

**Objections to Christianity**

Group 8

5/23/2013 7:30 PM

San Francisco CA

**(0:00:00.0-0:02:43.3) HOW ABOUT YOUR NAME, A LITTLE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY OR ROOMMATES, WHAT YOU DO, YOUR CONTEXT.**

**Barbara:** I grew up in Santa Cruz, and I've been in San Francisco since I was seventeen. As it relates to this, I'm Jewish. I am remarried, my first husband was also Jewish, and my current husband—we'll say husband from now on—is Catholic, but I am pretty devout in my faith, and practicing. I grew up reform, and I converted to Conservative Judaism in my early twenties. I have a five-year-old daughter named Golda, and a cat, and a three-day-old baby chicken waiting for me to get back.

**(0:03:55.4) WERE YOU ABLE TO STAY AT HOME WITH YOUR CHILD?**

**Barbara:** I was, for a little while, until my divorce. Now I work as a nanny. I've been a nanny since I was nineteen, off and on. I'm also an office manager for a union glazing company, for construction.

**(0:04:12.6) FOR A WHAT?**

**Barbara:** Union glazing company.

**(0:04:14.3) THAT'S COOL. THANKS FOR MAKING TIME TO BE HERE.**

**Barbara:** Yes, glad to be here. Making time is exactly right.

**Amanda:** I'm from Florida, and I moved out here about two years ago. About a month ago, I just moved out with my five-and-a-half-year boyfriend—ex-boyfriend now—to two new awesome lady roommates, who I love. I'm a web developer, I work in the city. I was raised Catholic by my parents, who were also raised Catholic, and now I don't really have a religious affiliation. I took a history class in high school, and Catholicism seemed really sexist, and then all religion just seemed corrupt to me in general, and just a way to control people. Now I believe in a higher spirituality, but I don't believe any religion is necessarily right.

**(0:05:06.8) DO YOU LIKE IT OUT HERE?**

**Amanda:** Yes, I love it out here. It's a lot better than Florida.

**(0:05:11.0) THE WEATHER'S BETTER.**

**Amanda:** Yes, the weather, the people, everything.

**Jackie:** Hi. I'm actually in the same boat as you are. Grew up Catholic, raised by Catholic parents, all of my siblings are Catholic, we were baptized. I define myself as an NPC, non-practicing Catholic. As I got older, I basically found out what Catholicism meant to me. I think I was probably around fourteen. I didn't realize I was gay until I was twenty; that also affected my views about Catholicism. Also, I think it's more . . . the way I look at Catholicism now is through my culture. I'm Filipino. I don't know if you know a lot of Filipinos, but basically 90 percent of the country practice Catholicism. It's hard, at least for me, to take that out of my makeup.

**(0:06:32.8) YOUR CULTURAL SIDE?**

**Jackie:** Yes, my cultural identification of being Filipino, because it's just mired within centuries of Spanish rule, and all that history. Yes, that's pretty much where I'm at right now.

**(0:06:53.7) WHAT DO YOU DO?**

**Jackie:** I freelance in computers.

**(0:06:58.2) WHAT DO YOU GO HOME TO?**

**Jackie:** Oh, sorry. I call my home Vallejo. Actually still stay in the house that I grew up in. My parents retired in the Philippines about twenty years ago and they left us the house, so I live there with my sister. Yes, that's pretty much me.

**Monique:** Hi. I am from Mountain View, and I live in San Jose. I am getting married in a couple months.

**(0:07:27.8) CONGRATULATIONS.**

**Monique:** Thank you. It's very stressful. (*Laughter.*) I work as a cook at a really big corporation in the Bay Area. I would say, but I'm not allowed to.

**(0:07:39.8) YOU DON'T HAVE TO.**

**Monique:** I was baptized Catholic, and both sides of the family were Catholic. My grandmother mostly has been on and off other different branches, but I think she's Seventh-Day Adventist, so part of my family is Seventh-Day Adventist.

**(0:08:01.9) CATHOLIC AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST?**

**Monique:** Yes.

**(0:08:06.5) EVERY GROUP BRINGS ME SOME INTERESTING NEW JOY.**

**Monique:** Yes, basically both sides of the family are pretty religious. I was, I'm not anymore. I still like to believe there's something good and loving out there, and just think the best of people . . .

**(0:08:32.6) WHERE ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED?**

**Monique:** In San Jose, the Japanese Friendship Garden. It's very pretty, have you been there?

**(0:08:38.8) I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF IT.**

**Monique:** Yes. Huge koi pond, it's gorgeous.

**Joie:** I'm Joie. Where I'm from is a long-winded answer, but originally from Nebraska and moved to a town near Fresno when I was thirteen. I moved to New York City when I was eighteen, lived there for six years, then I moved here to San Francisco six months ago. I have one roommate, old friend of mine. I was raised Protestant. I was baptized, went to Christian school until I was in fifth grade, then I got in a bunch of trouble and ended up going to public school. I don't practice religion at this point. My parents wish I did, but I don't.

**(0:09:30.8) WHAT DO YOU DO?**

**Joie:** I work for a friend of mine who's an artist. We're launching this . . . essentially an art collective website. I also drive for Lift, it's the pink mustache cars. I do believe in energy, and I think it's okay to not know everything that happens. I'm comfortable not knowing what happens when we die, that sort of thing. That's my stance. I guess I'm agnostic.

**Emily:** Hi. I'm from Algonquin, Illinois. I went to college on the East Coast, and then moved out here about two years ago. My gentleman partner, we live together in Berkeley, and have a dog. I work for a nonprofit, an international organization that does gender equality and literacy programming in South and Southeast Asia and Southern Africa, in schools, in an educational context. My mom was raised super Catholic. She went to Catholic grammar school, Catholic high school, all that stuff. My dad was raised Methodist, and they both felt pretty strongly that they didn't want to raise my brother and me in a super religious environment.

**(0:11:00.8) SO THEY DIDN'T?**

**Emily:** Yes.

**Amber:** I live in Pittsburg. I'm originally from Brentwood, which is more east of Pittsburgh. I have three children, three daughters—seven, six, and three—and I'm a single mother. I am a server and a student, and I grew up in a very strict Christian home, and it's just not what I want for my children.

**(0:11:34.0) THE STRICT CHRISTIAN HOME?**

**Amber:** Yes. I'm completely opposite of what I grew up to be, I guess.

**(0:11:44.1) THANKS FOR BEING HERE. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO IT WITH THREE GIRLS AT HOME.**

**Amber:** It's like, this is away. *(Laughter.)* It's a vacation. *(Laughter.)*

**(0:11:52.5) "LET'S GO TO THE 21ST AMENDMENT AND HAVE A DRINK." *(Laughter.)***

**Aiden:** I grew up in San Francisco. I'm currently in the East Bay. I have one dog. I have a master's in clinical psychology. I'm actually not doing that, so I'm going back to school for physical therapy. Growing up, I didn't have any religion, but I found out about Mormonism when I was twelve, around there, and then I got baptized into that. Then I didn't really like that, so I got out and found other religion, like Baptist, other things. Except maybe Catholic, that area. Then, pretty much gone the other way, and went to more spirituality practices. I'm more into that now, like meditation.

**(0:12:54.3) YOU GO HOME TO . . . ?**

**Aiden:** I have one dog and four cats.

**(0:13:00.2) WHAT KIND OF DOG?**

**Aiden:** Shar-Pei mix.

**(0:13:04.7) WE WOULD'VE HAD A GOOD TIME WITH THE DOG.**

**Female Respondent:** That and drinks.

**(0:13:14.1) SOMEBODY TOLD ME HE TAKES CARE OF SCHNAUZERS . . .**

**Female Respondent:** Like a foster . . .

**Female Respondent:** A foster . . .?

**(0:13:27.8) A FOSTER SCHNAUZER PERSON.**

**Female Respondent:** Just for schnauzers?

**(0:13:33.4) JUST FOR SCHNAUZERS, BUT NOT MINIATURES.**

**Female Respondent:** Of course not. That'd be ridiculous.

**(0:13:39.4) SHAR-PEI. BEAUTIFUL DOG.**

**Female Respondent:** They have the purple tongue, right?

**Female Respondent:** No, that's the chao.

**(0:13:48.9) THEY HAVE THE LITTLE WRINKLES.**

**Female Respondent:** That's the chao-chao. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(0:13:56.1) ONLY ONE PERSON IS FROM SAN FRANCISCO. YOU SAID YOU LIVE WHERE YOU GREW UP IN YOUR PARENTS' HOUSE.**

**Jackie:** Yes, Vallejo. I've been in the Bay Area for a long, long time.

**(0:14:18.5) WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE TOPICS OF CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND JESUS, COLLECTIVELY?**

**Female Respondent:** Religion as an institution . . . ?

**(0:14:55.7) WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR, “WE’RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT CHRISTIANITY, CHRISTIANS, CHURCH, JESUS . . . ?”**

**Female Respondent:** That’s what I would think of, is just the institution, like the church . . .

**(0:15:05.7) YOU THINK, “WE’RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE INSTITUTION.”**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Barbara:** Brings out the anxiety for me.

**Female Respondent:** It makes me irritated. *(Laughter.)*

**Female Respondent:** I’m not irritated, but *(0:15:14.9 unclear/laughter)*.

**(0:15:15.5) ANXIETY, BECAUSE . . . ?**

**Barbara:** Anxiety because I have respect for all other religions, and I have not always felt that back. My mother has become an Evangelical Christian, and she raised me to be Jewish and to accept everyone, and have these really open ideas . . . very West Coast Jew, none of the fire-and-brimstone God, but just a loving, accepting God.

**Female Respondent:** *(Whispering)* East Coast Jew . . .

**Barbara:** Yes, East Coast Jews are different. They’re wonderful; they’re just different. All the East Coast Jews that didn’t like it all moved out here to be free, but then they liked the spirituality part, and so it’s without all of the drama. It’s just a celebration of loving God, that was my experience. I always . . . there’s not a huge Jewish population in Santa Cruz, and I remember going to youth group with other friends . . . I like going to church, actually. I don’t have a problem with religion. I grew up with a lot of the things some people do . . .

