted that the idea can be traced throughout

history back to the writings of the Bible, but the word first appeared in passing in the

writings of German philosopher I. Kant (1724-1804). Translated from the German word

weltanschauung, the term quickly became widely used by German philosophers to

indicate an underlying set of beliefs that shape all human action and thought (Heslam,

1998).

W. Dilthey (1833-1911), the Chair in Philosophy at the University of Berlin, was

one of the first to expound on the idea brought forth by Kant (Sire, 2004). Bringing his

own philosophy in the shape of the concept, Dilthey said that life itself is the ultimate

root of any worldview. Although Dilthey saw each person's worldview as different

because it is shaped by a person's intellect, emotion, and will, he also recognized the need for common principles, such as the inescapable facts of such reality as death (Naugle, 2002).

Naugle (2002) stated that Orr, a Scottish Presbyterian, first brought the idea of worldviews into Christian theology. Orr (1954), seeking to find a way to defend Christianity, adapted it for his own apologetic purposes. He wrote a worldview is "the widest view which the mind can take of things in an effort to grasp them together as a whole form the standpoint of some particular philosophy or theology" (Orr, 1954, p. 3). Furthermore, A. Kuyper, a contemporary of Orr, was also instrumental in bringing the concept of a worldview to Christian thinking (Sire, 2004). Kuyper expanded on Orr and presented the idea that Calvinist Christianity was a complete worldview. He noted that at the foundation of every worldview was a single point from which all others flowed.

Modern-day authors have built and expanded on these classic definitions of *weltanschauung*. Schaeffer (1981) observed worldviews were the "overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole" (p. 17). Olthuis (1989) expanded on this idea and included an aspect of personal calling and future. Sire (2009) stated that Olthuis extended worldviews to provide not only meaning but direction in life.

Nash (1999), one of the current prolific writers on worldviews, defined a *worldview* as the answers to the most important questions in life. He sees a worldview as a framework for someone's beliefs. The best frameworks are true, comprehensive, and systematic views of the world (Nash, 1999). In an early publication, Nash (1988) defined a *worldview* as "a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality" (p. 29). Another

current influential writer is James Sire. Sire (2009) regarded a worldview as a

"fundamental orientation of the heart" (p. 20). This orientation arises from a set of

presuppositions about the basic formation of reality and provides the foundation on which

people base their movements, lives, and being (Sire, 2009). DeWitt (2007) continued this

thought as he described a worldview as the "sum total of feelings, beliefs, memories,

knowledge and experiences that are used to interpret events and make decisions" (p. 25).

MacArthur (2003) and Barna (2003) defined the concept in slightly different

ways. MacArthur viewed it as a collection of values, suppositions, and convictions that a

person uses to makes sense of the world (MacArthur, 2003). Barna (2003) regarded a

worldview as the mental and emotional filter people use to understand the world they live

in. Although all these great thinkers defined the concept differently, the main idea is the

same. For the purpose of this research, a worldview is simply a person's view of the

world. It is a composition of fundamental beliefs that guide a person's life and actions.

Review of Literature

The Biblical worldview in America. Despite all the philosophy and research,

Barna (2003) claimed that most people in America do not consider their worldview to be

the defining element of life. Barna (2003) stated, "Everyone has a worldview. Relatively

few have a coherent worldview or are able to articulate it clearly" (p. xviii). Similarly,

Moreland (1997) stated that most people have almost no understanding of how a

Christian is to view the world.

The Biblical worldview that was once the dominant worldview in America

(Autio, 2005) is now being cast aside even among Christians (Barna, 2003). Worldview

research shows that the worldviews of most professing Christians are not Biblical (Barna,

2003). Of people who profess to be born-again Christians, only "about one-quarter make their moral and ethical choices on the basis of the Bible" (Barna, 2003, p. 21). Barna also found that only 9% of professing born-again Christians have a Biblical worldview. Thus, research has indicated that the Biblical worldview is being lost in America.

The Biblical worldview among Christians has been in steady decline for more than a decade (Barna Group, 2009). In 2009, the Barna Group compared results from Biblical worldview reports from 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2008. The study revealed that people who have made a personal commitment to Christ as their Savior were twice as likely to have a Biblical worldview as the average person. However, among born-again Christians, fewer than one out of every five had a Biblical worldview. This number is down from 11% in 2000 (Barna Group, 2009). Barna also found that, among adults, only 19% had Biblical worldviews, down from 22% in 2000. This decline coincides with the 20-year decline in the church attendance of adolescents in America (Smith & Denton, 2005).

America is in a post-Christian worldview culture (Autio, 2005). Colson and Pearcey (1999) stated, "Americans, along with most other Western cultures, no longer rely on Judeo-Christian truths as the basis of their public philosophy or their moral conscious" (p. 22). This shift in culture away from a Biblical worldview is having effects in the world. In a study of 210 randomly selected Christian and public school teachers, Brown (2006) found no significant difference in the moral self-concepts of the two groups. Furthermore, the Nehemiah Institute (1998) stated that the Biblical worldview in Christian schools is being replaced by the secular humanist worldview. Additionally, the

Barna Group (2009) found that less than one half of one percent of adults 18–23 had a Biblical worldview, compared to 9% of older adults (Barna Group, 2009).

Factors that influence worldview formation. The goal of this research project was not to show that the Church is the sole or most influential aspect of worldview development. Numerous factors influence worldview development (Bandura, 2006). Instead, the goal of this research was to analyze the role the church plays in the development of young persons' worldviews. Explanations of various additional entities influencing worldview development follow.

Parents. One of the prominent ways that beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are transferred to students is through parents (Bao et al., 1999; Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). Often called the *social learning theory*, it indicates that people learn from one another through modeling, observing, and imitating (Bandura, 2006). One component of this theory is that children develop thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors by observing their parents (Bandura, 2006). A hierarchical linear-regression study of fathers, mothers, and adolescents from 171 intact Caucasian families indicated that parents who talk with their children about values and beliefs have a strong influence on the values and beliefs of their children (Flor & Knapp, 2001). This claim is backed up by numerous other research studies (Arenson-Kemp, 1995; Frysh, 2006; Snarey & Dollahite, 2001). Not only do students learn through discussions with their parents, but they also learn through modeled behavior (Lee, Rice, & Gillespie, 1997). These social exchanges with parents have lasting and significant influence on worldview development (Gabora, 2004). However, as students grow older, parental influence tends to decrease as social influence increases (Chen, Dornbushe, & Liu, 2007).

Community. Research has shown that the community of adults and peers in which students are involved also has an effect on worldview development (Stassen & Gushee, 2003). Gunnoe and Moore (2002) agreed that peers become the primary driving force in shaping worldview for students who are 17–22 years old. Furthermore, Hoge, Petrillo, and Smith (1986) posited a balance between parents, community, and peers by suggesting that transference is most effective when discussions on belief and values in the home combine with attendance at church and related functions.

Teachers. Because no education takes place in a value-free environment (Riesen, 2002), teachers play a major role in shaping a worldview. Deckard and DeWitt (2003) came to the same conclusion when studying the worldviews of college students. They found that students' worldview can become more Biblical when teachers approach education from a distinctly Biblical perspective. Fryock (2008) confirmed these findings when he found that, over time, the worldviews of students shift toward the worldviews of their teachers.

School. Most of the research on the effect of the type of school on worldview has focused on comparing public and Christian schools. McDowell (2006), using the PEERS Test, found that 85% of public school students did not hold a Biblical worldview. However, students from Christian schools scored only slightly higher (6% more) in concerning holding a Christian worldview (McDowell, 2006). Taylor (2009) investigated whether the Biblical worldview of students attending a Christian school with a curriculum specifically focused on teaching worldviews would be higher compared to the worldview of public school students. The second semester 12th-grade students who attended the Christian school with the worldview curriculum did score higher, but the

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results did not show statistical significance. However, the results did show statistical significance when students had received additional worldview training for 7 or more years. Thus, Taylor concluded that a congruency of school, church, and worldview training over a significant period of time has a positive effect on the nature of a student's worldview.

      Elements of a worldview. Sire (2004) claimed that "once we have recognized that something is there, we have not necessarily recognized what that something is" (p. 19). Therefore, the following sections include discussion and definitions of the elements that make up a worldview. Many prominent authors have opinions when it comes to determining what constitutes a set of basic beliefs. For example, Sire (2004) stated, for a worldview to be complete, it must answer seven primary questions:

1. What is prime reality—the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around one?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to person at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do people know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history? (Sire, 2004, p. 20)

Sire further noted that the order of this list is very important. If one puts the epistemology (theory of knowledge) before the ontology (nature of reality), there is a risk of basing a worldview on a community's sense of reason or simply the human ego. For Sire (2004), "Ontology precedes epistemology and hermeneutics—and whatever else there may be" (p. 73).

Similarly, Ochs (2009) viewed worldview as provisional. Ochs described a worldview as being present at the beginning of life but also being affected by everything a person learns. To Ochs, a worldview is always changing; it is never rigid; it is welcoming to new experiences and ideas. Ochs posited nine questions that a worldview should address:

1. Who am I?

2. Where is God?

3. Why are we here?

4. What sense do we make of the human trajectory?

5. What sense do we make of death?

6. Am I free?

7. Can people change?

8. Is God only positive?

9. Is life good? (Ochs, 2009, p. 457)

Sunshine (2009) added the element of instinctive response to the basic philosophical questions concerning the following perspectives: metaphysics ("What is real?"), epistemology ("What can I know, and how can I know it?"), and ethics ("Is there a right and wrong, and how do I know it?"). Pearcey (2005), similar to Sunshine, took a broad perspective on the elements of a worldview. Pearcey posited three elements of a worldview that provide a "mental map that tells us how to navigate the world effectively" (p. 23).

1. Creation: How did it all begin? Where did it all come from?

2. Fall: What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?

3. Redemption: What can we do about it? How can the world be set right

   again? (Pearcey, 2005, p. 25)

Furthermore, Nash (1999) organized worldviews into five clusters of beliefs: beliefs about God, ultimate reality, knowledge, ethics, and human nature. He explained that, although the concept of a worldview could contain many more clusters, these five usually provide the framework for conceptual systems (Nash, 1999).

Barna (2003) had an approach to worldviews very similar to that of Nash (1999). Barna described a worldview as a framework for life that is comprehensive in everyday life. When defining a *worldview*, Barna included seven elements.

1. Does God exist

2. What is the character and nature of God?

3. How and why was the world created?

4. What is the nature and purpose of humanity?

5. What happens after we die on earth?

6. What spiritual authorities exist?

7. What is truth? (Barna, 2003, p. 48)

Peterson (2001) focused more on religion when defining the elements of a worldview. Peterson stated that "elements of a worldview are . . . often explanatory in character" (p. 10). Although Peterson noted that the fundamentals of a worldview may vary from one culture to the next, there is considerable overlap. Furthermore, Peterson described a worldview as follows:

1. Stories of origin—Cosmological and human

2. Accounts of the limits of the world—Spatial and temporal

3. The future—Cosmological and human. (Peterson, 2001, p. 10-12)

Palmer (2002) expanded more on the social and communal aspects of a worldview. He included six elements of a worldview:

1. Ideology—a set of core beliefs or statements that from central framework or system for explaining reality.

2. Narrative—stories that tell significant events about the worldview or those who hold the worldview.

3. Norms—the two most important norms in worldview are moral/ethical norms and aesthetic norms.

4. Rituals—ceremonial acts used to reflect on core beliefs and cause response to those beliefs.

5. Experience—the expression of ideology and norms of a worldview in order to shape them.

6. Social elements—the social setting of a worldview permits and encourages the transmission of beliefs, stores, norms, and rituals from one generation to the next. (Palmer, 1998)

Although Sire (2004), Barna(2003), Palmer (2002), Pearcey (2005), and Ochs (2009) addressed the broad scope of a worldview and Sunshine's (2009) three questions highlighted the fundamentals, none of these descriptions were focused enough to serve as reference points for this present study. Stevenson (1987) provided a clear and focused basis for this research when evaluating the Christian worldview and other prominent worldviews. To Stevenson, the basics of a worldview answer four questions: What is the nature of the universe as a whole? What is the essential nature of mankind? What is the

diagnosis of what is wrong with mankind? What is the prescription to fix it? (Stevenson, 1987). These four questions provide an appropriate framework for this present research to define and evaluate different worldviews.

  Defining specific worldviews. To understand fully the concept of worldviews, it is pertinent to provide an overview of major worldviews. This section will begin with the Christian theist worldview followed by other major worldviews. The intent is not to provide an evaluation of the worldviews or a comprehensive list of worldviews, but to clarify the Christian worldview, provide further understanding of the concept of worldview, and lay the foundation for the research. The worldviews will be discussed in the format described by Stevenson (1987).

  The Christian worldview. Christianity would not have been described in the terms of a worldview prior to the 17th century. The church would not have accepted this connection because of the concept's association with secular philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2004). However, in recent history, the idea of seeing Christianity through the concept of a worldview has increased significantly (Bertrand, 2007). Orr (1954) stated several advantages to seeing Christianity as a worldview. As Orr explained, viewing Christianity as a worldview brings to light the drastic differences between the modern theories of the universe and Christianity. Looking at ideologies through worldview thinking also addresses the supernatural. Addressing Christianity and other ideologies through the concept of a worldview is no longer about a particular miracle or an argument about the supernatural. The focus becomes more about the underlying worldview. To Orr, worldview thinking ties the New and Old Testaments together. It takes the overall concepts from both testaments and

formulates them into one consistent view. As a final point, Orr stated that worldview thinking allows the truth in other ideologies to be seen, even if these truths have been separated from their origins (Naugle, 2002; Orr, 1954).

However, some authors have disagreed with Orr (1954). Schleiermacher (1999) advocated that the concepts of worldview and Christianity do not fit because Christianity is a theology of feeling and an affection of the heart, not a worldview system. Thus, Schleiermacher denied that Christianity was cognitive or intellectual (Naugle 2002). Orr responded to this objection by claiming the argument was based on several wrong presuppositions and came from an incorrect understanding of the nature of religion (Orr, 1954). Orr also responded to the objection of continental theology (Naugle, 2002). Continental theology makes a strong distinction between religion and theoretic ideas of the world. Orr agreed that theoretical knowledge and religious knowledge are not the same. They differ in intent, nature, and object (Naugle, 2002; Orr, 1954). However, Orr reunited reason and faith, stating, "[F]aith cannot but seek to advance knowledge – that is, to reflective and scientific understanding of its own content" (p. 30). Naugle (2002) summarized Orr (1954): "The Christian weltanschoauung is the higher system which synthesizes and reunites all truth into a living whole with Christ supreme" (p. 11).

Theory of the universe: Christian theism. Christian theism begins with the existence of God. At the core of the worldview is "the belief that there is a transcendent God" (Colson & Pearcey, 1999, p. 20). This is not one God among many in the Universe, but the one and only God. He is not bound by time or space; neither is He simply the sum of everything that exists in the universe. Traditional Christianity identifies God as transcendent and immanent (Stevenson, 1987).

God exists in one person but three parts: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three aspects of one God are commonly called *the Trinity*, although this word never appears in the Bible (Cosgrove, 2006). This concept of "three persons, yet one God" (Schaeffer, 1972, p. 15) is distinct to Christianity. In the Old Testament, the Bible often refers to God in the plural. In Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (NIV). The New Testament is full of places where the three parts of the one God are made clear. For example, Matthew 3:16–17 refers to all three parts: Jesus the Son being baptized, God speaking from the clouds, and the Holy Spirit ascending. To Christian theism, there is one God, but three persons of God. Calvin (1960) stated that "when we profess to believe in one God, under the name of God is understood a single, simple essence in which comprehend three persons, or hypostases" (p. 144).

In discussing the worldview of Christian theism, it is impossible to say everything the Bible teaches about the character of God. The most common way to express the character of God is through two categories: incommunicable and communicable (Grudem, 1999). The incommunicable attributes of God are those characteristics that God does not share with others. For example, God is independent. He does not need anything to sustain His existence. Other incommunicable attributes include that God is omniscient, omnipotent, all powerful, and unchanging (Erickson, 1983). The communicable attributes of God are those characteristics that God shares, in a limited way, with people (Shedd, 2003). These attributes include such mental attributes as knowledge, goodness, wisdom, and truthfulness; such moral attributes as goodness, love, and righteousness; and attributes of purpose, such as free will (Grudem, 1999). God is

fully all these attributes. He cannot be more omnipotent, more knowledgeable, or more truthful. He is fully all these characteristics all the time (Grudem, 1999). The God of Christian theism is the perfect, full, ultimate God.

