

# Understanding The Christian Market Segment

The benefits of addressing the unique  
needs of Christian clients



Kingdom Advisors

# Understanding The Christian Market Segment

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Understanding the Christian Market Segment: The benefits of addressing the unique needs of evangelical Christian clients.

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## Executive Summary

In summary, this white paper will accomplish three things. First, it will define the size, scope, and nature of the Christian market segment in the United States. Secondly, it will outline key planning differentiators unique to this market, as they relate to the financial paradigms of Christian clients. These differentiators include: a stewardship mindset, debt, lifestyle, investing, estate planning, and retirement planning. When these differentiators are understood and applied, advisors can best help their Christian clients meet their financial goals. Finally, the paper will discuss why it is important for advisors and advisory firms to begin to intentionally serve this market segment in order to build client loyalty and also to maximize the networking potential within this market segment.

Firms and advisors who are interested in serving the Christian market segment will benefit from understanding the distinguishing beliefs that Christians hold regarding their finances so that they can serve their Christian clients in a manner that will strengthen advisor/client trust and, therefore, lead to longer relationships and stronger referrals.

Because Kingdom Advisors exists to train and equip advisors with best practices for serving their Christian clients, they have a desire to facilitate such service on a larger scale. They believe that informed financial advice is of great benefit to the Christian client, the advisor, and the firm.

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As more advisors skillfully and intentionally engage with this market, there will emerge a **synergy of benefits** to the Christian client, their financial advisor, and the firms they represent.

37% of Americans can be classified as highly religious based on self-reports of church attendance and the importance of religion in their lives.

\*

## Introduction:

The purpose of this Business Case is to clarify the uniqueness of the Christian market as it relates to the financial services industry, by discussing several areas of differentiation. Furthermore, this paper seeks to show how training financial advisors to offer advice from a biblical paradigm will not only meet the unique needs within this Christian market, but also result in a boost to client trust and loyalty to both their advisor and the firm the advisor represents. Finally, the paper will examine how advisors who are trained to connect on a values level with those in the Christian market are effectively reaching that market. As more advisors skillfully and intentionally engage with this market, there will emerge a synergy of benefits to the Christian client, their financial advisor, and the firms they represent.

## Part One: Defining And Assessing The Market

### Premise: Why “Sub-Culture” Matters

A subculture is “a cultural subgroup differentiated by status, ethnic background, residence, religion, or other factors that functionally unify the group and act collectively on each member.”<sup>1</sup> The thesis of this Business Case is that there is a distinct religious sub-culture known as “Christianity,” which is comprised of millions of Americans, across denominational lines, who have a defined and integrated network of behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. Furthermore, because this sub-culture ascribes to these specific beliefs and attitudes, their financial decisions will emanate from the unique paradigm created by these beliefs and attitudes. This form of Christianity asserts distinct beliefs about financial decision-making that are deeply rooted in biblical teaching. It is critical for financial advisors to understand this market, to know the paradigms that inform its members’ financial decisions, and to be able to communicate effectively with them on a values level, in order to maintain their trust and in order to grow their market share of these Christian clients over time.

### Christian Market Potential

The number of Christians varies, depending on the approach that the polling organization takes.<sup>2</sup> The two most widely cited research organizations on this topic are the Barna Research Group and the Pew Research Center. Barna classifies them according to whether they agree with certain beliefs<sup>3</sup>, while Pew classifies according to a self-selection method.<sup>4</sup> In both cases, the category crosses many denominational lines. Pew's 2014 Religious Landscape Study of over 35,000 adults showed that 70.6% of the population is Christian.<sup>5</sup> Barna's 2016 State of the Church report reveals 73% of Americans say they are Christian.<sup>6</sup> The Christian market is huge. The United States population is over 328 million<sup>7</sup>, making this market segment somewhere between 229 million and 239 million people in size. Furthermore, the belief system was on the rise between 1972 and 2006.<sup>8</sup> From an income perspective, in 2000, American Christians collectively made an estimated \$2.66 trillion in income<sup>9</sup> and had somewhere between \$1.54 trillion and \$6.72 trillion in assets, not including the value of their primary home.<sup>10</sup> Roughly 13 percent of them earn an income of more than \$100,000 per year.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the size and financial strength of the Christian market, there is evidence showing that branding along the lines of Christian principles or the promotion of the Christian faith makes many

