

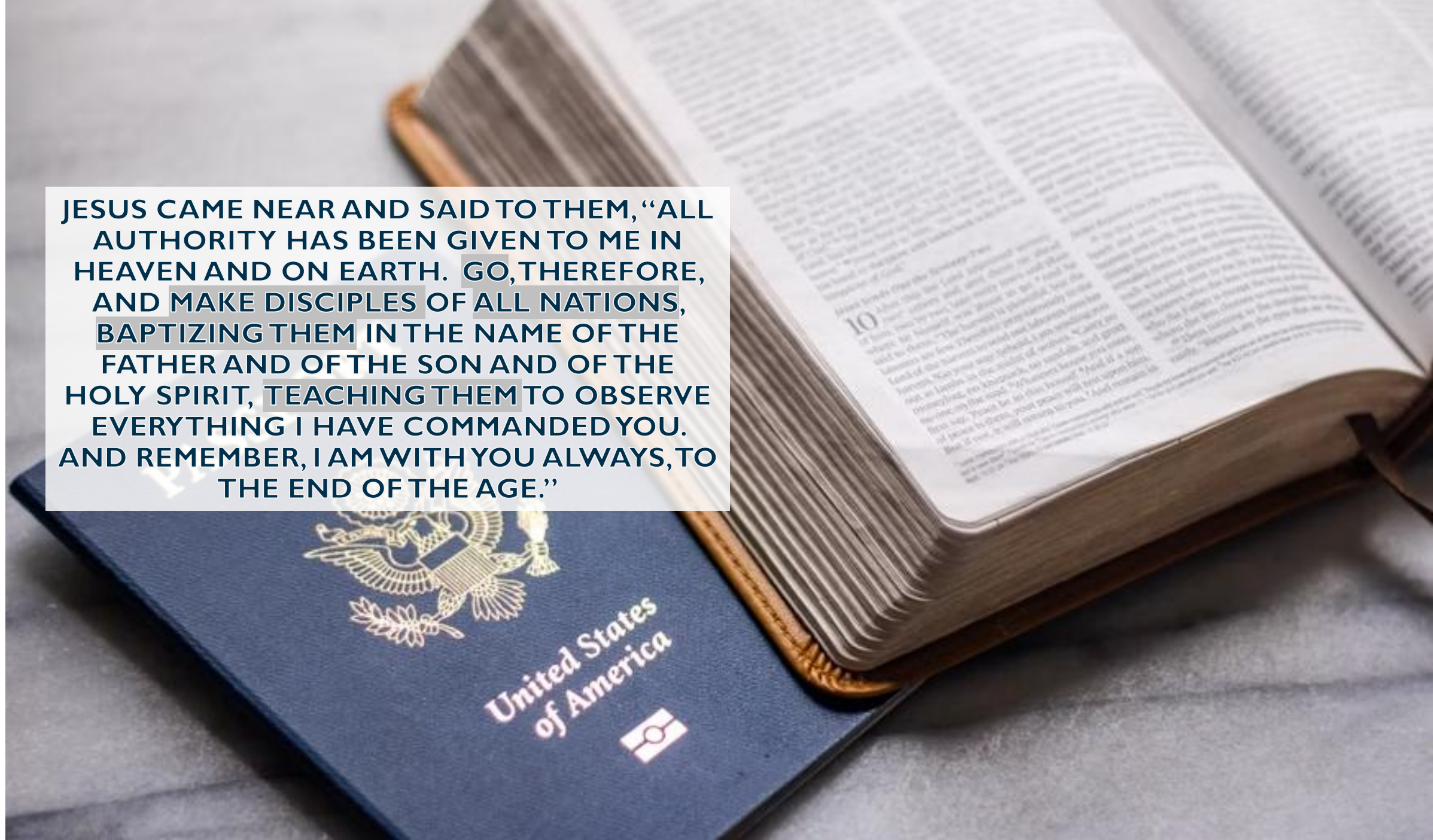


ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS IN THE MISSION OF GOD

Hannah Smith

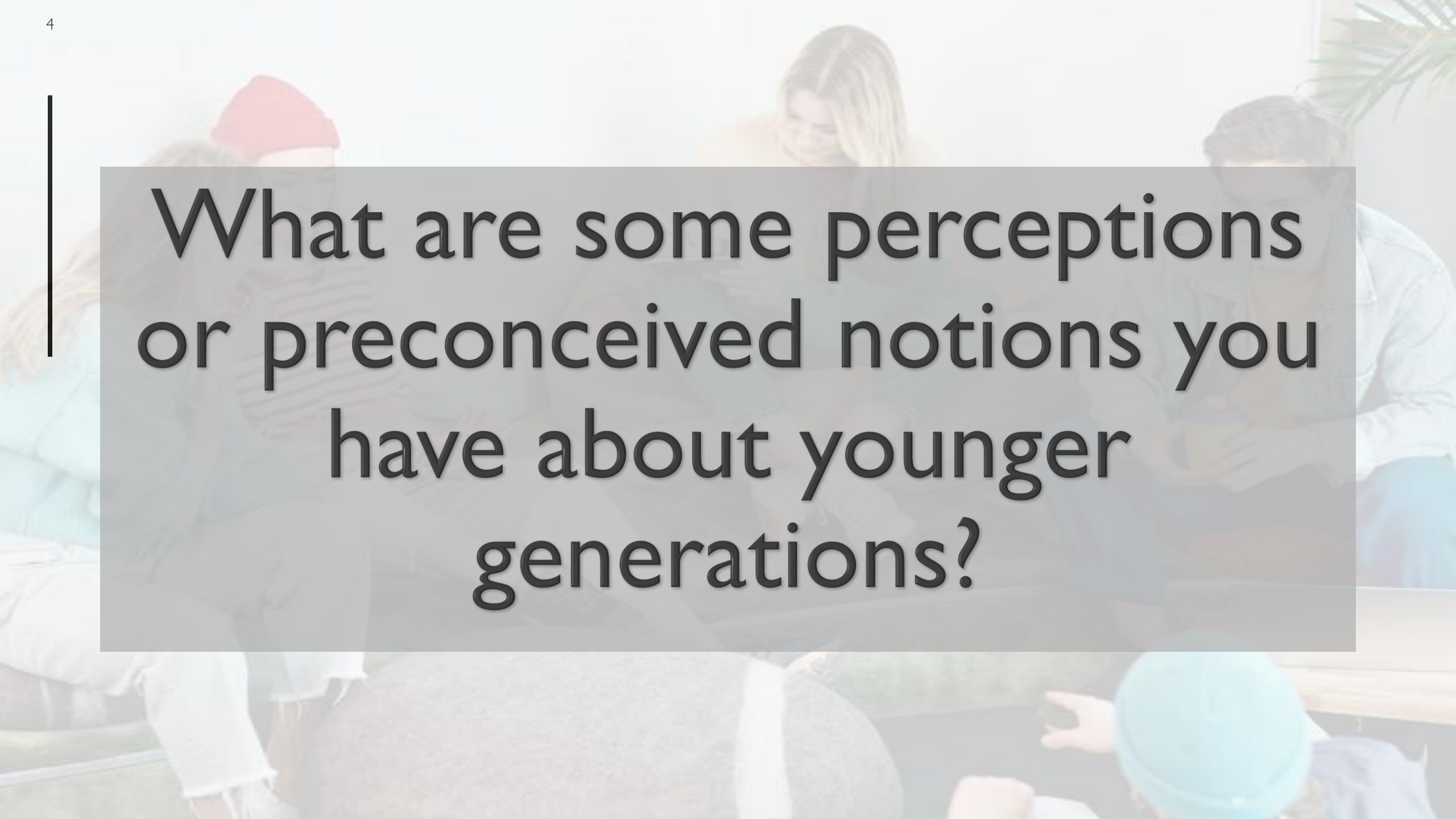
SC WMU Adult Consultant

JESUS CAME NEAR AND SAID TO THEM, “ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND REMEMBER, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE END OF THE AGE.”



WHO ARE THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS?

