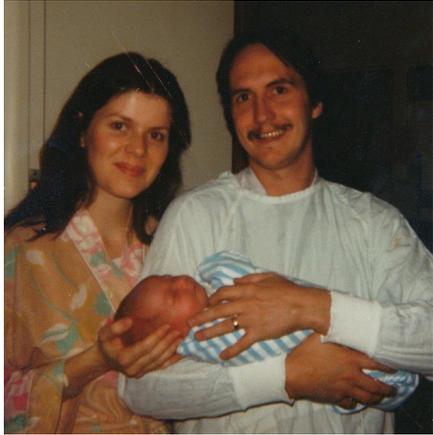




# **PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO A DISINTERESTED WORLD**







## HOW DO WE PROCLAIM CHRIST TO A DISINTERESTED WORLD

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**Hint: It's not as disinterested as we think**

## **Learning goals for our time together:**

- A. Explore research on the 'privately faithful', & the 'spiritually uncertain' in Canadian society**
- B. Consider some experiments to try**

**WHO IS THIS  
DISINTERESTED  
WORLD THAT  
WE HOPE TO SHARE  
THE FAITH WITH?**

What are  
their  
spiritual  
questions,  
longings,  
beliefs?

# WHERE WE ARE AT: A DECLINE IN CHURCH ATTENDANCE

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The rise of the 'privately faithful' and  
the 'spiritually uncertain'.  
Crisis or opportunity?

# A SPECTRUM OF SPIRITUALITY

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Angus Reid Institute: Public Interest Research

Canadian Public Opinion Poll published April 13, 2017

# The poll asked about:

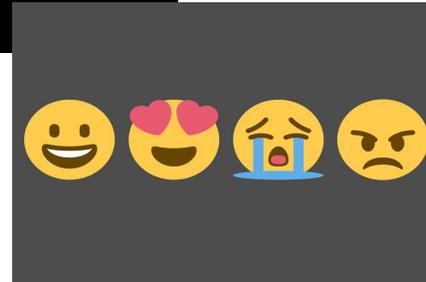
- Beliefs



- Behaviours



- Attitudes



## questions the poll asked: about Beliefs

Do you believe:

- that God or a higher power exists?
- In life after death?
- That God is active in this world?
- In heaven
- In hell



## Questions the poll asked about behaviours

Which of these do you do 'once a month or more':

- Pray
- Attend religious services
- Talk about faith or religion with family
- Talk about faith or religion with friends
- Read the Bible, Quran or other sacred text
- Experience God's presence



Questions the poll asked: about attitudes

Which of these words has a positive meaning for you?

religion, forgiveness, morality, mercy, meditation, karma, salvation, mystical. salvation, born-again, resurrection, theology, evangelism



## Questions the poll asked: about happiness, community & family

- I think that religion's overall impact on the world is positive
- I think Pope Francis is having a positive impact on the world
- I sometimes feel guilty for not being more involved in a faith
- I wish I had a closer relationship with God
- I feel uncomfortable around (a) the religiously devout (b) those who criticize
- Select the 3 most important: family life, comfortable life, honesty, self-reliance, good times, concern for others, success, being outside, intellectual inquiry
- How happy are you in: family, friends, community, overall?



**Results: Four  
Canadian mindsets  
on religion**

- 1. Religiously Committed (21%)**
- 2. Privately Faithful (30%)**
- 3. Spiritually Uncertain (30%)**
- 4. Non-Believers (19%)**
  - The most devout are more likely to be found in the prairies.**
  - The least devout are found in Quebec and B.C.**
  - The most devout tend to be older, female, from a visible minority & received formal religious education**

## Data specific to Quebec

- Quebecers had the lowest percentage of 'Religiously Committed' respondents, at just 14%, compared to the national average of 21% and Saskatchewan at 32%
- Quebecers are most likely to be found in the middle segments of society, the privately faithful and the spiritually uncertain.
- 68% of them fit into these two middle categories
- While 19% of Canadians overall fit into the category of Non-Believers, 18% of Quebec residents fit there; significantly smaller percentage than B.C. at 27%

**What do you see as some implications of this research for ministry?**



# The Religiously Committed

What sets them apart?

- beliefs
- Importance of their children being part of a faith community
- behaviours (prayer, experiencing God's presence, talking about faith with family, attending services, talking with friends about faith)
- only 58% report reading their sacred text once a month or more
- Least positive words: mystical, karma, then ... theology & evangelism
- 88% wish they had a closer relationship with God
- Of highest importance: family & honesty ... and volunteering
- Express the highest levels of happiness across all areas of life



## The Spiritually Uncertain



- A majority (67%) believe that God exists
- A majority don't believe in life after death, that God is active in this world, or in the existence of heaven or hell ... but they express some uncertainty about this
- Words having the most positive meaning: forgiveness, morality, meditation, mercy, karma
- Words with the least positive meaning: theology & evangelism

## **The Spiritually Uncertain**

- **See religion's overall impact as negative (71%)**
- **See Pope Francis' impact as positive (72%)**
- **Don't particularly wish for a closer relationship with God**
- **Feel uncomfortable around devout people**
- **Choose family life and a comfortable life as of high importance**

**What do you see as some implications of this research for ministry?**



## The Privately Faithful



- Majority (64%) want their kids to be formally welcomed into a religious community
- A strong majority (80-94%) believe: God exists, God is active in this world, in heaven, and in life after death (a slim majority believe in hell)
- a majority (58%) pray but don't read sacred text, attend services, feel God's presence, or talk about their faith
- most positive words: forgiveness, morality, mercy, meditation & karma
- least positive words: theology & evangelism

## The Privately Faithful

- See religion's overall impact as negative (57%)
- See Pope Francis' impact as positive (78%)
- A slim majority sometimes feel guilty for not being more involved in a faith
- Significant majority wish they had a closer relationship with God (65%)
- 49% feel uncomfortable around people who are devout
- Choose family life and a comfortable life as of high importance

**What do you see as some implications of this research for ministry?**



# Angus Reid: Conclusions and implications

- **Canadians keep the faith to varying degrees but few reject it entirely**
- **They are less hostile than attendance might imply**
- **The spiritually uncertain are somewhat interested in questions of the existence of God and life after death ... and are generally uncertain about their beliefs**
- **The privately faithful are very interested in questions of faith, want their children to be formally welcomed into a faith community, and often pray**
- **Younger, male, and non-immigrant Canadians may be the most challenging to reach with the gospel**
- **Few people really like the words theology or evangelism**