

CAFETERIA CHRISTIANITY?

**Facing the false religions around us
(and in us)!**



DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says ‘Morning, boys. How’s the water?’ And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’

ACTS 17

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols...

21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

IF PAUL WERE TO WALK AROUND YOUR PART OF YOUR CITY,
WHAT WOULD HE SAY PROVOKED HIM? WHAT IDOLS ARE
FILLING YOUR CITY?

FOUR OBSERVATIONS FROM ACTS 17

Paul ...

- Collects data
- Connects with their world / world views
- Confronts their own view and fallacies within and introduces
- Christ (proclaims Christ alone to them)

CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



Conservatism
(Value of tradition /
community)

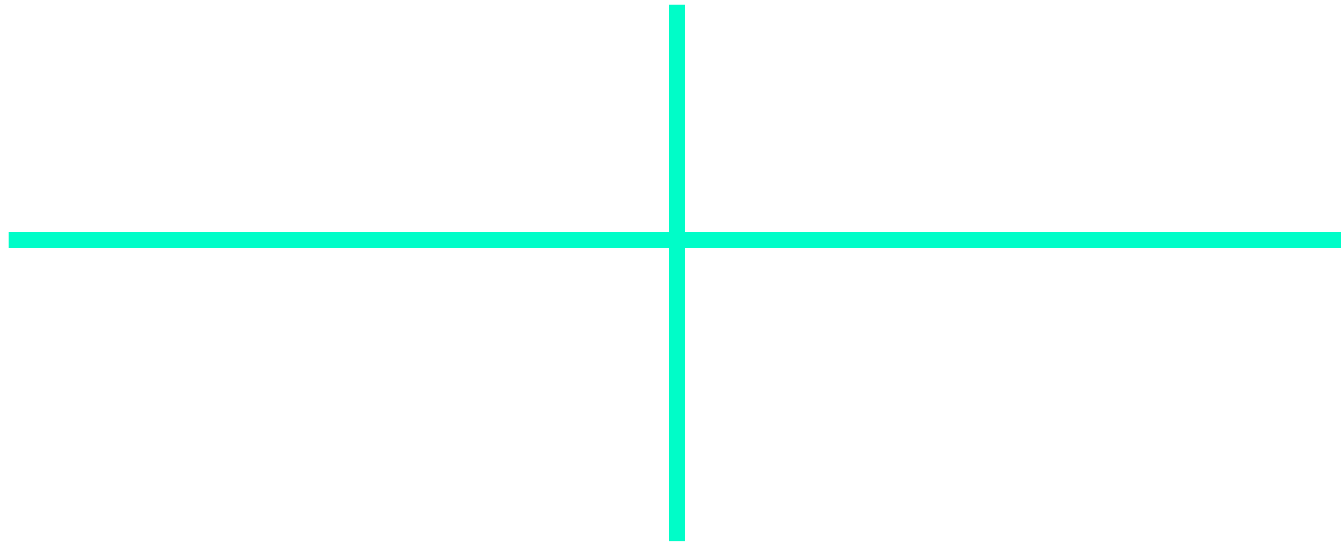
Liberalism
(value of progress/
individualism)

CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



Justification (performance)

(Acts 2 / prepared/ churched / virtuous)



Satisfaction (Pleasure)

(Acts 17 / unchurched or dechurched / Hedonism)

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The false god of GOOD

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The false god of GOOD
Moralism | Karma

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CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



Giles Fraser, “[Jesus] wants us to feel that we cannot do what morality demands... and he does so because he’s pointing to something beyond morality.” Jesus confronts us with our limits, not to discourage us but to engineer a situation in which the phrase ‘what is impossible with man is possible with God’ might find traction. Faith in God begins where



Jerico Silvers · Follow

Oct 9 · 🌐

Jerico Silvers

2. Whatever you
release into the
Universe — will come
back. So release the
energy that you
want to come into
your life.

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The false god of SELF
therapy | identity

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CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



“Self is the new God, the new spiritual authority, the new morality. But this puts a crushing weight on the self—one it was never designed to bear. It must discover itself. Become itself. Stay true to itself. Justify itself. Make itself happy. Perform and defend its fragile identity.”

- John Mark Comer, *Live No Lies*, p. 118



IF PAUL WERE TO WALK AROUND YOUR PART OF OUR
CHURCHES, WHAT WOULD HE SAY PROVOKED HIM? WHAT
IDOLS ARE FILLING YOUR CHURCH?

