

ARIZONA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE // SPRING 2022

ABLAZE



SCIENCE LABS

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

STUDENTS' DESIRE FOR REVIVAL

MILLENNIALS ADRIFT

CRC RESEARCH UPDATES

the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SPRING 2022

VISION FOR TOMORROW

In May, Arizona Christian University celebrated its 60th Commencement. It started with a single graduate in 1963 at a start-up Bible college called Southwestern Conservative Baptist Bible College. This year the class of 2022—with a diverse group of more than 150 graduates from a Christian liberal arts university that sends biblically grounded leaders into every area of influence in our culture—celebrated in front of about 2,000 family and friends. The ceremony occurred outdoors, under the lights, on a football field, and was livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube.

One thing that hasn't changed is the University's total commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture, and to learning and applying biblical truth—no matter what confusions and distortions are being promulgated and embraced in our culture. I love that at each Commencement, the graduation procession is led by an ACU staff member carrying an enormous Bible held out in front of him—symbolizing the supremacy of the unchanging Word of God at our institution.

In this edition of *Ablaze* we note among other things ACU's strong Biology and pre-med program, our growing success in athletics, the launch of new programs in the music and arts, as well as ACU's prayer emphasis and our leadership nationally in praying for the next Great Awakening—which we believe will begin on college campuses.

And I can't help but wonder—what is possible for Arizona Christian University six decades from now? Let me suggest three things that I believe will characterize ACU's future, long after those of us in leadership now are gone:

1. Faithfulness and Fidelity to Scripture. This is the core reason ACU exists. Specifically, our mission calls for us to educate Christian leaders—and so the University is committed to training and equipping young men and women who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and have evidenced a desire to grow and be disciplined in that faith. The Board of Trustees and leadership of the University have embedded biblical convictions into every element of ACU's existence, from our clear, conservative Statement of Faith to our Core Commitments, to our deliberate and extensive incorporation of biblical worldview development into every academic discipline and our CORE humanities curriculum, and into every extracurricular activity and special event. And our commitment to biblical truth, no matter what nonsense is happening in the culture, will lead to ...

2. Continued Growth. Our current master plan for our new miracle 75-acre campus shows that Arizona Christian University can reach as many as 5,000 traditional undergraduate students on our current site – fully five times larger than we are today! Recently I was interviewed for a national podcast by a homeschool mom, and her first question was essentially—“Why do my friends keep telling me they send their home educated kids off to a Christian college, and the kids return having lost their faith in God and becoming ‘woke’ leftists?” The truth is that the church—including many Christian colleges and universities—is becoming much more influenced by the culture than the other way around. As ACU stands firm for biblical truth, we will draw increasing numbers of students and supporters who share our biblical convictions. So we will continue to grow, but we will do so not for the sake of numbers, but for the cause of ...

3. Greater Kingdom Influence. In my Commencement address this year, my theme was from Colossians 1:17: “... in Him, all things hold together.” We live in a time when it feels like so many things are breaking apart in our culture—family, civic institutions, the rule of law, social cohesion, civility—and that is because we have removed the biblical foundations. When you remove the one thing through which “all things hold together,” of course things fall apart. We desperately need biblically grounded Christian leaders in our culture, and ACU is producing them. As soon as possible we need to go from 150-plus graduates annually to 1,000-plus graduates with a biblical worldview! Again, not for the sake of growth, but for the sake of the hope of the gospel and its power to bring healing and human flourishing to a broken culture.

Thank you so much for praying for ACU and for partnering with us on this incredible journey, as we look forward to the next six decades of growing influence for the Kingdom of God!

Yours in His service,



Len Munsil, B.S., J.D.

President

Arizona Christian University





A white banner hanging from a green lamppost. At the top is a red and yellow phoenix logo. Below it, the words "COURAGEOUSLY CHRISTIAN" are printed in bold, red, sans-serif capital letters.

**COURAGEOUSLY
CHRISTIAN**

ARIZONA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY

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ABLAZE

An Arizona Christian University publication

OUR MAGAZINE

The ABLAZE magazine is published by the Department of University Engagement. This publication is released bi-annually and distributed in autumn and spring. If this publication was shared with you and you would like to receive your own copy, go to <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/ablaze> to join our mailing list.

MISSION

Arizona Christian University provides a biblically integrated, liberal arts education equipping graduates to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in all aspects of life, as leaders of influence and excellence.

ON THE COVER

Students get new opportunities to conduct classroom experiments in state-of-the-art science labs—classes moved into new labs this spring.



Send address changes to:
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Glendale, AZ 85306

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu>

“

For a small Bible college, there were many questions back then about whether we could successfully move into the STEM area for the first time.”

Pres. Len Munsil



Another STEP FORWARD

A little more than a decade ago, Arizona Christian University took a bold step forward by seeking and gaining permission to offer degrees in the field of Biology. The vision was to provide future Christian doctors, nurses, physical therapists, and other medical professionals a pathway to graduate school and careers in medicine—all while learning in an environment that would develop and enhance their biblical worldview.

“For a small Bible college, there were many questions back then about whether we could success-

fully move into the STEM area for the first time,” said ACU President Len Munsil, who pushed for the degree during his first year in office. “We are so thankful the program was approved, and incredibly blessed to see its growth and now the fruit of having ACU pre-med and biology graduates serving as doctors and in health care.”

Over the last decade, ACU’s biology program has grown to include more than 15 academic courses that prepare students for graduate medical school, with a curriculum that demystifies complex scientific

subjects and demonstrates how they apply to clinical medicine.

“In the last 200 years, the impact of science and technology on our culture has been without precedent,” noted Dr. Warren Pettitt, Chair of ACU’s Biology Department. “Our program equips students to enter the various fields of biology not only knowing the subject matter, but also knowing the Creator of all life.”

The results of the University’s investment in its growing biology program can be seen through the success of its students who have graduated and gone on to complete graduate school and enter the medical profession.

