

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

JOIN US FOR A 4-PART SERIES STARTING JANUARY 10

*"A brilliant book. A must read for any Christian
hoping to see their faith regain traction in a changing world."
—GABE LYONS, Author, The Next Christians*

THE GREAT EVANGELICAL RECESSION

**6 Factors That Will
Crash the American Church
... and How to Prepare**

JOHN S. DICKERSON



HOPE OF NATIONS

*Standing Strong in a Post-Truth,
Post-Christian World*

JOHN S. DICKERSON

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Are we more committed
to **Jesus**,
or to **American Christianity**
as we know it?

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STRATEGY SERIES

*A prudent man **sees** danger and **takes** refuge,
but the simple **keep going** and **suffer** for it.*

Proverbs 22:3

*“Marry your **mission**. Date your **model**.*

*Fall in love with your **vision**.*

*Stay mildly infatuated with your **approach**.”*

Andy Stanley – Deep & Wide (2012)

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BE RICH

Give • Serve • Love

2020 GOAL: \$10,000

2020 INTERSECT PARTNERS



new generations

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MESSAGE 1: INFLATED & HATED

Are we **winning**?

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SIX FACTORS OF DECLINE

1. **Inflated**: The Church is smaller than we think.
2. **Hated**: Accelerating anti-Christian culture.
3. **Dividing**: Splitting on politics & social justice.
4. **Bankrupt**: Dependent on decreasing dollars.
5. **Bleeding**: Young people & others are leaving.
6. **Sputtering**: Not reaching new people.

FACTOR #1: INFLATED

*“The **evangelical** church
in the United States
is **not nearly** as large
as we’ve been **told.**”*

John S. Dickerson

The Great Evangelical Recission (2013)

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EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

1. Salvation is “**by grace**” alone.
2. Salvation is “**in Christ**” alone.
3. Salvation is “**by faith**” alone.
4. Jesus is the “**one and only**” way.
5. The Bible is “**God’s word**”.

How many?

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Down and **dropping** (7%).

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DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY

- In U.S., Decline of Christianity **Continues** at rapid pace. (Pew Research Center)
- The Decline of Religion **Continues** – Nones Gain 3 Percent in One Year. (American Values Atlas)
- Atheism **Doubles** Among Generation Z. (Barna)
- The New Sunday Morning – Barna Releases **Alarming** Church Stats Post COVID

FACTOR #2: HATED

*“... people are more **likely** than not to acknowledge that **Americans** are becoming more **hostile** and **negative** toward Christianity.”*

George Barna
Futurecast (2011)

A STORM OF HATRED

*Then a **new** king, who did not **know** about Joseph, came to **power** in Egypt.*

Exodus 1:8

*“Now at ninety-one years old, I believe the **storm clouds** are **darker** than they have ever been. The **world** has changed **dramatically**.”*

Billy Graham – Storm Warning (2010)

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*"If there's a **Reformation** or Renaissance
being propelled by
the **new technologies** of our age,
it is not a Christian Reformation
but a **reforming** of society into a culture
of hedonistic and **unrestrained**
sexuality and **selfishness**."*

John S. Dickerson

The Great Evangelical Recission (2013)

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When the Apostle Paul
found himself at a **tipping point**
of self-**weakness**
in his **following**, God gave him
a “**how to win**” statement.

*Three different times I **pleaded** with the Lord
to relieve me of this (**take it away**).*

But he answered me,

*“My **grace** (power) is always **more than enough**
for you, and my **power** finds its full **expression**
through your **weakness**.”*

*So I will **celebrate** my weaknesses,
for when I’m **weak** I sense more deeply
the **mighty power** of Christ **living** in me.*

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 TPT

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*So I'm not **defeated** by my weakness,
but **delighted!***

*For when I **feel** my weakness
and **endure** mistreatment -*

*when I am **surrounded** with **troubles** on every side
and face **persecution** because of my **love** for Christ*

*- I am made yet **stronger** (more powerful).*

*For my **weakness** becomes
a **portal** to God's power.*

2 Corinthians 12:10 TPT

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*“The **changes** that so many **lament** today
will **give rise** to a more nimble, alert, discerning,
and **adventurous** church ...*

*Shifting from the known to the **unknown**
is always **uncomfortable**,
but intelligent and **responsive** changes will birth
a church better **able** to minister **effectively**
in the new millennium.”*

George Barna – Futurecast (2011)

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3 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you **overestimated** the current **size** of evangelical Christianity in the U.S.? What happened during the **Great Recession** of 2008 when we overestimated home values?
2. If **evangelicalism** in the U.S. were a mighty **oak tree** with deep roots, which **two** of the six factors are **diseases** that eat the tree from **within**? Which **two** are hurricane force winds of **external** change? Which **two** are the **results**?
3. Read Paul's "**how to win**" in 2 Corinthians 12:8-10. What did Paul state that he would not allow to **defeat** him? What can we learn to be **portals** of God's mighty **power**.

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