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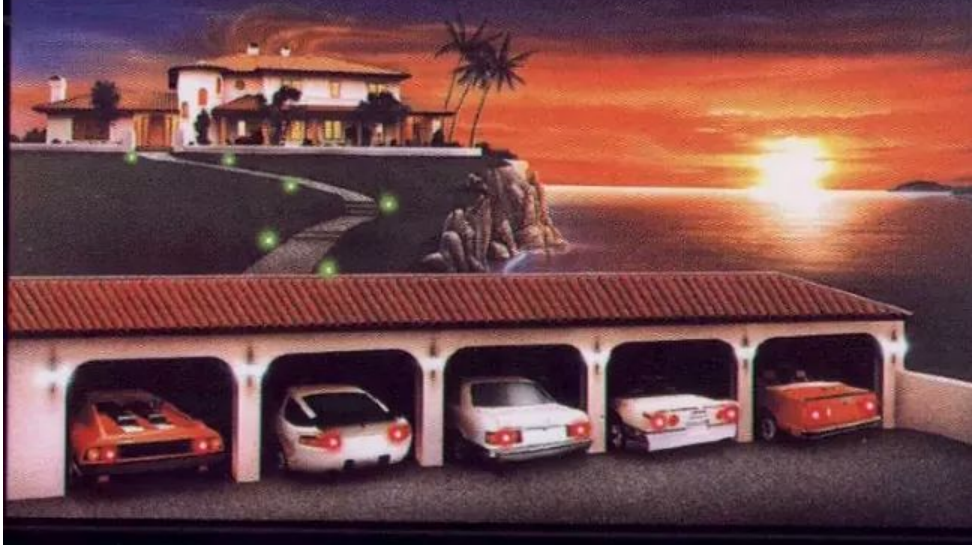
The false god of
PLEASURE

YOLO | Success

Satisfaction (Pleasure)

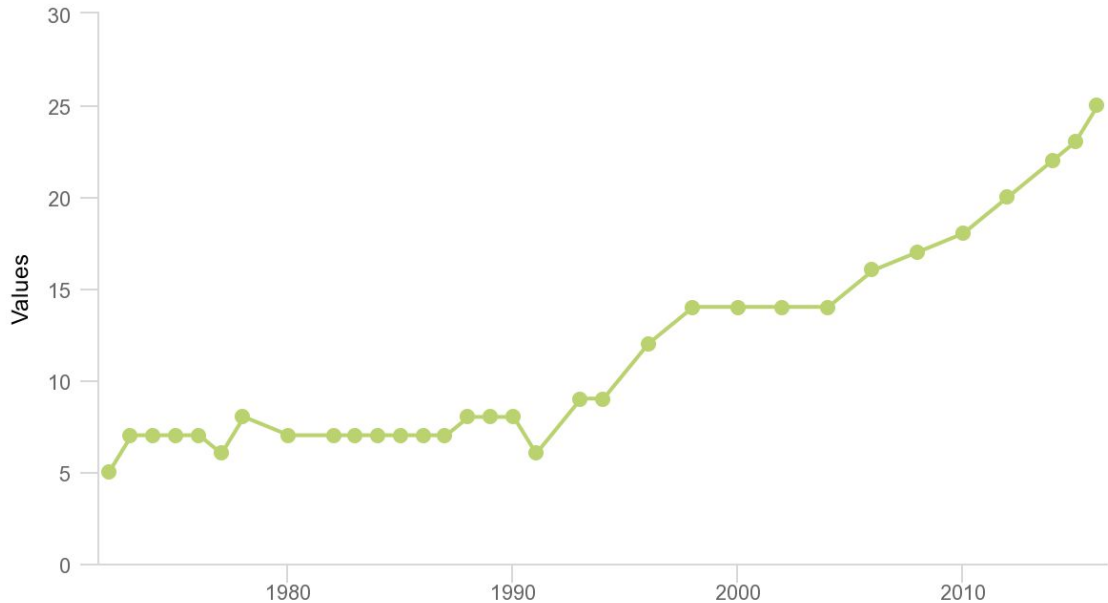
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JUSTIFICATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Growth of the Religiously Unaffiliated, 1972-2016

Percent of population



Sources: General Social Survey, 1972-2012; PRRI Surveys, 2014-2016.

PRRI

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The false god of
TRIBALISM

Wokeness | Nationalism



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JESUS + ANYTHING ~ NOTHING^{ty)}

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IF JESUS WERE TO WALK AROUND YOUR PART OF OUR
HEARTS WHAT WOULD HE SAY PROVOKED HIM? WHAT IDOLS
ARE FILLING YOUR HEART?

God?

- *What's bad about this from our fallen nature?*
- *How does Jesus come to save and redeem?*
- *What's the invitation in the gospel?*

| | Moralism | Self | Pleasure | Tribes |
|-------------|---|--|--|---|
| Creation | Gen 1 | Ps 139 Luke 2:52 | Eat everything but 1 | Created to belong |
| Fall | Rom 3 SELF-righteousness / PRIDE / SHAME | Abuse | Pleasure apart from pleasure creator ~ devastation | Division oppression |
| Restoration | MIRACLE of spiritual birth - Rich Young Ruler | Agape Authority ID is reached... | Pleasure + Presence Ps 16:11 | New community - THE CHURCH - Eph 2 |
| Glory | All order and freedom | Self / ID / Authority Forever Secure! | Pleasure forever in | New humanity - ONE around the throne Rev 5 / 21 |

HOW CAN THIS START WITH US?

CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



... It was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. Even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained; and even in the best of all hearts, there remains a small corner of evil.

CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



... If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

— Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*
1918–1956

CAFETERIA SPIRITUALITY



2 Chron 7: 14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

CAFETERIA CHRISTIANITY?

Which is no Christianity at all!