GENERATION	BIRTH YEARS
The Greatest Generation (GI Generation)	Born 1901–1927
The Silent Generation	Born 1928–1945
Baby Boom Generation	Born 1946–1964
Generation X	Born 1965–1980
Millennial Generation or Generation Y	Born 1981–1996
Generation Z or iGen	Born 1997–2010
Generation Alpha	Born 2010–2024
Generation Beta	Born 2025–2039

A group of young people are sitting around a table, looking at a laptop screen. The image is slightly blurred and has a soft, warm tone. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey rectangle in the center of the image.

What are some perceptions
or preconceived notions you
have about younger
generations?

MILLENNIALS (GEN Y)

1981-1996 (29-44)

- ❑ Came of age during major events such as 9/11/The War on Terror and The Great Recession
- ❑ Grew up with the rise of modern technology (computers, cell phones, the Internet, etc.), but many remember a time without it
- ❑ Embrace diversity & inclusion
- ❑ Enjoy work-life balance and flexible work environments
- ❑ Desire purposeful careers and to make an impact
- ❑ Make up 21.8% of the US population (74.2 mil)¹



GENERATION Z

1997-2010 (15-28)

- ☐ The first true “digital natives.” They don’t remember a time without technology at their fingertips.
- ☐ The first post-Christian generation in American history.
- ☐ Socially conscious and often passionate about social justice issues.
- ☐ Many important milestones (senior year/graduations, prom, etc.) were interrupted by COVID-19.
- ☐ Entrepreneurial spirit
- ☐ Value experiences over material possessions.
- ☐ Have a strong desire for authenticity.
- ☐ Although they experience more stress and anxiety from their digital habits, they prioritize self-care and well-being, recognizing the importance of mental health in contributing positively to society.



GENERATION ALPHA

2011-2024(1-14)

- ❑ The most tech-savvy generation yet. Often referred to as “iPad kids.”
- ❑ The first generation to experience remote classrooms.
- ❑ Will be highly affected by the rise of artificial intelligence (AI).
- ❑ The first generation to grow up largely or entirely in a world touched by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❑ Characterized by their diversity and global mindset, with exposure to different cultures and ideas from a young age.
- ❑ The largest generation in the history of the world, almost 2 billion globally.



SOURCES OF AUTHORITY AND RESPECT

Traditional

- *Experience*
- *Education*
- *Title/Position*

Emerging

- *Trustworthiness/Authenticity*
- *Empathy/EQ*
- *Relational Connection
(Individualized)*

“Relational leaders possess emotional intelligence, are authentic and transparent, invite and engage questions and discussion, and show a genuine interest in those they lead. For younger generations, respect is not based on experience, position, or education, rather on trust and relationship. Relational leaders position themselves to encourage, correct, and challenge the next generation to be their best.” – Jolene Erlacher

WHY IS ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS IMPORTANT?

- ❑ To be engaged in the mission of God, you must first be engaged with God. Many people under the age of 35 are not engaged with the church or Christianity at all.
 - Identifying as Christian is decreasing with each generation. 67% of Gen X identify as Christians. *49% of Millennials identify as Christians.*² That is an 18-point drop.
- ❑ We cannot assume that children of Gen X or Millennials have prior church experience. **64% of millennials attend church a few times or less a year.**³



WHY IS ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS IMPORTANT?

- ❑ If we do not engage them, we will lose them.
 - 66% of church kids stop attending church regularly between the ages of 18-22.⁴
- ❑ They are the future of the church.

*One generation will declare
your works to the next
and will proclaim your
mighty acts.
Psalm 145:4*

