

**#RELIGION @OMG FAITH**  
**DB8 IN 21ST CENTURY**

**DR DAVID COWAN**



# AGENDA

- I. **MODERN COMMUNICATION**
- II. **CHURCH COMMUNICATION**
- III. **OUTLINE OF THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMMUNICATION: THE MODERN BABEL

## *TRENDS*

- **GLOBALIZATION**
- **TECHNOLOGY**
- **TRANSPARENCY**

## *CHALLENGES*

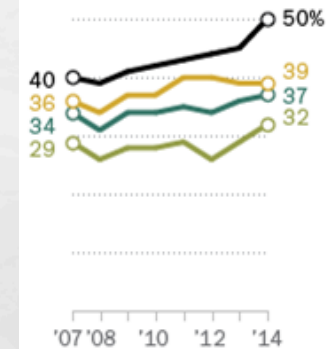
- **CULTURE AND DIVERSITY**
- **MANAGEMENT OF CONTENT**
- **TRANSMISSION OF IDEAS**

# OUTCOMES

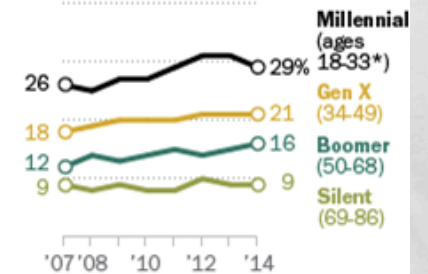
- **CRISIS OF AUTHORITY: WHO AUTHORIZES?**
- **MINORITY VIEWS AND ACCESS**
- **COMMUNICATION NOISE AND GETTING OUR ATTENTION**
- **NEED FOR DIALOGUE**

## Millennials: Unmoored from Institutions

*Percent who consider themselves political independents*



*Percent of adults in each generation who are religiously unaffiliated*

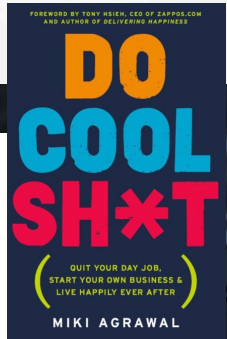
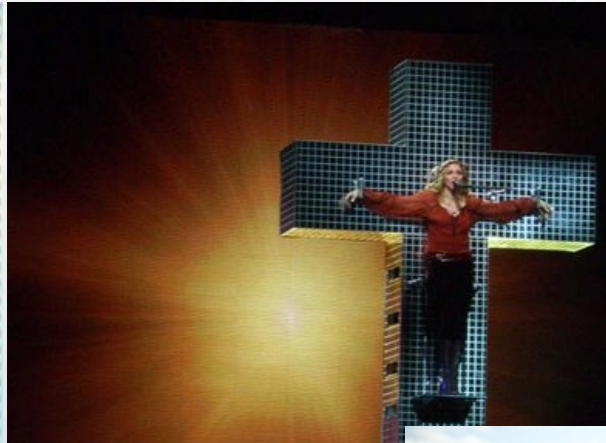


\* Age ranges are for 2014

Source: Data points represent totals based on all Pew Research surveys of the general public conducted in that calendar year.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# GETTING OUR ATTENTION



# HOW CHURCH COMMUNICATES

## ***TRENDS***

- **SECULARIZATION & RELIGION'S "COMEBACK"**
- **SEARCH FOR RELEVANCE**

## ***CHALLENGES***

- **CONTENT OF FAITH: DOCTRINE**
- **CONTROL OF LANGUAGE: A FOREIGN COUNTRY**
- **CHANGES IN DEBATE: SPIRITUALITY, ETHICS, LEGALISM**
- **FINDING A BASIS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN FAITHS**

# A CHRISTIAN PUBLIC SQUARE?



Doesn't This Matter

**ISLAM**  
is not a  
religion!



**It's the world's  
largest death cult**

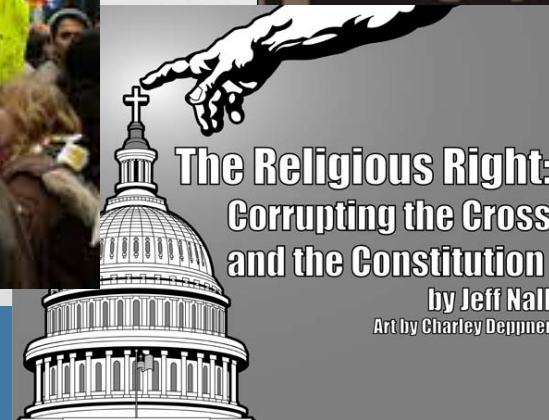


## Jesus Was

a bleeding heart  
long-haired  
peace-loving  
anti-establishment  
liberal hippie freak  
with strange ideas

