


LEADING
TOMORROW

STRATEGIES FOR A NEW GENERATION

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Understanding, Equipping, and Mobilizing Gen Z

1




Generations Today

- *Silent*: Born 1928-1945
- *Boomer*: Born 1946-1964
- *Gen X*: Born 1965-1980
- *Millennials/Gen Y*: Born 1981-1995
- ***Gen Z/Homelanders*: Born 1996-2010**
- *Generation Alpha*: Born after 2010

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2



Sources of Age Diversity

- Life cycle effects: Young people differ from older people, but may resemble them later in life (idealism)
- Period effects: Major events (9/11, recession, pandemic, etc.) affect people differently based on location in life cycle
- Cohort effects: Period events and trends that influence young adults as they are developing their core values (culture shift, education, parenting, technology)

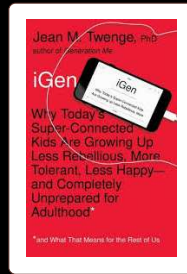
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Taylor, Paul, and Scott Kotter, eds. "Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change." Pew Research Center, February 2018. Web. 13 September 2018.

3

Fast Stats on Gen Z (iGen)

- **Internet** was commercialized in 1995 (Gen Z birth years are 1996-2012)
- Oldest members of Gen Z were early adolescents when the **iPhone (2007) and iPad (2010)** arrived
- Beginning with Gen Zers born in late 2009, less than **50% are non-Hispanic whites**
- With few exceptions, generational trends appear across **all demographic groups**



4



Different Cultural Context Impacting Missions Experience for Next Gen

Silent Gen/Boomers/Gen X

- Modern values & norms
- Cultural morality with biblical influence
- Church attendance the norm
- General understanding and support of missions (1956; Ecuador)

Millennials/Gen Z

- Post-Modern values & norms
- Post-truth, anti-biblical cultural norms
- Post-Christian: church attendance/influence in decline
- Post-Missions: lack of education regarding missions; changing perceptions of missions (2018; John Allen Chau)

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5

5



Cultural Trends

- Safety First/Culture of Fear
- Emotions vs. Facts
- Focus on Individualism/Identity
- Biblical Illiteracy

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6

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Cultural Trends: Culture of Fear

- Well-being of children has dominated national debate
- Culture of fear driven by 24/7 news and social media
- Fear of parents/culture projected onto young people
- World feels dangerous due to access to information
- Cultural messaging communicates need to be careful, be safe
- Lack of encouragement to take appropriate risks decreases resilience (lawnmower parenting)



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7

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**Cultural Trends:
Emotions vs. Facts**

post-truth *adjective*
Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

--Oxford Dictionary 2016 Word of the Year

"Facts are your friends."
 --Dr. John Delony




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8

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Tolerance as a moral value:

- Understanding
 - Respect
- **Acceptance**
- **Affirmation**
- **Celebration**



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9

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*"Tolerance is the new buzzword and the new law of the land, and it has a different definition than it did just a few years ago. Tolerance used to mean that we recognized and respected other people's beliefs and value systems without agreeing with them or sharing them. **Today tolerance means that everyone's values, belief systems, and lifestyles should be accepted.**"*

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Hawkins, O. S. (2016). *The Daniel code: living out truth in a culture that is losing its way*. Thomas Nelson.

10

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Cultural Trends: Individualism/Identity

- Individualism is behind the most fundamental changes of the last few decades
- Gen Z most individualistic generation; able to customize and personalize their lives; "unique" is celebrated
- Individualism encourages people to feel good about themselves; *negative emotions indicate something is wrong*

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Twenge, J. M. (2018). *Gen Z: why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy—and completely unprepared for adulthood (and what this means for the rest of us)*. Abing Paperback.

11

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Cultural Trends: Individualism/Identity

- Individualistic times tend to be less religious times. Religion involves believing in something bigger than yourself, following certain rules and joining groups, factors that don't fit an individualist mind-set; identity determined by self, not group

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12

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**Cultural Trends:
Individualism/Identity**

- Relationships conflict with message Gen Z hears that: "You don't need someone else to make you happy—you should make yourself happy."
- Income inequality or economic uncertainty (culture of fear) drives a sense of needing to get ahead, stand out, be unique (competing in a global market)

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13

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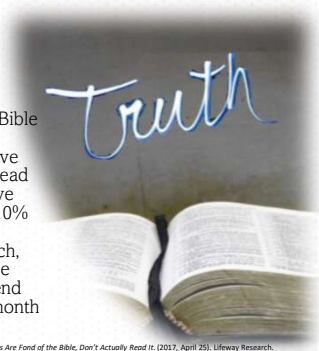
**Cultural Trends:
Biblical Illiteracy**

Lifeway Research found:

- One in 5 Americans has read the Bible at least once.
- About half of Americans (53%) have read little of the Bible: 13% have read a few sentences, 30% say they have read several passages or stories; 10% has read none of it.
- The more Americans attend church, the more likely they are to read the Bible daily: 39% of those who attend worship services at least once a month read a bit every day.

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Lifeway Research: Americans Are Fond of the Bible, Don't Actually Read It. (2017, April 25). Lifeway Research. <https://research.lifeway.com/2017/04/25/lifeway-research-americans-are-fond-of-the-bible-dont-actually-read-it/>



14

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**Mobilization
Needs
Resulting from
Cultural
Trends**

- Need a healthy understanding of & encouragement to take appropriate risks
- Need help processing emotions and understanding facts
- Need discipleship in godly identity
- Need discipleship understanding biblical truth that can sustain them through difficulties (theology of suffering)

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15



Gen Z's Role in the Global Age of Missions

*"At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." **Hebrews 12:26-28***

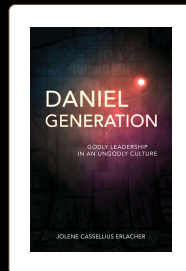
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16

16

During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The LORD gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So, Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

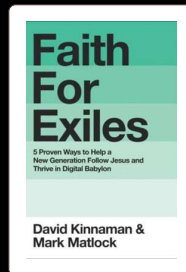
—Daniel 1:1-5 (NLT)



17

Next Gen & Faith

- Today's society is especially and insidiously faith repellent.
- 59% of young adults with a Christian background dropped out of church involvement.
- There is a countercultural 10% of young Christians whose faith is vibrant and robust.
- There are just under four million 18-29-year-olds in the US who follow Jesus and are resiliently faithful.