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Companies that embrace or promote Christianity have a **market advantage**.

types of consumers likely to be more receptive to doing business with those brands. In a nationwide sample of U.S. consumers who were asked if they would be “more or less likely to buy a particular brand if they knew it was from a company that embraces and promotes the Christian faith,” 37% said they would be more likely to do business with the brand, while only 3% said that the faith connection would make them less likely, and 58% were indifferent to the embracing of the Christian faith. Overall, the “favorable to unfavorable ratio” of the study was 12 to 1, showing that companies that embrace or promote Christianity have a market advantage.<sup>12</sup> David Kinnaman, the president of the Barna Group and director of the study, observed, “There appears to be a significant opportunity for enterprises that understand and value faith to express their faith consciousness through their business practices --- not simply as a marketing gimmick but as an authentic part of their content, their mix of products and services, their branding, and their corporate culture.”<sup>13</sup> Given this research, it follows that advisors who brand themselves as offering advice from a Christian perspective would potentially gain a market advantage that would reflect favorably on their firm’s brand, as well.

## Part Two: Defining The Planning Differentiators For The Christian Market

### #1: Planning Areas and Common Language

Sixty-eight percent of Christians say that their **religion is very important** in their lives. Therefore advisors who seek to serve this market would be more **effective** in their **advice** if they understood the religiously-based paradigms that most significantly affect the financial decisions of Christians.

Given the size of this market as it relates to the financial services industry, it is imperative that financial advisors interested in serving it understand both the language and the planning differentiators that are unique to Christians, in order to serve it most effectively. As with any religious affiliation, the teachings of Christianity inform the thinking and actions of its followers. The Christian’s belief that the Bible should inform their thinking and actions significantly affects the paradigms they use for decision-making. Of the various types of church affiliation, Christians rank in the top four categories of populations who say that religion is very important in their lives and whose religion informs their basic social and political views.<sup>14</sup> Sixty-eight percent of these individuals say that their religion is very important in their lives.<sup>15</sup> Therefore advisors who seek to serve this market would be more effective in their advice if they understood the religiously-based paradigms that most significantly affect their financial decisions. Based on the understanding that Christians are likely to apply a biblical paradigm to their financial decisions, this paper will outline a few key communication and planning differentiators.

### #2: Communicating with an Understanding of the Stewardship Paradigm

In order to understand the unique planning differentiators operative when they seek financial counsel from an advisor, it is first necessary to define the concept of “stewardship,” which is foundational to the paradigm Christians hold regarding their money. In the Bible, Jesus teaches that His followers are not the owners of their worldly wealth, but rather its stewards.<sup>16</sup> The belief that God is the true owner of a Christian’s resources, and that He will hold them accountable for how they use His resources, causes them to have a sense of responsibility to His stated purposes for the use of their wealth. Because of this stewardship mindset, financial advisors counseling Christians will need to be acutely aware of both the financial implications and the values/beliefs implications of the advice that they give.

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The most basic lifestyle question for a Christian is, **“How much is enough?”**

Additionally, financial advisors seeking to effectively serve these Christian clients need to be versed in the vernacular that surrounds the stewardship paradigm. In addition to the word “steward,” words such as “Kingdom,” “reward,” “treasure,” “ministry,” “calling,” and “wisdom,” all hold unique meaning for the Christian, as they relate to their financial beliefs. The financial planning implications of a stewardship mindset are reflected in a few key areas such as debt, lifestyle, investing, giving, estate planning, and retirement, all of which are outlined below.