- Tyler Brown, M.D., ACU’s first Pre-Med graduate, is currently in his third year of a Pediatric



Our program equips students to enter the various fields of biology not only knowing the subject matter, but also knowing the Creator of all life.”

Dr. Warren Pettitt

Cardiology Fellowship at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, one of the premier programs in the nation.

- Jackson Helms, D.O., who was also a four-year varsity basketball player at ACU, graduated from medical school and is now in an orthopedic surgery residency at Riverside University Health System in California.
- Toria Siemens, R.N., a four-year volleyball player for the Firestorm, likewise found her calling in medicine and works as a nurse at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Round Rock, Texas.

These students, and many others, are transforming the culture through their work in the field of medicine as they serve their pa-

tients with the love of Christ. In order to initially receive accreditation, ACU remodeled dormitory rooms into science laboratories on its Cactus Road campus. While the move to our miracle campus in Glendale brought an incredible array of blessings to ACU, a graduate business school did not have any science labs—and so ACU was forced to start over.

After the move, ACU faculty worked hard to provide creative, temporary solutions for much-needed laboratory instruction; at the same time, the entire field of education was disrupted by a pandemic and virtual labs became the norm in higher ed for the past two years. In the meantime, ACU worked to raise nearly \$1 million to construct new, state-of-the-art science labs on our Glendale campus. Last fall, thanks in large part to generous lead gifts

from two faithful ACU supporters, the University was able to complete construction on the labs and ready them for classes this spring.

“The heart of science is the laboratory,” stated Dr. Pettitt. “The most exciting part of the scientific process is to experience the concepts taught not just with our minds, but with our five senses. Our new science laboratories make this a possibility.”

Just a decade ago there were no biology graduates from ACU. Today, ACU has a growing tradition of producing outstanding, Christ-following medical professionals working to be salt and light as they serve their patients and colleagues through the field of health care.



REZWANA DERBYSHIRE

An inside look at struggle, faith, and overcoming.

Rezwana Derbyshire ('12) was born as an only child in Thailand. During her childhood, her family moved several times throughout Southeast Asia. Her parents, who were Bengali Muslims, raised Rezwana in the Muslim faith and encouraged her to live a life in step with the tenets of Islam. At 14 years old, Rezwana and her parents moved back to Thailand, where she attended The International Community School in Bangkok. While there, Rezwana met a few Christian friends, including Gary Derbyshire, her future husband, who would support her in her journey to become a follower of Christ.

Rezwana first grew interested in Jesus when she noticed an intimacy within Christian prayer that she could not feel in Muslim prayer.

As a Muslim, Rezwana could only pray in Arabic, which she didn't speak regularly. While wrestling with her religious identity, Rezwana could feel Jesus drawing her closer to Him. She glimpsed a hope and a light through the gospel unlike anything she had experienced before. However, she felt that if she became a Christian, she would inevitably bring dishonor to her parents. After sharing these concerns with an English teacher at the International Community School, the teacher assured Rezwana that God would comfort her and continue to teach her ways to give Him glory. In a moment of courage, Rezwana proclaimed her decision to follow Christ, and the English teacher prayed with her. At the age of 16, Rezwana accepted Jesus Christ as her savior.

Nearly a year later, Rezwana revealed the news of her conversion to her parents. It was a bold decision met with mixed feelings—she was sad to see her parents heartbroken but relieved to no longer feel the need to hide her faith from

those she loved. During this challenging time, Rezwana recalled, “being carried by the Lord through all of it.” God gave her clarity and peace, and she knew that she was meant to proclaim her faith in him.

After graduating from high school, Rezwana began exploring the possibility of attending college in the United States. Rezwana and Gary were dating at the time, and Gary's family was planning to move to Phoenix, Arizona. Gary's mother helped Rezwana send her testimony to several colleges, including Arizona Christian University, then known as Southwestern College. When ACU received Rezwana's testimony and offered a President's Scholarship, she knew the Lord was calling her to be part of this community.

“SO MANY TIMES, ACU WENT FURTHER THAN WHAT A TRADITIONAL FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY WOULD DO,”

In 2007, Rezwana arrived on campus hungry for knowledge of the Bible. “High school in Thailand was a place I met God; ACU was a place I met His Word,” she explained. Her ACU education taught her biblical literacy, church history, how the Old Testament related to the New Testament, and how to think deeply about her faith. She loved taking notes in Systematic Theology class, where Dr. Jim Porter helped her understand and organize Christian doctrine in a logical order. Rezwana later wrote her thesis on the Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement and treasured these biblical discoveries.

Arizona Christian University became a sanctuary of discipleship for Rezwana. “So many times, ACU went further than what a traditional four-year university would do,”

Rezwana said. When she struggled to pick a major, Dr. Carolyn Pela helped her discern a study path and later became a treasured mentor. Rezwana could openly talk to Dr. Pela about her life and always felt genuinely listened-to. When Rezwana shared her testimony at chapel, she remembered Dr. Pela looking at her with pride and love. And Rezwana is thankful that she still has strong relationships with her professors to this day.

Through her discipleship at ACU, Rezwana also began to understand what it means to worship. As a music lover, she always enjoyed singing worship songs. However, she also learned to see every aspect of her life as an opportunity to give glory to God. She saw firsthand how the students and faculty at ACU worshiped God with their whole being. She saw that they truly loved Him inside and outside of the classroom. “The core of worshiping God is dedicating everything you do to Him,” she reflected.

After graduating from ACU in 2012, Rezwana continued to worship God with everything in her life. Today, Rezwana and Gary live in Phoenix with their four children, Karim (9), Naima (7), Imani (4), and Rahim (2). Rezwana and Gary serve at Apollo Baptist Church, where Gary is the pastor and Rezwana is the worship leader. She also has plans to travel to Thailand as a missionary and to record music in the future. “I want to make music that makes God smile,” she says.

