

Connecting with Generation Y

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Working in partnership with local churches and organisations to bring Good News to every aspect of young people's lives, using media relevant to popular culture

emerge

Introduction

The Church's attitude to youth work in this country since 1960's has tended to divide the 'sacred' and the 'secular', focussing attention on spiritual development of young people. This approach has stemmed partly from the publication of the Albermarle Report in 1968 which led to the statutory Youth Service becoming 'professional' with new training requirements and other structures. This report questioned the relevance of Christian or other spiritual values for young people and these two factors led to the withdrawal of the voluntary sector from the statutory youth service. With the rise of youth subcultures in the '60's and 70's, the youth centre was often perceived by the Church as 'unsafe' and in response, the Church promoted the youth fellowship as an alternative place for 'its own'.

This 'retreat' of the Church has led to a situation where those attending church-run groups are almost always children and youth from families who have Church connections or are brought in through 'peer evangelism'. The over-riding concern for Church youthwork since 1960's has become to 'funnel' the young people within its groups into a place of Christian commitment.

We believe that this approach has not encouraged mission in the sense of reaching the un-churched and it may not for much longer serve those who are 'within' either; the distance between the worldviews of the Church and young people today, known as 'Generation Y' (see Appendix 1) is now so vast that we believe a whole new vision and strategy are needed in order to connect with them.

Research by Bob Mayo¹ and others shows that young people, although often highly independent and self-sufficient, are seeking community; but the way they relate to others and function within a group is quite different to that of previous generations. For example:

- Networking is the milieu in which they typically function.

- Internet networking is a common means of communication with peers and also unknown contacts, contributing to establishment of novel interaction, bringing them into daily contact with once remote or strange cultures. contexts of social interaction, bringing them into daily contact with once remote or strange cultures.
- Young people choose their own community, often based on shared lifestyle choices. Individual tv sets, internet, walkmans and iPods provide individual entertainment but there is an instinctive community between those who use them. Many young people have their own web-pages, which also indicates a search for community.
- A move from a book culture to a screen culture has caused significant changes in the way young people learn; they want to participate by experiencing, rather than reading and listening.
- Lateral rather than hierarchical relationships are preferred.
- Feelings are paramount and are increasingly the basis of authenticity for young people.

These are some of the reasons why Generation Y finds so much of Church culture alien. There is clearly a need to create new ways of being church to which young people are attracted, feel connected and challenged to discover, develop, explore, grow and mature.



Youth work and ministry

In the 18th and 19th centuries Christians pioneered work with young people in their local communities and saw no divide between 'sacred' and 'secular' youth work. In the inter-war years, the State began to take control of and responsibility for provision of youth work, but in the early stages, funded Churches and other voluntary groups to do this.²

As already outlined, following the 'Albermarle Report' in 1968, the Churches began to withdraw from the service and form their own youth fellowships which have tended to cater exclusively for 'their own' young people.

We believe it's time to 'go back to our roots' and take a fresh look at youthwork and ministry. We need to develop a 'joined up' approach to youth work which does not separate secular and sacred but provides a safe, attractive and challenging community which aims to benefit the young person holistically – personally, physically, spiritually.



Aims of youth work and ministry

Recent studies have shown that this generation's approach to spirituality (and also that of adults ascribing to the same life-goal, the 'Happy Midi Narrative,' see Appendix 1 for explanation) follows a pattern of: **Belonging, Believing, Behaving.** Their first overarching requirement is to feel that they are part of a supportive and authentic community which meets their needs; from there they can move to a place of trusting that community and what it stands for in terms of faith; lastly comes a personal transformation. To quote Danny Brierley

'In post modernity people are increasingly looking for ways to belong to something before deciding whether or not to subscribe to its values. They need to belong in order to believe.'²

The need to be embraced by a community becomes more and more important in our increasingly fragmented and individualistic world where families and communities often break down. We need to respond to this pattern of behaviour (which in previous generations would have been more likely to be: behaving, believing, belonging) and create strategies which are more in line with this mindset in order to reach this generation. In order to do this, we believe one overall aim is needed:

For young people to develop their full potential, personally, physically, spiritually, in the context of a Community characterised by authentic relationships and experiences.

To develop their full potential we define 3 types of activity:

1. Discovering and Developing Talents

develop physically, emotionally, and socially; eg through dance, drama, music, sports, life-skills projects.

2. Exploring Faith

young people are given opportunities to engage in 'formative spirituality' - this explores fundamental questions such as 'Who am I?', 'Why am I here?' What is the purpose of life? Does God exist? This takes place through group work and experiential activities. **Some young people begin to express interest in 'transformative spirituality'** - this involves a conscious attempt to touch a deeper reality or transcendent realm.¹

3. Growing and Maturing

young people are given support to work out the personal implications of the Christian faith, drawing on a wider circle of experience to address specific issues. Emphasis is given to prayer, Bible-study; supporting one another; growing in confidence in sharing faith and reaching out to others.