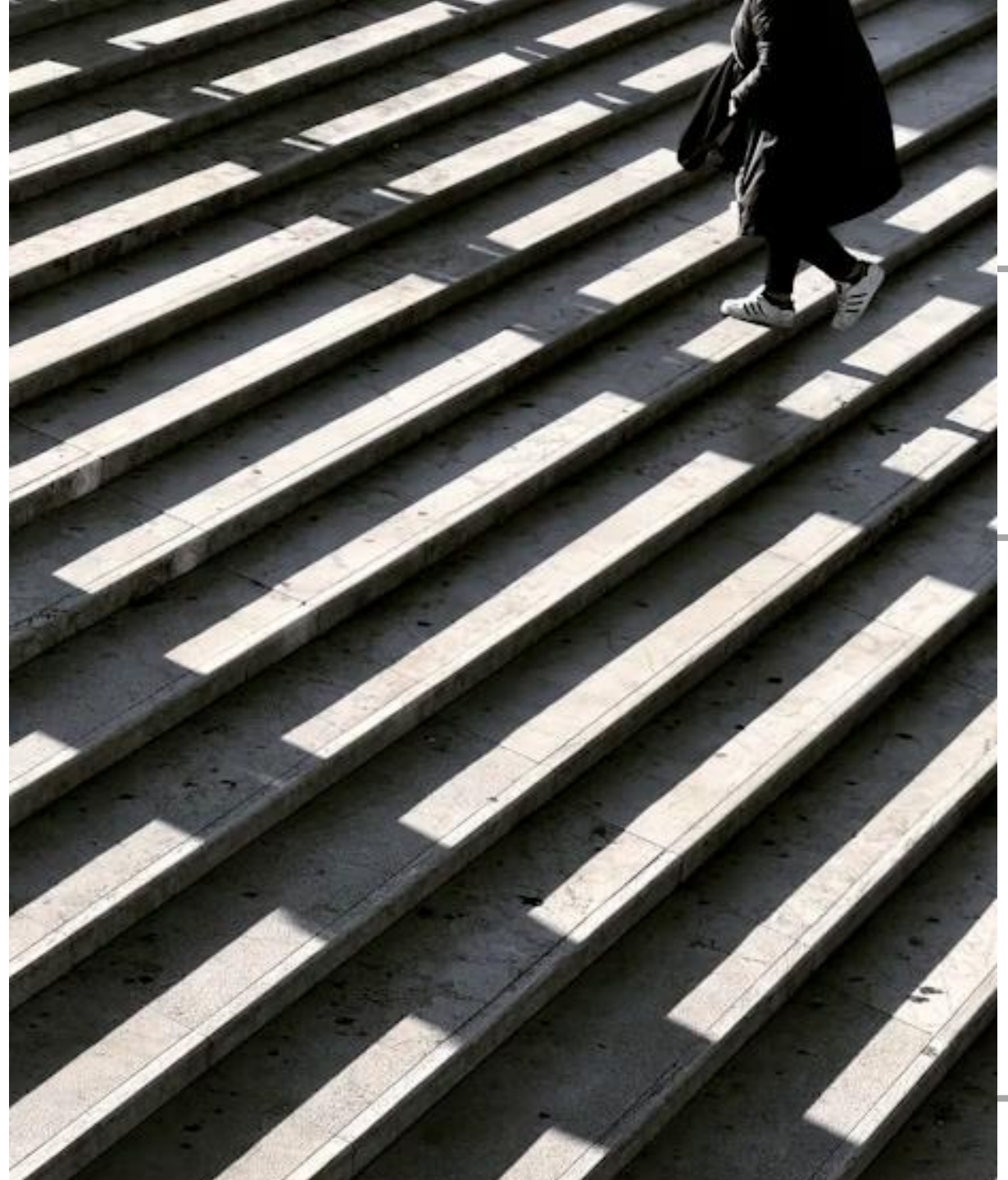


“Intergenerational relationships are crucial. The number one predictive factor as to whether or not a young Christian will retain his or her faith is whether that person has a meaningful relationship with an older Christian”

- Drew Dyck, author of *Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young People Are Leaving the Faith...and How to Bring Them Back*

CHALLENGES

- ❑ Many are not involved in church/faitth at all.
 - Fewer than half of millennials and Gen Z attended church weekly while growing up.⁵
- ❑ Those who grew up in church are leaving at a high rate once they enter young adulthood. (66%)
- ❑ Many who grew up in church were not properly discipled, so they have no concept of the mission of God.
- ❑ Many other barriers are keeping young adults from active involvement:
 - ❖ ***Discuss: What are some barriers that keep younger generations from engaging in the mission of God?***



OPPORTUNITIES

- ❑ Many of the characteristics of younger generations can be advantageous for missions engagement.
- ❑ Those who are committed are *ACTUALLY* committed.
 - In a culture where Christians are not the majority and where culture is hostile toward Christianity, people either choose genuine faith or disengagement.



