



Birth . . . life

Regeneration . . . renewal

made us free	{	walk in the Spirit
died, buried		led by the Spirit
raised		live in the Spirit

crucified . . . put to death

your members  
the deeds of  
the body

... reckon yourselves to  
be dead to sin

... do not live in sin

... do not let sin reign

... do not present your members  
to serve sin's lust

... do not let sin have dominion



① Putting to death the old Adam  
through the Word by the Holy Spirit  
in faith



② Not putting to death  
the old Adam

1 Cor 6:9-11

Antinomian = Against the Law

No Works



③ Trying to put to  
death the old Adam

NOT God's Way  
by other means

Galatians 3:1-9

Works



## Can hipster Christianity save churches from decline?

By Brett McCracken July 27

*This opinion piece is by Brett McCracken, author of “Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide” (2010) and “Gray Matters: Navigating the Space Between Legalism and Liberty” (2013).*

Do people want Christianity to be cool? What happens when churches become too driven by the desire to be trend-savvy and culturally relevant? Can a church balance hipster credibility within an orthodox tradition?

These were questions at the heart of my book “Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide,” which released five years ago. The book seemed to fascinate reporters, with outlets like The New Yorker, The Atlantic and NPR covering what they saw as a deliciously paradoxical story.

“If the evangelical Christian leadership thinks that ‘cool Christianity’ is a sustainable path forward, they are severely mistaken,” I wrote in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, The Perils of ‘Wannabe Cool’ Christianity. “As a twentysomething, I can say with confidence that when it comes to church, we don’t want cool as much as we want real.”

Five years later, has the cool-church movement done anything to reverse trends of declining church attendance, particularly among young people?

Most evidence suggests the answer is no. Recent Pew Research data showed across-the-board declines in Americans who identify as Christian and dramatic increases in those who are “unaffiliated” with religion, particularly among younger adults.

Research also indicates that millennials do prefer “real” churches over “cool” ones. Contrary to the belief that churches must downplay their churchiness and meet in breweries or warehouses in order to appeal to millennials, a 2014 Barna study showed that millennials actually prefer church spaces that are straightforward and overtly Christian. The same study reported that when millennials described their “ideal church,” they preferred “classic” (67 percent) over “trendy” (33 percent).

More evidence for the unsustainability of hipster Christianity comes by reflecting on what happened to some of the key figureheads and churches I profiled for the book.

Rob Bell was one of seven “Hip Christian Figureheads” featured in the book, and I also wrote about his then-church



# The Atlantic

POLITICS

## Why Every Church Needs a Drag Queen

A tattooed, profanity-loving Lutheran pastor believes young people are drawn to Jesus, tradition, and brokenness.



Alex Baker / Oriontrail / Shutterstock / Kara Gordon / The Atlantic

EMMA GREEN

SEP 3, 2015

“When Christians really critique me for using salty language, I *literally* don’t give a shit.”

This is what it’s like to talk to Nadia Bolz-Weber, the tattooed Lutheran pastor, former addict, and head of a Denver church that’s 250 members strong. She’s frank and charming, and yes, she tends to cuss—colorful words



# FIRST THINGS

---

## LOSING LUTHER

by Christopher Jackson

9 . 10 . 15

---

**A**s a recent Atlantic essay points out, Lutheran pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber's emphasis on sin and grace in Christ sounds downright conservative. Her congregation even utilizes orthodox Lutheran liturgy! In a sense, the claims to Lutheran orthodoxy are correct. Bolz-Weber's approach is the natural end of the predominant understanding of Lutheran theology in the twentieth century, though this understanding is ultimately false both to Luther and to the broader Christian tradition he sought to reform.

Gilbert Meilaender, in an essay entitled "Hearts Set to Obey" (Dialog, 2004), remarks that contemporary Lutheranism presents a static account of the Christian life. While Catholicism presents a "linear" framework in which the Christian journeys in progress toward holiness, Lutheranism posits a "dialectic" one which precludes any self-perfecting tendencies. In this view, "Christians make no progress in righteousness; they simply return time and again to the word that announces pardon, a word that invites and elicits faith."

This understanding "eventually arrives at a kind of practical antinomianism," for in this framework God's Law loses any power to guide the Christian in a more holy Christian life. "The normative will of God [is] of purely passing significance" so that "what the church has to say increasingly mimics the secular sphere both in what it accepts and in what it rejects."

The late Gerhard Forde forcefully presented this dialectical approach in the "Radical