One of the major characteristics of God in Christian theism, as indicated in Genesis 1:1 and Job 38:4, is that He is the creator of the universe (Allison, 2011; Erickson, 1983; Shedd, 2003). He is the creator of all that is in existence. Every mountain, ocean, and star—all the heavens and the earth—were created by God out of nothing (John 1:1-5; Genesis 1:1; Psalms 33). The author of Hebrews 11:3 stated, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (NIV). God is the creator and ruler of the universe he created. He is outside creation but involved. This is a critical distinction between Christian theism and other worldviews (Grudem, 1999).

The Bible also teaches that God created mankind, starting with Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:7). Adam and Eve were not created like everything else; they were created in a distinct and personal way (Allison, 2011). The author of Genesis 2:7 stated, "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (NIV). Eve was then created directly out of Adam's rib while he was sleeping (Genesis 2:21). Thus, for Christian theists, it is difficult to hold to the truthfulness of scripture and believe that humans were formed as a result of a long evolutionary process (Grudem, 1999). The creation of Adam and Eve was different from that of the rest of the animals. The author of Genesis 1:27 stated, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (NIV). God created humans in the image of God, more like God than

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any of the other creation (Shedd, 2003). God created human beings separate from God but dependent on God for existence (Cosgrove, 2006).

God the Father was not the only part of the Trinity involved in Creation; the Son and the Holy Spirit were also involved. John 1:3 said of the Son of God, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (NIV). Speaking of the Son, 1 Corinthians 8:6 says that, "All things were created through him and for him" (NIV). In regards to the Holy Spirit, the author of Job 33:4 stated, "The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (NIV). Furthermore, the author of Psalms 104:30 stated, "When you send your Spirit, they are created" (NIV).

In Christian theism, God is the creator. He is distinct from his creation. He is not part of it, but rules over it. As mentioned, he is transcendent and immanent over all creation. The universe is not random or chaotic because God created it systematically, with order and consistency (Noebel, 1994; Sire, 2004). God is not simply an energy or a force; he is a personal God and the creator and ruler of man (Sire, 2004). Thus, God is sovereign over his creation. As Sire (2004) stated, "[N]othing is beyond God's ultimate interest, control and authority" (p. 28).

In Christian theism, God has made Himself known through two types of revelation: special and general (Allison, 2011). General revelation is the knowledge of God that can be obtained through nature, history, and the universe (Psalms 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-20; Psalms 8:13; Isaiah 40:12-14; Acts 14:15-17). This knowledge can be known and understood by anyone, anywhere, at any time (Cosgrove 2006). This revelation is enough to keep humans accountable before God. Romans 1:18-20 stated:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, [19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. [20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (NIV)

Paul, again in the book of Romans, stated that there is a general revelation of morality in each person. Romans 2: 14-15 stated,

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. [15]They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them. (NIV)

This general revelation of morality is an ingrained sense of morality. It is an inner idea of what is right and wrong. However, it is obscured by an inherited sin nature. Christian theism teaches that general revelation is enough to be held accountable before God. Therefore, before God, there is no excuse (Lewis & Demarest, 1996).

In Christian theism, God also makes Himself known through special revelation, which comes in two forms. The first is through God's written word the Bible. The Bible itself frequently claims that all the words of scripture are God's words (Lewis & Demarest, 1996). The author of 2 Timothy 3:16 stated, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (NIV), claiming that even words written by men come from God (Grudem, 1999). Many times in the Bible, God's words are written down directly. In the Old Testament, the

phrase "Thus say the LORD" appears hundreds of times. This is a claim that what follows are the exact words that God spoke. In many instances in the Bible, God speaks through a prophet (Numbers 22:38; Deuteronomy 18:18-20; Jeremiah 1:9; Ezekiel 2:7). In this case, God uses a person to convey His words. In the New Testament, there are sections of recorded words of Jesus, the second part of the Trinity. Jesus claimed to speak the truth of God. In John 14: 6, Jesus stated, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NIV).

Much of Christian theism is based on the doctrine of *sola scriptura* or "by scripture alone" (Grudem, 1999). This is the belief that the word of God, given in the Bible, contains the knowledge necessary for salvation and a life of holiness. The Bible is necessary for a knowledge of God that surpasses general revelation. The Bible is also essential for gaining a knowledge of spiritual life, a knowledge of the gospel, a knowledge of God's will, and a knowledge of God's purpose (Grudem, 1999). Psalms 119:130 said, "The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (NIV).

The second form of special revelation comes through the life of Jesus. Jesus Christ, God's only Son, took the form of a man and lived on earth. Through His life and the way He lived, God revealed aspects of His character that go beyond words (Cosgrove, 2006). The combination of these two types of revelation creates the picture of God. In speaking of both general and special revelation, Moreland (1997) stated,

> When we affirm that the Bible is a revelation from God, we do not simply assert that God as a person is known in and through it. We also mean that God has revealed understandable, objectively true propositions. The Lord's Word is not

only practically useful, it is also theoretically true (John 17:17). God has revealed

truth to us and not just Himself. This truth is addressed to our minds and requires

an intellectual grasp to understand and then apply. (p. 45)

Theory of man: Christian theism. Stevenson (1987) stated, "The Christian

doctrine of man sees him primarily in relation to God, who has created him to occupy a

special position in the universe" (p. 45). Unlike the rest of God's creation, man was

created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Created to be similar to God, man presents a

likeness of God, not a full example of what God is like, but an "image" of God. For

example, God made man self-conscious and with the ability to love freely, similar to God

(Stevenson, 1987). Man is unique in that he was created with a mind, emotions, and will

(Shedd, 2003), making man more like God than any other part of creation (Grudem

1999).

God does not need humans for any reason; he created humans for His own glory.

The Bible speaks to this in Isaiah 43:7 stating, "Everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (NIV). When man loves and

serves his creator, he is fulfilling his created purpose (Lewis & Demarest, 1996).

Although Christian theism indicates that man has a physical body, one of its

foundational principles is that part of each human will live on after the physical body dies

(1 Corinthians 15:35). This idea of life after death is an essential doctrine of Christian

theism (Stevenson, 1987). Although this idea is fundamental, what exactly exists after

the body dies is debated. Trichotomy is the belief that man is created with a soul and

spirit along with the body (Grudem, 1999). In this belief, man's soul is comprised of

emotions, intellect, and will. This soul can choose to yield to sin or to serve God. The

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spirit in trichotomy is a "higher faculty that comes alive when a person becomes a Christian" (Grudem, 1999, p. 193). In opposition to trichotomy, dichotomy is the belief that man simply has a body and spirit. The spirit refers to the entire immaterial part of man, the part that was created in God's image and lives on after the body dies (Shedd, 2003).

  Diagnosis of what is wrong with man: Christian theism. In Christian theism, the problem with man can be clearly seen in the Bible. As Stevenson (1987) stated, man has "sinned, he has misused his God-given free will, he has chosen evil rather than good, and has therefore disrupted his relationship to God (Isaiah 59:2)" (p. 47). Man has failed to conform to the perfect moral law of God. Because of the character of God, His innate goodness and righteousness, and because God created humans in His image, God is the standard for morality (Schaeffer, 1972). Man is not the measure of right and wrong; God is (Sire, 2004). It is clear that God did not sin and is not to blame for sin (Deuteronomy 32:4). The author of Job 34:10 stated, "So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong" (NIV). In addition, the author of James 1:13 stated, "For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone" (NIV).

  Sin and rebellion against God's standard is not only apparent in individual acts such as stealing, lying, and breaking the Ten Commandments, but also in attitude. Having an attitude that is contrary to the attitude of God is also sin (Cosgrove, 2006). The author of Exodus 20:17 stated, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (NIV).

The origin of human sin is described in the first book of the Bible. Adam and Eve were created perfect, without sin, and placed in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1). They were given specific instructions to eat of all the trees in the garden except for one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God and eat of the tree. This rebellion against God is often labeled *the original sin* (Grudem 1999) because it was the initial sin that destroyed the perfect relationships between God and man (Lewis & Demarest, 1996). Because God is holy, man, in sin, can no longer be connected with God and has broken away from the original purpose of creation. The Apostle Paul stated in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NIV). This is the essence of the problem with man.

The original sin had an effect on all mankind. The Bible said, because of the original sin, humans have inherited guilt. The Apostle Paul explained it this way: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12, NIV). Paul presented the idea that, through the original sin, God thinks of all humans as having sinned. Therefore, all humans have inherited corruption because of the sin of Adam. Consequently, humans have been alienated from God (Lewis & Demarest, 1996). The Apostle Paul completed this thought in Romans 5:13-14:

> To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. (NIV)

The idea that man is guilty because of the original sin was also confirmed in Romans 5:18-19:

> Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. [19]For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (NIV)

The Bible frequently refers to the universal sinfulness of humans (1 Kings 8:46; Proverbs 143:2; Romans 3:9-10). The author of Psalms 14:3 stated, "All have turned away, all have become corrupt" (NIV). The doctrine of sin does not imply that man is incapable of good. Man is still able to live out, to a small extent, the communicable characteristics of God. However, man still carries inherited evil and is, therefore, guilty of rebellion and separated from God (Allison, 2011). Grudem (1999) summed up the diagnosis of man through the four needs humans have as sinners:

1. We deserve to die as the penalty for sin.

2. We deserve to bear God's wrath against sin.

3. We are separated from God by our sins.

4. We are in Bondage to sin and to the Kingdom of Satan. (p. 255)

Prescription for how to fix the problem: Christian theism. Grudem (1999) stated, "The history of the human race as presented in Scripture is primarily a history of man in a state of sin and rebellion against God, and of God's plan of redemption to bring many people back to himself" (p. 210). The Christian theism prescription for man is based on God. If God made man for fellowship and to glorify Himself and man rebelled against God and broke the relationship, then only God can restore what was lost. The salvation

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of man is only made possible through the forgiveness, grace, and love of God (Stevenson, 1987).

The prescription for man in the New Testament started with the incarnation of Jesus. This term *incarnation* simply means "in flesh." This word refers to God and His act of coming to earth in the human form of Jesus (Grudem, 1999). Although the term *incarnation* does not appear in the Bible, the concept appears throughout the New Testament (John 3:13; John 3:17; Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7). John 1:14 stated specifically, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (NIV). Through the virgin birth, God took on an additional nature, humanity. God the Son, fully God in every way, took on himself a human nature to become both God and man (Grudem, 1999). This is not an idea that Jesus' followers had on their own; Jesus himself claimed to be God. Jesus said in John 6:51, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (NIV). The incarnation of Christ is a foundational teaching of Christianity and essential for the prescription of man (Lewis & Demarest, 1996).

The second part of the prescription of man is found in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. The reason God came to earth was to accomplish the work of atonement (Allison, 2011). The author of John 3:16 explained, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (NIV). Paul explained in Romans 3:25 that God sent Jesus to be a propitiation for humans. Jesus endured the wrath of God that humans deserve so that humans can be seen righteous before God. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection paid the penalty for sins

(Barna, 2003). As the Apostle Paul stated in Romans 3:26, God "did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (NIV). Through a faith in God and accepting of the sacrifice of Jesus, humans can restore what is lost through sin. Grudem (1999) summed up the prescription of Christian theism describing how the incarnation and atonement of Jesus met the four needs of humans:

1. Sacrifice. To pay the penalty of death that we deserved because of our sins, Christ died as a sacrifice for us.

2. Propitiation. To remove from us the wrath of God we deserved, Christ died as a propitiation for our sins.

3. Reconciliation. To overcome our separation from God, we needed someone to provide reconciliation and thereby bring us back into fellowship with God.

4. Redemption. Because we as sinners are in bondage to sin and to Satan, we needed someone to provide redemption and thereby "redeem" us out of that bondage. (p. 255)

Summary of Christian theism. The worldview of Christian theism is based on one God as the creator and sustainer of all things. This God reveals himself to humans through His general and special revelation. His special revelation reveals specifics about God's character and purpose. Christian theism posits that man was created perfect in the likeness of God. However, because of human's rebellion against God, the perfect relationship of man and God was broken. God and His incarnation and atonement have made a way to fix what has been broken by sin (Grudem, 1999; Noebel, 1994). The Scottish Presbyterian theologian J. Orr (1954) was one of the founding thinkers in the

worldview tradition among Protestant evangelicals (Naugle, 2002). Orr's nine-point

summary of the Christian worldview is foundational to Christian worldview thinking

today:

1. The existence of a personal, ethical, self-revealing God;

2. The creation of the world by God, involving His holy and wise government of it for moral ends;

3. The spiritual nature and dignity of man as created in the image of God;

4. The fall of man into sin;

5. The historical self-revelation of God to the patriarchs and in the line of Israel;

6. The incarnation of Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, yes, as God manifest in flesh;

7. The redemption of the world through the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ;

8. The founding of the Kingdom of God on earth ,which includes the spiritual salvation of individuals and a new order of society; and

9. History has a goal, including resurrection, judgment and separation of the righteous and the wicked, the righteous to eternity with God and the wicked to eternal suffering excluded from his presence. (p. 20)

Other major worldviews. To understand the concept of a worldview, it is

important to examine not just the Christian worldview but other prominent worldviews.

The following section will give a brief summary of Deism, Naturalism, Atheistic

existentialism, and Postmodernism.

Deism: God is absent. Deists do not believe in the personal and involved view of God expressed in Christian theism (Machen, 1923). Instead, deists hold to a theory of the universe that believes god exists and created the universe but has since left the world on its own. To a deist, God is the creator, but unlike Christian theism, God has no influence or impact on the universe (Schaeffer, 1976). God is only transcendent and a beginning to the vast universe. Thomas Paine (1794/2008) said, "[T]he only idea man can affix to the name God is *first* cause, the cause of all things" (p. 44).

In deism, God does not desire nor have a personal relationship with people. He exerts no power or influence over humans. God is still the creator of humans; He just remains uninvolved and uninterested. God left the world to run on its own (Noebel's (1994; Barna, 2003).

A deist views the nature of humans as personal, conscious, and self-determined. However, these are not known because of a revelation from God but simply from observing humanity. Humans have no way of having a relationship with God or transcending outside of the system that was started by God. Humans have intelligence and a built-in sense of morality, but they are not based on God (Sire, 2004).

Nature takes on an important role in deism. Because people have the ability to understand the universe, God can be known in a limited extent through the study of nature and the universe (Barna, 2003). History is of little use to a deist because God is not involved and not active in it. There is no place for the supernatural in the universe because the laws of nature run the world (Pearcey, 2005). Right and wrong are based on the fundamental laws of the universe as seen through nature (Sire, 2004).

Deists take the position that it is impossible to know about life after death. Humans are free to choose good or evil and are subject to the same cause and effect that governs the universe (Sire, 2009). For a deist, it is up to the individual to determine personal destiny apart from the influence of the creator (Barna, 2003).

Naturalism. Compared to Christian theism, naturalism is on the opposite side of the spectrum regarding God. In Christian theism, God is the creator of all and a personal God. In naturalism, there is no god; God does not exist. Summarized in the humanist manifestos (Sire, 2009), Naturalism is the idea that there are no demons, souls, or supernatural; all of reality is matter and energy (Cosgrove, 2006). Astrophysicist Carl Sagan (1980) stated, "The cosmos is all there is or every was or ever will be" (p. 4).

For naturalism, the theory of the universe dismisses the idea of a creator. The naturalist rejects the idea of God and the supernatural, claiming that these are simply things that only exist in the minds of people; they are simply projections of people's own experiences (Colson & Pearcey, 1999). The foundational principle of naturalism is that there is no God. Naturalism is atheism, with the idea of God replaced with the natural world (Cosgrove, 2006), a natural world that has always existed and is all there is (Barna, 2003). The only compatible option for the origin of the universe for naturalism is atheistic evolution. Anything not perceived as scientific would not fit (Noebel, 1994).

For a naturalist, humans are seen as simply a biological machine. They have no grand purpose behind their existence or history (Barna, 2003; Cosgrove, 2006, Noebel, 1994). Their only observable purpose is survival. La Mettrie (1999) put it bluntly, stating, "Let us conclude boldly then that man is a machine, and that in the whole universe there is but a single substance with various modifications" (p. 177). Matter is

the only substance in the universe, and humans are simply another piece of the universe.

The laws that apply to matter apply to humans (Sire, 2009). This concept leads to

naturalists following logical behaviorism, the concept that thought and actions are simply

chemical reactions of the brain (Noebel, 1994). However, naturalists do see humans as

unique in the natural world because humans are capable of complex thought, use

language, and develop culture (Sire, 2009).

