

Faith Formation Needs of the Youth of the 21st Century: Some Insights and Recommendations

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Ministers**

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De La Salle University



Introduction

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Ang mga kabataan ngayon...

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Introduction

A. The Truth About the Youth

1. The rise of a generation with fundamental commonalities that transcend borders Three motivations ranked highly in every country:
 - a. Commune: The need for connection, relationships and community
 - b. Justice: The need for social or personal justice, to do what's right, to be an activist
 - c. Authenticity: The need to see things as they are.

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A. The Truth About the Youth

2. Technology as a fifth sense

- For young people, technology is more than a useful tool or an enabler. It is truly their fifth sense.
- Technology enables young people to sense the world and make sense of the world



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3. The Social Economy

- *young people seek to define themselves not only by what they own or what they do but primarily by their ability to connect, to share and to broadcast. The term 'Social Economy'*

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A. The Truth About the Youth

3. The Social Economy

- *Commune (the need for connection and community) was rated as the most fundamental motivation by young people.*

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3. The Social Economy

- *they want to be remembered not for their beauty, their power, or their influence, but simply for the quality of their human relationships and their ability to look after those around them.*

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- As a person who was loved by many people
- As a person who looked after their friends and family
- As a person who changed the world in a positive way
- As a person who made everyone laugh
- As a very generous person
- As a very influential person
- As a very powerful person
- As a very beautiful or attractive person

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A. The Truth About the Youth

4. The Influence of Friends

- *The Friends Arms Race: In this new world of infinite connections, one's quantity of friends becomes an important indicator. The downside to amassing so many 'friends' is that you're bound to pick up a rack of fakes along the way.*

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4. The Influence of Friends

- This is truly a global phenomenon, known as *stranger friends*' in India, *disposable friends*' in Singapore, *obligation friends*' in Australia, *recyclable friends*' in Chile, and *FBF or Facebook Friends* in the Philippines.

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4. The Influence of Friends

- *Non-friends are maintained for a number of reasons:*
 - *To make you look more popular*
 - *To 'spy' on (i.e. you don't regard them as a real friend, but you like to check up on them every now and again to compare their life to yours)*
 - *To 'show off' to (i.e. you might not want to hang out with them, but they still provide an audience)*
 - *Because, strategically-speaking, you might need them in the future*

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5. *The Need to be In Circulation*

- *No internet connection drives them crazy*
- *Pics or it didn't happen:*
- *Putting up a status: seeking approval: Young people describe sitting in front of the laptop continuously hitting refresh...waiting for someone somewhere to hit 'like'...*

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- A. The Truth About the Youth
- 6. Creativity and Competition: In many ways this is a generation who define themselves via their creativity. After all, they are the first generation in history that had mass democratic access to the tools of creativity: digital cameras, cheap editing software, design programs and blogging platforms.

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6. Creativity and Competition: *The flipside to mass self-expression and connectivity is the ability to continuously measure your own life achievements against those within your network. As the Social Economy increases its reach, could we find an entire generation impacted by social status anxiety?*

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7. Truth Hunters

- Globally, the brand that young people say they most admire, is Google because it is seen as the route to knowledge, to know-how, to problem-solving and ultimately (they believe) to truth.
- Truth is important to this generation: in their view, nothing is original anymore; everything nowadays is a copy of a copy of a copy.

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8. Idols come down to earth:

- *Young people purport to prefer stars that are connected to real life and not 'preachy'. They claim to seek substance as well as style*
- *For young people today, their idols are more real and accessible than ever because of twitter and other social networking sites.*

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9. Wishes for the future

- If we give young people three wishes for their future, we see that their aspirations are actually pretty grounded. Whilst many would assume that young people these days are a generation of attention-seeking fame obsessives...only 6.3% globally were interested in being famous.