## Everything Conservatives Hate

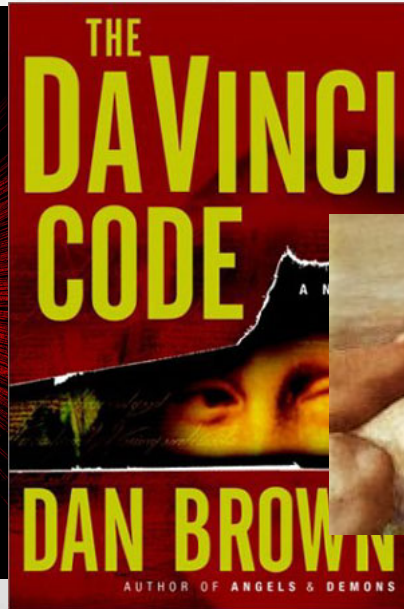
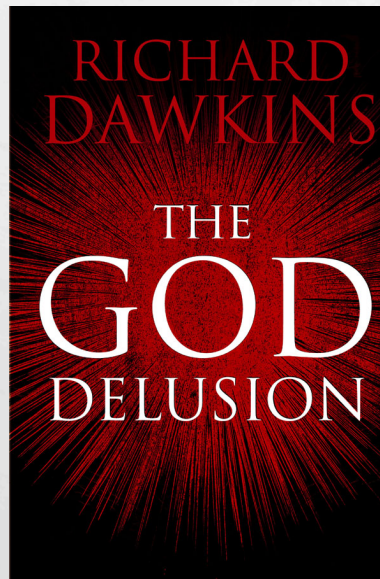
THE CHRISTIAN  
LEFT



**The Religious Right:  
Corrupting the Cross  
and the Constitution**

by Jeff Nall  
Art by Charley Deppner

# AN IMAGE PROBLEM?





# BRAND PROMISE & EXPERIENCE



[www.birmingham.anglican.org/love](http://www.birmingham.anglican.org/love)

**Body Piercing?**  
**Jesus had his done 2,000 years ago**

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

# THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE JOURNEY

## PROPHECY

**SPEAKING TO OUR SITUATION**

**COUNTER-CULTURAL NARRATIVE**

**DEALING WITH DISSONANCE**

**INSPIRING THE IMAGINATION**

## THE PARABLES

**AUDIENCE CONNECTION**

**STARTING FROM WHERE THEY WERE**

**USE OF METAPHOR & SIMILE**

**DEEPER MEANING EXPLORED FOR  
DISCIPLES**

## MISSIONARY SPEECHES

**CLEAR OBJECTIVE, COMMITMENT &  
UNDERSTANDING OF MESSAGE**

**AWARENESS OF CULTURE AND BELIEFS OF  
THE AUDIENCE**

**MAINTAIN VALUE OF MESSAGE IN  
CONTRAST TO AUDIENCE**

**SENSE OF TRAJECTORY OF NARRATIVE  
JOURNEY**

# SOME HISTORICAL REMINDERS

- **ORAL TRADITION**
- **USE OF PAGAN FORMS OF COMMUNICATION, E.G. RHETORIC**
- **COMMUNICATION AS NEUTRAL (AUGUSTINE)**
- **PROHIBITION ON USE OF IMAGES**
- **PRINT REVOLUTION IN THE REFORMATION**
- **MODERN MASS COMMUNICATION: TELEVANGELISTS, LIFE OF BRIAN, NEW MEDIA ATTACKS**

# EXPLORING A THEOLOGICAL AGENDA

- **UNDERSTANDING GOD AS A COMMUNICATIVE GOD**
- **A RETURN TO DOCTRINE, ALBEIT MODERNIZED**
- **WHAT WE TRYING TO DO WHEN WE COMMUNICATE? NEED TO CREATE DIALOGUE SPACE & HEALING**
- **INTERFAITH: BASED ON THE FACT WE DISAGREE, RATHER THAN PRETENDING WE AGREE, CREATING CONNECTED COMMUNITY RATHER THAN DISCONNECTED AND SUPERFICIAL AGREEMENT**
- **PREPARE FOR THE PUBLIC SQUARE, PERHAPS “THE CHRISTIAN ‘LEFT’ AND CHRISTIAN ‘RIGHT’ NEED TO ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER TO SEEK A BETTER CHRISTIANITY BEFORE TRYING TO TEACH THE BODY POLITIC A BETTER SECULARITY.”**

**THANK YOU!**

# A HUMAN WEEK IN AUGUST 1997



## **Algerian Massacres**

**28–29 August 1997**  
**Rais 98–375,**  
**News report august 30**

# A MEDIA WEEK IN AUGUST 1997



**Death of Princess Diana  
August 31, 1997, Paris, France**

# A COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

- **DEFINE WHAT IT IS WE ARE COMMUNICATING**
- **CREATE THE MESSAGE**
- **LOCATE AND ANALYSE OUR STAKEHOLDERS**
- **MATCH MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS: INTERNAL & EXTERNAL**
- **SELECT OUR CHANNELS AND MIX**
- **MAKE OUR ANNOUNCEMENT, PRESENT OUR MESSAGE OR LEAK?**
- **A PERSUASIVE FOLLOW-UP, PURSUING THE FAITHLESS**
- **MEASURING OUR SUCCESS, ADJUST THE MESSAGE**
- **BUILD THE NARRATIVE**
- **THE NEXT BIG THING...OR FAD**
- **DOCTRINE**
- **GOSPEL**
- **CHRISTIAN, OTHER FAITHS & SECULAR; POLITICAL, MEDIA, CULTURAL**
- **EMPHASIS ON TEACHING & LANGUAGE**
- **PROBLEM OF CHANNEL: SECULAR CHANNELS, CHURCH, LITURGY, SACRAMENT**
- **PROCLAMATION, INSPIRATIONAL**
- **A PERSUASIVE FOLLOW-UP, PURSUING THE FAITHLESS**
- **CHURCH AS BEACON & TIMELESS MESSAGE**
- **MAINTAIN THE NARRATIVE, SALVATION, ESCHATOLOGY**
- **AVOID THE NEXT BIG THING...OR FAD**