**(0:16:29.7) BUT THAT ANXIETY?**

**Barbara:** The anxiety comes from having pastors and preachers and priests come up to me and tell me that I was going to hell for my beliefs.

**(0:16:41.3) YOUR MOM’S CHURCH?**

**Barbara:** Not necessarily my mom’s church, because that was when I was a teenager. As a kid. Also, having the . . . being called derogatory names because I was Jewish, having people wanting to fight me, having people put swastikas on my locker. Having people oppress me because of my faith, when I just

want to be left alone to practice it. I don't feel like . . . when I think of Christianity and Jesus and all those things, I think the principles of it are wonderful, but I think the application, that I've come in contact with it, are not in keeping with the original ideas of what Jesus was preaching.

**(0:17:24.9) YOU SAID IRRITATED?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. It makes me irritated because I feel like . . . when I think of church, I just think of all these people who are always telling us what we can and cannot do. It just makes me so irritated. That's about it. That's why I'm irritated.

**(0:17:44.8) WHAT CAN YOU NOT DO?**

**Female Respondent:** Right now a huge thing is gay marriage. The church is telling everybody they can't do that, and I feel like it's wrong, and I don't think anybody should tell anybody what they can and cannot do.

**(0:18:03.2) SOMEBODY ELSE? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?**

**Female Respondent:** I think of just pressure from my family, to be part of the church, to go along with it. In that sense, it annoys me. I don't mind dialogue about it with people who aren't set on converting me, but I don't know. It's just annoyance most of the time when the church is brought up. It's, I'm not changing the way that I think. I'm *(0:18:33.6 unclear/crosstalk)*.

**(0:18:33.6) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Jackie:** I get annoyed when there's . . . like you said, when people are trying to convert you.

**(0:18:43.8) I WAS JUST THROWING OUT THOSE TERMS, THOUGH.**

**Jackie:** Like I said, institution. That's . . .

**(0:18:53.7) HOW ABOUT YOU?**

**Monique:** Similar to Barbara, where it's like . . . now I can't remember. I get irritated, because I have friends who are very religious and some who are very spiritual, all spectrums. It's just uncomfortable sometimes, when you have a good friend who you want to stay friends with, but who say really offensive things about other people that you may care about. The conversation is very closed-minded, it feels like.

**(0:19:27.9) WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF WHEN I PRESENT THE TERM, "CHRISTIANITY?"**

**Female Respondent:** I see big church, and cross . . .

**Female Respondent:** Megachurches.

**Female Respondent:** I think hypocrites.

**Female Respondent:** Corruption.

**Female Respondent:** Hypocrites.

**Female Respondent:** Dogma.

**Female Respondent:** (0:19:50.2 Unclear).

**Female Respondent:** Proselytizing.

**(0:19:57.3) DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE MEANS, PROSELYTIZING?**

**Female Respondent:** No.

**Female Respondent:** Preaching?

**Female Respondent:** It's trying to convert people.

**Female Respondent:** Oh, thank you.

**(0:20:07.8) IS IT Y-T-I, OR I-T-Y?**

**Female Respondent:** I don't know how to spell it. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(0:20:11.6) WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY, "CHRISTIANITY?"**

**Female Respondent:** Scamming.

**(0:20:22.8) SCAMMY, LIKE S-C-A-M-M-Y, LIKE A SCAM?**

**Female Respondent:** Scamming.

**(0:20:25.4) JUST MAKING SURE.**

**Barbara:** I think of Christianity and Catholicism as totally separate religions at this point.

**(0:20:36.2) WHAT DOES?**

**Barbara:** Christianity and Catholicism. Being very different.

**(0:20:41.7) EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE BOTH CHRISTIANITY?**

**Barbara:** Even though they both follow Jesus, Catholicism is just very different. When I think Christianity, Catholicism is not included in that.

**(0:20:53.6) YOU THINK OF THE PROTESTANT SIDE?**

**Barbara:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, I'm with Barbara on that one too. I separate Christianity and Catholicism.

**Female Respondent:** I think so too.

**Female Respondent:** I agree.

**Female Respondent:** I don't. I feel like Catholicism is just a more extreme version of the rest.

**(0:21:15.8) TELL ME A SHORT TRUE STORY ABOUT HOW YOU CAME TO BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO ABOUT CHRISTIANITY.**

**Emily:** I have one. I can't think of Christianity without thinking of one of my aunts who attends a megachurch in Illinois, and my two cousins. A couple years ago I was at a family event and someone was quoting an episode of Seinfeld. I can't remember exactly what the quote is, but it's something along the lines of, "So-and-so's gay," and then he's like, "Not that there's anything wrong with that." My seven-year-old cousin was like, "Yes there is. God hates gay people."

**(0:22:13.4) REALLY, A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD?**

**Emily:** Yes. It was so shocking and hard to hear such a young person have that kind of hateful view.

**(0:22:22.7) THIS CHILD WENT TO THE MEGACHURCH?**

**Emily:** Yes. That's what I think Christians are teaching their kids.

**(0:22:31.2) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** When I was younger, I was in a leadership group at church, and they found out that I had a beer, and they kicked—

**(0:22:52.2) A BEER?**

**Female Respondent:** A beer. Yes, I was fourteen, and I was going off the deep end maybe. They kicked me out and said they were going to keep in touch with me, but the youth pastor never called me again. Ever since then, it's . . . *(Laughter.)* Straight up.

**(0:23:12.7) THAT WAS SIMPLE.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** My first . . . I was all about Christianity. I was trying to convert my babysitters. I was very serious about it, because I was at church, essentially, six days a week. Then it was fifth grade . . . I was getting in trouble, because, I don't know . . . I made a drawing of the Spice Girls and I got in so much trouble, because they were . . . what was the word that they used? Not a Christian band. That was a big deal; it was pulled off the wall. There was this teacher who would talk about Jesus, and she pulled me out in the hallway and hit me once and singled me out and was really terrible to me, and it was this



realization that these people are saying they're Christians, but they're worse than people I know who aren't. It was just realizing hypocrisy at a young age.

**(0:24:12.5) THAT'S THE HYPOCRITICAL PART OF IT?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. *(One respondent agreed.)* Respecting these teachers for so long, and thinking they have so much to teach me, and then realizing that they're just crappy people too.

**Female Respondent:** When I was in middle school I had a best friend, and I would always go to her house, and she had a big picture of Jesus. I didn't know anything about Christianity or anything like that, because I grew up Buddhist, so I would always look at it, and she would explain it to me and try to convert me. Then I think one day I said, "God is stupid" or something like that, "There's no such thing," and that pretty much broke our friendship.

**(0:25:05.0) DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT SHE TOLD YOU?**

**Female Respondent:** She doesn't believe that. She thought I was talking trash.

**(0:25:15.2) THAT WAS IT?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes, that was it.

**(0:25:18.5) TODAY, STILL IT?**

**Female Respondent:** Oh, I don't talk to her anymore.

**Amanda:** I was going to say, for me it wasn't really one event, but an accumulation of things. I used to pray all the time when I was a little kid, selfless prays for other people who really needed and deserved it, and they were never answered, so I'm like, it seems like they're lying to me, because they say God answers your prayers. Hearing all the sexist passages in the Bible, and women can't be priests in Catholicism, and then reading all the corruption throughout history, of especially Catholicism, but a lot of different religions . . . it just seemed like a big corrupt thing to me, and I felt like, what's credible about it if all this other stuff is incredible, or not credible?

**(0:26:01.4) I UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU MEAN.**

**Female Respondent:** I like the way that came out, that was neat.

**(0:26:05.7) DID YOU START TO SAY SOMETHING?**

**Female Respondent:** I can. *(Laughter.)*

**(0:26:09.4) IF YOU HAD SOMETHING TO SHARE . . .**

**Female Respondent:** I used to go to Sunday school every week, and I had a friend who . . . she wasn't raised with any religion so she thought it was dumb, but that's how I'd spend my Sundays. She'd be like,

“Tell me, why is Jesus . . . in the pictures, paintings, does he have fair skin if he was in Israel . . .” I don’t know, whatever.

**(0:26:40.3) A COUNTRY WHERE THEY WERE DARKER SKINNED?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes, exactly. I’d ask it in class, and after that my Sunday school teacher called my parents, and they removed me from my class to another class . . .

**(0:26:53.5) FOR ASKING THAT?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. They just sat me down with my parents and said they thought it would be better if I just didn’t come back.

**(0:27:01.7) THIS IS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Barbara:** I can remember going . . . a friend of mine, my best friend, lives in Sacramento, and she and her children started attending a megachurch, and the kids were performing. I’m the kids’ godmother—obviously not specifically a religious godmother—but I’m responsible for her children, and she knows I love them like my own, so I went to watch them perform. It’s one of the megachurches where they have a rock band, and they were . . . this is a two-part story. They were all saying, “Everyone that’s feeling the spirit, that wants to convert, everyone put your right hand up like this, just right like this.” I remember sitting in the front row, and I looked back and there were two thousand people Nazi saluting. Literally, “Everyone put your hand up,” and it just freaked me out. Then later on, her mother was there, and I’m close with her mother. She’s this sweet little Southern Baptist lady from North Carolina. I love her, she calls me little Georgia beauty queen, and I have a close relationship since I was sixteen. She was saying, “Have you seen the *Passion of the Christ*? It’s just the best thing ever.” I said, “No, I’m choosing not to see that movie.” She said, “I really think you should. It might help you accept Jesus in your heart.” I said, “No, ma’am, I think I’m going to give it a pass. I don’t feel like it tells an accurate story.” She said, “Those Jews, they just killed Jesus like that.” I said, “No, ma’am, actually the Romans killed the Jews (*sic*).” She said, “No, but they were screaming for his blood. They wanted him dead, those Jews.” She knows I’m Jewish. I was like, “Okay, Ms. Joanne, whatever you say. I disagree, but respectfully, and I’m sorry that you feel that way about my people.” It was just intense. She believes that with all her heart, because if someone in an authority position, Christian authority, tells her, she believes it. She will listen to the radio and send money for holy water, for miracles for her family, or to a preacher that is . . . She’s not a stupid woman, she’s an intelligent woman who I really love, but her faith tells her to be obedient and not ask questions, and that scares me.