Looking back on her time at Arizona Christian University, Rezwana is incredibly thankful for all the professors and students who helped shape her into a disciple of Christ. It did not matter that she came from a distant corner of the world; God gave her a true fellowship with believers that will last for eternity.

Leading THROUGH CHRIST

At ACU, each semester brings new members of the Firestorm family, and with them new opportunities to help each student identify and fulfill God's call on their life. In August 2019, Sebastian Nicula was one of those new members of the family. And as he approaches his senior year, Sebastian continues to serve God in a way that embodies core values of faith and character at Arizona Christian University.

Sebastian grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona, with a younger brother and parents who immigrated to the U.S. from Romania. Growing up in a family of believers, Sebastian regularly attended a Romanian Christian church and was frequently involved in the youth group at Scottsdale Bible Church. As a teenager, Sebastian was a gifted soccer player and competed as a defender for the varsity soccer team at Horizon high school for all four years.

Sebastian began his college search in hopes of finding a university that had both a commitment to biblical values and an outstanding soccer program. As a talented student-athlete, he received scholarship offers from several universities, but ultimately chose Arizona Christian University because, in his words, "ACU felt authentic and genuine." "God really made a way for me to attend ACU," said Sebastian. "And He opened the door for me to play on the ACU soccer team." Sebastian was among the first freshmen to experience ACU's new

campus when he arrived in 2019. Within the first week, he began to form meaningful relationships by living in the dorms and participating in Res Life. "ACU does a really good job of giving students an easy opportunity for them to get plugged in. You just have to ask," he said.

Sebastian chose to major in Biology, and initially aspired to attend medical school after graduation. However, as time passed, Sebastian

him to lead the team. Sebastian also became the President of the Student Advisory Committee, which organizes the Firestorm Cup every year. (The Firestorm Cup is awarded to the ACU athletic program that earns the most points during the year in categories that include academic and athletic achievement, spiritual formation, and campus involvement.)

In addition to his academic and athletic success at ACU, Sebastian grew spiritually. "I learned to listen to God—rather than myself. I learned to slow down and rely on Him." Over time, Sebastian had learned to trust in God's timing and provision. "God has put me into such a good place now; I don't know what will happen next. I am just really excited to see what He has for me because I know what He has done, and I know what He can do. I will be relying on God as I prepare for life after college."

After graduation, Sebastian plans to begin an internship in sales to gain experience for a career in medical sales. Outside of school, Sebastian enjoys various outdoor activities, ranging from biking to fishing and marathon running.

Sebastian's journey is an example of the kind of spiritual growth that occurs so often at Arizona Christian University. He embodies ACU's core values of Faith, Influence, Relationship, and Excellence (F.I.R.E.) and will be a light for Christ wherever God calls him.

"I LEARNED TO LISTEN TO GOD—RATHER THAN MYSELF. I LEARNED TO SLOW DOWN AND RELY ON HIM."

ultimately decided to pursue a B.S. in Biology with a double minor in Business and Bible. By studying science and business, Sebastian knew he would have a good foundation for a career in medical sales. When he took his first business course, he got to know Professor Vincent Scarpinato, who became his favorite professor. Under Prof. Scarpinato's mentorship, Sebastian developed excellent study skills, and also connected with other professors across campus. He learned the value of building meaningful relationships with faculty and collecting life advice from their experiences.

During his time at ACU, Sebastian also grew to become a trusted leader on and off the athletic field. Recognizing his good sportsmanship, his coaches placed their faith in Sebastian and encouraged



SEBASTIAN NICULA

The college journey that shaped a leader on campus.



ADVANCING THE ARTS

The 2021-22 academic term was a banner year for the arts at Arizona Christian University. Each year ACU hosts several fine arts events and performances, and this year's list displayed a new level of excellence, achievement, and variety—leaving everyone asking for more.

"The arts are for everyone, and there's something for each person to enjoy, regardless of age and stage of life," said Professor Gerald Fercho, Music Department Chair. He continued, "This has been a hallmark year for the arts at ACU, and the support of our community and university leadership has been so encouraging for our students."

In the past year, ACU hosted its traditional slate of choral, band, and ensemble concerts. But that wasn't all. There was also a drama and musical theatre revival among the students, beginning in the fall semester with an original revue written and directed by adjunct professor Andres Marrufo. In the spring students performed Broadway stage classic *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. Both productions were tremendous successes.

Dr. Juliana Balinski, head of piano studies and choral director, said, "This year was packed...numerous recitals, ensemble performances, choral concerts, and the inaugural performance of the 'Chamber Singers' of Arizona Christian University. It's been a year of firsts in many ways."

Professor Ken Rasner, Director of Bands, came to ACU last fall and has been the champion behind the explosive growth of the ACU Symphonic Winds and Athletics Pep Bands. Professor Rasner said, "This is going to be huge for ACU; I am receiving so much interest in our bands, from current students and high school recruits...I can't wait for next year!"

ACU will build on this momentum as it looks to further expand its fine arts offerings in the coming year.

"Next year will be here sooner than we think," noted Prof. Fercho. "I can't wait to see even more of our community come to campus and enjoy the arts and support our gifted students."



Great SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

From the Second Great Awakening of the 1800s to the Jesus Movement of the 1970s, many of this country's most transformative revivals began or gained momentum on college campuses.

With this historic backdrop, and the need for spiritual and cultural awakening in America as urgent as it has ever been, Arizona Christian University is seeing the seeds of revival take root on its Glendale campus. ACU has always been committed to a steadfast belief that the next Great Awakening can and will be fueled by a new generation of passionate, dedicated Christian leaders who are equipped and deployed to transform culture with biblical truth.

And it all begins with prayer...

ACU Hosts Collegiate Day of Prayer - Simulcast to the Nation!

In February, ACU was selected to serve as the host for the National Collegiate Day of Prayer, uniting tens of thousands of believers in prayer for an awakening to occur on college campuses across America. In addition to the on-campus gathering, this national event was simulcast to nearly 2,000 university campuses across America and collectively reached more than 9 million people worldwide.