To the naturalist, man is basically good, but there is no standard for morality

besides culture and natural law (Barna, 2003). What corrupts man is society. It is society

and social institutions that produce evil, not the individual. The only universal morality

is natural law; morality is not universally applicable. "In any form of determinism what

is considered right or acceptable is arbitrary" (Schaeffer 1976, p. 74). In regards to

morality, Kurtz (1973) stated:

> We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is
>
> autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics
>
> stem from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life.
>
> (p. 17)

The only way to know anything in naturalism is through observation and

experience. Anything outside of such experience is fantasy and not reality. Science is

the only source of knowledge and the only hope for a better future (Colson & Pearcey

1999). The Christian theist concept of a sin nature is absent in naturalism. The problems

of man—genetics, psychological conditioning, crime, and anger—are caused by

problems in society. The only solution for these problems in society is to attempt to fix

the material problem. Doing so is addressed through genetic engineering, behavior

modification, or personality altering drugs (Cosgrove, 2006).

   Atheistic existentialism. Existentialism is an extension of naturalism (Barna,

2003, Sire 2004). It holds to many of the presuppositions of naturalism. The theory of

the universe in existentialism is naturalistic, and reality is simply the natural world.

There are no gods or ghosts, only matter and energy. The universe exists in a close

system that operates on cause and effect (Sire, 2004).

   Existentialism breaks from naturalism largely in its view of the subjective. In

existentialism, knowledge can come through the objective natural world, as in naturalism,

but in existentialism knowledge can also come through the subjective. Knowledge can

come from the senses as well as feelings and desires. In existentialism, the subjective

becomes one of the most important parts of reality because it defines purpose and

meaning (Sire, 2009). Each individual must create value and meaning in life.

   Naturalism and existentialism are similar in their views of the nature of man.

Humans have consciousness and free will but are still complex machines, deriving their

personality from chemical and physical properties (Cosgrove, 2006). Sartre (1946/1966)

stated, "If God does not exist, there is a least one being in whom existence precedes

essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and . . . this being is

man" (p. 289). Again, there is a division between the subjective and objective. In the

objective world, everything comes with its nature and its essence. Things are what they

are. However, humans make themselves from self-determinacy and self-consciousness.

Sartre (1946/1966), referring to humanity, stated, "At first he is nothing. Only afterwards

will he be something, and he himself will have made him what he will be" (p. 278).

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The problem with humans in existentialism is, again, similar to naturalism (Cosgrove, 2006). Human problems arise from biological, cultural, and psychological sources. A combination of the natural and society creates problems for humans. The only solution is for humans to acknowledge these problems and make choices that turn away from them. It is the inner subjective self that is the key in this process (Cosgrove, 2006). As Cosgrove (2006) stated, "Live as if your inner desires were of some value and had some impact on yourself and your world" (p. 110).

Postmodernism. The worldview of postmodernism has become the prevailing view of the younger generations in America. Both the Busters and the Mosaics, in general, hold to this worldview. Because many textbooks have been shifted toward postmodern foundations, postmodernism is being taught extensively in schools and colleges across the nation (Smith & Denton, 2005). However, postmodernism is difficult to define and catalog as a worldview. As Sire (2009) stated, "Postmodernism is both more than and less than a worldview" (pg. 217). It contains no single grand story to explain the universe and reality, making it difficult to categorize while being the heart of the postmodern view (Barna, 2003). Barna (2003) stated, "Spawned by behavior rather than concept—that is developed on the basis of sociology rather than philosophy or theology—, postmodernism challenges much but answers little" (p. 35).

One of the main focuses of the postmodernist is a shift from a focus on knowing to a focus on meaning. It is the idea that the act of thinking by each individual produces personal reality (Barna, 2003; Colson & Pearcey, 1999; Naugle, 2002). Postmodernism rejects objective knowledge and focuses on the subjective reality of each person. Reality is found in "individual choice and experience" (Cosgrove 2006, p. 81). There is no one

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single reality for all, but one single reality for each individual (Pearcey, 2005). Thus, postmodernism has adapted the belief of moral relativism, the idea that no absolute moral truths exist, or if they do exist, they cannot be known (Barna, 2003). No thought or reality can be checked against any standard. Truth is a "radical ethical relativism" (Sire 2004, p. 227). All ideas, even opposing positions, hold equal value and truthfulness. No one idea, view, reality, or person is more right than another (Colson & Pearcey, 1999).

Because there is not one overriding reality, it is difficult to define the postmodern view of the universe, man, and the solutions for human problems. If there is no absolute view of anything, people are left with an ever-changing view of reality (Sire, 2009). However, most postmodernists view the origin of the universe in the same manner as atheistic existentialists. In postmodernism, humans are the only conscious and reasoning beings in the Universe. The nature of man is developed through the language humans use to explain the cosmos. Barna (2003) stated, "Postmoderns believe that we have the ability to use language—a social construct that distorts reality for our purposes—to convey our personal experience and stories, but that such stories are simply personal truths, not validated, shared truths" (p. 35-36). Each individual's narrative becomes the truth and cannot be challenged or tested. The highest goal an individual can reach is security, self-satisfaction, and survival (Barna, 2003).

Summary

The definition of a worldview for this study is simply a person's view of the world. It is a system of beliefs about the nature of man that develops into a way of life. From the foundational beliefs, people develop values, and these values direct choices and actions (Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2004). For further clarity, Table 1 shows a comparative

summary of the four worldviews. With this foundational context and research to build

on, Chapter 3 describes the methodology and research design for this project.

Table 1

Comparative Summary of Four Worldviews

Belief	Deism	Naturalism	Atheistic existentialism	Postmodernism
Reality	Universe created by God, but God has left the world on its own. God is only transcendent. He is only the cause of all things.	Naturalism: The universe is a natural place, and there are no supernatural beings. The universe is all there is, and it is a closed system. Materialism: All is matter/energy. Determinism: Mater is determined—for every effect there is a prior, physical cause.	Naturalism: The universe is a natural place, not a supernatural place. Materialism: Everything that exists in the universe is some form of matter or energy. There are no gods or demons. Determinism: Matter is locked into a cause-and-effect relationship.	Physical universe

Belief	Deism	Naturalism	Atheistic existentialism	Postmodernism
Knowledge	Knowledge comes from sensory experiences, and from observing humanity. People have the ability to understand the universe through the study of nature.	Sensory empiricism: Knowledge comes from sensory experiences, form your senses. Radical empiricism: An extreme form of empiricism that says there is no need for any other method of knowing beyond empiricism. Logical positivism: A philosophical system that embraces radical empiricism.	Human experience: Human feelings and desires. Sensory experience: What one can know with one's senses.	Experiential knowledge

Belief	Deism	Naturalism	Atheistic existentialism	Postmodernism
Human nature	Humanity is personal, conscious, and self-determined. This knowledge is not a revelation from God but comes from observing humanity.	Biological machine: Human beings are just so much biological material, and like all matter, they are determined. There are no minds or souls, only brains. Reductionism: This philosophy explains the complex or mental in human beings by referring only to mere biology or mere animal. Reductionism says, "Human beings are nothing but functioning brains or are nothing but higher animals."	"Freak" personhood: Human beings have the attributes of being persons: free will, self-consciousness, symbolic existence. However, this inner life is accidental and does not matter.	Personal human beings

Belief	Deism	Naturalism	Atheistic existentialism	Postmodernism
Human problem	Right and wrong are based on the laws of the universe. It is impossible to know about life after death.	Physical causes—genetics, psychological conditioning, brain chemistry: Problems ranging from mental illness, crime, anger, and war are the products of something wrong in the natural realm of the person. Sin nature or sin is an outmoded concept in the worldview of the naturalist.	Caused by not coming to grips with one's absurd condition. Biological, psychological, and cultural sources of human problems	Blocked self-potential
Solution to human problems	It is up to the individual to determine one's own destiny apart from the influences of the creator.	Behavior modification, genetic engineering, personality-altering drugs: These treat the physical nature of the person with assumption that is all there is.	Admit to absurdity and make choices anyway: Live as though one's inner desires were of some value and had some effect on one's self and one's world.	Self-image building

Note. Adapted from *Foundations of Christian Thought: Faith, Learning and the Christian Worldview*, by M. P. Cosgrove, 2006, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This correlational research was designed to help understand the relationship between attendance at different types of church services and the Biblical worldview of high schools seniors. It is an effort to examine whether a statistically significant difference exists in the worldviews of high school seniors who have attended different Christian education contexts in churches. This chapter includes discussion of the methodology behind the study, including description of the participants, setting, instruments, procedures, research design, and data analysis.

Design

This correlation study was focused on investigating the relationship between four independent variables—students' attendance in main worship services, youth services, and Sunday school classes at their church, as well as their parents' church attendance— and one dependent variable: the students' scores on a Biblical worldview test. A correlation research design was appropriate because the research attempted to determine whether a relation existed among the variables. A correlation study was also appropriate because the research explored the extent and direction to which the variables were related (Campbell & Standley, 1963).

A survey was not appropriate because the study investigated how variables change together. *Ex post facto* research was not appropriate because the study examined the direction and strength of the relationship of the variables among the same subjects. Furthermore, an experimental research design was not appropriate because the study did not manipulate the variables (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).

This study was limited by several factors, including the self-reporting portion of the student profile. The possibility exists that students reported incorrectly. This possibility could adversely affect the data.

A convenience sample of 91 12th-grade students at a Christian school in southern California that enrolls both Christians and non-Christians was used for this study. The participants in the study were selected from those who had their parents' permission slips, had answered the survey questions, and had taken the PEERS Test. Participating students gave self-reporting answers about the independent variables. They were asked about the frequency of their church attendance at three different types of church services and the frequency of their parents' church attendance. They answered on a scale indicating 0–4 times a month. Directly following their responding to those questions, students took the PEERS Worldview Test, which gives each student a score concerning adherence to a Biblical worldview. The results of the PEERS Test were matched with the answers from the self-reporting survey to investigate the relation between different types of church attendance and Biblical worldview.

The researcher used a regression analysis between variables to determine the relation between the survey results and the score on the PEERS Test. This test investigated the quantitative effect the independent variables had on the dependent variable. Doing so allowed the researcher to determine whether a statistically significant correlation existed between the variables (Ary et al., 2006).

Questions and Hypotheses

This project was guided by the following principal research questions:

RQ1. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ2. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ3. What is the relationship between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldviews?

RQ4. What is the relationship between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldviews?

The null hypotheses aligned with the research questions for this study are as follows:

H1. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H2. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H3. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H4. No statistically significant correlation exists between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

Participants

       This research used a convenience sampling of participants. The population consisted of first-semester high school seniors in the 2012-2013 school years. They were either 17 or 18 years old and were enrolled in the Christian School. Ninety-one students were selected for the study. Seniors in high school are an excellent age to study for this research because most evangelical churches in America have structured teaching organizations and curricula for students in K-12 that use a variety of methods (Ham & Beemer, 2009). Thus, many high school seniors have had the opportunity to experience many different modalities of education in the church. Senior high school students are also appropriate for this study because of their position in adolescence. Smith et al. (2002) stated, "Adolescence represents a crucial developmental transition from childhood to adulthood and so can disclose a tremendous amount of knowledge about religious socialization and change in the life course" (p. 597). Smith et al. continued, "[A]dolescence provides an ideal baseline stage for longitudinal research on religious influences in people's lives" (p. 597).

       This study made use of a self-reporting survey that seniors at the southern California high school filled out before taking the worldview test to determine values for the independent variables. Students also reported on other moderating variables, including gender and church denomination. For students to be selected as participants in this study, they needed to be enrolled at the Christian school and have completed the self-reporting survey and PEERS Test. No incentives were given to the subjects for participation in the study.

Setting

Founded over 60 years ago, the Christian school used in this study started in a small church building and had only 40 elementary students. It has grown into one of the nation's largest K-12 private schools, with nearly 1,000 students. The school is a National Blue Ribbon School, meaning it has standardized test scores in reading and math that are in the top 10% of the nation. It is accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, a regional accrediting association that accredits private and public secondary schools and universities. The school received the maximum accreditation term. The school is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the California Interscholastic Federation, and the California Scholarship Federation and the College Board (Village Christian School, 2011).

This school does not require a student or the student's family to sign a statement of faith. A student is not required to be a Christian, attend a particular church, or attend church at all. This openness provided an excellent setting for this present research because the school has a population of students with differing levels of attendance at a variety of churches. That students attend daily Bible classes also makes this school an excellent choice for this study. Every student who attends the school should have a basic knowledge of the Bible and Christianity from taking required Bible classes.

Instrumentation

This study used the Nehemiah Institute's PEERS Worldview Test. The PEERS Test provides worldview assessment in five key areas: politics, economics, education, religion, and social issues. This 70-item test designed for high school students may be

administered through written or online formats (Nehemiah Institute, 2012). The purpose

of the test is "to measure the degree to which a person has or holds a Biblical Christian

worldview with respect to major aspects of life" (Ray, 1995, p. 2).

The test is focused on the consistency of beliefs, influence from others, and the

degree to which a person holds a certain opinion. It uses a 5-point Likert scale (i.e.,

strongly agree, *tend to agree*, *neutral*, *tend to disagree*, and *strongly disagree*) and includes

a customized profile questionnaire addressing such information as gender, ethnicity, and

religious affiliation. This profile information can be adjusted to fit the needs of the

research. Students receive a score in each of five categories: politics, economics,

education, religion, and social. The scores for the five categories are averaged, and each

student receives one composite score for the entire test. The scores on the PEERS Test

range from -100 to +100 and fall into one of four worldview classifications: Biblical

theism (70-100), moderate Christianity (30-69), secular humanism (0-29), or socialism

(< 0; Smithwick, 2008). This instrument was used because of its strong statistical

reliability and validity, its complete acceptance by researchers, and its online delivery

method (Ray, 1995).

The PEERS Test (CITE) defined the worldview categories as follows.

Biblical theism (70–100). A firm understanding of issues as interpreted from

scripture. The individual is allowing the scriptures to guide his reasoning

regarding ethical, moral and legal issues to determine correct or incorrect

thinking. Truth is seen as absolute for all ages for all time.

Moderate Christianity (30–69). Basically, "one foot in the Kingdom and

one foot in the world." A blended view of God as creator and ruler, but man as

self-determiner of the world. This position generally sees God as supreme in matters of religion but not concerned with matters related to governments, economics and to some degree education.

Secular humanism (0–29). Man is supreme. By chance, the human race has evolved to the highest form of life, but has responsibility to see that lower forms of life are not abused by man. The masses are more important than the individual.

Socialism (< 0). Mankind cannot prosper as individuals acting alone. A ruling authority is necessary to ensure that all facets of life are conducted fairly and in harmony. The authority must be the state (civil authorities) with the elite of society serving as its leaders. (Smithwick, 2012, p. 7)

In 1995, the PEERS Worldview Test was put through a professional validity and reliability assessment by B. Ray, a Professor at Oregon State University. As part of the validity assessment, Ray (Nehemiah Institute, 2011) tested the construct validity. *Construct validity* is "the extent to which a test is measuring the psychological construct it is intended to measure" (Ary et al., 2006, p. 313). To test construct validity, Ray used a panel of 10 experts, five of whom represented a Biblical view and five of whom were known to refute Christianity. The members of this panel, selected from across the United States, were experts in the topic of worldview and selected from leaders within organizations with strong opinions regarding worldviews. Both groups were given the PEERS Test, and as predicted, the test showed strong differences in the worldviews of the two groups (Smithwick, 2012). The panel of experts was also used to rate the degree the questions would identify worldviews. Ray (1995) reported, "At least 70% of the

experts decided that 83% of the items would identify worldview as defined by the publisher. The general agreement among the experts supports the validity of the test" (p 2).

To test reliability, the extent to which an instrument consistently measures what it is supposed to measure (Hopkins, Stanley, & Hopkins, 1990), Ray (1995) used 200 individuals in a pre-test/post-test style. Cronbach's internal consistency alpha was used to determine reliability (Ray, 1995). Instruments that test attitudes and beliefs generally have a reliability coefficient ranging from the .60s to the .80s (Borg & Gall, 1989). Only one of the alphas for this test's five subscales rated below .78 (Politics at .83, Economics at .80, Education at .82, Religion at .65 and Social issues at .78), and the total alpha for the PEERS Test was .94 (Ray, 1995). This result provides sufficient evidence that the PEERS Test is internally consistent.

From 1988 to 2012, the PEERS Test has been used over 100,000 times by many educational researchers and worldview scholars (Smithwick, 2012). When Ray (1995) released his findings, he concluded,

> The PEERS Test is designed to measure the degree to which a person has or holds
> a biblical Christian worldview with respect to major aspects of life (i.e., political,
> economical, educational, religious, and social). The evidence examined during
> this evaluation indicates that the validity of the instrument is more than
> satisfactory for most purposes, and it reliability (i.e., structural consistency) is
> very strong. The findings of this study suggest that the PEERS Test may be
> successfully used for individual assessment, group assessment and research
> purposes. (p. 7)

Procedures

Approval of the IRB board was received before any research was conducted. After IRB approval was received, the research process started with the researcher contacting the school administrator to seek written permission to conduct the study and publish the results. After this permission was received, the researcher contacted the facilitators, the 12th-grade Bible teachers. These teachers were asked to participate in the study, and those participating in the study were sent a follow-up e-mail with all the information. After their agreeing to participate, a timeline was developed for the remainder of the project. The next step was to obtain consent forms from each student or the student's legal guardian. The facilitators passed out the consent forms in class to be returned in 2 days. After all the consent forms were received, the facilitators administered the self-reporting survey which included the following questions:

Q1. On average, how many times a month over the past 6 years did you attend the main worship service of your church?