## #3: Debt

Debt is a ubiquitous American struggle. At the end of the second quarter of 2018, household debt was estimated to be \$13.29 trillion, with the credit card debt portion at \$829 billion.<sup>17</sup> For the Christian, debt decisions are informed by a few biblical principles that have a direct bearing on their thinking. First, the Bible teaches that it is wrong not to repay debts. Psalm 37:21 (NIV states, “The wicked borrow and do not repay.” Holding this view of debt has clear implications on bankruptcy decisions and processes. Secondly, Christians follow the biblical teaching that surety (co-signing is foolish, found in Proverbs 6:1-5 and Proverbs 11:15. Financial advisors to Christians need to understand this belief when they counsel clients regarding co-signing decisions. Finally, and more generally, these Christians believe that debt can be in conflict with their desire to live by faith in God. Because debt always presumes upon a future ability to repay, it can be in conflict with a biblical principle found in James 4:13 – 15<sup>18</sup>. Given this fact, an Christian making a debt decision will want to examine the assumptions and presumptions they are making about the future prior to going into debt, in order to ensure that their decision does not compromise their desire to live a life of faith in God.

The problem of debt is of high importance to Christian churches, as evidenced by the numbers of participants in Dave Ramsey’s acclaimed Financial Peace University study, which focuses strongly on debt reduction as a means to financial peace and freedom. As of 2012, Dave Ramsey’s curriculum was offered in over 35,000 churches. Of the over 1.5 million families who have participated in the Financial Peace University offering, the average family has paid off \$5,300 in debt and has saved \$2,700 during the 90-day program.<sup>19</sup> Both the widespread adoption and the impact of FPU reinforce the perceived need within the marketplace for debt solutions that are aligned with Christian values. As financial advisors counsel Christians from a more informed perspective, they will be able to offer solid financial counsel regarding debt reduction, while also aligning themselves with and supporting the foundational

## #4: Lifestyle

Because Christians view themselves as stewards of God’s money, their lifestyle decisions raise some fundamental questions. Their financial advisors need to be versed in helping them answer the values-level questions that their lifestyle-related financial decisions raise. The most basic lifestyle question for them is, “How much is enough?” Given their desire to follow God’s purposes for their resources, which include generosity and good financial stewardship, the Christian client will be inclined to move beyond an “accumulation” mindset and to define financial “finish lines” that are aligned with stewardship thinking. Because of this distinction, the advisor needs to understand an important biblical construct for defining, “How much is enough?”

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**A well-trained financial advisor...** is of **great value** to the Christian who wants to make God-honoring lifestyle choices.

Financial advisors who understand the importance of biblically-oriented viewpoints about the fear/faith dichotomy will help their clients **successfully navigate market downturns** by reminding their clients of the biblical viewpoint that cycles are inevitable and that God's purposes are at work.

that is found in the book of I Timothy, chapters 5-6. The teachings of I Timothy assert three parameters for making biblically-based lifestyle choices. The first parameter is provision<sup>20</sup>. "Am I adequately providing for my family?" The second parameter is contentment.<sup>21</sup> "Am I fostering an attitude of contentment within my lifestyle?" The final parameter is enjoyment.<sup>22</sup> "Am I enjoying my lifestyle, recognizing that what I have comes from God?" Obviously, these questions are all subjective questions, and the expertise of a well-trained financial advisor in answering each of them is of great value to the Christian who wants to make God-honoring lifestyle choices.

## #5: Investing

Christians find that many applications of their biblical financial paradigm apply to their investment decisions. First of all, from a subjective standpoint, they believe that the answer to fears deriving from market swings is having a firm faith in God's ownership, control, and purposes. Financial advisors who understand the importance of biblically oriented viewpoints about the fear/faith dichotomy will help their faith-guided clients successfully navigate market downturns by reminding their clients of the biblical viewpoint that cycles are inevitable<sup>23</sup> and that God's purposes are at work<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, they will understand that many of the objective investment principles their advisors espouse are rooted in biblical wisdom. This correlation will strengthen their trust in the advice of their advisor, assuming that the advisor is true to the principles. Some commonly held investment principles that are supported by biblical teaching include: establish written financial goals<sup>25</sup>, save and invest first<sup>26</sup>, focus on preservation and the steady growth of capital<sup>27</sup>, maintain a long time horizon<sup>28</sup>, diversify your portfolio<sup>29</sup>, seek wise counsel<sup>30</sup>, avoid high leverage<sup>31</sup>, monitor your anxiety<sup>32</sup>, and avoid risky investments if you can't afford a loss<sup>33</sup>. Beyond simple investment principles, a Christian worldview also informs a growing body of thought regarding the application of a biblical view of economics to investment methodology. Recently, books such as *Biblical Economics* by R.C. Sproul, Jr. and research by Christian financial planning firm, Ronald Blue & Co., on the application of a biblical viewpoint to classical and modern economic theory<sup>34</sup>, reveal that Christians have a growing interest in understanding how their faith applies to their investment choices as well as to the economic systems under which they live. Believing that there is a biblically-based framework to understand how economies grow, when inflation occurs, and how assets are valued, creates a greater demand among this sub-group for advisors who are educated about a Christian's viewpoints and paradigms for investment decisions. Finally, Christians are similar to other sub-groups who are growing in their desire to apply their social values to their investment portfolios.

