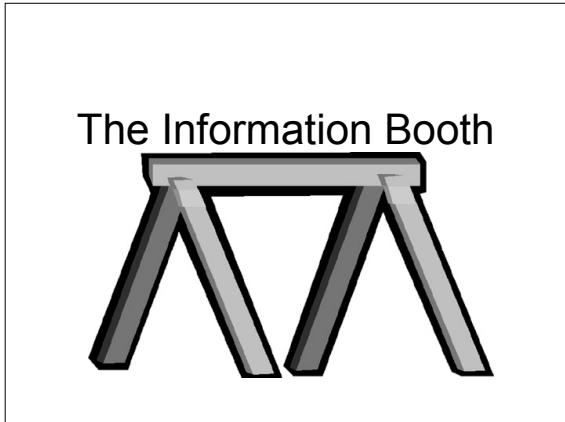
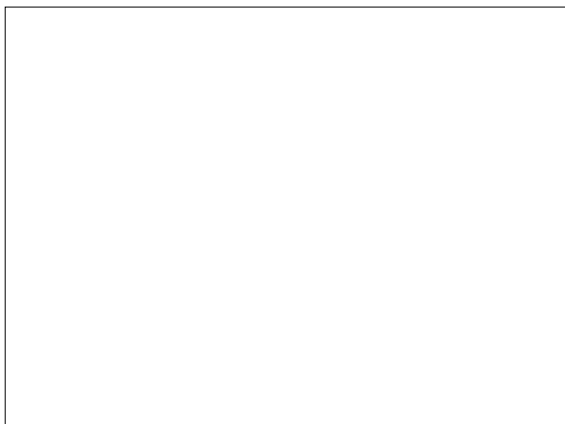


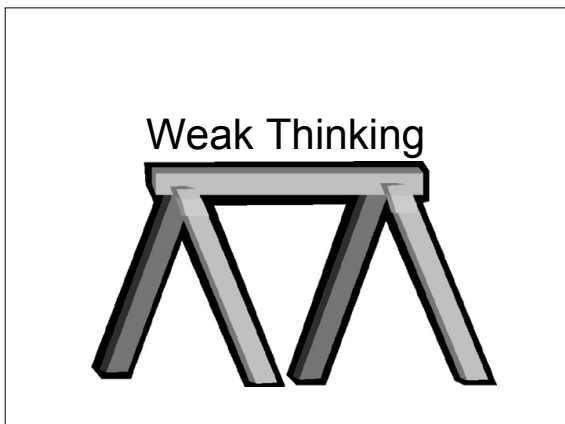
Missing the Message



- Information Booth:**
- Acting like we have all the answers.

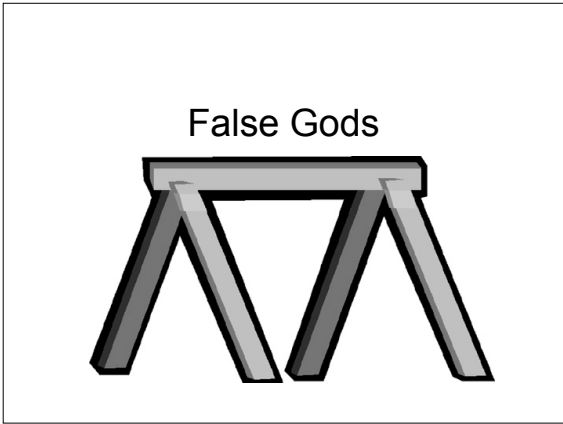


- What can we do?**
- Show enough love to respect others who hold different opinions.
  - Be open to critique.
  - Be willing to listen and consider other viewpoints.
  - Admit we don't know everything.
  - Allow for unanswered questions and the mystery of relationship with God.



**Weak Thinking**

- Circular Reasoning
- Flimsy Claims



**False Gods**

- The Bible

“Religiously, God is made in the image of our particular biblical interpretation. We see our own understanding of God as biblical, that of other Christians as not.”

- Jacob Loewen  
*The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

**False Gods**

- Church

“For some people, some groups, some denominations, the specialized God of religion has begotten a son, a junior God, the church – my denomination, my community of believers.”