Q2. On average, how many times a month over the past 6 years did you attend the youth service at your church? .

Q3. On average, how many times a month over the past 6 years did you attend a Sunday school class of your church?

Q4. On average, how many times a month over the past 6 years did your parents attend church?

After the self-reporting survey, the facilitators administered the PEERS Worldview Test following guidelines provided by the researcher. When the survey and test were completed the researcher utilized the data from participants who had completed

both the self-reporting survey and the PEERS Test. These data were analyzed to determine whether a significant correlation existed between attendance at a local church and Biblical worldviews.

Data Analysis

A linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of this study. Regression analysis was appropriate because the research was focused on determining how one variable, church attendance, affected another variable, a score on a worldview test. To do so, a linear regression analysis was conducted for each type of church attendance. This data analysis method investigated the quantitative effect the independent variables had on the dependent variable. Because there was only one explanatory variable, a simple regression model was used. Doing so allowed the researcher to discover the causal effect of one variable on another and provide an assessment of statistical significance.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, this study was focused on determining whether a relationship exists between the Christian education context of the local church and the Biblical worldviews of 12th-grade students. This investigation was accomplished by testing the Biblical worldviews of senior high school students who had different levels of involvement in church-based Christian education. The independent variables focused on attendance in the Christian education context of church: main worship services, youth services, Sunday school classes, and parents' attendance at church. The dependent variable values were the students' score on the PEERS Worldview Test. The scores on the PEERS Test range from -100 to +100 and fall into one of four worldview classifications: Biblical theism (70-100), moderate Christianity (30-69), secular humanism (0-29), and socialism (< 0; Smithwick, 2012). The study was designed to provide insight into how different contexts of Christian education in the church influence worldviews.

As indicated in Chapter 3, a linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of this study. Each type of church attendance was compared to the composite scores on the worldview test. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were examined, as well as simple regression. Doing so provided an assessment of statistical significance and allowed the researcher to analyze the relationship of one variable to another.

This chapter is focused on presenting the results of the statistical analyses. It begins with a description of the overall worldviews of the participants, then is focused on

the four specific hypotheses of this study, and concludes with a comparison of participants' scores with national averages. The hypotheses of this study were as follows:

H1. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H2. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H3. No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

H4. No statistically significant correlation exists between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

Participants' Worldviews

Participants in this research were 91 seniors at a Christian school in southern California during the 2012–2013 school year. Each student took an online PEERS Worldview Test specifically designed for high school students. The average composite score of the 91 students was a 3.75. This score puts the average student's worldview in the bottom portion of the secular humanism category. The standard deviation for the composite scores is 13.87 with a variance of 27.74.

The participant group included 37 girls and 54 boys. Girls scored slightly higher on the mean composite score than boys, averaging 5.32 to the boys' 2.65 as shown in

Table 2. Female students scored closer to a Biblical worldview in all five subcategories; however, the differences were negligible on a 200-point scale. The students came from a variety of denominations, as shown in Table 4. The Christian Church had the highest number of students at 35.

Table 2

The Mean Scores for the PEERS Test

	Politics	Econ	Ed	Religion	Social	Composite
Mean	-3.18	9.89	-6.86	17.98	0.95	3.75

Table 3

The Mean Scores of the PEERS Test by Gender

	Politics	Econ	Ed	Religion	Social	Composite
Female	-1.62	11.73	-7.67	21.65	2.52	5.32
Male	-4.29	8.60	-6.30	15.40	-0.16	2.65

Table 4

Participants by Denomination

Denomination	Count
Adventist	1
Apostolic	1
Assemblies of God	1
Baptist	4
Baptist - independent	1
Christian Church	35
Church of Christ	2

Denomination	Count
Community Church	1
Evangelical Free	5
Foursquare	3
Lutheran	2
Methodist	3
Nazarene	2
Orthodox	1
Presbyterian	9
Roman Catholic	6
United Church of Christ	1
Other	7
None	6

Table 5 shows the average composite and subcategory PEERS Worldview Test scores of participants by denomination. It also shows the comparison of these scores to the national average for the specified participants' denominations. Students from this study scored lower than the national average in all denominations except for Lutheran. The two students in this study who marked Lutheran for denomination had an average composite score of 24.29, but the national average is 21.43.

Table 5

Average PEERS Scores by Denomination Compared to National Average

Denomination	*n*	Pol	Econ	Ed	Rel	Soc	Comp
Adventist	1	-12.86	-17.14	-21.43	15.71	8.57	-5.43
National avg.		-2.00	1.71	-5.43	35.71	28.57	11.71
Apostolic	1	12.86	48.57	11.43	-17.14	17.14	14.57
National avg.		6.57	20.71	17.71	53.00	29.57	25.51
Assemblies of God	1	7.14	12.86	-18.57	27.14	18.57	9.43
National avg.		23.51	30.55	33.86	60.54	38.08	37.31
Baptist	4	3.93	26.79	11.07	29.29	12.86	18.79
National avg.		32.61	39.20	43.11	62.56	52.28	45.95
Baptist – Indep	1	18.57	50.00	11.43	42.86	34.29	31.43
National avg.		21.79	30.02	30.86	55.81	38.44	35.38
Christian Church	35	-3.47	4.86	-9.63	12.33	-2.69	0.28
National avg.		16.22	25.38	24.94	49.51	29.89	29.19
Church of Christ	2	-3.57	27.86	-8.57	19.29	6.43	8.29
National avg.		14.13	25.23	16.59	38.86	28.93	24.75
Community	1	-15.71	4.29	-31.43	-4.29	8.57	-7.71
National avg.		38.71	41.22	46.54	65.63	48.40	48.10
Evangelical Free	5	2.00	19.71	5.43	23.14	5.71	11.20
National avg.		24.06	30.07	33.10	58.63	41.83	37.54
Foursquare	3	-13.81	10.00	-4.29	26.19	16.67	6.95
National avg.		7.25	23.74	9.89	36.04	18.35	19.05
Lutheran	2	20.71	45.71	3.57	23.57	27.86	24.29
National avg.		10.23	19.44	13.77	43.58	20.12	21.43
Methodist	3	-21.43	-6.19	-30.95	3.33	-33.81	-17.81
National avg.		14.64	25.06	17.76	46.70	26.54	26.14
Nazarene	2	2.86	12.14	6.43	35.71	19.29	15.29
National avg.		32.39	38.97	48.64	66.74	49.67	47.28
Orthodox	1	-18.57	-8.57	-22.86	-10.00	-34.29	-18.86
National avg.		13.78	18.37	13.27	31.12	14.90	18.29

Denomination	*n*	Pol	Econ	Ed	Rel	Soc	Comp
Presbyterian	10	1.00	9.29	-3.43	32.43	2.71	8.40
National avg.		26.21	37.36	32.56	56.74	38.71	38.31
Roman Catholic	6	-8.10	7.14	-10.71	26.19	0.95	3.10
National avg.		9.81	19.47	14.79	42.35	22.70	21.82
United Church of Christ	1	30.00	30.00	-4.29	5.71	-11.43	10.00
National avg.		32.86	33.57	15.71	51.43	26.43	32.00
Other	7	-11.22	16.12	-9.39	27.14	6.94	5.92
National avg.		26.16	37.46	37.08	56.22	41.10	39.60
None	6	-5.95	2.86	-3.81	-4.52	-12.86	-6.00
National avg.		5.46	21.05	13.71	14.79	8.60	12.72

Table 6 shows the scores of the students in this study compared to the national average scores on the PEERS test over the previous 10 years according to high school class level. The students in this study scored lower in each category than the national average for any of the class levels.

Table 6

National Average Scores by Grade Level Over the Previous 10 Years

Class level	*n*	Pol	Econ	Ed	Rel	Soc	Comp
Freshman	3046	11.30	15.13	18.04	49.08	32.15	25.14
Sophomore	1860	12.84	17.65	19.63	48.75	34.69	26.71
Junior	2706	16.21	22.13	22.37	51.81	37.22	29.95
Seniors	7848	18.95	26.81	25.64	55.27	40.61	33.46
Present study (seniors)	91	-3.18	9.89	-6.86	17.98	0.95	3.75

Null Hypotheses 1: No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldview score on the PEERs Worldview Test.

Participants were asked in a self-reporting survey to report on their average church attendance at the main worship services of their churches over the previous 6 years. Answers ranged from 0-to-4 times a month. These results were paired with the participants' scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Doing so determined whether a relationship existed between students' attendance at the main worship services of their churches and their having a Biblical worldview. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were examined, as well as a linear equation, to determine whether a statistically significant relation existed.

Figure 1 shows participants' answers to survey Question 1 concerning attendance at the main worship services of their churches and the composite scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Results for $H1_0$ showed a slight positive linear correlation with a $y = 1.54$. The correlation coefficient of the composite scores and the students' answers for H1 was $r = .18$, with a coefficient of determination of $r2 = .03$. The standard deviation of the composite scores was 13.87, with a variance of 27.74. The p-value for H1 was .084. Table 7 shows the average composite score for each of the church attendance options for survey Question 1, including the standard deviation.
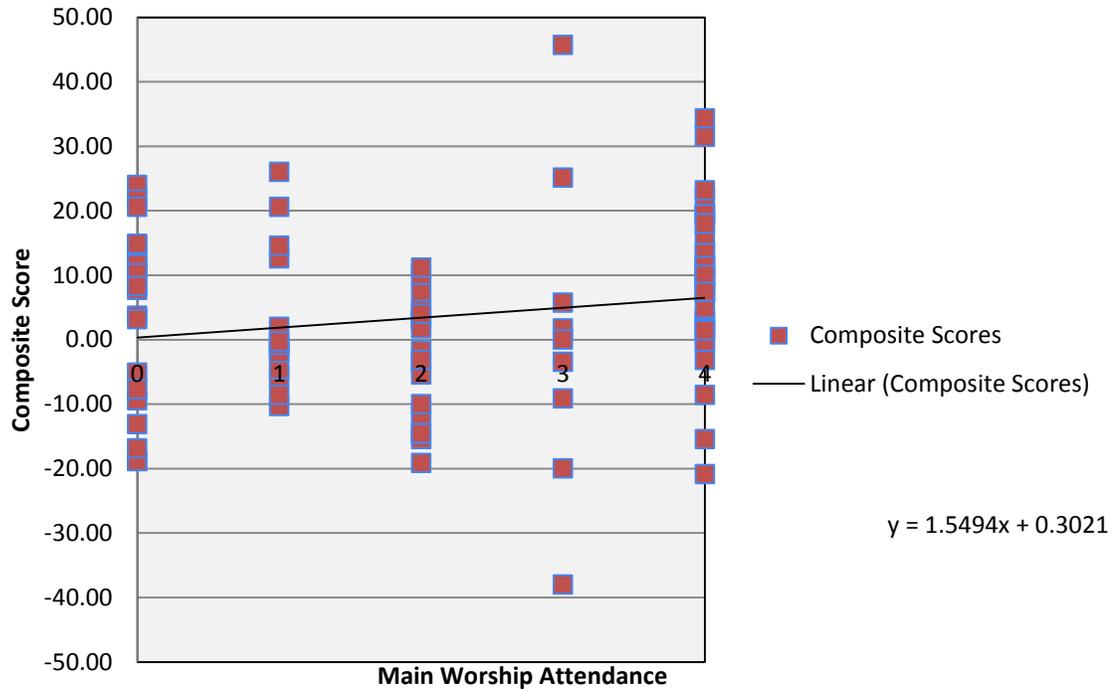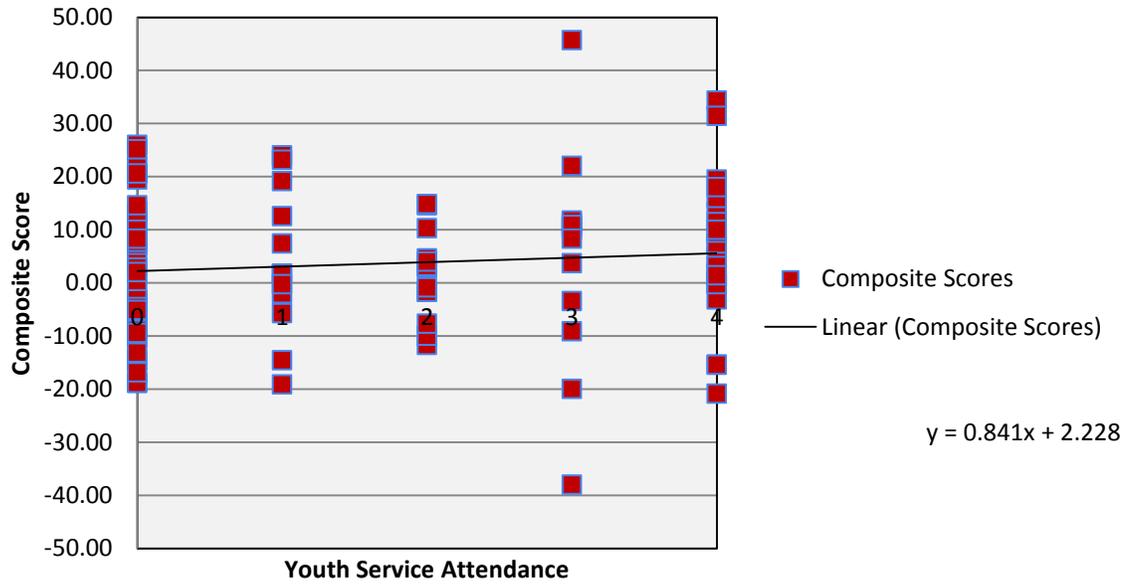
Figure 1. Composite scores and main worship service attendance.

Table 7

Average Composite Scores for Survey Question 1

Average composite scores	Main worship attendance	*n*	*SD*	2*std (95%)
3.0	0	18	14.4	28.9
2.9	1	14	11.1	22.2
-3.0	2	18	9.4	18.7
0.9	3	9	24.2	48.4
9.1	4	32	11.8	23.7

Null Hypotheses 2: No statistically significant correlation exists between students'

attendance in the youth services of their churches and their Biblical worldview

scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

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Participants were asked in a self-reporting survey to report on their average

church attendance at the youth services of their churches over the previous 6 years.

Answers ranged from 0-to-4 times a month. These results were paired with the

participants' scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Doing so determined whether a

relationship existed between students' attendance at the youth services of their churches

and their Biblical worldviews. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients

were examined, as well as the linear equation, to determine whether a statistically

significant relationship existed.

Figure 2 shows the participants' answers to survey Question 2 concerning

attendance at the youth services of their churches and their composite scores on the

PEERS Worldview Test. Results for $H2_0$ showed a slight positive linear correlation, with

$y = 0.84$. The correlation coefficient of the composite scores and the students' answers

for H2 was $r = .10$, with a coefficient of determination of $r2 = .01$. The p-value for H2

was .335. Table 8 shows the average composite score for each of the church attendance

options for survey Question 1, including the standard deviation.

Figure 2. Composite scores and youth service attendance.

Table 8

Average Composite Scores for Survey Question 2

Average composite scores	Youth service attendance	n	SD	2*std (95%)
2.2	0	30	13.8	27.5
4.0	1	12	13.9	27.8
1.7	2	14	8.2	16.3
3.0	3	13	20.2	40.3
6.1	4	22	13.6	27.2

Null Hypotheses 3: No statistically significant correlation exists between students' attendance in the Sunday school classes of their churches and their Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

Participants were asked in a self-reporting survey to report on their average church attendance in Sunday school classes at their churches over the previous 6 years. Answers ranged from 0–to-4 times a month. These results were paired with the participants' scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Doing so determined whether a relationship existed between students' attendance at Sunday school classes and their Biblical worldviews. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were examined, as well as the linear equation, to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed.