"Sustainable and socially responsible investing (SRI) in the United States has continued to grow at a faster pace than the broader universe of conventional investment assets under professional management. In 2016, professionally managed assets following SRI strategies stood at \$8.72 trillion, one fifth of all investment under professional management and a 33 percent increase since 2014...Over the same period, the broader universe of assets under professional management increased only 260%...During the most recent financial crisis, from 2007 to 2010, the overall universe of professionally managed assets has remained roughly flat while SRI assets...have enjoyed healthy growth."<sup>35</sup>

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The Christian market will **NEED** access to investment tools to meet their social values.

Financial advisors

who can offer expertise and guidance in this area will **win the trust and appreciation of those Christian clients.**

“In thirty five years of counseling Christian clients, I can confidently say that most of them wished to include giving as a part of their financial planning process.”  
– Ron Blue

Given society’s desires to align their values with their investments, the Christian market will need access to investment tools to meet their social values. Financial advisors who can offer expertise and guidance in this area will win the trust and appreciation of those Christian clients.

## #6: Charitable Giving

Christians tend to make charitable giving a consistent priority. Ron Blue, author of more than 15 books on personal finance and founder of Ronald Blue & Co., a financial planning firm that serves more than 5,000 clients, remarked, “In thirty-five years of counseling Christian clients, I can confidently say that most of them wished to include giving as a part of their financial planning process.”<sup>36</sup> One reason for this fact is that Christians operate out of a stewardship mindset, so they tend to take seriously the biblical mandates to tithe (meaning that they give away at least 10 percent of their income<sup>37</sup> and to care for the widow and orphan<sup>38</sup>. Because these clients seek to follow biblical teaching, they will be more committed charitable givers, due to their belief that they are carrying out God’s purposes with their resources. A second key reason that they will be more likely to make charitable giving a priority has to do with a concept that Christians refer to as “the Treasure Principle.” Essentially, this belief is rooted in the evangelicals’ view that they will experience eternal life with God after their earthly death, and that God has a system of eternal rewards for His followers. Jesus taught His followers that the financial resources they put toward heavenly purposes (such as caring for the poor were, essentially, a transfer of earthly “treasure” to heavenly “treasure.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, every temporal financial decision actually has eternal consequences in the life of a Christian. In light of this mindset, charitable giving becomes a very high priority. Research supports this assertion. In a recent study of 7,300 Christian women, results showed that these women, “give financially far beyond the U.S. averages. Median giving reported by the WDW (Women Doing Well respondents was 10 percent of annual income. This compares to average giving of 2.5 to 3 percent among American households. Additionally, some 13 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they gave 20 percent or more of their income annually to charity.”<sup>40</sup> Another study of Christians found that 24% of them tithed.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, growth in the number of grants given through the largest Christian foundation, the National Christian Foundation, over the last decade supports the argument for the need within this community to have effective vehicles to facilitate charitable giving. Between 1992 and 2001, the National Christian Foundation disbursed \$319 million in grants. Then, between 2002 and 2011, the same foundation disbursed \$2.8 billion in grants, with over 30,000 charities having received checks since the founding of the National Christian Foundation in 1982.<sup>42</sup> Advisors who wish to serve this portion of the Christian market need to understand the motivations for giving, the commitment to giving, and the vehicles for giving, in order to effectively serve these clients.

