

Ministry to Generation Z – The Evangelism Challenge

Dean Hunsucker – Associate Executive Director of Support Services

I. The Challenges of Evangelizing Generation Z

- A. Generation Z is the first generation to have never known a world without smartphone technology.

Google is the primary “go to” for Generation Z in answering questions they have. Search results for the question, “Who is God?” provides over three billion results.

- B. Generation Z children are more likely than any previous generation to grow up in a home with religiously unaffiliated parents (Twenge 2017, 121).

In 2010, it was reported that 40% of church attenders left the church during elementary and middle school years (Hamm, Beemer, and Hillard 2010, 31).

- C. Generation Z children are growing up in a Biblically illiterate world.

“The percentage of people whose beliefs qualify them for a biblical worldview declines in each successively younger generation:” (Barna Group and Impact 360 Institute 2018, 25)

1. 10% of Boomers have a Biblical worldview.
2. 7% of Generation X have a Biblical worldview.
3. 6% of Millennials have a Biblical worldview.
4. 4% of Generation Z have a Biblical worldview.

- D. Generation Z children have an eight-second attention span that is easily lost.

“Once something does gain their attention and is deemed worthy of time, they can become intensely committed and focused.” (White 2017, 116)

- E. Generation Z children have no foundational knowledge of the Gospel (White 2017, 131).

- F. Generation Z children grow up in a culture that claims there are no absolutes.

“It [Culture] doesn’t simply give a context for our values; it shapes our values in and of itself. It doesn’t just provide the atmosphere for something such as communication; it forms what communication is and how it is achieved. Culture alters not only what is said but also what is heard—and how.” (White 2017, 79-80)

II. The Christian's Responsibility in Evangelizing Generation Z

- A. Christians must present the truth accurately to Generation Z (1 Peter 3:15).

“More than ever before, we need Christians who will both live and proclaim the Christian worldview. Apologetics is critical for the task.”
(McDowell and Wallace 2019, 15)

- B. Christians must have loving relationships with Generation Z children.

“If we want the next generation to come to know the faith, we have to teach, model, and incarnate truth in our relationship with them. It is not truth or relationship—it is truth *and* relationship.” (McDowell and Wallace 2019, 64)

- C. Christians must make the message of salvation clear to Generation Z kids so as to provide them with an opportunity to accept the Gospel (Romans 10:17).

“Transformation of the message must be avoided at all costs. Translation, however, is essential for a winsome and compelling presentation of the gospel of Christ....Transformation is heresy. Translation is the heart of our mission.”
(White 2017, 95)

Bibliography:

- Barna Group and Impact 360 Institute. 2018. *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*. Barna Group.
- Hamm, Ken, Britt Beemer, and Todd Hillard. 2010. *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It*. Green Forest: Master Books.
- McDowell, Sean, and J. Warner Wallace. 2019. *So the Next Generation Will Know: Preparing Young Christians for a Challenging World*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook
- Twenge, Jean M. 2017. *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*. New York: ATRIA Paperback.
- White, James Emery. 2017. *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.