18



Season of a Remnant

An implication of the current trends in church attendance is that the young people who are going to step up in this context and say they want to participate in missions are going to mean it because it is not normal, but countercultural. With an overall decline in church attendance, the number of potential missionaries is also declining.

-- Savannah Kimberlin, Director of Published Research at Barna



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19

19



The Call of a Remnant to the Global Age of Missions

"The great commission is still for everyone. But now the mission is from everywhere to everywhere. The future we know is going to be different than the past, and as we look to the future, my hope is that we will listen to voices of the majority world who are already modeling what integral mission with a priority on evangelism can and does look like."

--**Ed Stetzer**, Executive Director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center and Dean of the School of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership

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The Post-Mission Age. Presented by Ed Stetzer. Missio Nexus, 2019. Conference Presentation. Accessed January 4, 2021.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k2VEy3MoaQ>

20



I believe that every person has been called to go...the call to go is from everywhere to everywhere...and God has not announced that He has stopped sending Americans, God has not announced that He has stopped sending Europeans. Thank God that it is the day for Africa to rise up. As Africa, Asia, and Latin America are rising to do missions, God did not say America stop, it is now time for Africa, it is now time for Asia. No, no. We have to work together, this is Kingdom work, and God has called all of us to work.

--**Reuben Kachala**, National Director for Frontier Missions International in Malawi

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21



Intergenerational relationships are crucial. The number one predictive factor as to whether or not a young Christian will retain his or her faith is whether that person has a meaningful relationship with an older Christian.

--Drew Dyck, Next Gen Author

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22

Discipleship

Developing real relationships in the mobilization pathway is imperative because discipleship will be a key part of Gen Z's journey to the field. Mobilization is no longer simply getting your name out there so those who are ready can find your opportunities. They are not lining up; you need to create them. Organizations must be prepared for mobilization to now include discipling people into readiness.



23

Discipleship

Gen Z needs mentors who model the worthiness of choosing Christ above all else, who experience real joy in the midst of hardship and trial, who wrestle with difficult questions in a way that gives ultimate authority and honor to God's Word, who have grace for themselves and are being used by God in their weakness and imperfections, and who take risks for the glory of God even amid uncertainty.

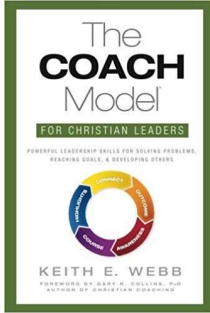


24

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What is Coaching?

“Coaching is an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to fully live out God’s calling.”
–Keith Webb, *The COACH Model*



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Webb, K. E. (2019). *The COACH Model for Christian leaders: powerful leadership skills for solving problems, reaching goals, and developing others*. Morgan & James Publishing.

25

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Sample Questions: Processing Emotions

- What negative emotions are you experiencing and where do you think those are coming from?
- What could God be speaking to you in these fears/doubts/emotions?
- Do you see anyone expressing that emotion in the bible and how do they/the Lord respond?
- What things does this concern reveal you need to believe or trust about God?
- In what order do you want this feeling to place amongst the other feelings and beliefs you have about this opportunity?



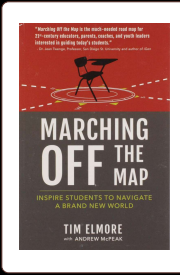
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Erlacher, J., & White, K. (2022). *Mobilizing Gen Z Challenges and Opportunities for the Global Age of Missions*. William Carey Publishing.

26

EPIC Learning: What is it?

- Experiential
- Participatory
- Image Rich
- Connected



27

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“The speed and interdependence of events had produced new dynamics that threatened to overwhelm the time-honored processes and culture we’d built... I began to view effective leadership in the new environment as more akin to gardening than chess.”

—General Stanley McChrystal, USA (Ret.), and author of *Team of Teams*

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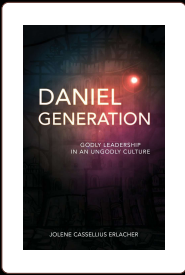


28

28

Preparing a Daniel Generation

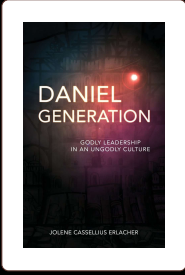
- Identify the “Daniels” you are called to invest in right now
- Intentionally cultivate (and model) healthy/trustworthy relationships
- Authentically and consistently model biblical faith and principles
- Engage the questions they are asking
- Provide spaces for them to process and “upload”



29

Preparing a Daniel Generation

- Encourage and provide EPIC learning experiences
- Be sensitive to what God is doing in their lives; engage with what He is already doing
- Seek to understand their challenges; invite their voice (cultural informants!) into decisions and discussions
- Speak hope and belief
- PRAY!



30



Generation Z Traits to Nurture

- Self Learners/Entrepreneurial
- Curious/Well Informed
- Independent and Individualistic
- Cautious/Realistic
- Diverse
- Future-Focused
- Work for Success
- Resiliency/Courage (Daniel Generation)

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31



Questions & Comments

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32



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33
