

How Christians Can Fall Victim to this Dangerous Cultural Phenomenon

Few would deny that tension across America abounds. Is it because of “identity politics,” and are Christians guilty too?

American Pastors Network (APN) President Sam Rohrer recently talked with renowned social science researcher George Barna on APN’s daily radio ministry “Stand in the Gap Today,” which airs on 425 stations nationwide.

Barna pointed to new research from the American Culture & Faith Institute (ACFI), where he serves as executive director, which defines “identity politics” as the practice of organizing a distinct social or political constituency around a cause, a sense of threatened existence, the perceived loss of opportunities or influence or a set of ideals.

A number of movements, Barna noted, have emerged to challenge society’s prevailing traditions, beliefs, customs and laws based on claims of discrimination related to race, sexuality, ethnicity, economics, and spirituality. The new national survey from the Institute looked at peoples’ perceptions of various population groups and discovered numerous areas in which prevailing beliefs about our population are wrong or questionable—and could result in violence or conflict situations.

Rohrer and Barna discussed whether Christians could also be guilty of these inaccurate perceptions.

“Unfortunately, it’s not uncommon for Americans, and Christians too, to find themselves forming an opinion about certain social movements or people based on how influential they think they may be,” Rohrer said. “Have we ever supported

an effort or agenda because of the 'bigness' of the cause and that we wanted to be on the 'winning side'? Many of us have also formed negative opinions about groups of people because of what we've heard or read. When we do this, we fall victim to the dangerous phenomena known as 'identity politics,' and there's no place for it in today church, especially as America continues to become more divisive."

Past sociological studies, the research found, have shown that negative feelings toward a people group are sometimes founded on a sense of feeling threatened by that group. One common reason for that perception of threat is the size of the group in question. Overall, the survey found that most Americans hold a favorable view of the 11 groups listed, with the exception of Scientologists. Whites, Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, evangelical Christians, Muslims and Mormons were also included.

View the full research here and listen to the program about the research and identity politics here.

"Stand in the Gap Today" is co-hosted by Dave Kistler, president of the *North Carolina Pastors Network (NCPN)*, and Gary Dull, executive director of the *Pennsylvania Pastors Network (PPN)*. Listen online at [by clicking on the orange "Listen Live" button on the right-hand side of the website daily at noon ET.](#) **Read more about the American Pastors Network and its "Stand in the Gap" radio ministry here.** {eo}