



*The Podcast Focused on  
Revitalizing Conventional Christianity  
—One Person at a Time*

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom  
Christianity

Episode 1, Houston, We Have a Problem!©

---

*The following is a transcript of Inside Jimbo's Head from Season 1, Episode 1 of the Hello, Jimbo Speaking™ podcast first aired January 13, 2020.*

*You can hear the Hello, Jimbo Speaking podcast on the following platforms: Anchor, Apple Podcasts, Breaker, Castbox, Google Podcasts, Overcast, Pocket Casts, RadioPublic, Spotify, and Stitcher.*

*All rights to each podcast and to this written transcript are copywritten to James B. Warren and are solely owned by him. All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying, and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author. Contact: Jim Warren, PO Box 65 Wheatfield, IN 46392*

---

## **Introduction**

It's time to look inside the head of Jimbo. I am often asked, "Jim, why are you so strong about changing things. What is this revitalizing conventional Christianity? Conventional Christianity has been going along just fine. Why do you want to change everything up?" Well, the truth of the matter is my friends, over the last twenty years there have been voices upon voices tell us that we are failing. All you have to do is look what the Bible says our lives should be like and then what there like, and then listen to all the excuses we and leaders make, time and time again, why we can't be what the Bible says we should be . . . Because, well, we're not in heaven yet. That my friend is an insult to the integrity of scripture and to God. Now, I know that sounded really strong but let's take a moment and let's look at what's happened over the last twenty years.

### **1. Reviewing the Evidence**

Ok, let's start by reviewing what has been happening in the last twenty years in the American church. We will have a special emphasis on the Evangelical church in America. So, let's start with a statement made in 2014 by journalist Elizabeth Palermo who was writing in Live Science. "The moral high ground seems to be a crowded place. A new study suggests that religious

people aren't more likely to do good than their nonreligious counterparts. And while they may vehemently disagree with one another at times, liberals and conservatives also tend to be on par when it comes to behaving morally."<sup>i</sup>

Now, I can hear you because I've heard it many times before, "You know she's talking about politics and all religious people, not just Christians." Well, let's just dig a little bit deeper.

Let's go back to 1999. George Barna compared the behaviors and attitudes of Christians with Non-Christians and came up with this conclusion, "We think and behave no differently from anyone else."<sup>ii</sup> Now you may ask, "Who is George Barna?" He's the founder of the Barna Group. Barna Group is a highly respected (by the church and outside the church) visionary research and resource company located in Ventura, California. Started in 1984, and is widely considered to be a leading research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture. What was happening in 1999? The church growth movement morphed into the seeker-friendly movement. Again you may say, "Barna was talking about all Christians, not us Evangelicals."

Really! In the same year, 1999, a group of Evangelical leaders gathered in Eastbourne, England. They gathered for the Eastbourne Consultation on Discipleship. Here's what they said in their concluding paper. "As we face the new millennium, we acknowledge that the state of the Church is marked by a paradox of growth without depth. Our zeal to go wider has not been matched by a commitment to go deeper. Researchers and pollsters have documented the fact that many times: Christians are not that different from the culture around them. When the desert wind blows, it shapes the sand, and the Church has become more like the sand than the wind." They went on. "We grieve that many within the Church are not living lives of biblical purity, integrity, and holiness. The need is in the pulpit and pew alike. The lack of true discipleship has resulted in a lack of power in the Church to impact our culture."<sup>iii</sup>

"Well, Jim, hey, that was the last millennium. It can't be the same today. Things had to of changed."

I know my friend. Once again, I've heard that. So let's skip forward to 2004. Barna concluded in a new study: "The ultimate aim of belief in Jesus is not simply to possess divergent theological ideas but to become a transformed person. These statistics highlight the fact that millions of people who rely on Jesus Christ for their eternal destiny have problems translating their religious beliefs into action beyond Sunday mornings."<sup>iv</sup>

And now, let's move a little bit further to 2007. In A 2007 article in Christianity Today (Christian Today), Audrey Barrick wrote this: "A new Barna Group survey measured the type of lifestyles Americans live. Results showed they live one of sacrifice and of self-indulgence. And the story is not that much different for born-again Christians. The differences, however, between the self-oriented behavior of born again Christians and that of national norms were" hey, get this, they were "small. Although born-again Christians are more likely to volunteer for their church, they are no more likely than average to help the poor or homeless, the survey found. When measured

for other moral behaviors, born-again believers are not much different from non-born-again adults.”<sup>v</sup>

“Ok, Ok, Jim. That was way in the past, twelve years ago!” Now if your making that statement that twelve years ago was way in the past . . . Ah, I know you’re not as old as I am. But, let me give you the benefit of the doubt. Maybe that is far back there. Ok, let’s move up to 2012.