**(0:29:27.6) THAT’S CHRISTIANITY. TELL ME WHAT IS DIFFERENT WHEN I TALK ABOUT “THE CHURCH.” WHAT IS IT, AS FAR AS YOU’RE CONCERNED?**

**Female Respondent:** I think like she said, church is more the experience of going to church, and what happens there, and “the church” is the institution of it, and the politics behind it, and the higher-up people behind it.

**Female Respondent:** I think of the church as encompassing most major religions, and my general thought on it is, it’s just a crutch that people feel like they need to get buy. It doesn’t seem like a necessity in my life, but I see it working for other people. It’s just a collective sort of thing. I don’t have negative terms because it’s such a broad spectrum, but . . . institution, I guess.

**(0:30:42.4) IS THERE A CHURCH EXPERIENCE THAT FORMED YOUR IMPRESSION OF CHURCH?**

**Female Respondent:** Mine was just like what hers was, when she went to a megachurch, and it was so extravagant. This big band and giant TV screens, and they probably spent millions of dollars on it. I’m like, why don’t they . . . it seems really hypocritical. Why aren’t they giving this money to people who need it?

**(0:31:12.1) WHAT KIND OF RELIGION ARE THESE MEGACHURCHES?**

**Female Respondent:** I think it was just nondenominational Christian.

**Female Respondent:** Yes. Evangelical, or I guess Southern Baptist based. I think of a business. (*One respondent agreed.*) When you say “the church,” the church is a business.

**(0:31:33.6) ANYBODY WANT TO ADD TO THAT?**

**Female Respondent:** It’s like a big entity where you meet and congregate in a group, where they tell you what’s the truth and what’s not. What to believe, what not to believe.

**Female Respondent:** I usually feel a little bit creeped out when I go to church, because they’re telling me what to believe, but I really like the singing.

**(0:32:17.4) YOU LIKE THE MUSIC PART.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I don’t want to do put my hand up . . . (*Laughter.*)

**Female Respondent:** I don’t think it was an intentional Nazi salute . . .

**Female Respondent:** I don’t want to do a Nazi salute.

**(0:32:35.2) ARE THEY TELLING THEIR STORY, OR TELLING YOU WHAT TO DO?**

**Jackie:** I guess it depends on . . . For me, it depends on what church I’m attending, because I have been to a Southern Baptist mass before . . . I don’t know if that’s the right word, but I’ve been to their congregation, and that was one of the most fun two hours I’ve ever experienced. Growing up Catholic, you’re supposed to just be quiet and listen to the priest even though you don’t understand a word he’s saying. They read scriptures out of the Bible, and I’m like, “Okay, where’s Jonah and the whale? I like

that story.” But it never comes, and I’m just like, “Okay, I’m going to fool around,” and I get in trouble, because my parents are there.

**(0:33:39.0) YOU WENT TO A SOUTHERN BAPTIST SERVICE?**

**Jackie:** Yes, I did, because one of my best friends, he was a Southern Baptist. Not only that, but I’ve been to a Seventh-Day Adventist, I’ve been to . . . Because when I was fourteen, I was like, “Ooh, what’s religion about?” Just went off the Catholic path, and I tried to find myself through religion, because that’s the only thing I thought of growing up Catholic, is to identify . . . “If I can’t be Catholic, I have to be Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish . . .” Something. I guess it really depends, because the last Catholic Church I attended is so far from the Catholic churches I’ve grown up with . . . You know how you said you love the music, that’s part of the reason why I go to that church periodically. Because one of my good friends, he’s the band director, and he doesn’t . . . I don’t know the word. Water down the music. He actually expresses it the way it’s meant to be played. The service I grew up with, they sing in a very old-timey operatic choir, but he brings the funk. He basically rocks the house. For me, since I have a very strong connection with music to begin with, that’s how I connect with the greater universe, or God, or whatever you want to . . .

**(0:35:34.2) YOU LIKE THE MUSIC?**

**Jackie:** Oh, yes.

**(0:35:36.1) SOME PEOPLE AREN’T COMFORTABLE WITH ALL THAT MUSIC.**

**Jackie:** You know what you were saying about church and “the church.” Since I grew up Catholic, I think of “the church” as the Vatican, but if I just say “church,” it could be anywhere where I’m feeling very spiritual. I could be in a house club or something like that, listening to one of my favorite DJs, and I’ll turn to my friend like, “Oh my God, I feel like I’m in church.”

**Barbara:** I’ve had some amazing experiences in a lot of different kinds of churches, because I just like the experience, and even if it’s . . . My mom’s mom, growing up, she always went to different churches, so I would go with her. If I was spending the night at her house, we would go, and . . . I remember going to services where they came in and people brought their pets in, and they were blessed. That was cool. That was nice. Anytime I go, and I feel like there’s a genuine . . . Or, the person who’s preaching is trying to have a genuine connection with the people, and explain how we have a loving God, and how the Bible, the New Testament, for Christians, how it’s meant to make their lives better, and easier, and how God is something you depend on . . . not necessarily as a crutch, but as something that can add to your life and make your life fuller. I know when I go to synagogue, it’s always relevant. It’s not the rabbi having an agenda. There’s no political agenda, there is no personal agenda of judging, or saying, “This is right,” or, “This is wrong.” It’s because we move in a cycle of, we start the Torah at one time, and every three weeks we go to a different parashah, so your year is mapped out for you. You have a different Torah portion, you know what’s going to be there, and then you can relate it to what might be going on in people’s lives. Those are the times that I’ve really liked being in any denomination of church. We had

a pulpit exchange with a black Southern Baptist church in San Francisco, and I took my daughter, and it was incredible.

**(0:37:54.6) I BET THAT WAS INTERESTING.**

**Barbara:** It was wonderful. I was like, “I want to come here,” and the food afterwards was great, and it was joyful. The music was praise music, and the people were passionate about what they had to say, and they were joyful and they were lifted by their faith, not oppressed by it. I really, really appreciate . . . I don’t care what the faith is. When you see that, to me, that’s great, and that was a community. When your church is a community, as opposed to a hierarchy . . . Hierarchy scares the s\*\*\* out of me. A community, where people come together and support each other, based in the basic principles . . . I think that’s why I can be drawn to the Russian Orthodox, or Catholicism, or the religions that are unchanged as they have gone through—or Judaism, or whatever—because there isn’t that influence of . . . It’s like, “This is what we do, this is the way it is, and however it fits in your life is your business.”

**(0:38:56.0) IT’S INTERESTING THAT YOU DON’T FEEL YOU’RE BEING TOLD WHAT TO BELIEVE IN THOSE ENVIRONMENTS.**

**Barbara:** No.

**(0:39:02.9) WHICH CAME UP EARLIER.**

**Barbara:** I think because I wasn’t raised in Christianity I’m able to look at it from an outside perspective and say, “What are they trying to achieve?” Sometimes I’ve gone to church, like a megachurch, and feel like, they’re trying to shake these people upside down and get every last penny. Or, they’re trying to get them to vote a certain way because they have an agenda.

**(0:39:24.0) THAT’S HOW YOU FEEL.**

**Barbara:** That’s my perception of it.

**(0:39:27.2) YOU DIDN’T FEEL THAT WAY WITH A PULPIT EXCHANGE.**

**Barbara:** No.

**(0:39:30.5) THAT’S A WHOLE DIFFERENT WORLD.**

**Barbara:** Yes. I’ve gone to a Methodist and a Baptist church in the Caribbean. Totally different experience.

**(0:39:43.2) WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I THROW IN “JESUS?”**

**Female Respondent:** I think of the same stuff. Scamming and hypocrisy and corruption. I don’t really know much about it or, how true this is. I’ve heard the Vatican hides sections of the Bible that portray Jesus in a more negative light.

**(0:40:08.1) IT HIDES THE NEGATIVE PORTIONS, YOU MEAN?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I've heard he murdered his teacher and peers or something, and brought them back to life for fun, like he was an unruly teenager. I don't know if I believe that, but . . . it just reminds me of the same corruption.

**(0:40:26.4) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** I think in the Bible, Jesus' teachings are valid and they're good moral lessons. I wish that Christians took those things more to heart than some of the literal things from the Old Testament. I don't really have negative association with it that much, it's just . . . I feel like it's not taken in the right context as it should be.

**Female Respondent:** I agree. I think I have a more favorable opinion of Jesus than the church.

**(0:41:05.0) WHAT IS JESUS, ANYHOW?**

**Female Respondent:** How I see him, as what he preached of, "Love your neighbor," and be, basically, a good person . . . I see that as things you should take to heart, and not take everything else so literally. Those are things that don't change over time. Versus other things in the Bible, they only are relevant to that time period in the Bible. We obviously don't stone adulteresses at this time, because we have laws and government that control those kinds of things, but . . .

**Female Respondent:** At least not in this country.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, well, you know . . .

**Female Respondent:** Yes. The stuff about gay people in the Bible, I think, is totally taken out of context. I've done some reading up on it, and I think it was more about a procreation issue at the time. Even talking to my parents about it, they're like, "Sodom and Gomorrah," they'll go on and on about it. These are stories, not to be taken word-for-word literally. I don't see how you can read any of Deuteronomy and think, "Oh, this is great, living by this." It's more just, they take snippets to push a different agenda, which I don't think the Bible is even really about.

**Female Respondent:** You don't think they lived for nine thousand years? Come on . . .

**Female Respondent:** The other thing, too, is the Bible's been translated and translated and retranslated, and given to kings, and then they translated it.

**Jackie:** By man. *(One respondent agreed.)* That's the funny thing growing up in the church. "This is the Word of God." I'm like, "Really? Because last time I checked, that was in a different language, that was translated into a different language and now it's in this form." How can you really say that is the word of God, when it's gone through . . . I speak Tagalog at home, very poorly, which is the Filipino language, and I know there are some things that just get lost in translation between Tagalog and English, and vice versa. There's just no way, not unless you know the culture and the nuances and all that stuff, to

pinpoint what exactly I'm trying to say, without you learning that language or whatever. That was actually part of the . . . I think I was around twelve when I realized this, every time he said, "This is the Word of God up there," and I'm like . . . I started getting suspicious, like, "Really? This is the Word of God?" The fact that . . . Talking about stoning people, they'd dig a pit and they'd drop them in there and they'd stone them in there, really? That's how you're going to deal with somebody who's an adulterer? Oh, it's just a woman, I'm sorry. The man can just pay a fine or whatever.

