Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church
Kenda Creasy Dean, Oxford University Press, 2010. Book Findings: Dean affirms what Soul Searching called 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism' “If teenagers lack an articulate faith, it may be because the faith we show them is too spineless to merit much in the way of conversation.” Students who stayed in church through college said that the first thing they do when they have doubts or questions was to talk to their parents and then read their Bibles. You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith
David Kinnaman, Baker Books (2011). With millennials leaving the church, doing good youth ministry is more important than ever. In partnership with Youth Specialties, Barna Group conducted research among key stakeholders to assess the trends and state of youth ministry in America. Similarly, among youth ministry leaders in the quantitative survey, the biggest challenge by far is the busyness of youth (86%). Next is lack of interest from parents (41%), breakdown of families (31%), lack of adult volunteers (22%), lack of interest among youth (20%) and lack of youth taking leadership roles (19%). Whatever the strategy, it is clear youth leaders face great challenges as they seek to engage today’s teens in today’s culture. But it’s precisely because of these challenges that youth ministry is so critical to the church today. To help teens form a lasting and consequential faith, I will continue pursuing the type of ministry the College Transition Project points us toward: one centered on Christ, infused with grace and built on intergenerational relationships and intergenerational worship. My hope is that in doing so, I will be able years from now to survey graduates of my youth ministry and find them still active in a church, committed to their faith and striving to live out their faith in daily life. The five adults (the minimum needed, Bradbury writes) who kept me connected were in the church choir. I joined the adult choir at 13 and I am grateful every day that I did. At the time when everything my parents said was “stupid,” I listened respectfully to the choir director or my section leader.