In 2012, a Barna Study of attitudes of Christians concluded: 14% of today’s self-identified Christians—just one out of every seven Christians—seem to represent the actions and attitudes . . . Consistent with those of Jesus. They also found that 51% qualify for the attitudes and actions characterized by self-righteousness—the attitude of the Pharisees.

“But, hey, hey Jim, wait a minute, wait a minute, that’s all Christians, not us Evangelicals.” Well, it went on . . . “When looking at Evangelicals, the study found 38% qualify as neither Christ-like in action nor attitude, and only 23% are characterized by having the Jesus-like actions and attitudes. The rest is a mixture of Christ-like actions and Pharisaical attitudes.”<sup>vi</sup>

NEED MORE . . . ?

In 2016 John S. Dickerson reviewed all the studies done on the condition of the American Evangelical Church. He saw five trends:

- The fuel of American Evangelicalism—dollars—is disappearing and will dwindle over the next three decades.

Now let’s just hold there just one minute. I find it really interesting that Dickerson called money the “fuel of American Evangelicalism.” Now, theologically, we say it’s the Holy Spirit. But later on in these podcasts, you are going to learn how the “church,” the Evangelical church (actually all churches) have taken on a twenty-first-century model of organizational development found in the business world. Because of that, money has become the fuel of American Evangelicalism. Dickerson went on . . .

- We’re losing millions of our own people—about 2.6 million per decade, just from one generation studied.
- Third, he said, the Evangelical church is not winning new believers fast enough to keep pace with rapid population growth in the United States.
- Next, he said, while these forces eat at the church internally, the external climate is turning against evangelicals. The fastest-growing subculture in the United States expresses a militant antagonism against Christians who take the Bible seriously.
- Finally, he says, what’s left of a smaller, shrinking, strapped church is also splintering and splitting itself over politics and postmodern views of God and the Bible.<sup>vii</sup>

In his book, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, where those five things can be found, the kind of summarizes them all in these four little statements: The American Evangelical church is

Sputtering—declining numbers, Bleeding<sup>viii</sup>—failing discipleship, Bankrupt—depleted dollars, Hated—antagonistic host culture.

“But, Jim, it really isn’t that bad. My church is growing. We have so many people we have to hold three or four services each weekend. And anyway, we have great programs and Biblical preaching and an unbelievable moving worship experience. Why are you complaining?”

First, let me make it very clear, I am not complaining. I am crying!

The very things you are pointing to, as the things that are right and good in your church, are the very things that identify cultural Christianity. You see, our traditions have kind of blinded our eyes and kind of caused us to stick our heads in the sand for way, way too long. We have been ignoring the devastating non-Biblical results of conventional Christianity. Now listen to this. It’s not just the results of the church, per se. We have been ignoring the devastating non-Biblical results of non-Biblical conventional Christianity in the lives of people. That’s right. Remember, it’s all about people—people Jesus radically came and radically lived for and radically died for.

## **2. Importance of Recognizing and Fixing the Problem**

Can you remember back to Apollo 13? Maybe you’re too young for that, but maybe you saw the movie where Tom Hanks said, “Houston, we have a problem.” Now really, the astronauts said, “Houston, we had a problem.”

### **Sound Effects: Tape of Apollo 13 on Radio**

Now think about this. What would have happened if flight control would have responded as we, in the modern church, respond to the fact that we have a problem? What would have happened if they had said, “Well, it can’t really be that bad! Hey, we are doing a great job. The problem must be with you guys in that capsule floating around in space. Now fix your own problem. We’re having problems with the coffee machine in the break room.” You see, my friends, we are so focused on things that do not bring the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ that we can’t even allow ourselves to see the very problems that have been screaming at us for the last decades.

Think I’m getting a little too radical? Maybe, maybe not.

I’d like to conclude with a chapter in a book. The title of the chapter is The Paradox of Our Age. It was written, way back there in the Stone Age guys, in 1995. It was written by a gentleman by the name of Dr. Robert Moorhead. Now, let me just say this for clarification. I know he got into a lot of moral trouble and had to step down from his church. But, just listen to these words he used to describe the American culture back at the end of the twentieth century.