**Female Respondent:** Go marry again.

**Jackie:** Yes. (*One respondent agreed.*) If it's the woman . . . Also, "an eye for an eye," and all that other stuff. It got me really suspicious about where, essentially, this origin is coming from. Is this really the Word of God, or is this what they thought, back in the day, what God would think about how to construct society?

#### **(0:44:46.3) DID JESUS LIVE, OR IS JESUS A MYTH?**

**Female Respondent:** I think there was a guy named Jesus.

#### **(0:44:53.5) THERE WAS A GUY?**

**Female Respondent:** There was a guy named Jesus.

**Female Respondent:** I don't know. There's no way to know. I'm comfortable with that.

**Female Respondent:** I think of Jesus in a historical context, of what was going on at the time. It was around the time of the destruction of the second temple, and Judaism didn't have a direction, and people know Jesus was a Jew, and the people were trying to figure out what they were going to do. There were a lot of crazy radicals with ideas, and what they were trained to do was find a way to continue the faith without all of the ritual and the rites, after the destruction of the Second Temple. I believe that Jesus was . . . he was a rabbi.

#### **(0:45:41.4) HE WAS A RABBI . . .**

**Female Respondent:** He was a rabbi, and he was trying to tell the people, "Here are the principles. We don't need this. God is in our hearts, and we don't need a building, and we don't need to burn animals, and we don't need any of these things. Our faith is . . . we can talk directly to God." I personally feel like people got that confused. They got the message and the messenger mixed up. That's my feeling. I can't say for sure that he existed, but people who say that he existed, there's always proof, and then on the other side they're also proving. It's like a math problem, you prove all these things. It's like that.

#### **(0:46:24.6) ON BOTH SIDES OF THE EQUAL SIGN?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. It's like, "What we're saying is the truth." Then what they're saying is the truth. It's hard to discern sometimes. It creates more confusion.

**(0:46:36.7) BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT SURE THE TRUTH IS THE TRUTH?**

**Female Respondent:** They could be picking something minor and saying, "This is the truth," when in fact it's only a snippet of something, so it's not the truth.

**(0:46:50.9) I UNDERSTAND THE CONFUSION.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes, and it's like the Bible. Picking up little stuff, something about the gay marriage, about the stories, that it's wrong . . .

**Female Respondent:** I'm willing to believe that he was real. I also believe dinosaurs were real, but I don't think that there's any way to know for sure that he was the physical embodiment of God on earth. We have no way of knowing that.

**(0:47:27.5) WHAT ELSE IS SAID ABOUT JESUS THAT YOU CAN'T BELIEVE?**

**Female Respondent:** What I can't believe is, because of what the church is now, they're so judging of everybody . . . I can't believe that the Jesus in the Bible hung out with Mary Magdalene. She was a prostitute. The Jesus that is in the Bible is hard to believe, because it's not what the church portrays Jesus to be.

**(0:48:04.3) WHAT ELSE IS SAID ABOUT JESUS THAT YOU FIND DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT?**

**Joie:** I just think, it was two thousand years ago, and those were dark times. We have a lot more information now, and I don't know . . . I don't buy it, I guess, or I'm not even that focused on it.

**(0:48:21.9) THEY WERE DARK TIMES, THEREFORE JESUS WAS OR WASN'T, WHAT?**

**Joie:** I don't even know if he existed or not. Such a long time ago, and there's no one to . . . There's no witnesses. The Bible, who even knows what was originally in it, who wrote it, what happened . . . I don't know. I find the whole thing hard to believe. Not even with the behavior of the church collectively now, it's such a thing of the past.

**(0:48:55.1) WHAT DO CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?**

**Female Respondent:** That he died for their sins.

**Female Respondent:** And was resurrected.

**Female Respondent:** That he's the Son of God.

**Female Respondent:** If they believe in him they'll go to heaven.

**Female Respondent:** If they don't believe in him they'll go to hell.

**(0:49:10.7) I COULD HAVE PUT MONEY ON THE BARREL FOR THAT ONE.**



**Female Respondent:** He was immaculately conceived.

**(0:49:19.4) THOSE ARE THE BIG ONES, RIGHT?**

**Female Respondent:** And miracles.

**Female Respondent:** And the trinity. The Father, Spirit, and God.

**(0:49:36.4) FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT. (Several respondents agreed.) ARE THEY ALL UNBELIEVABLE?**

**Joie:** I can't disprove it, but I can't prove it either. I try to focus on what I understand to be true and factual in my life. Again, I can't say for sure either way, and I don't think it's necessary to think I understand it.

**(0:50:11.2) YOU SAID YOU WERE OKAY WITH IT.**

**Joie:** Yes.

**Barbara:** The point, from my understanding, is the message, right? Jesus wasn't, from my understanding, saying, "I'm the focus." What he was saying was, "Follow my teachings, and you'll have a better life." That's the gem. For me, whether he performed the miracles or whether he's the Son of God, all that is not important. His message was a wonderful message, and if you muck up that message with your own agenda, or with focusing on the details, you've lost the message. The message is fantastic, and it has a value unto itself.

**(0:50:52.0) THE DETAILS ARE UNPROVABLE, RIGHT?**

**Barbara:** But are they important? Do they make it more or less relevant in our actual application in our lives? I don't think so.

**(0:51:04.5) IT SOUNDS LIKE SOME PEOPLE DO AND SOME DON'T.**

**Amanda:** I was going to say I agree. Anything that doesn't physically happen now, that seems not possible . . . Immaculate conception I don't believe in. Plus there's no way to believe those people who are saying that it happened. How do you know they're not lying? I feel like Jesus does have a good message, but you don't need that to be a good person. I would probably agree with a lot of the Christian teachings of kindness and love, but it's not because I believe in Jesus. It's because I just want to be a good person.

**(0:51:41.1) WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY YOU FIND OBJECTIONABLE, WITH A REASON FOR THAT OBJECTION?**

**Female Respondent:** Sexism.

**(0:52:12.2) WE'VE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I guess because I'm a woman . . . *(Laughter.)*

**(0:52:17.4) I WAS GOING TO SAY, "THE REASON IS . . ."**

**Female Respondent:** Not that men wouldn't care. Some men wouldn't care about that.

**Female Respondent:** Denial of science, and things that are known, bothers me a lot. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**Female Respondent:** It bother me how powerful and rich they are.

**Female Respondent:** Indoctrinating kids who are too young to think for themselves.

**(0:52:52.5) THEY INDOCTRINATE THEM?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, it's not like Amish, where you can pick when you're fourteen. Rumspringa, or whatever they call it.

**(0:53:06.0) WHAT ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** I think the fanaticism about the whole thing. My mother is . . . she's a devout Catholic, and she is one of those people that really . . . Whatever's in the Bible is law. Higher than any state, government . . .

**Female Respondent:** The only thing that bothers me, Amanda touched on it, is the waste of money that I see. My parents go to one of those megachurches, and we recently lost a very close family member, and their church told them that they don't have the funds to hire a grief counselor in the church, but they have all these massive screens, they have a full soft rock band, the whole thing. It's just . . . if your mission is to help people, then why aren't you actually doing that? It's a smoke-and-mirrors sort of thing.

**(0:54:17.9) "WHAT PUTS ME OFF ABOUT CHRISTIANITY IS . . . ?"**

**Female Respondent:** Closed-mindedness.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, big time.

**Female Respondent:** And a culture where it's wrong to ask questions.

**(0:54:33.6) WHAT ARE THEY CLOSED-MINDED ABOUT?**

**Female Respondent:** Everything.

**Female Respondent:** Everything that's on the list right there.

**Female Respondent:** Everything they disagree about.

**Female Respondent:** Real issues.

**(0:54:46.2) WHAT ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** They're saying what's wrong with other people, but they're not looking at themselves.

**Female Respondent:** Lack of introspection, that's a good one. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(0:55:07.9) TELL ME ABOUT INTROSPECTION?**

**Female Respondent:** You should look at yourself first, and then you point the finger at other people.

**(0:55:16.8) THAT'S HYPOCRISY, RIGHT? "YOU SHOULD NEVER WEAR BLUE," AND HERE I AM WEARING BLUE.**

**Female Respondent:** I think that's a little different. Hypocrisy is when Christians don't always follow what they're supposed to do, and then judge other people for it.

**Female Respondent:** It's like love your neighbor, but they're hating certain people.

**(0:55:39.1) I SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING.**

**Female Respondent:** I'm also bothered just by people in power. I think that leads to corruption. I guess that's up there, but that's another thing that bothers me.

**(0:55:51.9) WHAT GIVES THEM THEIR POWER?**

**Female Respondent:** Just being higher up in the church, being the head pastor. It's an ego thing I think, sometimes.

**Female Respondent:** Things done in the name of religion.

**Female Respondent:** It bothers me when you try to have a conversation with people that are very religious, and their only reasoning behind, "Well, it's my religion." Which is nice, but that's their only argument for it.

**(0:56:16.4) CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE?**

**Female Respondent:** Since we've been talking about gay marriage, like my grandmother when it was on the ballot in California. She was like, "I know I'm not voting for that, because it's against my religion." That was it.

**Female Respondent:** I don't have a problem with that, though. Like I said, because I grew up Catholic, and it's not like the Amish where I could pick and choose. If your grandmother's lived this way for such a

long time, it's hard to move her from that, and she's one of those people that believe in that. Because I believe in what I believe in, and who am I to judge your grandmother, to say, "Okay"?

**Female Respondent:** No, I agree . . .

**Barbara:** What if she doesn't have an opinion on it one way or the other, and then she goes to church, and her pastor tells her, or priest tells her, "This is what you should think on it, this is how you should vote on this." I think that's a problem.