HOW DO WE ENGAGE THEM?

- ❑ First and foremost, we must make sure they are followers of Christ.
- ❑ Proper discipleship is essential. Do they understand the importance of participating in God's mission? Do they understand their responsibility in it?
- ❑ Use what characterizes them for the good of the Kingdom.
- ❑ Engage them in a way that is fitting for them, not just in the ways it has been done in the past. Be willing to change methods!
 - They don't want "come and hear" they want "go and tell."
 - Engagement must move from "programs" to partnership and participation.
 - They value one-on-one relationships versus large group discipleship.



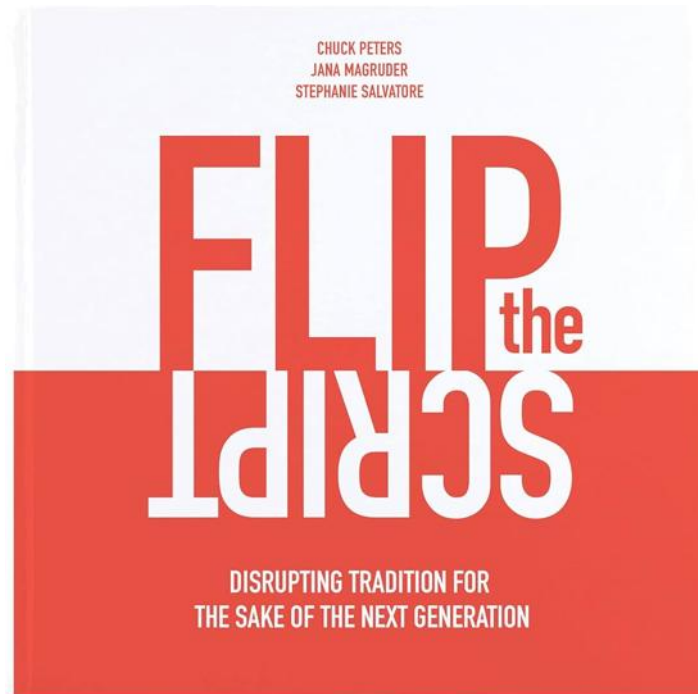
YOUNGER PEOPLE NEED GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

“Having a spiritual mentor is one of the strongest factors for helping young people develop a resilient faith—one that grows and sustains them over time and helps guide them toward meaning and purpose in life.”

--David Kinnaman, The Open Generation Report

RESOURCES

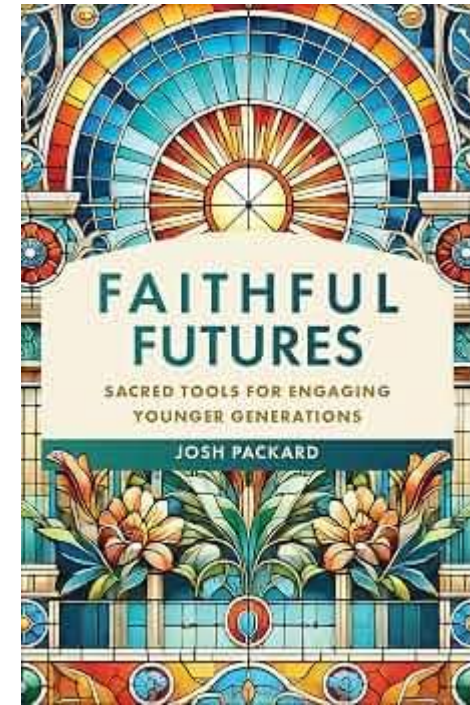
Flip the Script



Mobilizing Gen Z



Faithful Futures



CONTACT ME

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SOURCES

¹<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>

²*Flip the Script* by Church Peters, Jana Magruder, and Stephanie Salvatore. Published by Lifeway, 2022.

³*Flip the Script*

⁴*Flip the Script*

⁵*Flip the Script*

Information on generations: <https://curioninsights.com/article/meet-the-generations-a-guide-to-their-unique-traits-and-spending-habits/>