"It was an honor to be selected from among the thousands of colleges and universities across the nation to host this year's Collegiate Day of Prayer," said Travis Turner, ACU's campus pastor. "Our stu-

dents were deeply impacted by the enormity of the event. They knew the eyes of the nation would be on ACU, and they spent days and weeks in advance praying and seeking the face of God for what he wanted to do during that time."

Sophomore Brendan Archibeck said the event was a seminal moment for him spiritually.

"There was this moment of prayer that actually ignited something in me that I had no idea was there. It gave me a sense of purpose and identity. It was a life-changing moment."

Brendan explained that just as he and his team were preparing to go on stage to lead their worship set, one team member sensed the Lord saying, "As you lead the students in prayer and worship, it's going to bring a refreshing to the school."

"At that moment, the heavens seemed to open up. It was a glorious moment where we seemed to align with the Father's heart," said Brendan. "When we began singing 'God of Revival' it was like, 'this is why we are here in this moment. We are here to see revival at ACU.'"

"People were on their knees, crying out to the Lord, 'We need revival, Lord! Send revival.'"

24/Hour Ignite Gatherings

Following the Collegiate Day of Prayer event, ACU students continued to pray through the night, ending more than 24 hours later.

The Firestorm are well acquainted with these 24-hour prayer events, as each semester ACU partners with BridgeBuilders International to host an all-night, 24-hour prayer gathering aptly named "Ignite!" BridgeBuilders is a national ministry led by Hal and Cheryl Sacks and is located on the ACU campus.

"We could not organize and lead these prayer events without Hal and Cheryl's training and mentorship," said senior Celine Orona. "This semester's 'Ignite!' marked the fifth hosted on the new campus, and each semester these all-night prayer gatherings get bigger and bigger."

"The 24-hour prayer and worship events have given students an opportunity to pray together, and it has broken down barriers," Celine said. "When some of the quieter students saw how passionately their classmates were praying, it caused them to know they could do it too."

Celine says that following every "Ignite!" event, there has been an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on campus.

For example, after the fall 2021 24-hour prayer event, the prayer did not stop at the end of the 24 hours. Nightly prayer and worship on campus continued for more than 100 days in the ACU campus prayer room.

During that time, Brendan Archibeck had a sense that the Lord was leading him and other students

to record the moves of the Holy Spirit happening on campus.

"It's like when the Lord told King David that the men of Ephraim had forgotten the mighty deeds of the Lord—that He parted the Red Sea, that He led them in the wilderness with a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night," said Brendan.

"The Lord wants to remind us daily of the transformational experiences He has brought to ACU," Brendan said. "He wants us to share them so they are not forgotten—like the outpouring we experienced during the Solemn Assembly we held in the spring of 2021. The Lord also does not want us to forget the worship recording we did that spring semester and how it felt like heaven itself was singing along with us, and the presence and power of God was so real that the cameramen fell to their knees."

"The Lord wants us to record and remember these mighty moves of the Spirit so that we do not bury them as a thing of the past," Brendan continued. "He wants us to remember His good deeds so that moving forward we can remind ourselves of what He did—and

that will inspire us that the Lord can empower us to do even greater things."

Accelerate The Awakening

It seems that now more than ever the body of Christ is feeling a divine nudge to press through for spiritual transformation across America—and the students of ACU feel it too!

This desire to see a move of God transcends the ACU student population as well. Arizona Christian University is inviting its alumni, parents, grandparents, and all members of the body of Christ to raise up a canopy of prayer over ACU—praying for the students, faculty, staff and university leadership. Join us in praying that the Lord will pour out his Spirit on us and empower the Firestorm family to fulfill His purposes at ACU and in the world.

Our prayer is that God will bring to fruition the work He has begun at Arizona Christian University and other faithful college campuses across the nation, awakening hundreds of thousands of students to the love and grace of God, and ushering in the Next Great Awakening in our nation and world.

"WE NEED REVIVAL, LORD! SEND REVIVAL."

JOIN US AS WE PRAY ...

- Heavenly Father, we pray that You would use the students of ACU to ignite a FIRESTORM of revival, one that will spread to other campuses across Arizona and the nation. Start a fire that will not go out, day or night.

-Lord, we hold before You the ACU faculty, staff, and leadership. We ask You to give them wisdom, courage, and skill to provide Your highest and best Christian education for the students. Release Your

favor and abundant provision for every need of ACU. Cause the university to grow in numbers and in depth of love and service for You.

-Lord, we pray for a young adult Christ-centered awakening on the college and university campuses all across America. Pour out Your Spirit on your sons and daughters.

-Send an outpouring of Your presence that will sweep millions of young people into the kingdom.

-Raise up students who are not ashamed of the gospel, who will proclaim the power of Your good news and take the gospel into

every sphere of influence, bringing biblical values and godly reform.

In Jesus name, AMEN!

JOIN OUR CANOPY OF PRAYER



<https://azcu.link/canopy>



United States MILLENNIALS **ADRIFT**

A groundbreaking research report on American Millennials by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University takes an unprecedented look into the nation's largest and youngest adult generation—offering a host of new insights about their lifestyles, relationships, politics, faith, and mental health.

Many of the report's findings upend the prevailing cultural narrative regarding Millennials, challenging what has long been thought to characterize and animate the next generation.

Among its main themes, the report finds that Millennials struggle in relationships, face soaring levels of mental health issues, and

desperately long for meaning and purpose. The findings also indicate that Millennials have less biblical worldview understanding than any generation since worldview was first measured more than 25 years ago by Dr. George Barna, veteran researcher and author of the new survey.

The extensive project, *Millennials in America: New Insights into the Generation of Growing Influence*, was released earlier this year by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, in collaboration with the non-profit Foundations of Freedom.

"Millennials, while much studied, have also been much misunderstood and maligned," explained Dr.