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9. Wishes for the future

- *Their top wishes for their futures were:*
 - *to maintain good health (40%),*
 - *be successful in their chosen career (40%),*
 - *meet their soul mate (36%)*
 - *and look after their family (34%).*

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10. Commitment to Justice

- *This is a generation who pride themselves on their ability to distinguish right from wrong and have a strong commitment to JUSTICE. Justice is broadly interpreted here as 'doing the right thing', and the concept can be applied on two different levels:*
 1. *Social Justice: The need to do what's right for society*
 2. *Personal Justice: The need to do what's right for me*

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10. Commitment to Justice

- *Young people are most likely to say they're good at 'knowing right from wrong'. But do they define 'right' and 'wrong' in the same way as other generations?*
- *We've seen evidence that they are developing their own distinctive moral framework, which is heavily influenced by the 'laws' of the internet rather than the laws of any individual nation state.*

Challenges to Youth Ministry

- Challenges to Youth Ministry in the 21st century (Dr Sharlene Swartz and Dr Graeme Codrington , 2003)

1. Faith is no longer intergenerational: “We have grandparents who had a Christian belief, parents who have a memory of that belief, and now kids who have nothing(Kesler, 1996).



Challenges to Youth Ministry

WARNING



CHALLENGES

AHEAD

3. Biblically illiterate: Cannot distinguish between a line in a song and a biblical quote.
4. The question of attention
5. Outside appearance is not a measure of spirituality
6. Spiritually hungry but are wary of people who do hard sell
7. A culture apart
8. “We need real and accessible heroes”

Mind the Gap

- ✘ The expression, “para kang sirang plaka” does not mean anything to them
- ✘ They have not played Pac-man
- ✘ Cell phones are normal
- ✘ They know VCR but never Betamax
- ✘ Michael Jackson has always been black
- ✘ Dial means pressing a letter or number rather than actually dialing a dial.
- ✘ They have Facebook, not slumbook
- ✘ They know Taylor Swift, not James Taylor
- ✘ We are senti, they are emo

Some Recommendations

- 1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.**
 - Program-centered ministry focuses on the production of quality programs with the intention of drawing large crowds of young people. This strategy can work in drawing numbers, but remains faceless, and in itself is unlikely to result in a lasting impact in the life of a young person.

Some Recommendations

- 1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.**
- Message centred evangelism emphasizes the proclamation of truth, in the hope that the repetition of the biblical message in creative ways will result in Christian living. While truth may be transmitted from one mind (the speaker's) to others (young people in the audience), experience shows us that this method, in itself, is infertile and powerless in the long term.

Some Recommendations

1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.

- Relationship-centred ministry recognizes the need of young people to interact with both the message and the messenger. For the message to be accepted, the messenger has to be part of the package. When this happens, powerful youth ministry can take place.



Some Recommendations

1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.

- It's not enough to give good talks, or organize elaborate programs. Youth workers need to give themselves as well, and in so doing earn the right to share the gospel with young people.



Some Recommendations

1. Complement program-centered and message –centered ministries with relational ministry.

.Adults forging friendships with young people, entering their world and earning the right to model the life of Christ to them is what youth ministry is all about. This is relational evangelism



Some Recommendations

- 2. Peer ministry:** Teens reaching other teens create an atmosphere of trust and affirmation that enables young people who might not otherwise hear a gospel message to hear, and relate, and find release” (Zoba, 1997)
- 3. An accepting and nurturing environment:** Ministers act as mentors and not tormentors.



Some Recommendations

2. Professionalizing Youth Ministry

- Evolve a youth ministry culture in which qualified men and women in significant numbers make a career out of youth ministry
- Youth work must be recognized as a profession (a vocation!) rather than a bus stop while waiting to move on to more “mature” pursuits.



Some Recommendations

5. Change methodology/shift paradigm and mend the gap: “Nung kapanahunan namin”; we could no longer form the young today with the methods of the past.

6. Team Approach to Ministry

- creating a school atmosphere conducive to faith formation
- Church as curriculum approach
- **Synergize** with the teachers involved in actual instruction and with those involved in community extension activities. The three should mutually



Some Recommendations

- 7. If there is an absence that we should encourage, it's the absence of ambiguity; if there is something we should fail to be, it is to be judgmental.**
- 8. Reliance on the primary role of the Holy Spirit in the work of evangelization and formation.**