## #7: Estate Planning / Wealth Transfer

Another common financial planning area that is affected by the beliefs of the Christian is the area of estate planning. The Christian client will see their responsibility to acknowledge God’s ownership and serve His biblically stated purposes as primary in a plan for the disposition of their resources. Because the over-arching paradigm used by a Christian to mitigate estate-planning decisions is a paradigm of stewardship, as opposed to the more common paradigm of the management of tax implications, they will ask

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The Christian will ask different questions in relation to their children and their preferred charities during the discussion process.

different questions in relation to their children and their preferred charities during the discussion process. Specifically, this paradigm will mean that they are more likely to give attention to passing “wisdom before wealth”<sup>43</sup> to their children; it will mean that they are more likely to include charitable giving as a part of their estate planning goals. Both with their children and their preferred charities, the Christian will want to answer the question, “Is the next steward chosen and prepared?” so that they feel confident passing on God’s resources to the next generation, both biologically and within their faith community. A financial advisor will need to understand specific strategies for assessing the amount of money that should pass to each child, grandchild, or charity. In terms of family, the advisor needs to be equipped with specific communication strategies (such as the facilitation of a family conference) that will help the client effectively pass on wisdom along with their wealth. Also, a financial advisor will need understanding and strategies to help clients assess the strength and effectiveness of various charities to which clients are leaving their wealth.

## #8: Retirement Planning

Christian clients believe that they are called to certain purposes and works on earth. Their advisors need to help them determine financial “finish lines” that will free them to continue to work in order to best use their talents and best fulfill their calling.

Another financial planning differentiator is the area of retirement. Traditional retirement planning focuses on an accumulation and preservation strategy, with the goal of allowing clients to be able to stop work at a certain age to pursue recreational aspirations. Working on retirement planning necessitates understanding their view of work, specifically as it relates to the concept of “calling.” Christians have a well-formed set of beliefs regarding work. They believe that God uniquely designs each person (Psalm 139:13-14). They believe that each person has been given unique talents for a purpose (Romans 12:6-8). They believe that people should develop those talents for excellence (Proverbs 22:29), and they believe that vocation is a platform for a person’s higher calling (Matthew 5:16).<sup>44</sup> With this framework in mind, an advisor working with Christians will serve their client best when they can help their client ascertain how well their current work life aligns with their talents and calling, as well as how well the client’s plans for retirement from their current career align with their talents and calling. Because Christian clients believe that they are called to certain purposes and works on earth, their advisors need to help them determine financial “finish lines” that will free them to continue to work (in either a paid or unpaid setting) in order to best use their talents and best fulfill their calling. Advising a Christian client on the topic of retirement will necessarily include many aspects of traditional retirement planning with a unique focus on financially equipping that client to fully pursue their calling by using their gifts and talents.

In conclusion, there are several financial planning differentiators that are unique to this market. When financial advisors are equipped with an understanding of the differentiators and how to apply them to their client’s specific financial scenarios, there is an opportunity to create high levels of client satisfaction as well as to generate meaningful client loyalty within the Christian market.

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As more undergraduates are trained to become Certified Financial Planners®, it is worth noting that several Christian colleges and universities are offering courses in either financial planning or personal finance that integrate a biblical paradigm and the planning differentiators outlined above into their standard curriculum.

There is a growing understanding in the marketplace and among advisors that having **values alignment** and **integrity of viewpoints** with their clients are key aspects to developing a **thriving** and **trusting** advisor / client relationship.

## Part Three: Effective Intersection of the Christian Market and the Uniquely Equipped Financial Advisor

Thus far, this paper has looked at the general scope of the Christian market and the specific financial planning differentiators unique to that market. At this point, the paper will examine how the uniqueness of this market and intentional efforts by a growing number of financial advisors to reach that market could provide synergy and benefit to both the Christian client and the advisory world.