Barna, CRC Director of Research. "So much research has been done on this generation, but there are still areas of the mind, heart and soul of Millennials that have not been studied. That's where this project comes into the picture." According to the study, Millennials are characterized by a growing dissatisfaction with organized religion and little understanding of the biblical worldview, yet they express strong levels of respect for Jesus Christ and the Bible. The research found that Millennials desire to experience deeper, more meaningful relationships and struggle with relational conflict.

Despite high levels of formal education, knowing what brings meaning and purpose to their lives

Quick Takes

Three out of four Millennials believe that all religious faiths are of equal value.

A majority admit to often feeling

**ANXIOUS
DEPRESSED
OR
FEARFUL**



3 OUT OF 4 MILLENNIALS said that they are still searching for their purpose in life.

Roughly **two-thirds** of the young adults align themselves with the Christian faith. Just over one-quarter of them said they do not associate with any religious faith.



Most Millennials reject the existence of absolute moral truth

and identify feelings, experiences, and advice from family and friends as their most trusted sources of moral guidance.

Seven out of ten Millennials claimed that they are willing to sacrifice their life for something. The things they were most likely to die "to save, protect, or defend" were family members and their freedom. They were least likely to make that sacrifice for their country or their most cherished possessions.

MOST LIKELY



LEAST LIKELY



The personal changes most likely to be described as "extremely desirable", listed in descending order of frequency, were:

- > GREATER FINANCIAL EASE OR COMFORT
- > BETTER, DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS
- > BETTER PHYSICAL HEALTH
- > BETTER PAYING JOB
- > BETTER MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

2 OUT OF 3 YOUNG ADULTS admitted to avoiding interaction with someone if it was likely to produce conflict.



Issues listed by less than **2 percent** of Millennials as being among the most important included:

2%

- > INCOME INEQUALITY AND REDISTRIBUTION
- > INFRASTRUCTURAL NEED
- > POLICIES RELATED TO ISRAEL
- > NATIONAL DEFENSE
- > NATIONAL VALUES AND MORALS
- > THE PARTISAN DIVIDE AND NATIONAL UNITY
- > RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
- > RULE OF LAW
- > FEDERAL ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS
- > MEDIA STANDARDS

Of the nine cultural influencer categories tested, none of them were trusted by a majority to "always or almost always tell the truth or do what is right."

The most highly trusted influencers were their parents and friends.

The least trusted entities were entertainment celebrities, popular social media personalities, and elected government officials.

Courtesy of Foundations of Freedom

Quick Takes



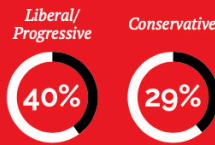
Close to one-half of young adults say they prefer socialism to capitalism.

VERY SATISFIED
Intimate Relationships & Friendships

LEAST SATISFIED
State of the Nation

Less than one-third say they are very satisfied, overall, with their life. The areas with which they are most likely to be "very satisfied" are their intimate relationships and their friendships. The area with which they are least satisfied is the state of the nation.

Politically, this generation is more likely to be liberal than conservative regarding fiscal matters, social issues, and governance. The biggest gap relates to social issues, with 40 percent self-identifying as liberal or progressive compared to just 29 percent who claim to be conservative.



Further, those who think of themselves as Democrats outnumber those who identify as Republicans by a two-to-one margin.



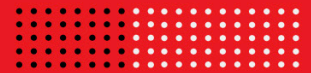
A majority of Millennials held a **positive** opinion of Jesus Christ; the United States of America; and the Bible.



They were more likely to have a **negative** than positive impression of atheism.

THE DON'TS

A record-breaking 40 percent of young adults fit the "Don'ts" category:



People who don't know if God exists, don't care if God exists, or don't believe that He exists.

Only one-third of Millennials claimed to believe in God



as the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect and just creator of the universe who still rules the universe today.

Courtesy of Foundations of Freedom

eludes an overwhelming three-fourths (75 percent) of the generation. And perhaps most surprising—and alarming—the research found skyrocketing levels of mental and emotional health issues, including a majority admitting to regularly feeling anxious, depressed, or fearful.

Beyond that, Millennials are highly individualistic. They value authenticity, distrusting just about everything but their own feelings and experiences. And in the midst of a culture that scoffs at the notion of objective truth, they long for something real.

"This remarkable generation is desperately seeking purpose and significance, but not finding it from a secular culture," said ACU President Len Munsil. "We pray this research enables the body of Christ to engage Millennials with understanding, compassion and authenticity in a way that brings healing,

hope and the opportunity for an abundant, joyful life."

The release of *Millennials in America* earlier this year prompted a series of Millennial Action Panels, bringing together national experts with the hope of developing real solutions to the challenges identified in the report.

The panels generated such a positive response that the Cultural Research Center has solicited panelists to share their insights and practical strategies in a new book, *A Generation in Crisis: Practical Ways to Help Millennials Thrive*, scheduled for release in the fall. Although the Millennial report ignited a national discussion, we know these same challenges are all around us at ACU.

We serve the youngest of these Millennials (ages 18-25). Not only are they our students, for many faculty and staff, they are our children and

our children's friends and co-workers. They are parents of the next generation and the next leaders of our nation and the world. Their beliefs and behaviors will shape the world for generations to come.

In significant ways, the research shows Millennials are a generation hanging in the balance—and without a worldview intervention, they risk tipping into the abyss.

But at ACU we're convinced God has great plans for the next generation. Our mission—training students to know and live out the biblical worldview—is all about transforming the next generation so they can transform the world. We want our students to flourish, fully experiencing all that God has for them.

As Dr. Barna sees it, "Actively searching for ways to bless Millennials is a tremendous opportunity to be Christ-like to a fragile and

desperate generation. It may be our greatest chance to contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom on earth."

He believes the most important thing we can teach students are these five "simple truths" on which the whole of the biblical worldview rests:

1. Truth exists.
2. It comes from the Bible.
3. It is defined by God Himself. (through His character and purposes)
4. The purpose of life is to serve God with all your heart, mind, strength, and soul.
5. The definition of success is consistent obedience to God.