We have taller buildings but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower viewpoints; we spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy it less; we have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, yet less time; we have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgment; more experts, yet more problems; we have more gadgets but less satisfaction; more medicine, yet less wellness; we take more vitamins

but see fewer results. We drink too much; smoke too much; spend too recklessly; laugh too little; drive too fast; get too angry quickly; stay up too late; get up too tired; read too seldom; watch TV too much and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values; we fly in faster planes to arrive there quicker, to do less and return sooner; we sign more contracts only to realize fewer profits; we talk too much; love too seldom and lie too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've done larger things, but not better things; we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice; we write more, but learn less; plan more, but accomplish less; we make faster planes, but longer lines; we learned to rush, but not to wait; we have more weapons, but less peace; higher incomes, but lower morals; more parties, but less fun; more food, but less appeasement; more acquaintances, but fewer friends; more effort, but less success. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication; drive smaller cars that have bigger problems; build larger factories that produce less. We've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion; tall men, but short character; steep in profits, but shallow relationships. These are times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure and less fun; higher postage, but slower mail; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are days of two incomes, but more divorces; these are times of fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diaper, cartridge living, throw-away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to prevent, quiet or kill. It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stock room. Indeed, these are our times!<sup>ix</sup>

"When the desert wind blows, it shapes the sand, and the church has become more like the sand than the wind."

Listen to that last sentence one more time. "It is a time where there is much in the show window and nothing in the stock room." Now I know some of you don't believe that. Some of you don't believe that's the culture of conventional Christianity. But, look around. Listen to those facts. We need to face up that, Houston . . . Or maybe I should say, Heaven . . . We have a problem. We're sleepwalking, and we're blowing the mission. Now, I'm not just here to complain. That's not my job. I'm here to give solutions. Remember this, "The Radical Redirection of Relational Realities Required for the Revitalization of Conventional Christianity, Its Citizens, and Communities—One Person at a Time?"

You see, the answers to these problems, every one of them, is a radical redirection of our relationships. We need to change the realities of relationship, both vertically and horizontally. We say we have a relationship with God, but is that as real as our relationship with our mate.

Maybe it's like the neighbor next door. We wave at as we exit our homes, or enter our homes, but really don't have a lot of time for each other. I hope that's not your reality. But you have to be honest. How real is your relationship with God? Then there is that horizontal plane of relationship. That thing that we call community, but is it? Randy Frazee calls the modern American sense of community a group of individuals getting together to make sure their needs are met. Think about it. Everyone who may have left your church didn't leave because they were so busy meeting the needs of others. They left because they felt their needs weren't being met.

### 3. Concluding Remarks

So when was the last time you saw this reality: "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, (in other words, if there is any reality to Jesus what so ever) complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others."<sup>x</sup> Now please, please, don't use the excuse that that can't happen until we get to heaven, or Jesus returns and establishes the physical kingdom. Those are commands to us as God's people in this age!

Now, before I get too far along, I think I need to hold back just a little bit. But before we get into those solutions, we have to have had a solid understanding that we have a problem. We must be like those people in mission control who stopped everything that they were doing and focused on fixing the problem. But here is the reality. We can't fix it until we fix our relationship with God and relationship with one another.

---

<sup>i</sup> Elizabeth Palermo, Religion Doesn't Make People More Moral, Study Finds, Live Science, September 11, 2014; <https://www.livescience.com/47799-morality-religion-political-beliefs.html>

<sup>ii</sup> George Barna, *The Second Coming Of The Church*, Word Publishing, 1998, pg. 7

<sup>iii</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community*, Baker Books, November 1, 2003, Appendix 4

<sup>iv</sup> Faith Has a Limited Effect On Most People's Behavior, Barna, Faith & Christianity, May 24, 2004; <https://www.barna.com/research/faith-has-a-limited-effect-on-most-peoples-behavior/>

<sup>v</sup> Audrey Barrick, Study Compares Christian and Non-Christian Lifestyles, Christian Today, February 7, 2007; <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/american.study.reveals.indulgent.lifestyle.christians.no.different/9439.htm>

<sup>vi</sup> Christians: More Like Jesus or Pharisees?, Barna Group, Faith & Christianity, June 3, 2013; <https://www.barna.com/research/christians-more-like-jesus-or-pharisees/>

<sup>vii</sup> Dickerson, John S. *The Great Evangelical Recession: 6 Factors That Will Crash the American Church...and How to Prepare* (p. 22). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<sup>viii</sup> *ibid.* p. 65

<sup>ix</sup> Dr. Bob Moorehead, *Words Apply Spoken*, Overlake Christian Press, 1995, pg. 197-198

<sup>x</sup> Philippians 2:1-4 ESV