**(0:57:18.9) DO THEY TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD THINK AND HOW YOU SHOULD VOTE?**

**Barbara:** Not in my synagogue, but I've been to . . . I have actually been in churches where they tell them how to vote. *(One respondent agreed.)* "This is what Jesus would want you to vote."

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I've heard that too. The movie *The Da Vinci Code*, when it came out . . . when I went to church, everybody was like, "Don't watch that movie, it's blasphemous."

**Female Respondent:** And *The Golden Compass*, they tell you not to watch that.

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I was like, "Have you guys read the book and seen the movie?" "No." Oh, okay, so you're just saying all these things without any kind of . . . You're forming your own opinion, you're just going by . . ." But again, that's their individuality. If their religion is so . . . their faith is mired deep in that religion, there's just no way you can . . . Fanaticism. That's what it is.

**Female Respondent:** There's just a lot of control. For example, Mormons from out of state, they actually collected a lot of money to try to defeat Prop 8. I think that's the main reason why it was defeated.

**Female Respondent:** *(0:58:37.3 Unclear/crosstalk).*

**Female Respondent:** A lot of the major funding was from out-of-state. Mormons. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**Female Respondent:** I would add oppression, too. *(One respondent agreed.)* All of this stuff is oppression.

**Female Respondent:** I think that leads to people misbehaving way more than they would. Guilt from the church, or whatever, to be a certain way. As an example, the pastor at my church growing up—the head pastor, he was a total egomaniac, he got busted in a park masturbating to a cop, and he had a wife and two kids . . . He was probably raised in the church, or whatever caused him to want to become a pastor, but I feel like . . . Without the guilt and imposed rules of the church, people would be more true to themselves and wouldn't act out or do crazy sexual weird things. Things like that. It goes for priests too, in the Catholic Church. I think if they were allowed to sexually express themselves, they probably wouldn't be molesting altar boys.

**(0:59:42.9) YOU'RE SAYING IT'S MORE KEEPING THEM ON A CHAIN WITH NO OUTLET, RATHER THAN, "DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO."**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**(0:59:55.7) TO FOLLOW THEIR NATURE.**

**Female Respondent:** Exactly. Repressing their natural desires that aren't even wrong . . . As a human, you're going to have sexual desires.

**(1:00:11.1) IT EXPRESSED ITSELF IN A NON-ACCEPTABLE WAY.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, if you introduce the idea of shame, early on, associated with sexuality, the brain is going to . . . If it can't go straight, it's going to go off in these other directions. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(1:00:32.3) LET'S TALK ABOUT DENIAL OF SCIENCE. YOU BROUGHT IT UP.**

**Barbara:** I guess I did, but I feel you have been talking about it.

**(1:00:46.1) YOU CAN START THE CONVERSATION.**

**Barbara:** Sorry, I'm a mouthy Jewish broad. I don't know what to say.

**(1:00:53.0) AND PROUD OF IT, RIGHT? *(Laughter)***

**Barbara:** Teaching evolution . . . I was told it was absolutely wrong in school. It was not taught at my Christian school. I don't think that it has to make your faith invalid just because it goes against what the Bible says, or is different than God making the universe in seven days. It's just more of an answer of how, and not the answer of why. I feel like people miss the mark on that. My parents deny evolution, and it's just like, "Why? It's cool." Knowing things about the planet is awesome. I don't know, I don't get it.

**Female Respondent:** I think, since religion is . . . at least how the Bible's concerned, that's two thousand years ago that it was written, they didn't necessarily know . . . They didn't distinguish anything from magical stuff, and actual science facts. They didn't really have a telescope that they can look up, like, "Oh, that's Mars." I'm not trying to go against you, because I do believe in the denial of science, but the point is, in their 100 AD brain, they had to jam all of what they've seen and what they believe. Let's just say, if there was a smoke bomb, and that was the burning bush, they're like, "That must be God trying to get Abraham's attention," or something like that. In reality, it's probably just lightning started . . .

**Female Respondent:** Again, it's taking things literally when you shouldn't. Looking at the context, you go, "Oh, these are parables. These are stories."

**Female Respondent:** Yes, but they didn't know, necessarily, about, lightning can hit the ground and start a fire. *(One respondent agreed.)* Because they're sheepherders.

**Female Respondent:** But people still deny it nowadays.

**Female Respondent:** Oh, yes, but that's, again, what I was saying about, if you're just mired in that religious belief for so long, it's like you said, if you have no outlet you can't get out of it. You have to just stay in that box. They have blinders on.

**Barbara:** I think evolution and creationism support each other. If you really look at physics and science, and you realize that time is relative . . . In my mind, yes, there was a Big Bang, and we started from dust, but where did the dust come from? They don't have to be at the exclusion of the other. I believe in divine intervention in my life; I also believe in free will. These things don't have to fight each other, and what I think is hard for me, with some sect of the Christian view denying evolution, is why would you choose to exclude knowledge? Why would knowledge be threatening? Why would other ideas be threatening to your own? If you're right, and it's working for you, you shouldn't be threatened by outside things. You should be open to the ideas, even if you don't take *(1:04:24.8 unclear/crosstalk)*.

**Female Respondent:** Because it gets people out of line, though. They're going to start revolting against the norm.

**Female Respondent:** If you've got something good, all it's going to do is reinforce it.

**Female Respondent:** Yes. I totally believe in that, because, like you said, the Big Bang theory, and how the seven days, or the six days, that it took to create the world . . . I just think of how I codify that whole instance . . . It's, one day is really a millennia or something. *(One respondent agreed.)* Like I said, they didn't know how to smooch that into their brain. "How do I get this whole concept . . . ? How do I tell people . . . ?"

**(1:05:07.7) THEY ATTRIBUTED IT.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**(1:05:11.6) TELL ME ABOUT THE LINK OF CHRISTIANITY AND CORRUPTION.**

**Female Respondent:** They used to sell free passes to people so that their dead family members could go to heaven. If you gave them money they would say, "Okay, your family member's going to go to heaven now." Then they said, "No, we were just lying." That was a long time ago though.

**Female Respondent:** Absolutions or something, they were called.

**Female Respondent:** I can't remember, I think maybe.

**(1:05:49.3) WHAT DID YOU SAY?**

**Female Respondent:** I was trying to remember the name of it. They were absolutions, or something like that. Free passes.

**Female Respondent:** Oh, (1:05:54.1 unclear/crosstalk). Free passes.

**(1:05:57.2) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** I think if you have the power, you're going to have corruption. You see that in social groups.

**(1:06:05.1) WHAT DO THEY DO?**

**Female Respondent:** Take money from little old ladies.

**Female Respondent:** I associate it more with the Catholic Church. I don't know, when the pope stepped down, everyone was saying they feel bad for the pope, and I was like, "I hate the pope." He knows about all these children getting molested by these priests—again, repressed people—and not only did they not remove them, they just reassigned them somewhere else so they can keep doing it. It's that knowledge, and hiding it from the public, and letting one of the worst things that can happen to you as a person continue, and say that you're a man of God . . . that's corruption to me.

**(1:07:02.8) GIVE ME ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF CORRUPTION.**

**Amber:** I do think of it more as the crazy stuff that happens inside the church and comes out later. Not only Catholic churches, but a lot of other churches, the pastors are cheating on their wives, and they're with other women, and it falls under being hypocritical, but it just seems like everything is false inside the church.

**(1:07:36.6) DO WE HOLD CHURCH LEADERSHIP TO A HIGHER STANDARD, LIKE POLICE?**

**Female Respondent:** No, I don't. I think they should just be good people like the rest of us. They don't have to be any better than . . . they aren't any better than any of us, but that's where they like to put themselves.

**(1:08:04.7) TELL ME ABOUT KIDS INDOCTRINATING KIDS.**

**Emily:** I already told that story about my cousin. She was too young to believe that. She was too young to hate anyone. She had clearly been told that by her church.

**(1:08:21.3) IS THIS UNIQUE TO CHRISTIANS, OR SOMETHING PEOPLE JUST TEACH KIDS?**

**Emily:** As far as I know . . . I don't have experience with other kids having that strong of an opinion too early on. I think it's impossible. Your parents are supposed to teach you things. It's impossible for them to let you grow up completely devoid of any context and opinions. I totally have my parents' political beliefs, I will be open about that, but it was never that they were, "This is what you have to believe." They were very much wanting us to learn to think critically for ourselves, and I feel like everyone that I

know, not everyone, but a lot of kids that I know, that grew up in really Christian households were told at a really young age exactly what they should believe in. A lot of them don't believe that anymore, but . . . I never want to hear a seven-year-old say that they hate someone.

**Female Respondent:** It bothers me that it's not presented as a choice. It wasn't, at least, in my case. I feel like the concepts of it are almost too much for a kid to even think about. I remember when I was trying to convert people, I was being told at school, "If you don't accept Jesus into your heart, you're going to burn in hell." I was freaking out all the time whenever I'd meet somebody who wasn't a Christian, I'd be like, "I don't want them to burn in hell. I like this person." It's just . . . I don't know. Children can't even . . . I don't think they even have the need for spirituality, at least as a five-year-old, six-year-old. I don't think you need that, really, in your life. It just depends on how extreme you take it, I guess.

**(1:10:21.7) NO QUESTIONS, WHO WAS THAT?**

**Female Respondent:** That was me.

**(1:10:40.6) CLOSED-MINDED, NO QUESTIONS.**

**Female Respondent:** No questions was the culture of the—

**(1:10:46.0) TAKE NO QUESTIONS A LITTLE FURTHER FOR ME.**

**Female Respondent:** Just give me a signal when I should stop.

**(1:10:53.7) JUST CLARIFY IT FOR US.**

**Female Respondent:** There seems to be a culture of it that if you have a question, like you were sharing about in school . . . I had the same experience in Brownies, they kicked me right out. I wanted to know why the pin needed to be turned upside-down for a week, it didn't make sense to me. The idea that if you are questioning it, and you were questioning whether it is true, or you are questioning why. Not even if it's true, but just, "Why do we do this?" Things like that happen, where children are kicked out of Sunday school, or they're made to feel like they are not good Christians if they question. It should be obedience without even a thought, and if you have the question, then that's the devil working in your life.