Figure 3 shows the participants' answers to survey Question 3 concerning attendance at Sunday school classes and the composite scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Results for $H3_0$ showed a slight positive linear correlation, with $y = 0.26$. The correlation coefficient of the composite scores and the students' answers concerning H3 was $r = .03$, with a coefficient of determination of $r2 = .001$. The p-value for H3 was .763. Table 9 shows the average composite score for each of the church attendance options for survey Question 3, including the standard deviation.
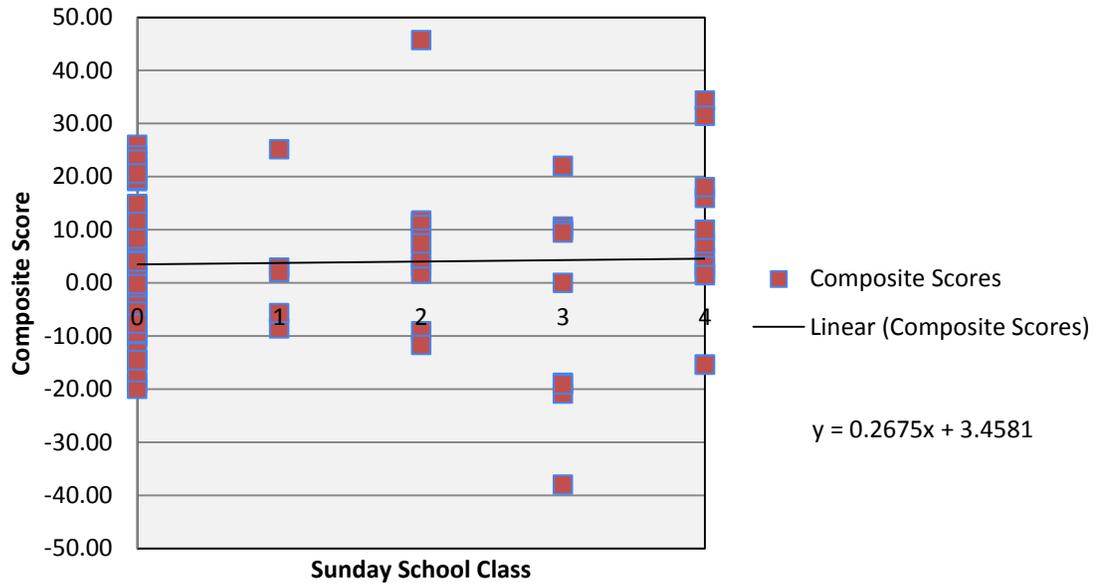
Figure 3. Composite scores and Sunday school class attendance.

Table 9

Average Composite Scores for Survey Question 3

Average composite scores	Sunday school attendance	*n*	*SD*	2*std
3.4	0	54	-12.1	-24.1
3.1	1	5	13.2	26.5
7.6	2	11	14.9	29.7
-5.0	3	9	19.9	39.8
8.1	4	12	15.4	30.9

Null Hypotheses 4: No statistically significant correlation exists between the attendance of students' parents in churches and the students' Biblical worldview scores on the PEERS Worldview Test.

Participants were asked in a self-reporting survey to report on their parents' average church attendance over the previous 6 years. Answers ranged from 0-to-4 times a month. These results were paired with the participants' scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Doing so determined whether a relationship existed between the church attendance of students' parents and the students' Biblical worldview. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were examined, as well as the linear equation, to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed.

Figure 4 shows the participants' answers to survey Question 4 concerning parents' church attendance and the students' composite scores on the PEERS Worldview Test. Results for $H4_0$ showed a slight positive linear correlation, with $y = 0.91$. The correlation coefficient of the composite scores and the students' answers for H4 was $r = .11$, with a coefficient of determination of $r2 = .013$. The p-value for H4 was .270. Table 10 shows the average composite score for each of the church attendance options for survey Question 4, including the standard deviation.
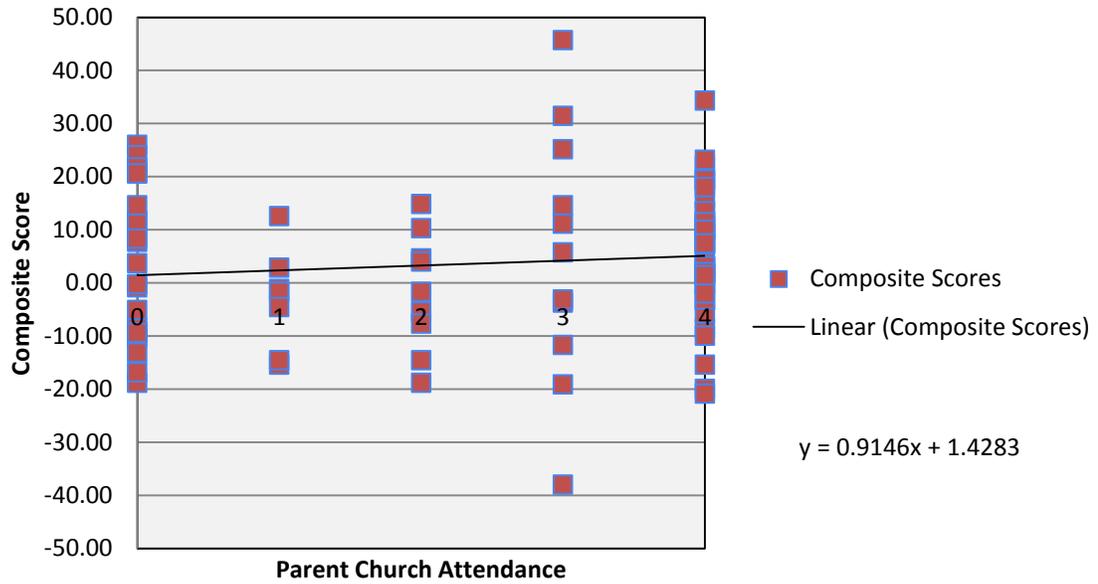
Figure 4. Students' composite scores and church attendance of parents.

Table 10

Average Composite Scores for Survey Question 4

Average composite scores	Parent church attendance	*N*	*SD*	2*std
3.5	0	20	14.6	29.3
-3.1	1	7	9.8	19.5
-1.6	2	9	11.2	22.4
5.3	3	11	24.0	47.9
5.6	4	44	11.1	22.3

Summary

The research in this chapter was conducted to determine whether a relationship existed between different contexts of Christian education in the church and Biblical worldview. Ninety-one 12th-grade students from a Christian school in southern California participated in the study. The students in this study scored lower on the

PEERS Worldview Test than the overall national average, class-level national average, and all denominational national averages except for Lutheran. The composite score of the 91 students was 3.75, which is in the secular humanism worldview category. The standard deviation for the composite scores of the 91 students was 13.87, with a variance of 27.74.

The research indicated little to no correlation between the students' attendance at the different types of Christian education context of the church and their worldviews. Table 11 shows the correlation coefficients for the hypotheses and the p-values. Figure 5 shows the composite score correlation coefficients.

Table 11

Correlation Coefficients of the Composite Scores

Hypothesis	Correlation coefficients	Coefficient of determination	P-Value
H1: Main worship service	0.181885	0.033082163	0.084
H2: Youth service	0.102092	0.010422713	0.335
H3: Sunday school	0.031986	0.001023093	0.763
H4: Parent attendance	0.116620	0.013600214	0.270
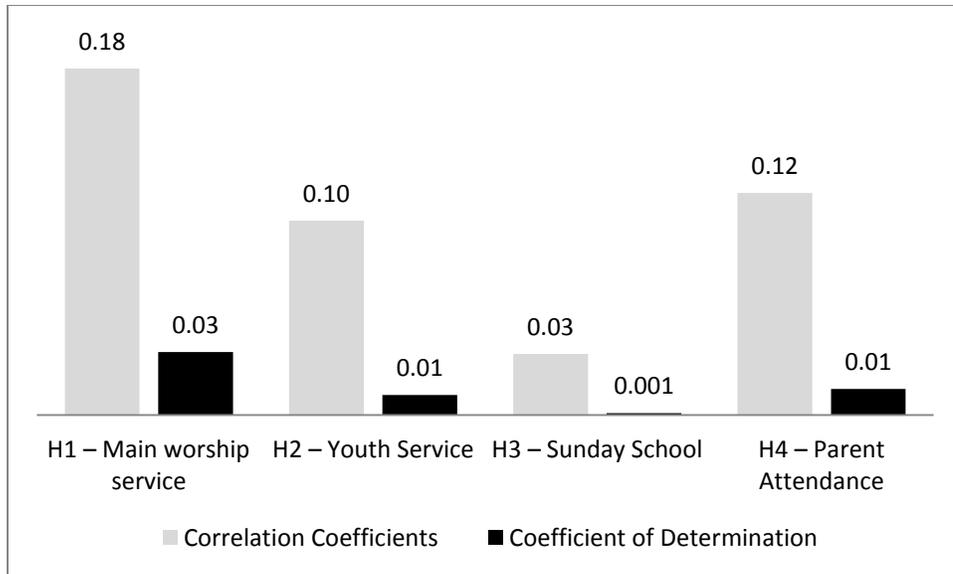
Figure 5. Bar graph of composite score correlation coefficients.

H1$_0$. Analysis showed a very slight positive linear correlation between students'

attendance at the main worship services of their churches and their Biblical worldviews

($y = 1.54$). The correlation coefficient for H1$_0$ was $r = .18$, with a correlation of

determination of $r2 = .033$. The p-value for H1$_0$ was .084. This study revealed little to

no statistically significant correlation between students' attendance at main worship

services and their Biblical worldviews.

H2$_0$. Analysis showed a very slight positive linear correlation between students'

attendance at youth services and their Biblical worldviews ($y = 0.84$). The correlation

coefficient for H2$_0$ was $r = .10$, with a correlation of determination of $r2 = .01$. The p-

value for H2$_0$ was .335. This study revealed little to no statistically significant correlation

between students' attendance at youth services and their Biblical worldviews.

H3$_0$. Analysis showed a very slight positive linear correlation between students'

attendance at Sunday school classes and their Biblical worldviews ($y = 0.26$.) The

correlation coefficient for H3$_0$ was $r = .03$, with a correlation of determination of $r2 =$

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.001. The p-value for $H3_0$ was .763. This study revealed little to no statistically significant correlation between students' attending Sunday school classes and their Biblical worldviews.

$H4_0$. Analysis showed a very slight positive linear correlation between the parents of students attending church and the students' Biblical worldviews ($y = 0.91$). The correlation coefficient for $H4_0$ was $r = .11$, with a correlation of determination of $r2 = .013$. The p-value for $H4_0$ was .270. This study revealed little to no statistically significant correlation between the parents of students attending church and the students' Biblical worldviews.

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research data of this study. Chapter 5 includes discussion focused on understanding these results. It will include discussions on the findings, study limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 presented the linear regression data analyses used to measure the relationship between different contexts of students' Christian education in the church (main worship service, youth service, Sunday school class, and parent attendance at church) and the students' Biblical worldviews. It gave the descriptive statistics for each of the four hypotheses as well as total church attendance and a comparison of the worldviews of the participants in this study to national averages. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and interpret the data from this study in light of the theoretical framework and related literature. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the findings, discussion of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Findings

This study found that, for the 12th-grade students at this Christian school in southern California, there was little to no correlation between their church attendance and their worldviews. All four null hypotheses were supported by the results. Little to no statistically significant relationship was found between students' attendance at main worship services, youth services, or Sunday school classes or the church attendance of students' parents and the students' Biblical worldviews.

An examination of the composite scores of the students showed a slight upward trend in the correlation between church attendance and Biblical worldview. However, the correlation coefficients were low, and the standard deviations and variance were high. The highest correlation was for $H1_0$. Attendance at the main worship service and the students' Biblical worldviews had the highest correlation coefficient ($r = .18$) and the highest linear regression ($y = 1.5$). Attendance at the main worship service also showed

the highest composite scores by monthly attendance and had the lowest p-value (.084). Although $H1_0$ had a higher correlation to worldview than the other hypothesis, the numbers were too low to show a statistically significant relationship. The correlation coefficient was close to zero, indicating little to no correlation (Ary et al., 2006). The y = 1.5 is a positive linear correlation but flat and insignificant. It shows that attending one more main worship service a month did increase these students' worldviews, but only by 1.5 points on the 200-point PEERS Worldview Test. H1 had the larger correlation in this study. However, for church attendance to show a real effect on students' worldviews, a 15-30 point difference is needed to move a student from one worldview category to the next.

The composite scores of $H2_0$, $H3_0$, and $H4_0$ showed slight positive correlations, but no statistical significance. Attendance at Sunday school classes had the smallest correlation. The p-values for these hypotheses were well above the .05 standard. With a correlation coefficient of $r = .03$ and a y = 0.26, attendance at Sunday school classes made no difference, positive or negative, on the Biblical worldviews of these students. Attending one more Sunday school class per month would have increased a student's score on the PEERS Worldview Test by only 0.26 on a 200-point scale.

Attending main worship services at church 4 times a month was correlated to a stronger worldview score than attending 1 or 2 times a month or not at all. However, it was not statistically significant. No real conclusions can be drawn from the data concerning attending 3 times a month because of its high standard deviation and few (9) responses. Those who attended twice a month scored lowest in every category except for Sunday school. Students who attended any church meeting 4 times a month were slightly

less humanist in their worldviews than those who did not attend at all. While attending 4 times a month did make a difference, it was a very slight correlation. The students who attended 0 times a month had very similar worldview scores, indicating that the non-churched students in this area were very uniform in their worldviews.

This result is interesting considering Brickhill (2010) and Bryant (2008) found church attendance did have an effect on students' worldviews. There are several likely reasons for this discrepancy. It is possible the worldview test did not accurately assess the students' Christianity or the students did not fill out the worldview test or the self-reporting test accurately. It could also indicate this population of students in southern California was simply different from those in the Brickhill and Bryant studies. This last option seems the most plausible considering the low overall score on the PEERS Test for these participants in comparison to the national average. Also, the students in this study had significantly lower average composite scores on the PEERS Test than the students in the Brickhill and Bryant studies.

The results of this southern California study showed that parent church attendance is not correlated to the students' Biblical worldviews. This may be regarded in opposition to the research of Dudley and Dudley (1986) and Bao, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Conger (1999) which shows parents play an important role in the transmission of religious beliefs and practices to their children. However, these research results are not necessarily in opposition. It is possible the worldviews of parents in this southern California study do correlate to worldviews of their children. Further research would be needed to confirm this for this specific population. The data from these 91 students suggests that church attendance is simply not a factor in parent to student religious transmission.

When reviewing the data for this research, it is important to understand the population studied. The students in this study did not appear to represent the average student in America. For the students in this study, the average of all the scores on the PEERS Worldview Test fell into the secular humanist category, significantly lower than the national average. The average student in this study was a borderline socialist, and the average student in America was a borderline secular humanist. The senior high school students in this study scored 29.71 points lower in composite scores than the national average for senior high school students. They also had lower average scores on the PEERS Test in all five subcategories. Although they scored highest in religion, it was still 32.92 points less than the national average. Thus, the students who took part in this study were not indicative of the national averages for the PEERS Test.

The overall worldviews of the students in this study are consistent with Autio's (2005) claim that the Christian worldview is not the dominate worldview in America. This research is also consistent with Barna's (2003, 2009) research that shows a decline of a Biblical worldview in America and the Nehemiah Institute's (1998) study that showed the secular humanist worldview is replacing the Biblical worldview in Christian schools.

The lower test scores for this particular population did not seem to be a product of a particular church or denomination. Following the trend, the students in this study scored significantly lower in their average worldview scores than the average for their denomination, with the exception of two Lutheran students, who scored higher on this study. However, the population for comparison was extremely small with only two participants in this study claiming to be Lutheran. Most students from this study attended

the Christian Church (35) and scored 28.91 points lower on the worldview test than the national average for students in the Christian Church. It is not the Christian Church that has a lower worldview, but these particular students. The overall lower PEERS scores and the lower denomination scores indicate that the population for this survey was in the bottom of the national average. It is possible that this set of students is a small subset in the nation for whom church attendance is not correlated to worldview. More research is required to see whether this is a national trend or simply specific to these students in this area.

For the 91 students at this Christian school in southern California, the data indicated that the level of student attendance at church is not a factor in the development of their worldviews. The data also indicated that parent attendance at church is not factor in the development of students' worldviews. Church attendance of any kind did not have a positive or negative relationship with the Biblical worldviews of these students. The church seemed to be irrelevant to their worldviews.

Study Limitations

This study had several limitations. Having only 91 students participate in this study limited the strength of the research (Ary et al., 2006). If more students had been tested, the strength of the research would have been increased. This research was also limited by its choices in convenience sampling. All participants were from the same school. It is possible that the school represented in this study attracts people with a humanist worldview. The fact that all the students were from the same state and area was also a limitation. It is possible that these students grew up in a strong humanist culture and church attendance had no effect on their worldviews.

Self-reporting of the student profile was also a limitation. There is the possibility that students could report incorrectly or that the church they attended did not have a programmatic structure that fit the research questions. This situation could confuse the students and cause them to report incorrectly, having a serious effect on the analysis of the data (Ary et al., 2006).