### Growth in Financial Advisory Field

The financial planning industry is a fast-changing landscape. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the number of financial services jobs to grow by 32% over the next 10 years.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the CFP® designation has grown from only 42 in 1973 to over 118,000 globally in 2008.<sup>46</sup> Recognizing the growth of the industry, many colleges and universities are beginning to incorporate CFP® planning programs into their curricular offerings. In fact, “the number of colleges that have registered with the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. to offer approved planning programs has grown to 130, up 20% from two years ago.”<sup>47</sup> As more undergraduates are trained to become Certified Financial Planners®, it is worth noting that several Christian colleges and universities are offering courses in either financial planning or personal finance that integrate a biblical paradigm and the planning differentiators outlined above into their standard curriculum. Specifically, Liberty University is offering a CFP® program that integrates a biblical paradigm into its training; Charleston Southern University is offering a personal finance course with specific integration of biblical financial teaching; and Indiana Wesleyan University is currently developing a Masters in Financial Planning with biblical integration as a focus. As colleges and universities begin to intentionally equip their graduates to speak to the planning differentiators of the Christian market, that market will likely continue to turn (in greater numbers) to advisors who understand and share their biblically based values and financial decision-making paradigms.

### Impact of Shared Values

Doug Lennick, CFP®, author of *Financial Intelligence: How to Make Smart, Values-Based Decisions with Your Money and Your Life*, examines the intersection of people’s values and their financial decisions. In the chapter dedicated to choosing an advisor, Lennick relies on research conducted under the auspices of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, which, “confirms the importance of integrity...to your choice of financial adviser.”<sup>48</sup> Lennick shows his readers how important it is for their financial advisor to have high moral character and high emotional competencies.<sup>49</sup> In fact, the number one question that he recommends a client ask when choosing an advisor is, “What are your most important values?”<sup>50</sup> Lennick’s findings and recommendations reveal that there is a growing understanding in the marketplace and among advisors that having values alignment and integrity of viewpoints with their clients are key aspects to developing a thriving and trusting advisor/client relationship.

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This type of training can be a recruiting tool for advisors who are interested in having a **competitive advantage** or a **differentiator** in the marketplace.

Christians are highly **networked**.

Churches in the Christian tradition offer a **thriving subculture** that speaks to its members' family life, **financial life**, and even physical and political life.

Currently, there are many independent firms and individual advisors who focus on serving the Christian market. Kingdom Advisors, a training organization that specializes in helping financial advisors understand and apply the planning differentiators unique to the Christian client, has over 2,523 members.<sup>51</sup> Ronald Blue & Co. is a large, full-service financial and investment planning firm that offers an expressly Christian perspective in its client counsel. Ronald Blue & Co. seeks to deliver, "trusted and professional financial counsel based on applying biblical wisdom with an eternal perspective."<sup>52</sup> In 2006, Ronald Blue & Co. conducted a survey of a sample of 340 of its more than 5,000 clients. They found that their clients have high levels of client referrals and client loyalty, as well as an appreciation for the shared values represented by financial counsel offered from a biblical paradigm. The survey showed that 93% of the clients had recommended Ronald Blue & Co. to someone else; it showed that 93% of the clients sampled had been with the firm for four years or more; and it showed that over half of the clients sampled saw the biblical perspective of the counsel as being the most distinguishing feature of Ronald Blue & Co.<sup>53</sup> These survey results express both the benefit to the client and the benefit to the advisor when there is an open, concerted effort to give financial advice with a focus on the preferred moral paradigm and value system of the client. They also point to the favorable referral, loyalty, and satisfaction outcomes that could result when advisors are equipped to counsel their Christian clients from a shared-values standpoint.

Given the size of the Christian market and the clarity with which planning differentiators unique to that market can be defined, it is important for financial advisory firms to continue to pursue ways in which they can meaningfully equip their advisors to give counsel that aligns with the values and moral paradigms of their clients. Furthermore, by doing so, this type of training can be a recruiting tool for advisors who are interested in having a competitive advantage or a differentiator in the marketplace.

## Adoption Potential: Active, Networked Christian Market

For financial advisors and advisory firms interested in serving this subculture, it is important to understand that Christians are highly networked, largely due to their connections with their church communities. Their active participation in their churches allows certain programs and personalities to have a strong platform within those communities.

