

NOTES FOR MISSION NET UK MOBILISERS CONSULTATION



Monday 7th March 2011

WEC HQ, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, SL9 8SZ

Who are we engaging? – Rachael Smith

A closer look at the Millennial generation

INTRO:

- With less than 2% of Generation Y (GY) currently in church attendance in the UK the church and related organisations are facing a massive deficit.
- How successfully churches and organisations engage with this generation will determine how effective they are in the future, and indeed whether they will have a future at all.
- In order to engage with this generation it is important to understand them, what motivates them, inspires them and how to communicate best to them.

UNDERSTANDING GY:

- They are the most technologically advanced generation, using the internet to make decisions, find information and communication comes naturally to them. They are responsive to change and adapt quickly so they want to see organizations and churches doing the same.
- They have been brought up through a time of prosperity and rapid change that has shaped their world view. They expect instant gratification, quick answers and masses of information at their fingertips.
- They no longer buy into marketing and branding like the Xers did. They choose the media - they interact with and are sceptical about it. This is how they see their churches too. This generation has always been bombarded with messages; they don't necessarily focus on functional needs but rather lifestyle.
- In the same way a person would weigh up brands and shop around until they find one that fits their needs, this same principle is applied to relationships and careers. Partners can be traded up for a better model, so can church!
- The importance of social networking cannot be underplayed. If they like it they will recommend it to their friends.
- Celebrity culture, binge drinking, compulsive shopping and drug taking are part of the expected GY culture. Where for previous generations they may have been seen as acts of rebellion, they are now seen by GYers as normality.

THE CHALLENGE:

- Churches and organisations are faced with this; that GY are sceptical, are in the middle of a media revolution and the society they have inherited is fragmented. How will you respond to this? Where precious strategies have worked, for this generation they will not!
- To become trusted we need to ask ourselves whether we are:

Trusted

Agile

Transparent

Engaging

-This generation needs to be engaged with, the mission for the church and organisations should be clear: WE NEED THIS GENERATION - the time to strategize, act on, and change is now.

WHAT CAN WE DO?:

- **Plan today for tomorrow.** We need to be encouraging our churches to at least look at and reflect on the needs of GY, be actively reaching out to this Generation. Our organizations must be encouraged to look closely at their strategies in recruiting and evangelising to GY.
- **Strategize.** Most organizations don't even have a plan for recruiting GY, let alone a mission trip tailored for them. Conduct your own research, try to think like a GYer, run focus groups and use existing information on Millennials to create a strategy. To successfully engage with GY we need to specifically target them
- **Spread the word.** Using social networking sites, visiting university campuses and speaking out to see change.

FURTHER STEPS:

- **RECOMMENDED READING;**

'Millennials: Reaching, Raising, Releasing by Frog and Amy Orr-Ewing' available at St Andrews Bookshop, <http://www.fast-print.net/view.php?book=653>, and in e- format. Articles and research are free to read on www.millennialsthinktank.com/articles/ and updated regularly.

- **SEMINARS;**

Frog Orr-Ewing and Rachael Smith are available to run seminars and discussion groups on Generation Y. Topics include 'Connecting with Generation Y', 'Generation Y, The Church and The Future' and 'Working with and Strategizing for Generation Y'. This includes a presentation, discussion/forum and Q&A time.

- **CONSULTANCY;**

Specific research is carried out on GY in a church/organisation, this could be anything from the GY view of the organisation, the internet presence, level of GY engagement. This research is then presented back to the leaders, a strategy created, consultancy given and workshops run.

- **CONFERENCE;** WEC is hosting GO2011 www.go2011.org.uk the conference will have a special focus on evangelism and mission with Generation Y.

What are we seeking to achieve?

Rachael's session continued into this session with further input and questions on how it related with the idea of millennials adopting a missional lifestyle.

From where does our help come?

This was time of facilitated prayer for each other.

Where do we go from here?

A wider discussion session continued with some blue sky thinking about what we can do together as agencies with a look at current & potential partnership projects, including GO2011.