- Jacob Loewen  
*The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

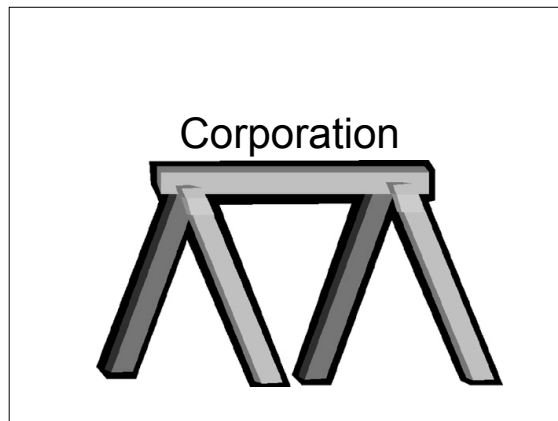
**False Gods**

- Rituals
- Worship
- Doctrine

death penalty  
 Jews - inerrant  
 the Bible - literal  
 evolution - figurative  
 6-day creation  
 theistic evolution  
 millennialism baptism  
 premillennialism The Kingdom  
 amillennialism  
 demons -forever  
 hell- for a time war  
 church and state -annihilation  
 pre-destination spiritual gifts

	death penalty	
Jews	- inerrant	
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amillennialism		The Kingdom
demons	-forever	
	hell-	for a time
church and state		war
		-annihilation
pre-destination		spiritual gifts

LOVE



### Corporation

- Being corporate Christianity

Instead of a vibrant, relational community.

- Marketing Jesus to consumers

"Our research shows that local churches have virtually no influence in our culture."

7 dominant spheres of influence:  
movies, music, television, books, Internet, law, family

Second tier of influencers:  
schools, peers, newspapers, radio, businesses

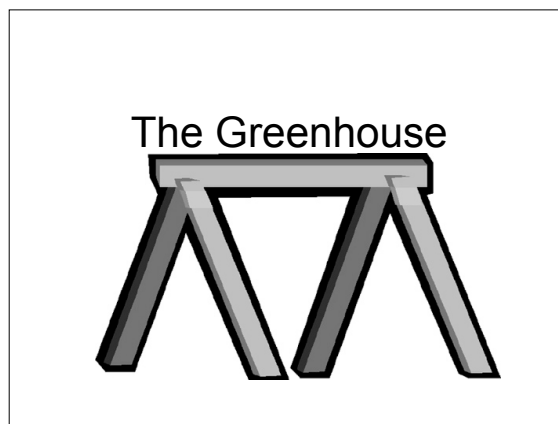
"The local church appears among entities that have little or no influence on society."

- George Barna, *Revolution*

By 2025, the primary means for experiencing and expressing faith:

1/3 of population – the local congregation  
1/3 – alternative forms of faith-based community  
1/3 – media, arts, other cultural institutions

-George Barna  
*Revolution*



### The Greenhouse

- Isolating ourselves.
- “We vs. they” warfare mentality.
- Across-the-board condemnation of all other religions.

### Heaven Focus



### Heaven Focus

“Nor is Christianity about Jesus offering, demonstrating, or even accomplishing a new route by which people can ‘go to heaven when they die.’ This is a persistent mistake, based on the medieval notion that the point of all religion – the rule of the game, if you like – was to make sure you ended up at the right side of the stage at the end of the mystery play (that is in heaven rather than in hell)...”

– N.T. Wright  
*Simply Christian*

### Heaven Focus

The church “does not exist to provide a safe haven in which people can hide from the wicked world and ensure that they themselves arrive safely at an otherworldly destination.”

Instead, we are “called to be agents of God’s healing love, putting the world to rights.”

– N.T. Wright  
*Simply Christian*

### Perfectionism



### Perfectionism

- Giving people the impression that they must be perfect to please God.

**Perfectionism:**

“Here is the test of any presentation of religion. Does it make it wings to lift a man up, or a deadweight to drag him down? Does it make it a joy or a depression? Is a man helped by his religion or is he haunted by it? Does it carry him, or has he to carry it? Whenever religion becomes a depressing affair of burdens and prohibitions, it ceases to be true religion.”

- William Barclay  
Commentary on *Matthew*