Church communities are interested in assisting their congregations with effective financial counseling. In 2015, research was conducted on 336 megachurches (churches with 2,000 or more in total attendance, 71% of which are Christian by denomination), which showed that the second biggest outreach effort in those churches was financial counseling, with 94% of the churches offering this outreach.<sup>54</sup> As previously mentioned, over 35,000 churches currently offer Dave Ramsey's "Financial Peace University" program, which was first offered via video in 1997.<sup>55</sup> Churches in the Christian tradition offer a thriving subculture that speaks to its members' family life, financial life, and even physical and political life.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, as financial advisors begin to offer meaningful financial counsel from a biblical worldview, the opportunity for growth and word-of-mouth marketing is significant.

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Firms and advisors who begin to intentionally serve that market will be on the **cutting edge**, in that there are very few firms or advisors who offer financial advice from a **biblically-based paradigm**.

## Influential Leaders Facilitate Faster Adoption

In addition to common programming and outreach, there are certain leaders within the Christian community who have very wide followings, both in brick and mortar churches and online or through media outlets. Kingdom Advisors is highly networked within this community and offers a platform for many of the major influencers in this space. For example, in the last few years, the Kingdom Advisors annual conference has featured Andy Stanley, Rick Warren, David Platt, John Maxwell, Anne Graham Lotz, and Bob Doll as plenary speakers. Stanley pastors a church with nearly 24,000 members<sup>57</sup>, Warren pastors a church with more than 25,000<sup>58</sup>, and Platt is the author of *Radical*, which was #3 on the list of Christian non-fiction bestsellers in 2011<sup>59</sup>, John Maxwell has sold over 19 million books,<sup>60</sup> Anne Graham Lotz is the evangelist-daughter of Billy Graham, and Bob Doll is the former Vice Chairman of BlackRock®. As Kingdom Advisors equips more financial advisors to offer financial counsel from a biblical paradigm, the network of speakers and authors that the organization attracts to its events, webinars, and training conference calls can have a significant impact on how widely known this network of advisors becomes within the Christian subculture.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, financial advisors and financial advisory firms who desire to serve their Christian clients well can greatly enhance their service by understanding the unique planning differentiators. Additionally, the size, influence, financial resources, and connectivity of the Christian sub-culture make it an important market whose members are looking for financial advice that aligns with its values. Firms and advisors who begin to intentionally serve that market will be on the cutting edge, in that there are very few firms or advisors who offer financial advice from a biblically-based paradigm.

## About Kingdom Advisors

Kingdom Advisors offers in-depth training and a tight-knit community to more than 2,500 Christian financial professionals who want to integrate their faith with their practice. Kingdom Advisors vision is to create a recognized and credible specialty of Christian financial, legal, and accounting professionals within the financial services industry offering biblically wise financial advice to the public.

Kingdom Advisors serves Christian financial professionals by offering:

- **Advocacy:** serving as the primary industry advocate for the specialty of biblically wise financial advice.
- **Training:** providing training for its members to integrate their faith and practice through a vast array of member offerings and experiences.
- **Community:** connecting members by facilitating networking, accountability, and encouragement among like-minded peers.
- **Designation:** certifying financial professionals who earn the Certified Kingdom Advisor® designation, the gold standard for advisors who offer biblically wise financial advice.

For more information about Kingdom Advisors and to search for a Certified Kingdom Advisor® visit [www.kingdomadvisors.com](http://www.kingdomadvisors.com)

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- 10 This information is extrapolated from three sources: Social Investment Forum, 2003 Report on Socially Responsible Investing Trends in the United States (Washington: Author, 2003), 4; George Barna, Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical, The Barna Update, January 18, 2007; Larry Eskridge, Defining Evangelicalism (Wheaton, Ill.: Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, n.d.).
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- 13 Ibid.
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- 15 Ibid.
- 16 This teaching is found several places in the gospels; most notably in the "Parable of the Talents" in Matthew 25:14 – 30.
- 17 "Total Household Debt Rises for 16th Straight Quarter" Federal Reserve Bank of New York. 14 August 2018. Web. 28 August 2018.
- 18 "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and make a profit.' 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'" James 4:13-15 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 19 (email correspondence) Guess, Karen. "Kingdom Advisors Business Case Statistics?" Brown, Michael. 26 June 2012.
- 20 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." I Timothy 5:8 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 21 "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content." I Timothy 6:8 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 22 "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" I Timothy 6:17-18 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 23 "For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." II Peter 3:4b (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 24 "Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand." Proverbs 19:21 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 25 "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty." Proverbs 21:5 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 26 "Prepare your work outside and make it ready for yourself in the field; afterwards, then, build your house." Proverbs 24:27 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 27 "A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished." Proverbs 28:20 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?" Luke 14:28 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)