Because of these factors and the fact that the participants in this study scored very differently from the national average, this research should not be generalized to the whole of the United States. When analyzing the data in this format, a researcher must always consider alternative explanations, such as reverse causality, common cause, and the presence of other independent variables (Ary et al., 2006).

Implications

One of the main reasons researchers conduct research is because they expect to find some kind of relationship between factors. Researchers, expecting a relationship, design experiments to indicate the expected relationship. When the research is accomplished, if the relationship proves to be true, then the researcher can continue to function under the original assumption of the relationship. However, if a relationship is not shown, then the thought process regarding the factors needs to change. A change in thought then leads to a change in action to align action better with what is now known to be true.

This researcher began this study with an assumption that attendance in different types of church education would enhance the Biblical worldviews of students. The desired effect was to determine which context of church education had a higher relationship with students' having Biblical worldviews. This investigation made sense

considering that one of the main jobs of the church is to convey a Biblical worldview to its parishioners. However, the research showed little to no relationship between Christian education contexts of the church and Biblical worldviews of students. Thus, a change of thought about the relationship needs to occur and, with this change of thought, a change of action.

The implication of this research for the church is significant. The research shows that, for this population, the church is having little to no effect on students' worldviews. This is sad news for the church and a wake-up call. In light of this research, churches must begin to reevaluate the way they go about teaching and developing Biblical worldviews in students. The research showed that, among these students, current methods are not working. The methods and strategies implemented in main worship services, youth services, and Sunday school classes are not effective at imparting a Biblical worldview. The church is not able to overcome the culture of secular humanism and socialism.

Many churches, especially those that have been around many years, can fall into the trap of using decades-old methods and strategies for teaching current students. Although the Biblical worldview does not change over time, students and the cultures of students do change. Churches need to evaluate constantly their priorities and strategies to ensure they are effectively reaching current students in the current culture. Methods, practices, and strategies need to be continually adjusted to reach the new culture and student.

To improve their ability to affect worldview, churches need to take a more intentional approach. Being more specific and deliberate at worldview transfer is

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essential to the churches' success. The following are suggestions for improving churches' ability to convey worldview. First, pastors and teachers in the church need to be trained in Biblical worldviews. The beliefs and values of teachers influence students (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003), so it is vital that pastors and teachers in the church be fully training in Biblical worldview thinking. Research has shown that teaching from a Biblical worldview perspective by an experienced and trained teacher increases Biblical worldview in students (Fyock, 2008). Second, teachers should teach about worldviews directly. Churches need to teach what worldviews are and how they affect people's lives. Doing so could help students understand and work on their worldviews. The use of a curriculum such as Noebel's (1994) *Understanding the Times* or Overman and Johnson's (2003) *Making the Connections: How to Put Biblical Worldview Integration into Practice* could help teachers focus on cultivating a worldview.

Third, churches should implement specific worldview-based instruction. The church can implement a curriculum that has a specific focus on conveying a Biblical worldview. Research has shown that students who have received Biblical worldview training have shown an increase in overall Biblical worldview (Taylor, 2009). Fourth, such worldview-based instruction should be implemented at an early age. An effective worldview teaching program does not begin at high school. Research has shown that implementing worldview teaching over time does affect students' worldviews (Taylor, 2009). The church needs to focus its teaching early; using age-appropriate methods, churches need to train children to think critically and to apply the Bible to their lives at a young age. Finally, parents should also be trained concerning the importance of worldviews and how to develop a Biblical worldview in their children. Parents are one of

the strongest influences on student beliefs (Bao et al., 1999; Grusec et al., 2000). Therefore, parents and churches should work together in developing students' worldviews.

This research showed that, for the students in this study, the church is not being effective at conveying a Biblical worldview. If this finding is true, then the church needs to change the way it is teaching. As stated earlier, there is an ongoing battle for truth in America (Dobson & Bauer, 1990), and the church is on the forefront of this battle, attempting to fight against the overwhelming humanistic and socialistic worldviews. Research has shown that the church is losing this battle (Barna, 2011; Barna Group, 2009). Something must be done. The church cannot afford to keep the status quo. To be effective, it must be constantly evaluating and changing the way it is teaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research sheds light on the correlation between different types of church attendance and students' Biblical worldviews. However, because of the limitations for this study, the information cannot be generalized. The results of this study illuminate the need for further research in this field.

Further research is needed to better understand what type of relationship exists between different types church attendance and worldview. This study should be replicated with a much larger population representing a variety of cultures and student class levels. Students from different states, different socioeconomic backgrounds, and different cultures (urban and rural) should participate in a study to develop a broader understanding of the relationship between church involvement and worldviews. The research should also be repeated with students from a variety of educational

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environments. It would be interesting to see what the relationship is like for students in public schools, private schools, and Christian schools and home-schooled students. Increasing the population and expanding the scope of this study would provide a better picture of the overall state of the relationship of church attendance with worldview.

The analysis could be expanded to include the five sub-categories that make up the composite score, students overall church attendance, and additional survey questions such as attendance at small-group studies. As an example for further research, data on the five sub-categories is contained in Appendix E through Appendix H. One predictor of religiosity among students not addressed in this study is the church attendance of students' peers (Gunnoe & Moore, 2002). Incorporating this factor into the research could further understanding. Expanding the study to include adults would also provide more in-depth information concerning the effectiveness of church-based Christian education.

The next step with this research would be to consider the students who scored high on the PEERS Worldview Test and determine what they have in common. A new study could be implemented to test the new assumed relationships. If relationships were found, churches could implement these into the Christian education context of their churches for better effectiveness.

To develop this research topic further, a study could be conducted to examine groups of students whose worldviews correlate to their church attendance. Using this group of students and their specific churches, a study could be developed to discover what these churches are doing to be effective at developing Biblical worldviews. Doing

so would provide important information on specific methods the church uses in specific

settings that are effective at imparting a Biblical worldview.

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APPENDIX A: SCRIPT FOR TEACHERS TO INFORM STUDENTS
ABOUT THE STUDY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
David Rutledge
Liberty University
School of Education

Please read this to the students to inform them of the purpose and their participation in the study:

You are invited to be in a research study on the impact of different types of church attendance on Biblical worldview development. You were selected as a possible participant because of your attendance at a Christian school and the fact that you are a senior.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of church attendance on Biblical worldview. One of the goals of Church education is to train students who develop a Christian view of the world. This study may help to better understand the church's influence on Biblical worldview development.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take the PEERS survey and answer several brief questions. This should take between 30 and 45 minutes. The time will be allotted during a normal class period for taking the test.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The risks involved in this study are no more than an individual would encounter in everyday life. There is no individual benefit to participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

All records and tests for this study will be kept private, and any published data will not include the school's name or the name of any individual. Students will not provide their names on the test. To ensure confidentiality, raw data will be coded and analyzed by the survey's publisher, the Nehemiah Institute, and provided to the researcher in Microsoft Excel format.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

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

To participate in this study you must first complete the consent form. I will pass out these forms to you, and you will have 4 days to have them signed and returned to me to participate in the study.

Contacts and Questions:

This study is being conducted by: David Rutledge, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, under the direction of Dr. Toni Stanton, Professor of Education.

If you or your parents have questions, **you are encouraged** to contact Mr. Rutledge at dsrutledge@liberty.edu or by phone at 818-843-0900. You may also contact the Liberty University Advisor on this research at: Toni Stanton, Ed.D. Assistant Professor, School of Education. Office: (251)752-3242

If you have any 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, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Main worship Service – This is the main gathering of members of a church. Usually held in the sanctuary on Sunday morning and involves teaching and different forms of worship.

Youth Service – This is a meeting that is directed specifically at high school age students for the purpose of general spiritual development. This service is often lead by a youth pastor and can include games, events, activities, worship and teaching.

Sunday School Class - This is a meeting that is focused on teaching different aspects of Christianity. It is a class that focuses on religious education.

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO HEADMASTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
David Rutledge
Liberty University
School of Education

Dear (Headmaster):

Recently, you were contacted regarding a doctoral research project dealing with the
impact of different types of church attendance on the Biblical worldview of seniors in
high school. My name is David Rutledge, and I am a doctoral candidate and the primary
investigator on this project. I am asking you to consider allowing your senior students to
participate in this study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of church attendance on Biblical
worldview. One of the goals of church education is to train students who develop a
Christian view of the world. This study may help to better understand the church's
influence on Biblical worldview development.

The study requires that senior students take a self-reporting survey questioning them
about their attendance at the main worship, Sunday school, and youth service, and their
parent's attendance at a local church. Students will also take the PEERS worldview test.
This test measures the extent to which students hold a Biblical worldview. The data will
then be used to see if there is a correlation between attendance in the Christian education
context of the local church and the Biblical worldview of the students.   The self
reporting questions and the PEERs test can be taken on the computer and should take
approximately 30 minutes.

I am requesting that some of the class time of the senior Bible class be used for this
research.   The risks involved in this study are no more than an individual would
encounter in everyday life.
All records and tests for this study will be kept private, and any published data will not
include the school's name or the name of any individual. Students will not provide their
names on the test. To ensure confidentiality, raw data will be coded and analyzed by the
survey's publisher, the Nehemiah Institute (the publisher of the PEERS test), and
provided to the researcher in Microsoft Excel format.

There are advantages for your participation in this study. Not only will you be involved
in helping me complete my research, but you will also be participating in adding much
needed information on Biblical worldview development.   In addition, the school will
also benefit from the research. Once the research is done, you will be provided with a

free, detailed description of the worldview of your senior students. This can be incredibly useful information as you go about preparing students to develop a Christian worldview.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Rutledge

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
David Rutledge
Liberty University
School of Education

Your child is invited to be in a research study on the impact of different types of church attendance on Biblical worldview development. He or she was selected as a possible participant because of his or her attendance at a Christian school and the fact that he or she is a senior. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: David Rutledge, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, under the direction of Dr. Toni Stanton, Professor of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of church attendance on Biblical worldview. One of the goals of Church education is to train students who develop a Christian view of the world. This study may help to better understand the church's influence on Biblical worldview development.

Procedures:

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be asked to take the PEERS survey and answer several brief questions. This should take between 30 and 45 minutes. The time will be allotted during a normal class period for taking the test.

Ricks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The risks involved in this study are no more than an individual would encounter in everyday life. There is no individual benefit to participating in this study.

Compensation:

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

All records and tests for this study will be kept private, and any published data will not include the school's name or the name of any individual. To ensure confidentiality, raw data will be coded and the names will be removed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or with your school and class. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is David Rutledge. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Mr. Rutledge at dsrutledge@liberty.edu or by phone at 818-843-0900. You may also contact the Liberty University Advisor on this research at: Toni Stanton, Ed.D. Assistant Professor, School of Education. Office: (251)752-3242

If you have any 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, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

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

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian:_____ Date: _____
(If minors are involved)

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
David Rutledge
Liberty University
School of Education

Student Survey

**Student
Name:**_____

Mark your answers to the following questions.

1. **On average, how many times a month, over the past six years, did you attend the main worship service of your church?**

    __ **0 times a month**   __ **1 time a month**
    __ **2 times a month**   __ **3 times a month**
    __ **4 times a month**

2. **On average how many times a month, over the past six years, did you attend the youth service at your church?**

    __ **0 times a month**   __ **1 time a month**
    __ **2 times a month**   __ **3 times a month**

    __ **4 times a month**

3. **On average how many times a month, over the past six years, did you attend the Sunday School class at your church?**

    __ **0 times a month**   __ **1 time a month**

    __ **2 times a month**   __ **3 times a month**

    __ **4 times a month**

4. **On average how many times a month, over the past six years, did your parents attend church?**

