

40% of Christians Disengaged: The Biggest Threat to Christianity?

Voices are gradually rising as many realize Christianity is on the brink of worldwide persecution.

The West has abandoned the principles on which it was built, and is instead silencing the voices of any who declare the ways of God and the salvation found in Jesus Christ. It has turned its back on the ways of God and embraced the ways of man.

But is persecution the greatest threat facing the spread of the Gospel message today?

According to George Barna, founder of the market research firm The Barna Group, in an interview with The Christian Post, there are several “negative trends” that have led to the loss of cultural influence and relevance for the Christian faith, leading to “Christian invisibility in our culture.

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“People have become more selfish, churches have become less influential, pastors have become less Bible-centric,” Barna says. “Families have invested less of their time and energy in spiritual growth, particularly of their children. The media now influence the church more than the church influences the media, or the culture for that matter. The Christian body tends to get off track arguing about a lot of things that really don’t matter.”

How did we get here? When did the faith traditions that built the West become afterthoughts in society, and a punching bag

of Western media?

Barna points to the lack of proper discipleship from old to new generations of leaders which has led to a decay of influence over the years.

“There is poor leadership in seminaries that mislead local churches into thinking that they’re actually training individuals whom God has called to be leaders and are qualified to be leaders and certifying them to lead local churches, not knowing any better bringing them on,” warns Barna.

As recently as January 2022, The Barna Group discovered, only a mere 28% of Christians are engaged in “Discipleship Community,” and 39% aren’t engaged in discipleship in any form whatsoever.

Instead of holding coming generations up to the Bible’s standard, we have instead been conforming ourselves to the world’s standard, trying to wrap the Bible around that, instead of wrapping our views around the Bible.

“You get what you measure,” he continues. “So if you measure the wrong things, you’ll get the wrong outcomes ... [pastors] measure how many people show up, how much money they raise, how many programs they offer, how many staff persons they hire, how much square footage they built out. Jesus didn’t die for any of that. So we’re measuring the wrong stuff and, consequently, we get the wrong outcomes.”

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So how do we as the corporate body of Christ fix this predicament we are in?

It’s all about getting back to biblical basics, according to

Barna.

"If we were to go back to the Bible, I think we'd recognize the local church, the institutional church, as we've created it, is man-made. It's not in the Scriptures," he said. "The programs, the titles, the buildings, all the stuff that has become sacrosanct in American culture and around the world is not necessarily biblical.

"Jesus didn't come to build institutions, He came to build people. And we see that model in His life. He devoted the ministry portion of His life to investing in individuals. And that's what each of us who are followers of Christ need to be doing."

With proper, biblical discipleship and the establishment of relationships that can weather the storms of life, the church can once again be the light that societies around the world so desperately need it to be.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.