

NEXT GENERATION CONVERSATION STUDENT'S RESPONSE

As the youth of the Next Generation, we crave intimacy, community, and the freedom to express ourselves without fear. The desire of our hearts is an authentic spirituality that does not rely on performance, but has its foundation in Jesus Christ. We have no desire to follow trends; we simply want to follow Jesus. To be transformed into the image of Christ is our goal, and so we refuse to be clones; we will only be shaped into the true expression of who God has made us to be.

Our generation has a no-fear attitude and a global awareness. Although we live in a distracted culture, where abuse, broken families, and cynicism abound, we have retained our spontaneous creativity and giving attitude. Ignoring the current trends of isolation and busyness, we have the desire to travel across culture lines. We are open to the supernatural and ready for leadership roles. We are familiar with multimedia communication and can be creative in designing evangelism tools. We understand that we have a lack of education, but we also have a great desire to learn concepts that will cause us to lean on our faith and not our sight. We need mentors who will allow us to ask questions and provide the hands-on involvement we need.

We desire to see an end to church vocabulary, hierarchy, legalism, and manipulation. We are wary of names such as "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic," preferring to be known by the character of Christ rather than any label. Legalism must end. The message of prosperity and entitlement must cease. We long to see mega churches, denominations, and territorialism replaced with discipleship and true ministry. We want our leaders to practice experiential teaching and our churches to use the vocabulary of forgiveness and grace, teaching about surrender and vulnerability, energy, and pursuit. To appeal to the desires of our generation speak to us about a relationship, a holistic and organic spirituality, and connection. What will draw our generation is discipleship, servant leadership, intimacy, compassion, and selflessness. We want to see people engaging in community, worship, small groups, and missions.



NEXT GENERATION CONVERSATION

STUDENT'S RESPONSE *(continued)*

Our generation needs accountability and leaders who will allow failure. We are seeking leaders who will encourage us to be ourselves while also pushing us to become more like Christ. Our leaders and mentors must be examples of balanced spirituality and humility. They must show trust for the younger generation, and there should be inter-generational dialogue. Leaders should be willing to hand over the baton to the younger generation, and the elder leaders should come alongside to support and encourage the new leadership.

The church at its best would encourage diversity. Leaders would model acceptance of non-traditional social groups, engaging the culture in a Godly way. Equality would be central, and inter-denominational communication would be the key for unity. Competition, comparison, and division would cease. The church would extend help to the broken and seek God's answers to society's problems, striving to be Heaven on earth, giving the Spirit free reign in our services. We would be missions-minded, building relationships with unbelievers, rejecting fear and operating in compassion, knowing that we died to this world and are alive in Christ. The general spirit of apathy would die, and love would take its place.

Today the Holy Spirit is moving beyond the four walls of the church, extending into arenas such as social justice and the arts. This movement allows for more freedom of expression, which is vitally important to our generation. We are hungering for real manifestations of the Holy Spirit that we may be empowered for service. We are a sold-out generation, desiring an intimate, passionate relationship with God that affects every aspect of our lives. Our commitment is to live for Christ even when the emotions are gone and the "spiritual high" has faded. We long to serve Him with whole-hearted abandon. We, the Next Generation, are expectant and hopeful as we look to the future to see what God will do next.