**(1:11:49.2) HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE SOMEBODY WHO ASKS THOSE QUESTIONS?**

**Female Respondent:** A thinking person.

**Female Respondent:** A heretic.

**(1:12:02.4) ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO AREN'T THINKING THAT WAY. WHY DO YOU WANT SOMEBODY TO BE A THINKING PERSON?**



**Female Respondent:** So they can make good decisions, and they understand why they make those decisions.

**(1:12:22.3) FEEL FREE TO LEAP IN.**

**Female Respondent:** It's also that people don't make hateful decisions for no reason or do hateful things, like the whole gay marriage thing. People do hate crimes against gay people sometimes in the name of religion. Maybe if they thought a little bit about what they were doing . . .

**(1:12:40.4) WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?**

**Female Respondent:** They wouldn't do hateful things if they thought about why, or what the point was.

**(1:12:48.4) IF THEY THOUGHT ABOUT IT INSTEAD OF JUST GOING WITH THE FLOW?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Barbara:** Thought about things from the other person's perspective. Not, "They all need to subscribe to this religion." What if they already have something going on? What if they're happy with their lives? That doesn't seem like it's ever considered. It's like they must be miserable because they don't know Jesus. People are quite contented with no faith, or whatever other variation.

**Female Respondent:** If you believe that they actually are going to go to hell . . .

**Barbara:** I have compassion for that. I think that's a . . . my daughter asks about this. She's very interested in Christianity, she wants to know what are all these T's all over the place.

**Female Respondent:** What are what?

**Barbara:** T's. The crosses. She's five. I explain to her about how Christians want other people to be . . . She's like, "Why are there so many?" I said, "Because Christians go out and talk about their faith to other people, and they try and share it." She's like, "Why?" I take her to synagogue, she knows about being Jewish. Big part of our life. I said, "Because they feel like, if they don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God, they'll go to hell, and they really love those people, and they really want to save them from this terrible thing." She's like, "What's so great about going and being with Jesus in heaven?" I said, "Don't you want to go be with God when you go to heaven?" "Oh, yes." I said, "That's where they're coming from. That's all it is."

**Female Respondent:** I felt that.

**Female Respondent:** Earthquake.

**(1:14:20.3) I'VE BEEN FEELING IT.**

*(1:14:21.4 - 1:14:32.0 Brief discussion about the earthquake.)*

**(1:14:32.0) YOU STARTED TO SAY SOMETHING?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. They don't want you to ask questions, they don't want you to be in the logical camp. They want you to have faith in what they're telling you, and what's in the scriptures.

**Female Respondent:** I feel it. *(Laughter.)*

**(1:14:46.8) IT'S OKAY, WE'LL SUPPORT EACH OTHER.**

**Female Respondent:** I'm going to go under the table. *(Laughter.)* That's where I was headed.

**Female Respondent:** I'm going to start praying to God right now. *(Laughter.)*

**Female Respondent:** We're all going to hell.

**Female Respondent:** I believe you. *(Laughter.)*

**Aiden:** When I was Mormon, I had to read four, five books. I think there's five books. It's everything, if you have questions, it's in there. You don't need to ask why, or how . . . it's just, believe, because it's been passed down, starting from Moroni, from the angels, so don't question anything.

**(1:15:30.4) YOU THINK IT BEST TO QUESTION.**

**Aiden:** Yes, because if you keep questioning then you can look at other perspectives. New theories, open-minded . . . You can be more open-minded.

**Female Respondent:** Then it becomes a choice.

**Aiden:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** There is the kid indoctrination, there is no choice growing up, but if you start to question it, you're like, "Oh, there are other options besides . . ." blank, whatever you're practicing at that moment.

**(1:16:05.5) WHEN I SAY "EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS," WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?**

**Female Respondent:** Michele Bachmann.

**Female Respondent:** Ted . . . what's his name? He has a weird mouth. Ted . . .

**Female Respondent:** Is he alive or dead?

**Female Respondent:** He's alive, and he's the one who was the leader of this big megachurch in the Evangelical movement, and then he got caught having gay sex.

**Female Respondent:** I know who you're talking about. I just don't know his name.

**(1:16:40.4) WE NEEDED TO ASK MORE QUESTIONS.**

**Female Respondent:** Joel Osteen. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**Female Respondent:** IHOP. International House of Prayer. It's a megachurch.

**Female Respondent:** I think of 700 Club and Pat Roberts.

**(1:17:00.5) WHAT WAS THAT? *(Laughter.)* "CALL THIS NUMBER NOW."**

**Female Respondent:** Call this number now.

**Female Respondent:** Tammy Faye.

**(1:17:10.0) WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?**

**Female Respondent:** Nothing.

**(1:17:15.0) WHEN YOU THINK OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS OR CHRISTIANITY, WHAT DO YOU PICTURE?**

**Female Respondent:** I'm not familiar with that branch of Christianity, really. It seems more cultish to me than other denominations.

**Female Respondent:** I think of mission work.

**Female Respondent:** Much bigger focus on conversion.

**Female Respondent:** I think of my father. *(One respondent agreed.)* He was . . .

**Female Respondent:** Speaking in tongues.

**Amanda:** I have a friend, it makes me think of my friend who constantly tries to convert people. It scares me.

**(1:18:10.7 - 1:18:54.7 MODERATOR EXPLAINS EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY TO RESPONDENTS.)**

**(1:18:54.7) I WANT YOUR THOUGHTS OR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE FOUR CORE BELIEFS PRESENTED HERE. WHEN YOU HEAR THE DESCRIPTION OF THE "BORN AGAIN" BELIEF, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?**

**Monique:** I'm sorry, can you repeat?

**(1:19:53.2) I WANT TO KNOW YOUR REACTION TO IT.**

**Monique:** I think it looks nice on paper, but in practice, you never know.

**(1:20:02.0) IN PRACTICE, THE PROBLEM COULD BE THAT . . . ?**

**Monique:** It could be any number of those things that we discussed before. They could take snippets of the whole thing, and just focus on that thing as the truth of a path, and it could just be the wrong path. Seeing other people in categories as, “This is us, and that’s them, and how do we get them to us?”

**(1:20:40.5) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Barbara:** The born again thing bothers me. I don’t know, I humor my parents sometimes when I see them, and I’ll go to church with them. One of the last times I went, they showed a video of this guy and he was like, “I was doing crack for twenty years, my life was horrible, I have kids, I wasn’t taking care of them. Then someone told me about Jesus. I was like, ‘Yes, I’m going to change my life,’ and I haven’t smoked crack since.” If I was his kids, I’d be so upset that he couldn’t quit for me, and it had to be, really the thought of “what’s going to happen when I die,” more so than the people who actually care about me, or that need me.

**Female Respondent:** Fear is a big motivator.

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** I think love’s a bigger motivation.

**Female Respondent:** I wish it was.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, but a lot of people just . . . that’s what conversion means to me. The term, “born again,” I’m sorry if I’m offending anybody in here . . .

**(1:21:48.2) WE CAN SUSPEND JUDGMENT IN THIS ROOM.**

**Female Respondent:** I’ve come in contact with a lot of people that identify themselves as born-again Christian, and there’s this archetype of them just Bible-thumping, and they basically will shout, talk over you, they won’t let you get your word or your opinion in edgewise, at all. They’ll just, “No. You will have Jesus in your heart. That’s what you need to do.” Over and over again like a broken record, and you’re just like . . . You try to be polite to them, you try to argue with them, try to throw science, everything, they just won’t budge.

**(1:22:45.8) THEY’RE DOGGED ABOUT IT.**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. Dogmatic, yes.

**Barbara:** I think if it’s a personal choice that somebody makes it can be beautiful. I watched my mom, who I didn’t have a relationship with me for seven years, because she was so steeped in anger and bitterness and was really . . . I didn’t speak to her for six years. I moved out when I was thirteen, didn’t talk to her until I was seventeen. She became a born-again Christian and she was able to release those things. While there were a lot of things that were annoying, of her trying to convert me and giving up some of her own free will and her thinking, I got my mom back and she had some peace. It was new for her, so she felt like she wanted to share it, because it was such a great thing in her life. It’s like if you

have a new boyfriend or girlfriend, you want to talk about them all the time because it's such a great thing in your life. I try and have some tolerance for that, while still maintaining the boundary of, "No, this is my life and I'm good here," but I think it can be beautiful, if it is a true spiritual awakening within that person.

**(1:24:00.1) SOMETHING DIFFERENT?**

**Amanda:** I think that they take conversion as their own personal gain, so if they convert someone, they're better, a better Christian or something. I think that's why they're always thumping, because they need to make more Christians, that's their job or whatnot. I remember when I was younger at this day camp or whatever, and they were having me convert children. I was nine, fifth grade, probably fourth grade, and now I look back at it, and I'm like, "How was I a fourth-grader bringing all these little kids to Christ?" Having all these kids like, "Repeat after me, 'Bring Jesus into your life.'" Bla-bla-bla. "He'll forgive all your sins . . ." It's just weird that I was doing it, and I feel like it's all a personal gain for the person converting. That's how I guess I felt.

**(1:24:56.9) ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON THAT?**

*(No response indicated.)*

**(1:25:00.7) "ACTION," DEMONSTRATION OF FAITH THROUGH WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS. WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THAT?**

**Female Respondent:** We're on action?

**Female Respondent:** I don't know what "social justice" means in their context.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, that's what I was going to say. *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(1:25:20.7) WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN?**

**Female Respondent:** They don't want to be persecuted. That's social justice for them, I think.

**Female Respondent:** That's not a term I would ever associate with them.

**(1:25:35.7) WHY?**

**Barbara:** Because they are oppressing other peoples, preventing other people from having social justice, as part of their curriculum.