There's a deep hunger among Millennials. The research uncovered a gaping emotional, relational, and spiritual void that seems overwhelming. Understanding the biblical worldview is the starting point for filling that void and helping the next generation to flourish.

Dr. Ken Sande, a national relationship expert who participated in the Millennial panel focusing on relational and mental health, offered this encouragement:

"An analogy I would use is this: If I just came to town and had a mobile food kitchen, and I found out everybody in town was really, really hungry, I'd say, "This is good. There's a hunger for the product I've got, and I've got something to give them." And I think the Church has something to give this generation. They are hungry. They are craving relationship. Something God has programmed into the heart of every human being is a hunger for authentic, durable, meaningful relationship. And the Church should be the place that they're coming to and seeing that this is a place we can feed that hunger for relationship, because we have it in Christ. The ultimate,

intimate, sacrificial, loving relationship is given to us through the Gospel, and it should be flowing through us, out into the world."

What an opportunity! At ACU, the "food truck" is open.

The full digital report, *Millennials in America: New Insights into the Generation of Growing Influence*, is available for download free of charge on the CRC website.

www.crcqr.link/research



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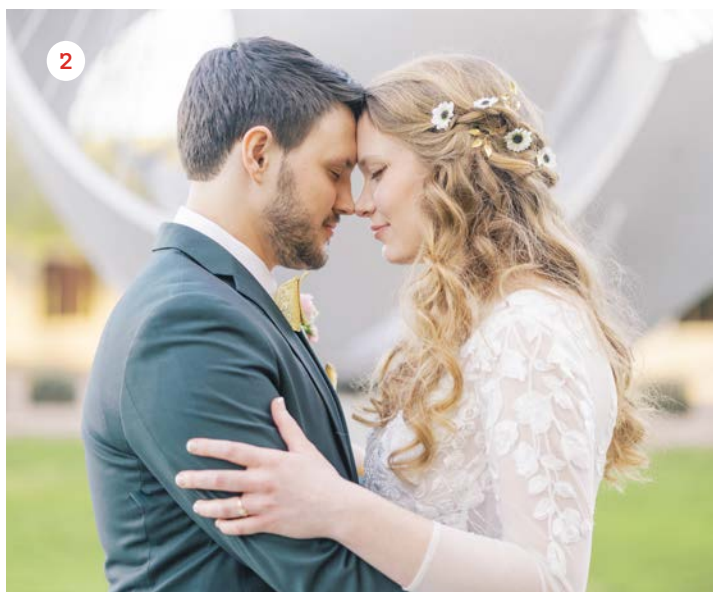
Actively searching for ways to bless Millennials is a tremendous opportunity to be Christ-like to a fragile and desperate generation. It may be our greatest chance to contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom on earth.”

Dr. George Barna

The groundbreaking *American Worldview Inventory 2021-22* is the first-ever survey of the prevalence of both the biblical worldview and competing worldviews of American adults—and its findings are dire.

Veteran researcher George Barna unpacks these and other trends—offering perceptive, pointed, and practical insights into how we can restore our nation.

FIRESTORMFAMILY

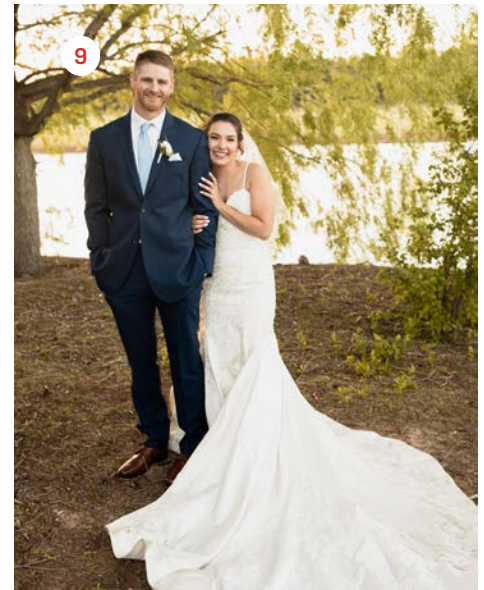
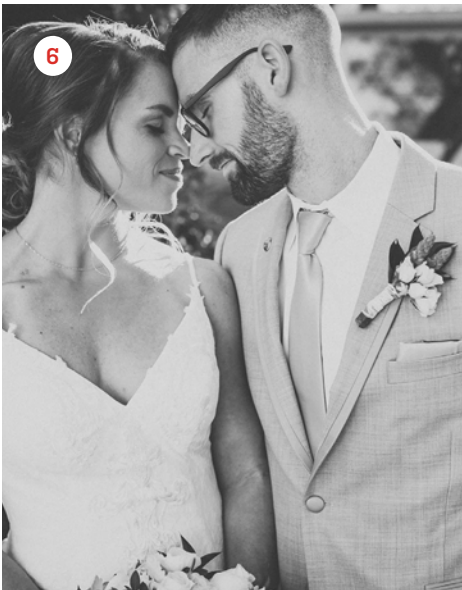


1) RAFELLA ZAK ZAK (2017) AND BRANDON SEIFERT (2020) were married on December 18, 2021. The two met at ACU and have been together for five years. Pastor Tim Reed officiated their wedding ceremony. The Siefert's are currently expecting their first child and cannot wait to see what the future holds.

2) MELODY TOSO (2019) AND BRADEN REIMCHE were the first couple to be married on ACU's Glendale campus on February 20, 2022—the same day Braden also got baptized. The couple met through Melody's close friend and fellow alumna, Sonora Roman (2019). After about two years of game nights, the Lord revealed to Braden and Melody that they were meant to serve Him together as one. Today, Melody serves as the Education Placement and Compliance Coordinator at ACU, and Braden is a Quality and Manufacturing Engineer at Nautilus Systems Inc.