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- 29 "Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth." Ecclesiastes 11:2 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 30 "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days." Proverbs 19:20 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 31 "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave." Proverbs 22:7 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 32 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 33 "There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt." Ecclesiastes 5:13 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 34 For information on this research, visit [www.ronblue.com/](http://www.ronblue.com/) resources.
- 35 "2012 Report on Socially Responsible Investing Trends in the United States." Social Investment Forum Foundation (2010): 8. Web. 30 May 2012.
- 36 Ron Blue, comment in a live interview on 24 May 2012.
- 37 "Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD." Leviticus 27:30 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation) AND "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. You shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always." Deuteronomy 14:22-23 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 38 "When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." Deuteronomy 24:19 AND "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:17 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 39 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Luke 12:33-34 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 40 Sherman, Amy L. "Directions in Women's Giving 2012." Women Doing Well. (2012):6. Available via web on [www.womendoingwell.org](http://www.womendoingwell.org).
- 41 "New Study Shows Trends in Tithing and Donating." The Barna Group. 14 April 2008. Web. 15 May 2012.
- 42 "Generosity Changes Everything: 2012 Ministry Report." National Christian Foundation. (2012):20-21. Web. 25 May 2012.
- 43 "Wisdom along with an inheritance is good and an advantage to those who see the sun. For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors." Ecclesiastes 7:11-12 (NASB, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation)
- 44 Blue, Ron and Burkett, Larry. *Your Money After the Big 5-0*. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007) 77.
- 45 "Personal Financial Advisors: Summary." Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web. 24 July 2012.
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- 47 Kephart, Jason. "More colleges adding financial planner programs." InvestmentNews.com. 29 April 2012. Web. 23 May 2012.
- 48 Lennick, Doug and Jordan, Kathleen. *Financial Intelligence: How to Make Smart, Values-Based Decisions with Your Money and Your Life*. Denver: FPA Press, 2010. Print. 127.
- 49 Ibid. p. 127.
- 50 Ibid. p. 137.
- 51 Taken from internal data at Kingdom Advisors, verifiable by calling (404)497-7680, the home office of Kingdom Advisors ([www.kingdomadvisors.org](http://www.kingdomadvisors.org)).
- 52 "Our Story." RonBlue.com., n.p., n.d., Web. 12 June 2012.
- 53 Taken from internal Ronald Blue & Co. publication of survey conducted in October, 2006 by Integrity Marketing Group, Inc., entitled "Hedgehog Project Research Presentation."
- 54 Bird, Warren and Thumma, Scott. "A New Decade of Megachurches: 2011 Profile of Large Attendance Churches in the United States." Leadership Network. (2011): 6, 11. Hartford Institute. Web. 18 May 2012.
- 55 (email correspondence) Guess, Karen. "Kingdom Advisors Business Case Statistics?." Brown, Michael. 26 June 2012.
- 56 Bird, Warren and Thumma, Scott. "A New Decade of Megachurches: 2011 Profile of Large Attendance Churches in the United States." Leadership Network. (2011): 10. Hartford Institute. Web. 18 May 2012.
- 57 "The Church Guide: Top 20 Megachurches in America." Hartford Institute of Religion Research. Web. 18 May 2012.
- 58 /about/our-church/history. Saddleback.com, Web. 17 August 2016.
- 59 "February 2011 Christian Marketplace Bestsellers." PublishersWeekly.com. 26 January 2011. Web. 18 May 2012.
- 60 About/Bio. Johnmaxwell.com., n.p., n.d., Web. 13 June 2012.