    __ **0 times a month**   __ **1 time a month**

    __ **2 times a month**   __ **3 times a month**

    __ **4 times a month**

APPENDIX E: SURVEY QUESTION 1 AND SUBCATEGORYS OF THE PEERS
WORLDVIEW TEST
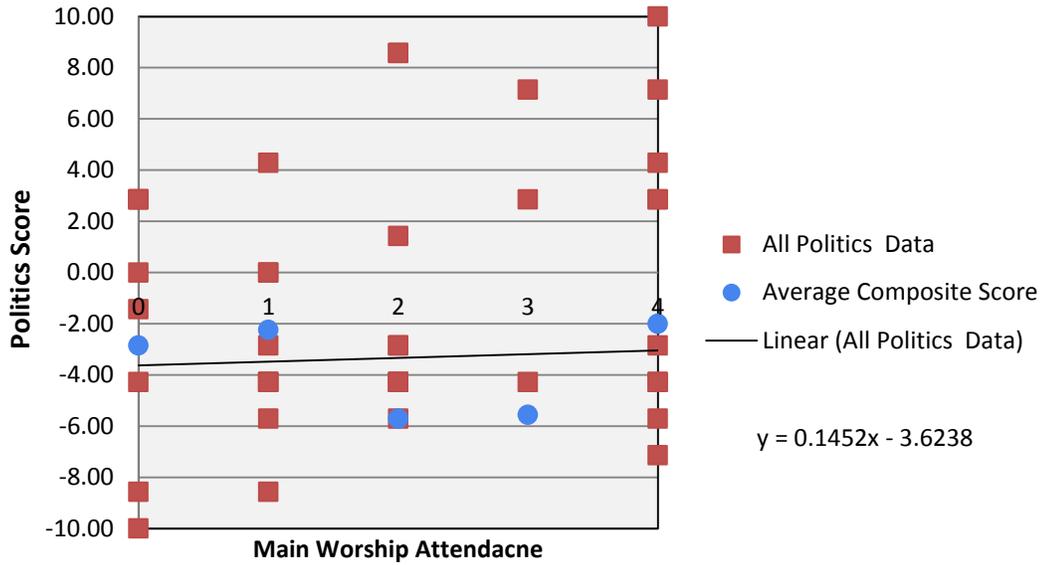
Figure 6. Survey Question 1 and the politics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
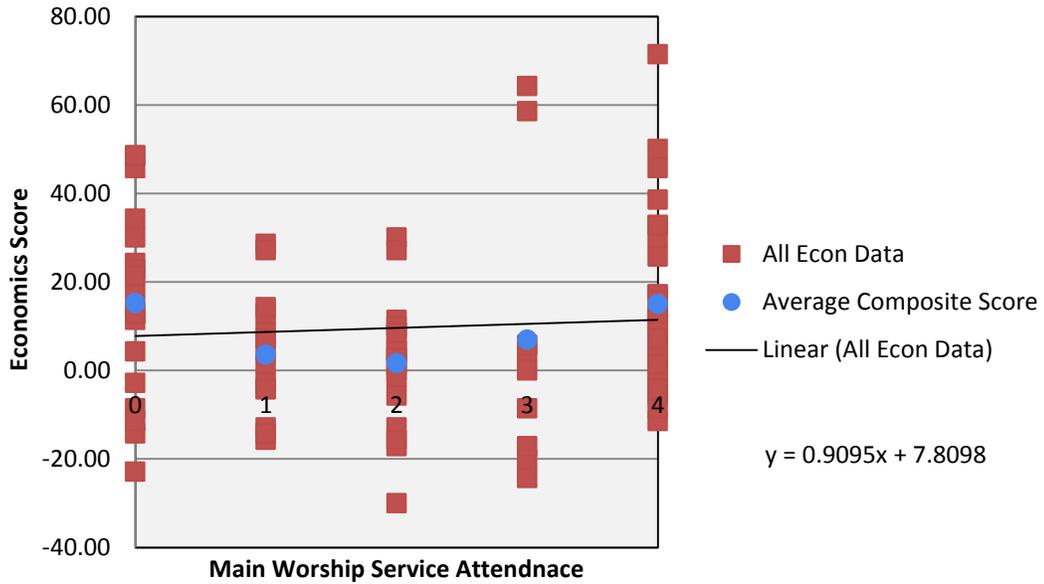
Figure 7. Survey Question 1 and the economics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
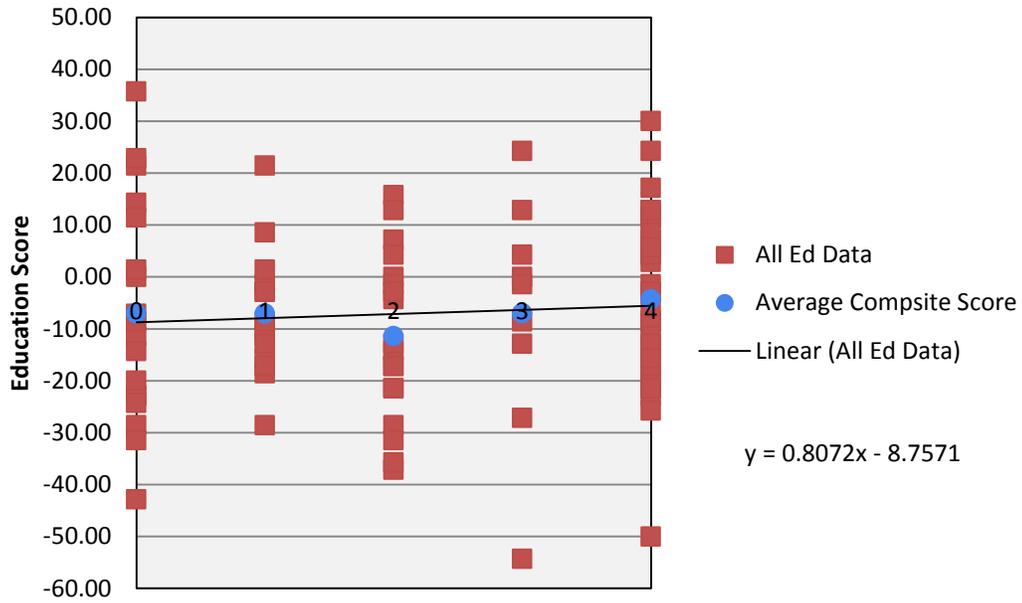
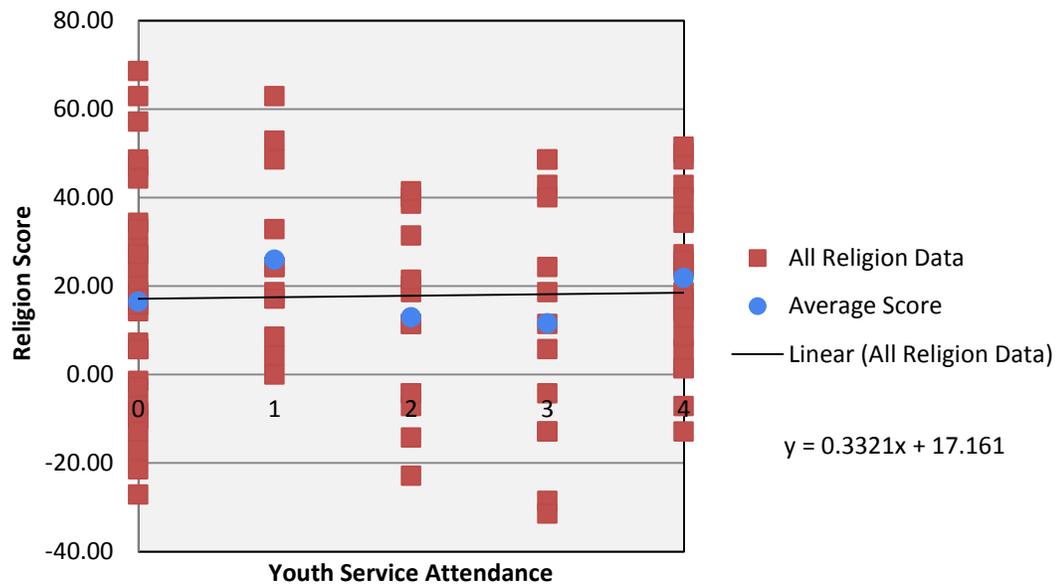*Figure 8.* Survey Question 1 and the education subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
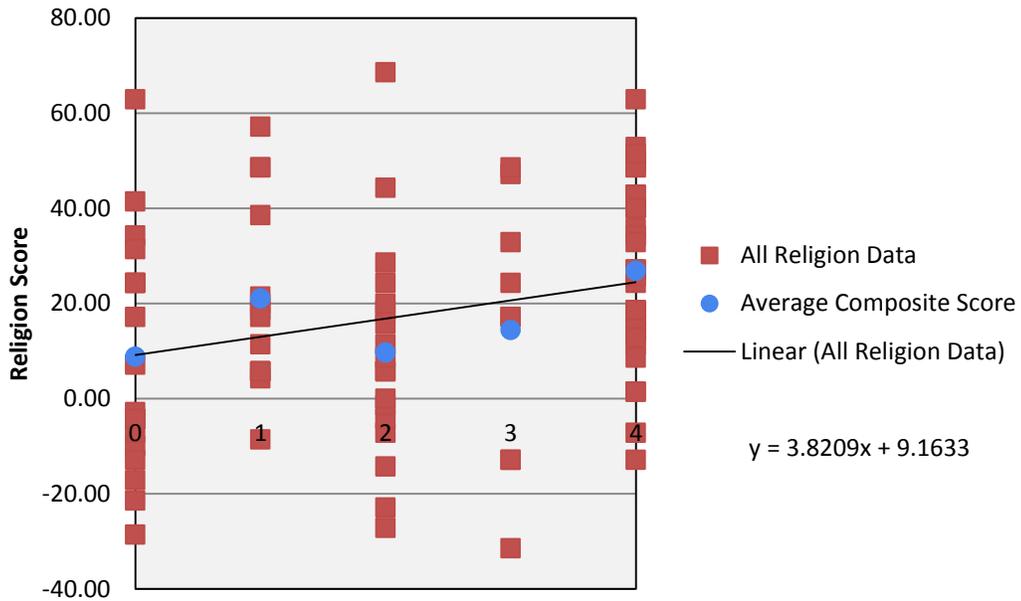
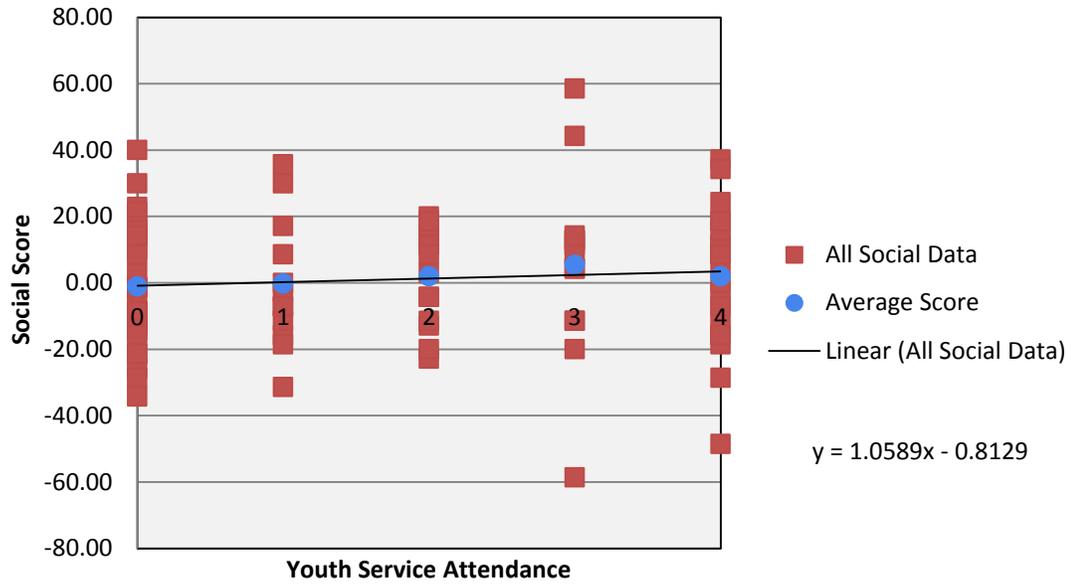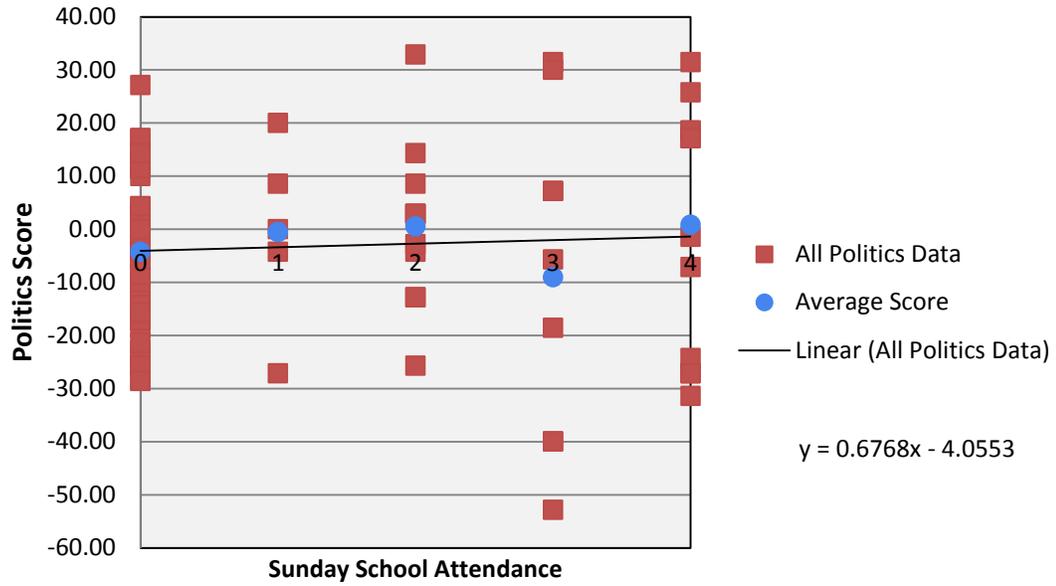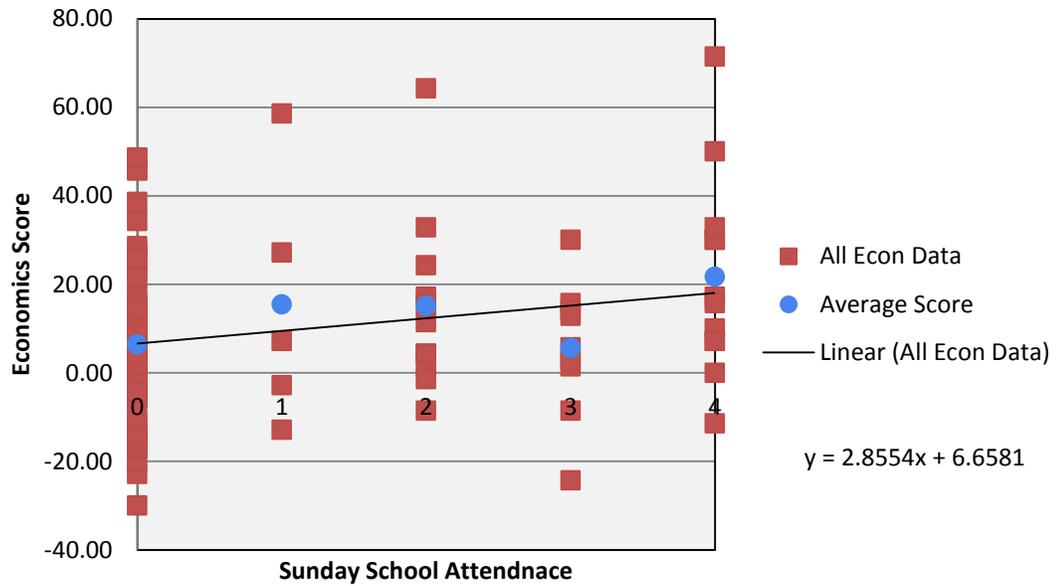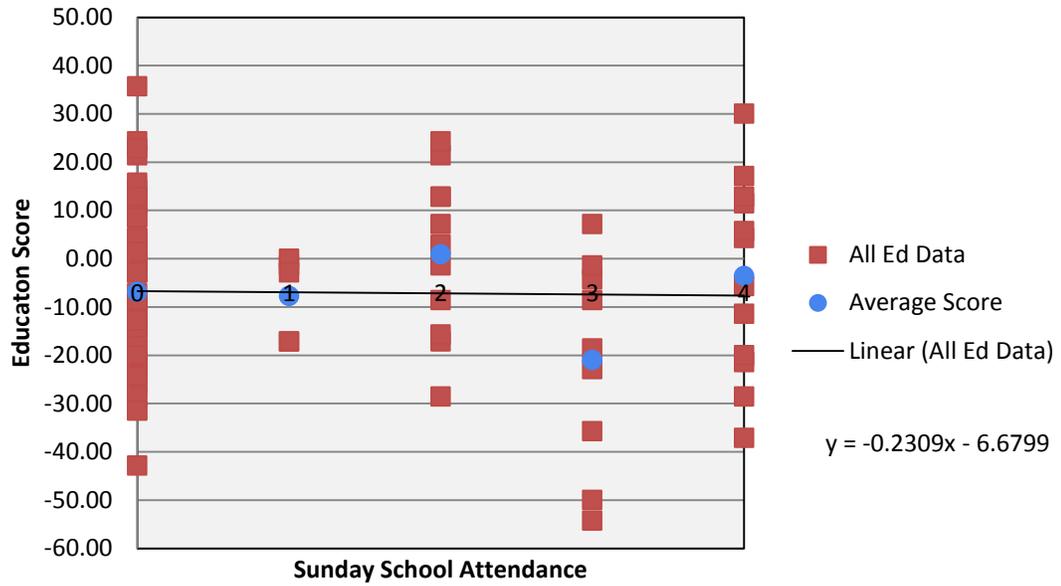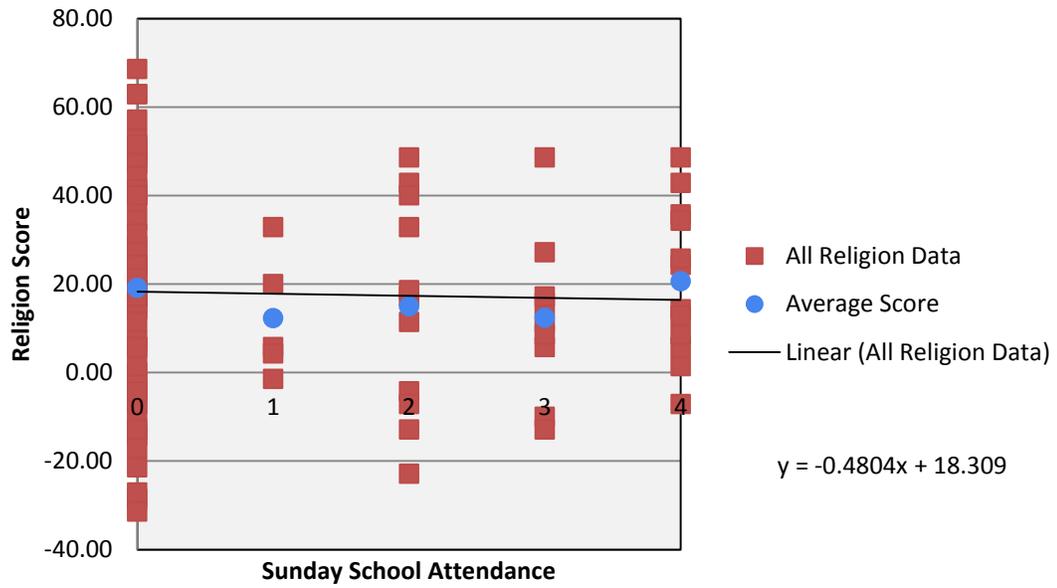*Figure 9.* Survey Question 1 and the religion subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
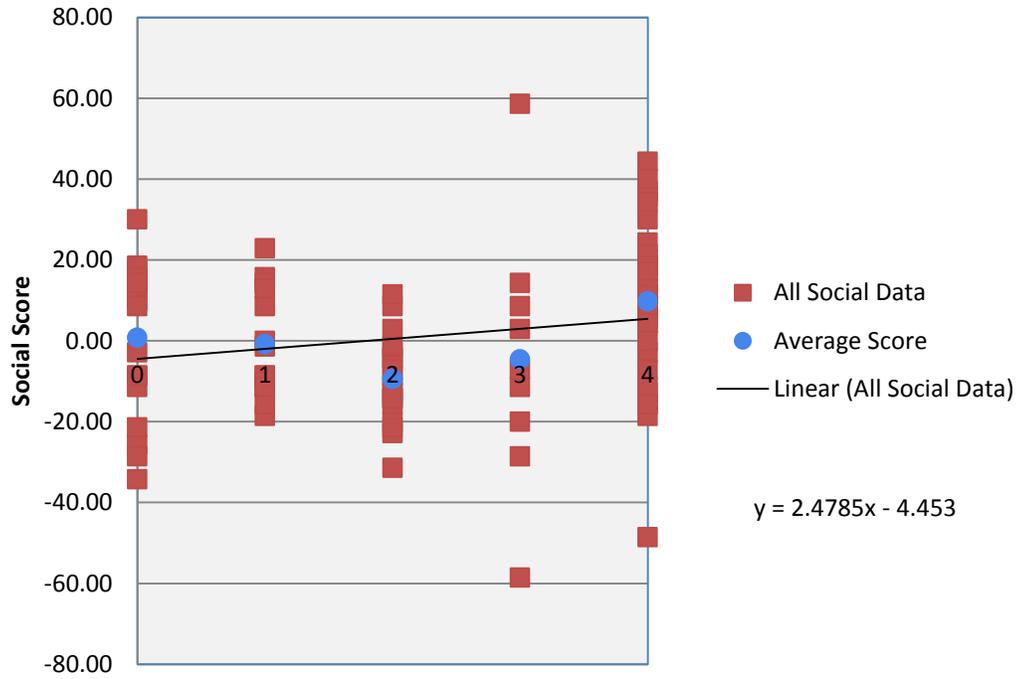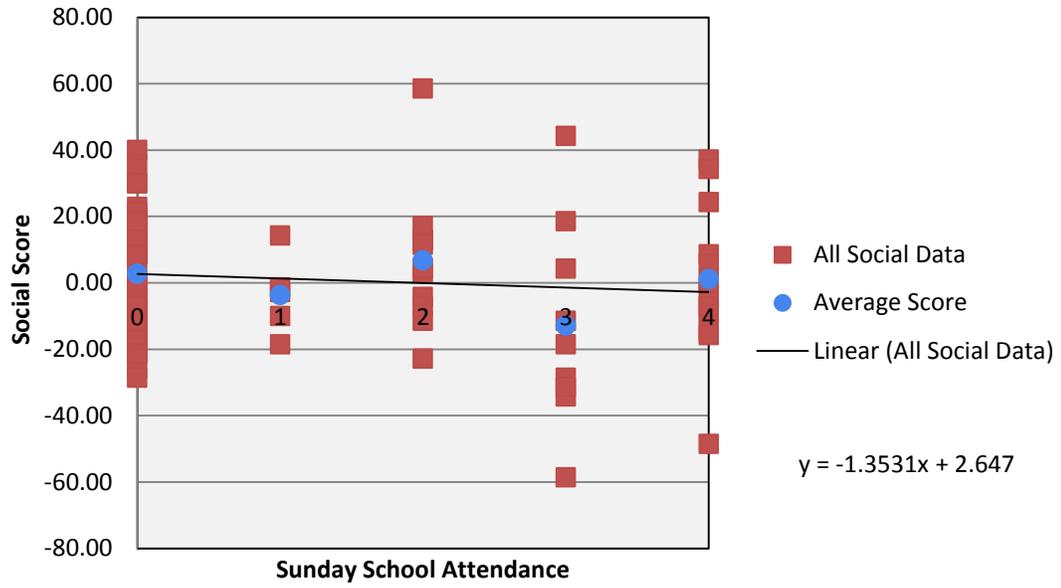
Figure 10. Survey Question 1 and the social subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
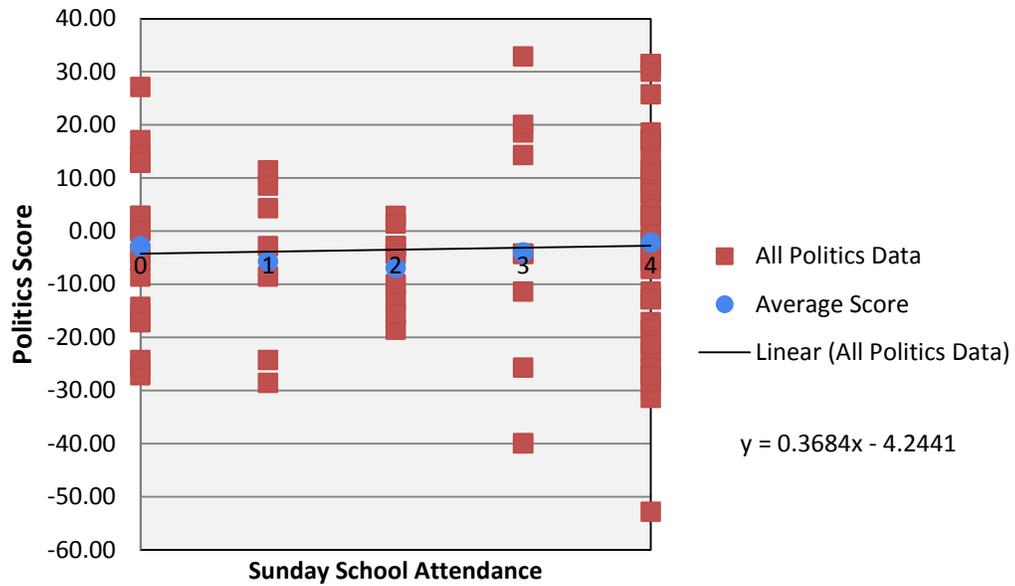
Figure 11. Survey Question 2 and the politics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
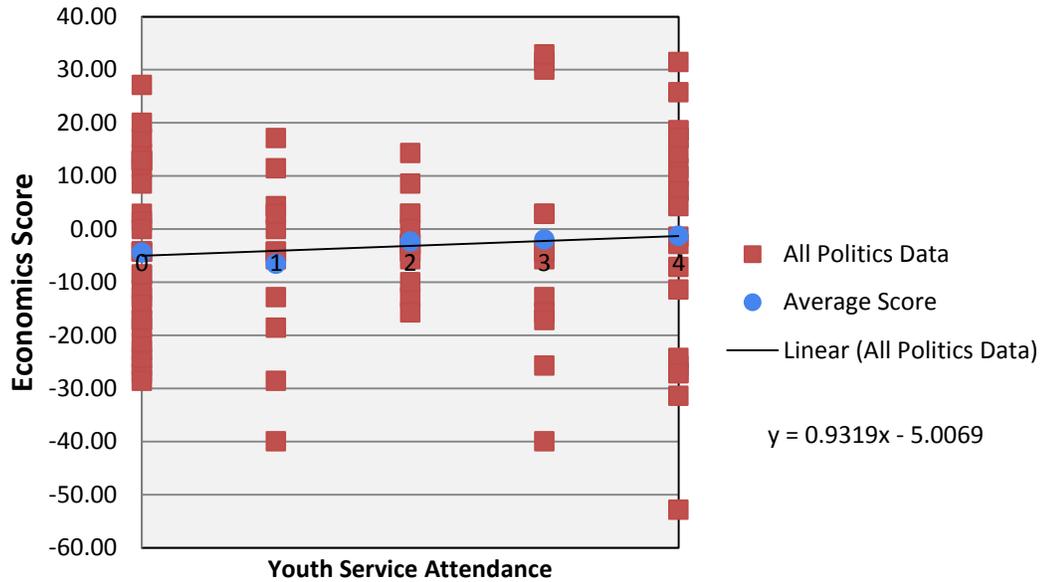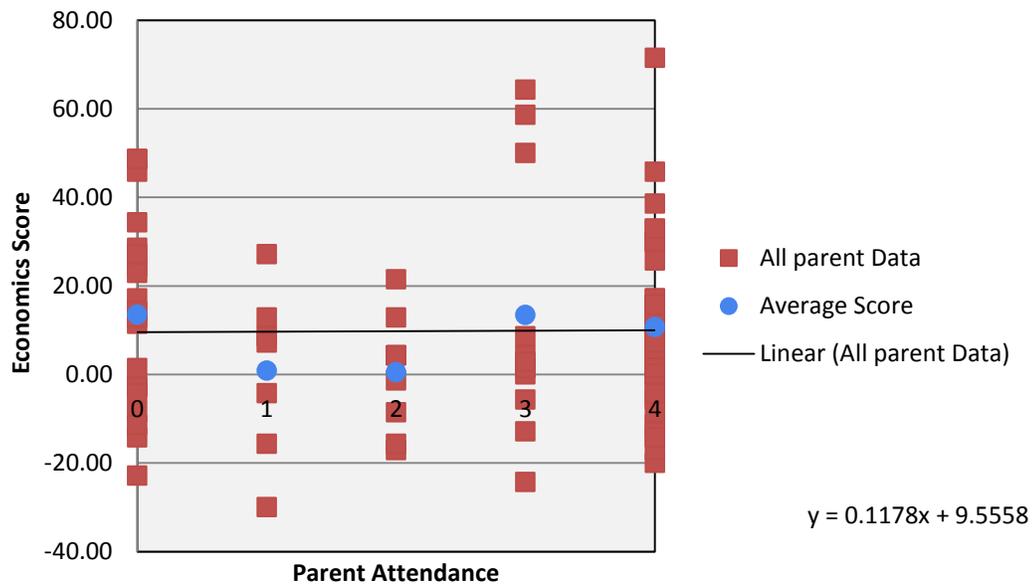