3) MATT MARA (2018) AND JENNA CASTILLEJA (2020) married in November of 2021 at Lost Dutchman State Park. Matt is a Sales Representative at Ferguson Enterprises and Jenna is a teacher at Legacy Traditional School - Deer Valley. The Maras also just purchased a home in Phoenix.

4) MARCO CASTILLA (2019) AND MIKAYLA MORGAN (2018) met at ACU in the fall of 2017. They married at El Chorro in Paradise Valley on April 8, 2022. Marco says it was the most amazing day of their lives celebrating with all of their ACU friends and family and sends a special thanks to Tim Reed for giving them the most beautiful ceremony! The Castillas now live in Colorado where Mikayla is an Investment Analyst at Creative Planning and Marco is a Realtor working for RE/MAX Professionals servicing the Denver metro area.



5) ETHAN KAVANEY (2020) AND BRIANA TUXHORN (2021) married on May 13, 2022 at Scottsdale Bible Church. While most know them from their time as students at ACU, their relationship began as friends on the first day of 7th grade. Bri has just started in a graduate program at Phoenix Seminary. Ethan is on staff at Scottsdale Bible Church.

6) ROBBY RIPLEY (2014) and his wife, Erin, were married on November 13, 2021, at Chaparral Christian Church, which is associated with the gym where they met. Pastor Tim Reed officiated their wedding. They are currently living in Rolesville, North Carolina, where Robby is teaching K-8 PE at PreEminent Charter School. Erin is a rehab psychologist and the couple is expecting their first child, son Peyton William, due in August.

7) MICHAEL ROGERS (2021) AND EMILY HOBROCK (2021) were married on April 9, 2022, at Desert Hills Bible Church. They met in

2018 at ACU and began to date in 2020. They are so thankful for the support they have received from the Firestorm community. Michael is currently pursuing a Masters of Divinity at Phoenix Seminary while working with AAA Landscape. Emily is working as the Assistant to the Director at Ravenscroft in Scottsdale.

8) ISAIAH KINNARD (2020) AND ABIGAYLE YOUNG married on April 29, 2022, in Gilbert, AZ. Isaiah and Abi are both on staff at City Church in Surprise, AZ.

9) DILLON EAVES (2018) AND SARAH MOSSMAN (2020) were married on May 22, 2021, in Munds Park, Arizona. They recently celebrated their first anniversary! Sarah started working at ACU in 2021 as the Athletic Recruitment Coordinator and Dillon currently works for Pristine Auction Company (owned by ACU alumni Jared Kavlie, '05) and has been there for four years. He also coaches baseball at Scottsdale Christian Academy.

CLASSNOTES

2020s

2021

ALYSSA CLINE teaches full time at Paradise Valley Christian Preparatory, as a Computer Technology and Math Teacher. She is also the music director at the Glendale campus of Central Christian Church.



ELAH ALVIS was recognized as "Teacher of the Quarter" at Chino Valley School District last fall after only three months in the classroom!

2020



JORDAN SAWYER was honored in May 2022 as the Arizona Diamondbacks Employee of the Month.

2010s

2019

ANDY MARRUFO was the Director for ACU's amazing production of "Beauty and the Beast" featured this spring.



CHUCK FITZGERALD was honored with the Education Visionary Award this spring by the Peoria Education Foundation for his efforts in supporting the students, families, staff, and faculty members of the Peoria Unified School District.

2018

JASON SMARR joined the Corban University men's basketball coaching staff in the fall of 2020. He and his wife, Sarah, married in 2021.

2017

QUINTIN AND TORI (COREA) RILEY welcomed their first child, son Ezra, in fall 2021. Quintin is a computer and HUB instructor at Scottsdale Christian Academy.

LINDSEY PAYTON became an assistant coach for the Academy of Art University in San Francisco in 2021.

2016



JESSICA DUBOSE recently made a career change to an offsite manufacturing and construction team in Phoenix and is pursuing a Masters degree from the Thunderbird School of Global Management.



TYLER CAWTHORNE AND SARA VANDERZEE are planning their fall wedding. Both work at Charles Schwab. Sara's sisters and their husbands also attended ACU.

MICHAEL MUNGUIA is a professional tennis player and married his wife, Chrissy, this spring.

2015

TEVIN AND LEXI (CLARK, 2016)

EDDY live in Mesa where Tevin is the Worship Director at HiWay Baptist Church.

2014

MAT BALGAARD is the Executive Pastor at Church of Celebration in Maricopa, AZ, where he has served for the past 15 years with his wife Misty (Hawkinson).

2013

JOSEPH AND BRITTANY

(BOURDEAU) DODDS work in youth ministry and are serving at Christ's Church of the Valley in Chandler.

JASON FEESER is an assistant pastor at Calvary Phoenix. He and his wife, **ALYSSA (MCGRAW)** have one child.

DR. BENJAMIN AND BREANA

(FRANKS, 2015) JOHNSON are planning a trip back to Africa. Pray for them as they prepare to travel and minister there.

2012

BRETT BOWMAN is a math teacher and head boys' soccer coach at Paradise Valley High School. This year, his team won the sportsmanship award for all of 5A.

THOMAS SLAGER is the Groups Pastor at Highlands Church in Scottsdale.

2011

DANIEL STANTON is the founder and director of G Road, a nonprofit that supports young people on their road to adulthood through creative programming and intentional relationships.

2010

MIKE BHATTI is the Director of Strategic Partnerships at Phoenix/

One, an organization that cares for and encourages local pastors and staff. Mike and his wife, Jessica, have two daughters.



MATT MOSCHGAT and his family are closing out three years in Hawaii serving the U.S. Army at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which is responsible for searching for, recovering, and identifying missing military service members from WW2 to present day. Matt has served in several capacities in the Agency and would love to share his experience with the ACU staff, student body, and alumni.

NATE BRADLEY is the Business Manager for Northwest Christian School. His wife, **ANNA (FOURT, 2010)**, runs a home bakery, The Chocolate Chippery. The Bradleys have two children.