**Female Respondent:** Gay marriage, abortion . . .

**Barbara:** Yes. They're in the Air Force base and they are creating a culture where the entire Air Force Academy, I just watched a documentary on it on Netflix, is Evangelical Christian, because that guy with the weird mouth who I can't remember his name, is right down the road. That's the headquarters for Evangelical Christians. They put leaflets out and there's banners there and they put . . . They're

encouraging them to convert people to the point where people that are not of that faith, be they other types of Christians or, this was on Jews, or if they're Muslim or something else, they're being harassed, actively. When that person brought it to the head of the campus, because the two are pretty enmeshed at this point, evidently, they were told, "They just need to toughen up about it, and maybe they should consider converting." It was like, really, you're oppressing other people to . . . ? It's just not something I associate with them.

**Emily:** I think it's a little unfair to say that you can't associate social justice with Evangelical Christians. I work with the international development sphere, as I mentioned earlier, and the largest international aid organization is World Vision. It's a Seattle-based Christian group. That's the largest organization that's distributing resources and money to aid in the developing world. Yes, I totally get it that some of their motivation might be a little unfair, because they want to convert people, but that's a really large distribution of resources that's happening, and I think it's really important to acknowledge that.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, but wouldn't you deem that as quid pro quo? Because social justice to me is, you're not expecting anything . . . If I were to go out there and rally for immigration or whatever, but I'm already a US citizen, what do I have to gain by the immigration issue? You know what I'm saying?

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** That's, maybe, a bad example, but to me it's like, I'm out for social justice because so-and-so to my left and so-and-so to my right, should be treated . . . Because they're in this country. Regardless of your status or whatever, you should be treated as a human being. To me, that's social justice. I understand, I guess, in a skewed way, about social justice is . . . To them, the abortion issue, I think Barbara touched upon that. If their faith strongly believes that the time of conception, that that fetus is a human being, I guess in a weird way that's social justice to them, to me. If you look at . . . I don't know much about the other religions, but I know in the . . . What order is Mother Teresa in? Whatever her order is, they vow poverty, but everybody that they took care of, the lepers and the sick and the dying in Calcutta, they don't necessarily convert them. They're just out there helping out people, like, "Oh my goodness."

#### **(1:29:39.8) THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT BY QUID PRO QUO?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes. *(Two respondents agreed.)*

**Female Respondent:** Isn't social justice also just ensuring that all human beings have basic human rights and dignity and are able to live their lives at a certain standard? There are lots of Evangelical organizations who are just helping people get by in the world with enough food, and be free from war.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, but there's a pamphlet that comes with that.

**Female Respondent:** I don't know if that's the case for all of them.

**Female Respondent:** I think most of . . .

**Female Respondent:** I don't think that they're really distributing a pamphlet to Somali children. That's not going to mean anything to those kids.

**Female Respondent:** What percentage of what they take in is actually distributed? I think that can be a problem too. Because I hear what you're saying . . .

**Female Respondent:** For the Evangelical Church. This is an aid organization. All the money they're raising is either going towards their expenses, to run themselves, or to their actual programs in the field. It's not like anyone's making a profit off of that.

**Barbara:** Right. I volunteer at the Irish Pastoral Center, because my husband's from Ireland, and it's a Catholic pastoral center. It's a Catholic center. I volunteer for them, because they help everyone, and they help like I have not seen anyone else help. I wish that my faith had services the way they have services, and that they were available to everyone. I personally, I hear what you're saying, you have, I personally haven't seen that in the Evangelical Church. It seems like, "If you believe what we believe, or you at least act like you do, then we'll help you. We have a lot of resources." But, "I'm altruistic, I'm helping you because that's what Jesus told me to do, without asking anything in exchange," I don't really see that.

**Female Respondent:** At some point to me, though, if those kids are having better lives, I don't really care if someone suggested that they believe in Jesus.

#### **(1:31:48.1) SOUP KITCHENS FEED HOMELESS AND HUNGRY PEOPLE . . .**

**Female Respondent:** Then they preach.

#### **(1:31:53.6) THEN THEY ASK YOU TO PRAY OVER YOUR MEAL. IS THAT SOCIAL JUSTICE?**

**Female Respondent:** (1:32:03.2 Unclear/crosstalk).

#### **(1:32:03.8) ARE YOU HELPING SOMEBODY?**

**Female Respondent:** Prayer over your meal, and saying you'll go to hell if you don't subscribe to a religion, are very different.

#### **(1:32:08.9) THAT WOULD BE A LITTLE CHALLENGING.**

**Female Respondent:** They're very different, and that's what you see with Evangelicals. That's what has been my experience.

**Female Respondent:** The motivation there is what bothers me. I would prefer that they wanted just to help, and it's the right thing to do.

#### **(1:32:27.5) THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO EXPLORE THE DEFINITION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE.**

**Female Respondent:** Again, worrying about what's going to happen to you when you die, and it's like, "I've got to do charity work for that purpose . . ." I don't know. It's about your motives, I guess. Some people have good motives and some people don't.

**Emily:** I do think motives are important, but at a certain point those resources are getting out into the field. We also collect a lot of money from corporations. Goldman-Sachs is one of our biggest donors, and obviously their motivation is, it's whitewashing their image. It makes them look better to be donating to literacy.

#### **(1:33:11.8) THEY GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT.**

**Emily:** They totally get something out of it, but I still want their money. I still want their money so I can run their programs.

**Aiden:** It makes me think of IHOP. They're a megachurch, and they have a lot of money, so they go to Uganda and pump a lot of money in there and help build houses and things like that. It's very different; it's really rich there. They have these big buildings, rich . . . it's very different from the rest of the country. At the same time, they're helping the Ugandans pass this anti-homosexuality bill, where if you're a homosexual they can kill you. They're going to Uganda because they're . . . In the US, most people are open-minded. There's a lot of states that allow gay marriage, so it's not going to happen here, so that's why they're going there. Start from there.

**Female Respondent:** Remind me not to go to Uganda.

**Female Respondent:** Don't they kill people, if you find out they're gay?

**Female Respondent:** They publish your name in the newspapers, and they find you. What you do, and where you live. (*One respondent agreed.*)

**Female Respondent:** Yes, and after that, it's all written.

**Female Respondent:** And it's legal.

**Female Respondent:** This reminds me of an early *South Park* episode about Starvin' Marvin in Africa, and Sally Struthers is there and everyone's starving to death, and they're so hungry, and they're like, "Give us food." Then they just give them Bibles, and in the meantime Sally Struthers is eating Cheesy-Poofs in a really posh house.

**Female Respondent:** There was an *Onion* . . . you know the magazine, *The Onion*? (*Several respondents agreed.*) It said, "Ethiopians send thank-you letters to Christians: Thank you, the Bibles were delicious."

**Aiden:** Oh, God . . .

#### **(1:35:07.7) MY REACTION IS HER REACTION.**

**Female Respondent:** I didn't write it. I just read it and remembered it.



**Female Respondent:** Oh, for Pete's sake . . .

**Female Respondent:** I feel like I need to backpedal a little now . . . *(Laughter.)*

**(1:35:18.1) YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUSTIFY ANYTHING YOU'VE SAID.**

**Female Respondent:** I think there's a difference between having the wrong motivations and having motivations that are okay. If you're going into a country because you want to impact their legislature and their government and their laws so that you can kill people, obviously totally wrong no matter how much money you're giving those people. If it's a difference between giving them a pamphlet about God and also teaching them to read . . . I don't know.

**Female Respondent:** Also, from their perspective, giving the pamphlet is helping. Because they . . .

**Female Respondent:** Right. If it's *(1:35:57.8 unclear/mumbling)*.

**Female Respondent:** I agree with you, that's what I'm saying.

**(1:36:02.8) "THE BIBLE," REGARD FOR AND OBEDIENCE TO THE BIBLE AS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY. YOU SHOOK YOUR HEAD.**

**Female Respondent:** It's just silly. I feel like the Bible is a great story book. I think it's something that we can learn from, great stories, and there are a lot of morals to learn, but to take it literally is, I think, silly. Because it has been translated and everything.

**Female Respondent:** I think we covered it beautifully when we talked about translation.

**(1:36:39.4) "THE CROSS," STRONG EMPHASIS ON JESUS' SACRIFICE AS MAKING REDEMPTION OF HUMANITY POSSIBLE.**

**Female Respondent:** I think *(1:36:48.9 unclear/crosstalk/imagery)*.

**Female Respondent:** I think it's more just a symbol to identify each other, I don't know. It becomes more of an icon, more so than anything else.

**Female Respondent:** It was only used starting with Constantine, and he used it as a symbol to go into battle, because he had a vision that said, "In this symbol you shall prosper," or, "You shall have victory," or something like that.

**Female Respondent:** It was the symbol of the cross, right?

**Female Respondent:** Right, but before that, Christianity's symbols were the dove and . . .

**Female Respondent:** The fish.

**Barbara:** The fish. Then Constantine had the vision, and it was a symbol of power. Again, it brings up, for me . . . I'll make it short, I promise. I want to hear everyone else, too. You're mixing up the message with

the messenger. The point of Jesus' life, yes he made the ultimate sacrifice, but did you listen to all the other stuff he said before? That stuff was important too, and if you're hung up on him being killed, I think that it can distract from . . . He was pretty clear about helping the poor and not judging people and being of service in your life. He was pretty clear on that. That wasn't a side note; that was the focus. If your focus becomes his torturous death, and how gruesome can you make the body, but how awesome can you make the abs at the same time. It's more than creepy to me. I think it distracts from the beautiful parts of Christianity, which is the life that you can live with it. That's me, as an outsider, because it's not my . . .

**(1:38:29.4) DIFFERENT SECTS HAVE VARYING CORE BELIEFS; EVANGELICALS BELIEVE IN THESE FOUR THINGS: CONVERSION, ACTION, THE BIBLE, THE CROSS. WHEN YOU PUT TOGETHER THE INFORMATION YOU HAD BEFORE AND HAVE NOW, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS? IF YOU HAD TO EXPLAIN IT TO SOMEBODY, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM? WHAT STANDS OUT FOR YOU?**

**Female Respondent:** I think they're just trying to get by. They're just people looking for a reason, or whatever it is, to fulfill that need for faith or whatever. I think they're a little loonier about it than other religions, but it's all the same thing.

**(1:40:23.5) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** They're not shy about it. They'll express themselves outwardly. They'll say vehemently, "I'm an Evangelical born-again Christian," and they will . . . It's like a small terrier. Just come at you. That's just what I think.