Figure 12. Survey Question 2 and the economics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
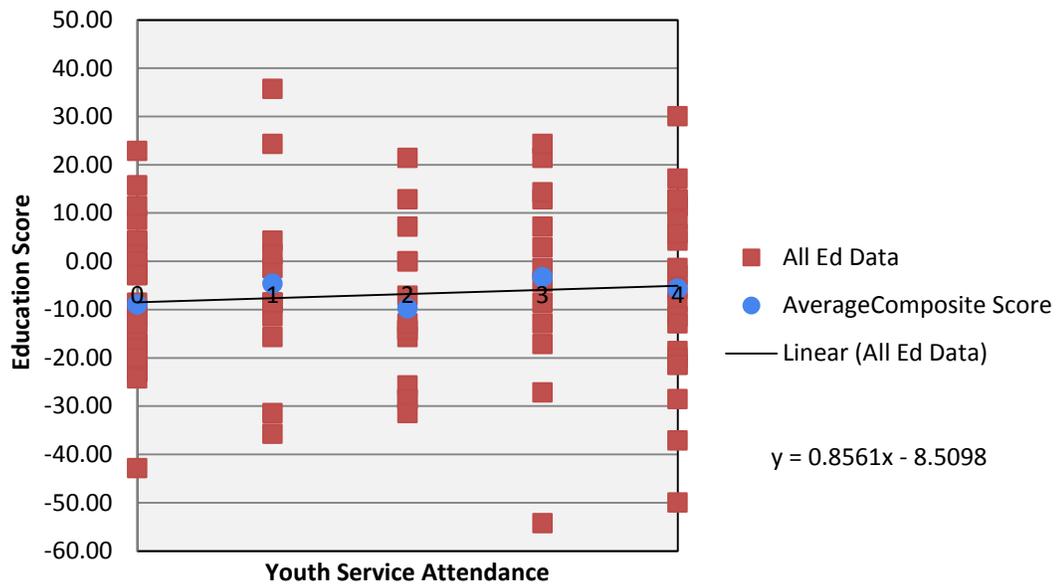
Figure 13. Survey Question 2 and the education subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 14. Survey Question 2 and the religion subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 15. Survey Question 2 and the social subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 16. Survey Question 3 and the politics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 17. Survey Question 3 and the economics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.
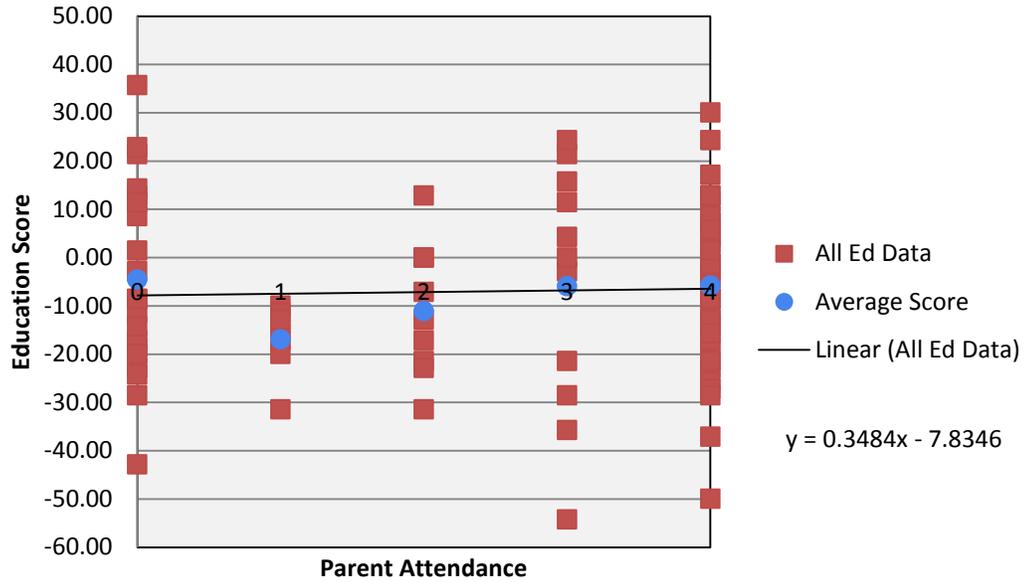
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Figure 18. Survey Question 3 and the education subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 19. Survey Question 3 and the religion subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

Figure 20. Survey Question 3 and the social subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test.

APPENDIX H: SURVEY QUESTION 4 AND SUBCATEGORYS OF THE PEERS
WORLDVIEW TEST

Figure 21. Survey Question 4 and the politics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview
Test.

Figure 22. Survey Question 4 and the economics subcategory of the PEERS Worldview
Test.

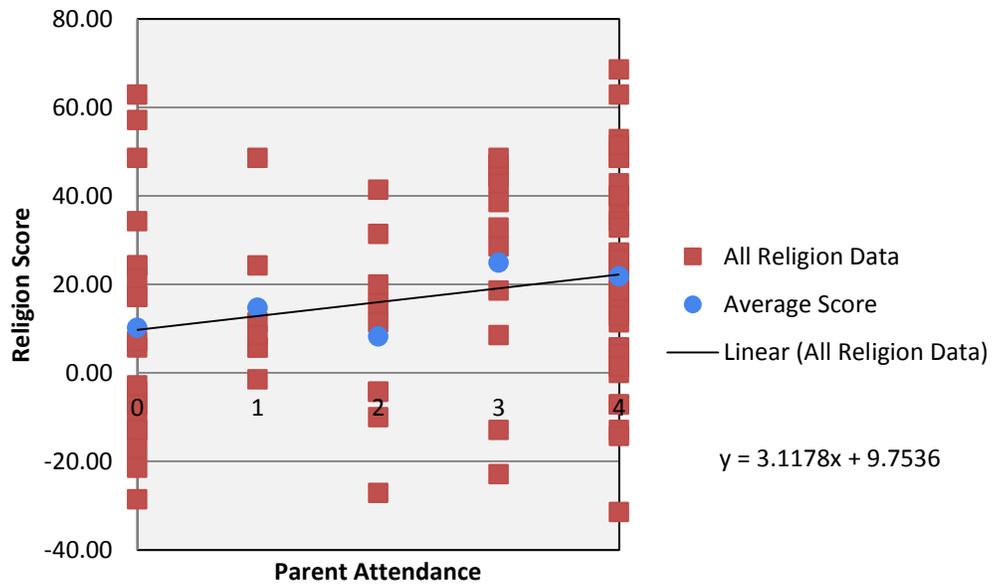*Figure 23.* Survey Question 4 and the education subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test

Figure 24. Survey Question 4 and the religion subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test
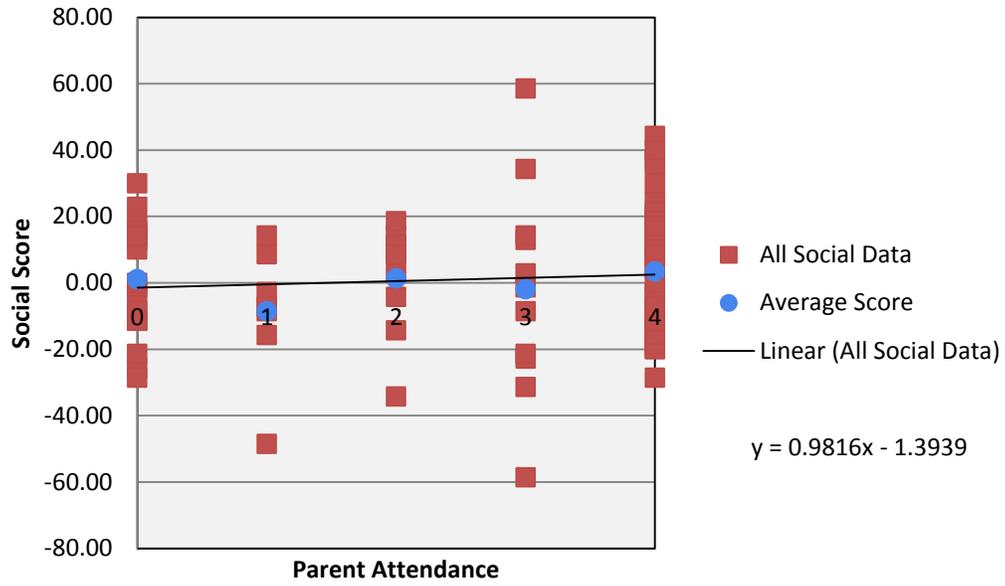
Figure 25. Survey Question 4 and the social subcategory of the PEERS Worldview Test