JOHN BURRITT is the Director of Worship at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Scottsdale and a chorister for the Arizona Opera. He and his wife, Emily, welcomed their first child in March 2021.

CRAIG AND BRITTANY (DISCHINGER, 2011) KLAUKA are planting Grafted Church coming to Phoenix in Spring 2022, where Craig will be the lead pastor. Pray for them and this new ministry!

GABLE LEGASPI has been in ministry for over 16 years and just finished up a season at Compass. His wife, **JESSICA (PYRITZ, 2008)** is a Leadership Giving Officer at the Phoenix Rescue Mission.

JOHNNY MARTINEZ is the Lead Pastor at Restoration Church in Peoria.

TOM MILTON AND HIS WIFE

(THERESA, 2009) are small business owners. In 2017, they started Paragon Signworks, a local sign company that serves the metro-Phoenix area and have proudly worked on a number of projects for Arizona Christian University.

2000s

2009

MATT ROBARDS is the Family Pastor at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Scottsdale. He and his wife have four children.



CHRIS KEMP was named the Interim Head Men's Basketball Coach at Eastern Oregon University in May 2021, where he will serve for the 2021-22 season. He has been the top assistant coach for the team since the 2017-18 season. He and his wife, Stephanie, have three daughters.

MICHAEL STAHL is the Lead Pastor for Salt Church in Waddell, Arizona. He and his wife, Kristen, have four kids.

2008

SHAWNEE (HAGEMAN) BACA recently lost her husband, Anthony, who was described as a man of faith who lived it out, even through pain and struggles. Please lift up Shawnee and her two children as they navigate life during this time of immense loss.

2006

GRANT BOTMA is the founder of Stewardship Mortgage, Insurance, Planning & Financial in Gilbert. The Stewardship team is also made up of several other SWC/ACU grads.

2005

NEIL GILSDOFT AND HIS WIFE, JAN (GOLIKE, 2003) live in Gretna, Nebraska, where Neil has been the Worship Pastor for Journey Church over the last nine years. Jan is a freelance makeup artist and the couple has been married 16 years after meeting and dating at ACU. They have three children, daughter Emalyn, and twin girls, Eleanor and Eliza.

TONY PALEO is a pastor at House of Rest Phoenix, and also serves at Christian Family Care Agency.

2003

JEFF WOLFE has finished 22 years as the Executive Pastor at Palmcroft Church. He is now a realtor at Realty ONE Group. His wife, **AMBER (SOUTHALL, 2001)** recently fulfilled her dream of owning a food truck for her cupcake business, For the Love of Cupcakes.

2002

JILL (MOSCHGAT) BAILEY is the Director of Development at MentorKids USA, a faith-based non-profit that is making a huge difference in the lives of children.

2001

JARED TETZLAFF has served the community over the last 20 years as a police officer, businessman, and church staff member. He is now the Safety and Security Director at Rock Point Church in Queen Creek and the President of FAST Aid, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing financial, educational, and personal assistance to injured racers, support teams, and their families.

2000

BRAD AND SARAH (DALTON, 1998) SPANGLER live in Indiana and have two children, (Dalton and Macy), who are now attending ACU.

JOSEPH VALENZUELA has been in ministry with his wife, **LISA (MCHATTON, 2001)** for 22 years. He currently serves as the Student Ministries and Communications Pastor at New Life Community Church in Scottsdale and varsity wrestling coach at Coronado High School.

1990s

1999

SCOTT BROWNSON is the Director of Development and Outreach at Clydehurst Christian Ranch. He and his wife, **CARLA (FRY, 1999)** live in Montana with their three children.

BRANDON LETARTE is the head coach of the varsity women's basketball team at Sunnyslope High School. He also helps with the women's volleyball program there, led by his wife, Amber.

1998

PHIL AND HEIDI KOOISTRA are both serving on staff at Grace Bible Church in Bend, Oregon. Phil is the Teaching Pastor and Heidi is the Women's Ministry Director.

RANDY AND DEANA THERIO recently moved to Winslow to mentor Native American pastors on the reservation and help plant Multiply Church.

1996



KARIE (COMPTON) BARTLETT

and her husband, Jody, have been married for 22 years and have three children. They have lived in Central Texas for 19 years where they are active in their church, Trinity Baptist. Jody is the Youth Pastor and Karie is the Director of Children's Ministry.

1994

NATHAN MAPLES and his wife Trudy have spent over 25 years in youth ministry impacting young lives. They also cofounded a health and wellness business together, Inspiring Health and Wellness, LLC.

CAROL MERTZ TETZLAFF won first place in the Bible Study category at The Selah Awards, part of the Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writers Conference. Carol's book, *Ezra Unleashing the Power of Praise* can be found on Amazon.

1992

JIM CLAYPOOL passed away on January 10, 2022. He received a pre-seminary Bachelor of Arts degree from SWC in 1992. Jim served bi-vocationally, in ministry and as a plumber. He shared the hope of Jesus with everyone and reached out to the hurting and under-served. He is survived by his wife, Sandy, and daughter, Shayla.

1991

JOHN AND LORI (GOODMAN) CRAFT live in Colorado where John

serves as the Executive Director for the Rocky Mountain Church Network. They have been married for 30 years!

1980s

1985

JEANNETTE (REDDING) HARTUNG and her husband, Phil, celebrated 36 years of marriage in November 2021!

1984

KEVIN REDDING has served faithfully at Shiloh Community

Church in Phoenix for 20 years, where he is currently the High School and Young Adult Pastor. His wife Chrissy, daughter **RACHEL (REDDING, 2016) DEAN**, and son in law, **THOMAS (2013)**, also attended ACU. Pray for Kevin as he leads a group back to Latvia this summer to serve those in need.

KENNY MAY, owner and CEO of Eventsource Ministries, teamed up with Pastor Tim Reed last fall for a youth outreach ministry weekend at Magic Mountain and the beach.

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Update us at www.arizonachristian.edu/update/ or open your mobile phone's camera app and hover over the QR code.



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