**(1:40:58.1) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** I agree with that, that they're very hung up on converting, and just keep hounding that. Actually, too, the whole cross idea is whack. I feel like, for some people, it just lets them feel like it's okay to keep sinning, and it's okay because they'll be forgiven, because Jesus died for them. It's like saying being bad is okay. I think some people use that.

**(1:41:35.0) MISUSE THAT?**

**Female Respondent:** Misuse that. Yes.

**Aiden:** I agree on that point, that it's just, "It's okay, I'm forgiven no matter what because Jesus died for me and if I work hard to convert other people to my faith, it's my golden ticket to heaven."

**Female Respondent:** It has a negative connotation for me. They focus on doing good work and helping other people who are less fortunate and trying to convert other people . . . These are the main focus, but they don't look at other things.

**(1:42:30.7) SUCH AS?**

**Female Respondent:** Let's see . . . these are positive things, so you don't look at the negative things, like what they're doing wrong. Being critical of things.

**(1:42:51.6) SOMETHING DIFFERENT?**

**Barbara:** I feel like I have a lower opinion of them than when I came in, and I feel badly about that, because I . . .

**(1:43:03.2) WHAT DROPPED THE BAROMETER FOR YOU?**

**Barbara:** Hearing what their principles are, as opposed to what I see in action. I feel like they have a good concept, and I'm all for being really proud of who you are. Like I said, I'm a mouthy Jewish broad, it's who I am. My faith is my culture also, so I wear that openly, but not at the expense of anyone else. I feel like they wear everything . . . they wear their heart on their sleeve. "This is who we are, rah-rah," with the banners, but it's at the expense of everyone else. There's this huge carnage around them that they don't take responsibility for, they're not aware of. They're so busy cheering themselves on for being so great in what they're doing, they don't see the impact that it's having. It's different, I think, from the impact that is intended, because the intention is good, but to have some self-reflection as a group, and to say, "Is it worth it at any cost, and what is the cost?" At least acknowledge that there's a cost and what it is. Then they could say, "It's worth it, because if we convert that one person . . ." I think that is some of the rhetoric you hear, but it doesn't sit well with me.

**(1:44:35.5) YOU'RE AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD GOING TO COLLEGE AND YOUR ROOMMATE IS AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN. KNOWING THAT, DO YOU SWITCH ROOMMATES OR STICK IT OUT, AND WHY?**

**Female Respondent:** I'd stick it out.

**(1:45:53.8) WHY?**

**Female Respondent:** I think that's probably just a portion of who that person is. Maybe down the line they're a little crazy, and you could choose to have other options then, but at last be open to . . . That just doesn't make up everything that they are, behavior . . . They could be an Evangelical Christian and they could be a total slob. You never know where your boundaries are.

**Female Respondent:** I'd stick it out, but . . . My eighteen-year-old self would have driven this person crazy. I was smoking cigarettes in my dorm, smoking weed, having boys over, all those things. Things just wouldn't have clicked. I probably wouldn't have done anything. I'm always respectful of other people, but I also do my own thing. I don't know.

**(1:46:56.4) SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**Female Respondent:** I would probably stick it out also, but I think I would lay it on the line and let them know that I don't want to hear it. That's what I would do.

**Female Respondent:** I would stick it out. If they weren't trying to convert me within the first ten minutes, they just mentioned it, then yes. I think you can tell someone, "I don't want to hear it," and they'll eventually leave you alone. I think it would work.

**(1:47:26.9) WHY WOULD SOMEONE NOT STICK IT OUT?**

**Female Respondent:** This is you're finding out you have this roommate, and you haven't met them? Or, the first day you meet them? That's all you know about them?

**(1:47:40.2) AND THEY'RE AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN.**

**Barbara:** That's prejudiced.

**Female Respondent:** Have you already moved all your stuff in? *(Laughter.)*

**Female Respondent:** That's a factor.

**Barbara:** That's prejudiced. That's like finding out somebody's gay, or finding out somebody's a different ethnicity. That's full-on prejudiced to just say, "I know one thing about this person, and I don't want to room with them." That's going against everything we say we have a problem with, with them. That seems totally wrong. If they're a jerk, and they happen to be an Evangelical Christian, that's something different. Based on their faith, that's pure prejudice.

**(1:48:14.5) I'M LOOKING AT BEING JUDGMENTAL FROM OUR SIDE.**

**Female Respondent:** I think it'd be more likely for them to be judging me, than me judging them.

**(1:48:29.0) YOU IN PARTICULAR . . . (Laughter.)**

**Female Respondent:** Those crazy eighteen-year-olds.

**Female Respondent:** I feel like all the judgments being made are more just the whole institution of it, but with individual people, you don't know how they're going to be.

**(1:48:47.5) I'VE ASKED YOU HARD QUESTIONS, AND IT'S NOT ALWAYS A FLATTERING PICTURE . . .**

**Female Respondent:** I feel like we're bashing them.

**(1:49:01.8) OUR GOAL IS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE ABOUT THEM.**

**Female Respondent:** Okay.

**Female Respondent:** I think if they're very devout in their religion, so let's say if I was . . . I don't know, what's the opposite of Evangelical Christian?

**Female Respondent:** Unitarian Universalist?

**Female Respondent:** Yes. If I believe in that and I found out my roommate is an Evangelical, I would probably want to switch.

**(1:49:44.3) YOU'D BE AT THE OPPOSITE ENDS, SO NEITHER OF YOU WOULD LIKE WHAT THE OTHER WAS DOING.**

**Female Respondent:** Right, but like Barbara was saying, we're highly prejudicial, but obviously . . . Personally, I probably would stick it out, and there would be other factors, and so on and so forth, but if I came from the unilateral . . .

**Female Respondent:** Unitarian Universalist.

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**(1:50:12.7) WE TALKED ABOUT THEM CONVERTING AND BEING OUTSPOKEN AND NOT OPEN, AND I DIDN'T KNOW HOW SERIOUS THAT IS, HAVING TO INTERACT WITH SOMEONE.**

**Barbara:** As a devout person who is that polar opposite, I don't believe their God, which they believe is the one true living God. I don't accept that person, or that being, as my God. I'm the opposite religion, you could say, but because I'm devout, and because I'm secure in my faith, it's not threatening to me.

**(1:50:52.7) YOU'RE NOT EIGHTEEN ANY MORE.**

**Barbara:** Even at eighteen it wasn't threatening. I was born like this. It's been a problem.

**(1:50:59.7) THE MOUTHY JEWISH PART?**

**Barbara:** Yes, it's in the blood.

**(1:51:05.1) WHAT QUESTION DID I NOT ASK, THAT YOU EXPECTED OR HOPED I WOULD?**

**Female Respondent:** I guess I definitely think of the abortion issue a lot when it comes to Evangelical Christianity, and so I'm a little surprised that hasn't come up more. I know it's been mentioned, but . . . *(One respondent agreed.)*

**(1:51:30.5) THAT'S ONE REASON I HAVE WOMEN SEPARATE FROM MEN.**

**Female Respondent:** I'm surprised you didn't ask what positive things we might associate with them.

**Female Respondent:** She did; it was social justice. *(Laughter.)*

**Female Respondent:** That's an awfully small . . .

**Female Respondent:** *(1:51:49.8 Unclear/crosstalk).*

**Female Respondent:** We made a list of all the things that we associate with them negatively.

**(1:51:55.1) I ASKED ABOUT YOUR OBJECTIONS, THEN ABOUT EVANGELICALS SPECIFICALLY.**

**Female Respondent:** Right, but if we have a list of what our negative associations, then why not our positive . . . I thought that would've been nice too.

**(1:52:14.4) IN THIS CASE WE'RE LOOKING FOR OBJECTIONS.**

**Female Respondent:** Sure.

**(1:52:22.8) THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME WHAT YOU WERE EXPECTING.**

**Female Respondent:** I wasn't scolding you, you asked what we expected.

**(1:52:26.9) THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?**

**Female Respondent:** This is for a book, right?

**(1:52:49.6) YES.**

**Female Respondent:** Do you know the person writing it?

**(1:52:52.2) NO, BUT IT'S SUPPOSED TO COME OUT IN THE NEXT YEAR. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH OR LITTLE WILL BE IN IT.**

**Female Respondent:** Do you know what the approach to the topic is?

**(1:53:04.7) OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY.**

**Female Respondent:** Are they over there, behind the glass? (*Laughter.*)

**(1:53:07.5) NO, THAT'S EMPTY. THEY HAVEN'T BEEN IN THE LAST THREE CITIES.**

**Female Respondent:** You've been in three other cities for this study?

**(1:53:19.1) YES.**

**Female Respondent:** How many more?

**(1:53:21.6) I'M JUST DOING FOUR. THEY'VE DONE A NATIONAL ONLINE STUDY.**

**Female Respondent:** The answers you get (*1:53:36.2 unclear*).

**Female Respondent:** Are we going to get an email or something like that, that this book has been published?

**(1:53:41.8) DO YOU WANT ONE?**

**Female Respondent:** Yes.

**Female Respondent:** Yes, because I'm interested . . .

**(1:53:44.6) I MIGHT JUST SEND EVERYBODY AN EMAIL WHEN IT COMES OUT, BECAUSE THEY CAN'T.**

**Female Respondent:** Cool. *(Several respondents agreed.)*

**(1:54:02.8) IT'S INTERESTING.**

**Female Respondent:** Have the answers been typical to the regions you're in?

**(1:54:09.6) NO. TEXAS WAS ROUGH.**

**Female Respondent:** Why was it rough?

**(1:54:25.0) PEOPLE HAVE VERY STRONG OPINIONS IN TEXAS.**

**Female Respondent:** Have you had anyone in the studies who was an Evangelical Christian?

**(1:54:32.5) USED TO BE. NOBODY CURRENT.**

**Female Respondent:** That's a good idea.

**(1:54:37.8) EVERY GROUP'S HAD A USED-TO-BE. I'VE MET A LOT OF INTERESTING PEOPLE.**

**THANK YOU . . .**