

NEXT GENERATION CONVERSATION LEADER'S RESPONSE

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(Q1) When we ask what the Holy Spirit is up to? We are asking a question with built-in assumptions. First, that the Spirit is at work, and second, that the Holy Spirit is at work through this generation. The Spirit is drawing this generation to value community and relationships. These relationships are both vertical and horizontal. They want vertical relationships with mentors and desire to be mothered/fathered by the generation preceding them. A realization resonates that whatever the Spirit is up to will be manifested through the passing off of the baton from one generation to the next, so they seek generational unity where approachable, accessible leaders partner with young emerging leaders bringing about balanced spirituality. They seek intimacy over authority, openness over judgementalism, authenticity over false image, and they seek to be pointed to Christ and not just be a reproduction of their mentors. They realize that transformation does not happen instantly, but is progressive.

They also seek horizontal relationships. They seek to be a generation that moves beyond an experience with the Holy Spirit to a life of the Spirit where they can be Jesus to the world in measurable ways. They long to know what the Spirit is up to next. Embedded in their identity is a longing to see the Holy Spirit beyond the four walls of the Church, extended to things like social justice and the arts, allowing for more creativity and freedom of expression. They hunger for the Spirit but want to know what a real, legitimate manifestation of the Holy Spirit looks like? Real manifestations of His Spirit, where they are empowered for service, as they look for an intimate and passionate relationship with God that affects every aspect of their lives, going beyond emotions living for Christ even when not on a “spiritual high”.

(Q2) According to the meetings, what seems to be producing fruit are things like: community, discipleship, servant leadership, humility, intimacy, heartfelt worship, genuine compassion, small groups, conversation, life-style evangelism, authenticity, transparency, embracing the lost and broken, relational missions, selfless living, freedom of artistic expression, accountability, allowing failure, and flexibility.



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Not producing fruit: Church vocabulary, one-man show (single leaders doing it alone), control, manipulation, religious hierarchy, legalism, titles, agendas, and labels i.e. Charismatic/Pentecostal

There is a strong sense that we need to stop: legalism, message of prosperity, mega church, denominationalism, entitlement, institutionalism, systems of control, pretending, territorialism, and that what must start is: diverse and generational ministry, experiential preaching, trusting of the younger generation, community, team effort, discipleship, encouraging, equipping, giving meaning to words, transparency, everyday ministry, servant leadership. Finally, what needs to continue is: forgiveness, grace, teachable leaders, dialogue between generations, and truly seeking the Spirit.

Language: surrender, vulnerability, cultural relevance, discipleship, identity, relationship, connectivity, holistic, organic, real, energy, and pursuit. Avoid terms such as: Pentecostal, charismatic, Biblical language.

(Q3) Positive Trends: They are seeking community, have a no fear attitude, global awareness, spontaneous creativity, transparent, open to supernatural, ready for leadership, multimedia communicators, giving attitude, going green-saving the earth, diversity-crossing culture lines, travel, instant communication, creative evangelism. The negative trends mentioned were: distracted culture, abuses, family breakdown, busyness, impersonal, cynicism/ pessimism, lack of face to face, isolation, high tech over touch, disconnected from reality, lack of role models, the church trying to imitate the world in order to reach youth, lack of discipleship, lack of education about Holy Spirit, spirit of apathy, lack of opportunity in the church for encountering the Spirit.



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(Q:4) Spirit-empowered living inside the walls of the church directly affects how we live outside the church. Again we see the theme of handing over the baton which shows that there is a sense that this should take place within the church; not just as an exercise of the transference of leadership but as transference of heritage. High regard is placed on diversity and equality.

Other values include ridding ourselves of competition/comparison, apathy, divisions of race and class-cultural integration (seek a Kingdom culture), and denominational separation. Discipleship should produce the character of Christ where we function how Christ functioned. Our services should create a level of expectancy where the Holy Spirit is free to minister without a proctor, where the Spirit is encountered in services, and where everyone is provoked to give of their time, tithes, and talents.

The message should have practical application and should address the grey areas of life (sex, ethics, finances, etc.). People should be moved and equipped for service outside the church so we become the help for the broken, where we provide social answers bringing healing and love for the outcast. Missions is still highly valued, but it is not reserved for geographical travel. It now includes going across the street, getting involved in social issues and engaging this culture in a Godly way (missional).

