

Are We Misled About Evangelical Influence in America?

A headline from an article by a Christian leader quotes a specific number of Christians in America, saying it's the key to the upcoming presidential election. But is this number accurate? And what is the truth about our current Christian cultural influence?

Dr. George Barna, director of the Cultural Research Center at Azusa Christian University and author of 60 books, helps us understand whether we are succumbing or shaping society as Christ's ambassadors, plus determining how many of us are really out there.

Barna's most recent project is a no-holds-barred, realistic, objective and honest assessment of data that many watchmen on the wall believe God is giving us to wake us up in this time of crisis. He's informing and inspiring us to be salt, holding back decay plus awakening authentic Christ-followers to be informed influencers and change agents before it's too late.

We need a sense of urgency, so he's exposing counterfeit Christians and an evangelical exodus, as many pastors avoid addressing hot-button issues while church attenders enjoy sermons about books of the Bible but don't apply the Scriptures to address extremely serious issues accelerating America's moral decline.

How we desperately need this kind of brutal honesty today. U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement released its recent findings that 450,000 unsupervised criminal aliens are in America now, including 13,000 convicted or accused of murder. The media avoids or downplay these shocking figures, causing masses to treat open borders as no big deal, when the

situation is having a catastrophic effect on our society. And how we need accurate stats on the actual number of Christians in America so we can gauge their real impact in elections.

An Accurate Assessment

Major media polling tells us that about 40% of America's adult population (representing about 90 million votes) is "Christian." Barna research shows the figure is inflated—it's actually around 10% (representing maybe 30 million votes).

Sorry, vile rappers, scandalous porn stars and blasphemous entertainers who "love Jesus," you don't make the cut (but we pray you'll repent and get right with a holy God).

This data is surprising and sobering many who identify as evangelicals but who may have illusions about our impact today.

Let's break it down for the sake of clarity and realism.

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When people are asked general questions—"Are you a Christian?"—millions respond in the affirmative because that's their childhood experience. They attend periodic church services; they're not Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim, so they surmise they must be Christian, Catholic or some facsimile.

Back to Basics

Barna pollsters ask specific questions that are more revealing in light of historic Christian beliefs. Identifying as an evangelical means salvation is by "grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone;" Jesus Christ is God incarnate; the

Bible is divinely inspired as the revealed will of God; we are “born again” [converted as Jesus stated we must be (John 3:1-21)] when we repent and trust Jesus Christ and His sacrificial, substitutionary death on the cross, “not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:9, NKJV).

If we ask questions such as those that follow, we find massive numbers of so-called Christians who aren’t really Christians after all.

Brutal reality: From the clear teaching of Scripture, millions professing to be Christians are sadly deceived into believing these incorrect beliefs about salvation and eternal life and communicate (when asked) that they are Christians. However, they are not and are in need of being evangelized.

Even Pope Francis recently said in Singapore: “All religions are paths to reach God. There is only one God and religions are like languages, paths to reach God.” Sorry, this is not scriptural!

Biblical Worldview

Barna’s meticulous and objective research also reveals mind-boggling data showing scores of evangelical Christians failing to put their faith into action to impact society. Scores are neglecting, ignoring and tragically compromising commands and important aspects of the Christian life that bring light into darkness and preserve us from moral decay For example:

1. Only 1/3 of “evangelical Christians” have a biblical worldview.
2. Seven of 10 believe it’s best to follow instincts in decision-making.

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3. Half, or 50%, believe that all people are basically good, resulting in minimal intentional sharing of the transformative message of the gospel. (Note: Pope Francis declared this unbiblical belief on “60 Minutes” on May 19: “We are all fundamentally good. There are some rogues and sinners, but the heart itself is good.” Error!)
4. 25% accept lying when it’s in their best interests.
5. Millions accept abortion as legitimate. Fifty percent of Catholics voted for the pro-abortion candidate in the last presidential election,
6. A third choose not to vote, refraining from our duty as citizens to “render to Caesar” (Mark 12:17) as Jesus directed and modeled.
7. Six of 10 don’t pay attention to news about government and politics.
8. Millions don’t engage in advancing God’s agenda by choosing to refrain from dialogue with others where they differ.

Call for SAGECONS

The Family Research Council, led by Tony Perkins, a man I deeply respect, is issuing a call for “Spiritually Active, Governance Engaged, Conservatives.” It’s a clarion call for evangelical Christians to stand up and speak up on the issues of our day in order to change the hearts and minds of those surrounding us in our spheres of influence.

Many of you are aware of the Bullseye initiative, which is similar in its mission to equip informed influencers to speak courageously and confidently on the 30 hot-button issues we’re facing at this critical time in America’s history. Sixteen top

leaders donated their time and ministry to put together 30 free, brief, compelling videos instantly available for pastors, politicians, youth leaders, parents, educators and everyone arising to take a bold stand and rescue those being swept up in deception on our watch. Simply go to [www.barna.com](#) and click on the Bullseye graphic to begin being mentored by leaders such as Dr. Michael Brown, Dr. Alveda King, Stormie Omartian, Dr. Che Ahn, Dr. David Barton and others. It's all free.

Here's the Deal: Barna's latest research project is certainly a needed eye-opener with the coming election. May it jolt scores out of any complacency to get engaged, vote biblically and strongly but lovingly, exhorting everyone we can to see God's purposes fulfilled in 2024.

Larry Tomczak *is a best-selling author of 10 books, cultural commentator of 50 years, Intercessors for America board member and a public policy adviser with Liberty Counsel. Go to [www.barna.com](#) to watch 30 amazing, free, brief, on-demand videos by America's top leaders so you can confidently address today's tough issues.*