At the outset, the Church needs to firstly listen to young people outside (and inside) the Church, to find out what the community really needs and wants. We believe that, following Christ's example of incarnation, we need to be seeking to enter young peoples' worlds with sensitivity and cultural awareness, respecting their rules and conventions. Christ related specifically to the people in his culture, using symbols and messages relevant to them – we should seek do the same.

Discovering and developing potential

Imagination is encouraged to allow young people to articulate their own questions; this has to start with the reality of who young people are and the questions **they** are asking. This will involve seeking to establish maximum common ground and taking positive action which benefits them, for example through offering skills which they are keen to learn (eg music, dance, skate, beauty tips etc.) and services which will benefit them (eg counselling, advice & support). Generation Y are keen to explore their 'ideal self' - the person they want to become. Through focussing on '**being**' rather

than on '**doing**' we are able to link more easily with this mindset. Popular arts can be used to draw out their ability to imagine, explore and identify the person they want to become – this is an essential first step towards 'formative spirituality'.

Exploring faith

We need to acknowledge that an authentic movement from formative spirituality towards committed transformative spirituality, when the possibility of God may be acknowledged and ultimately encountered through Jesus Christ, takes time.



Growing and maturing

Young people may be moving towards a commitment to belief in Jesus as Lord and Saviour (or have made such a commitment) but there is still room for questioning, discussion and exploration.

An integrated strategy

All 3 types of activity are interconnected and equally important. There is freedom for young people to move between them, in any direction allowing them to remain within the community. There is also the potential for young people, as they grow in confidence, skill and maturity, to help, mentor and lead other young people in any of the three places. In each of the three places, emphasis needs to be given to seeking young peoples' participation and ownership; this links with their desire for interaction and lateral relationships rather than 'being told' what to do.

The strongly expressed need for community by young people is the context in which the Church has always thrived – this is one of the three hallmarks of authentic church described by Chris Stoddard in 'Church on the Edge'- so in this sense there is nothing new here. The difference is that because of the huge culture gap which has opened up between the established Church and Generation Y, churches may find that there is a need to create 'specialised' youth communities.



Case Study: Legacy XS



Legacy XS is an example of such a community or 'youth congregation', as they prefer to call it, which can be used to illustrate the 3-part model. Set up in Benfleet, Essex, in 2002, it focuses on a specific people group, in this case primarily (though not exclusively) young people in or on the edge of the skater/BMX community. In the first two years of the project, 3,000 young people engaged with the centre. The Centre incorporates a drop-in café and skate-park open 7 days a week. Acting as the base for the Legacy Youth Congregation it helps facilitate the elements of a healthy community by becoming a focal point for the social and worshipping life of the youth community in Benfleet. On Sunday evenings the centre is the venue for evangelistic focused gatherings incorporating creative worship sessions and including the Legacy worship band.

The centre grew from discussions with local young people (churched and un-churched) and community leaders about what was needed in the town for young people. So from the start young people have had 'ownership' of the project, which is a vital element of incarnational youth work as discussed earlier. The construction costs of the project were jointly funded from secular and Christian sources eg donations from trusts, individuals, and the church. Running costs are financed almost completely by Legacy and the Youth Congregation is heavily supported by members of St George's.

The focus of Legacy is to develop ways of being a real community where everyone is valued for their friendship and just for who they are. Whilst not everyone who is part of the group that makes up Legacy would describe themselves as a Christian, the central figure in the group is Jesus and, together, they are trying to find out more about what it means to live life to the full in imitation of him.

To some the idea of a 'youth congregation' sounds like a splinter group, splitting off from the Body of Christ, however, to the Pastor, Pete Hillman,

'A Youth Congregation is nothing more than the recognition that young people within such a wider community represent just this, a distinct social grouping within society. Youth Congregations are probably best understood as church plants into a distinct culture, in our context the culture of post-modernity. It does not mean that young people are separated from the rest of the Christian church it just means that for some of the time they meet together just as any other special interest group within the church would

Case Study: Legacy XS (contd.)

do. Legacy remains firmly a part of the family of St. George's and always will! To this extent it is not expected that one day the young people who form it will grow up and attend "proper church" but rather that a distinct church is being planted and born into new and virgin territory, although this territory is not physical but cultural.⁴

We can see that Legacy XS includes and challenges young people in the three different places described above, seeking to meet their physical/social/emotional and spiritual needs. Firstly, it welcomes them in to the skatepark, for social and recreational activity where they can develop skills and begin to open up to questions of formative spirituality.

When and if young people at Legacy are ready to move from a place of discovering and developing talents to exploring faith, it is very much on their own terms, as Pete Hillman, Youth Pastor, describes:

'We do encourage people to come along to youth service by friendship evangelism and we also have a "free" session at the end of the main Sunday evening gathering which draws some riders and skaters in who are not yet Christians. They are also able to participate in the worship and prayer we do using the ramps which appears more natural for them as a method of worship than, say, singing songs'.

Legacy allows young people to fully explore questions of formative spirituality before they are ready to join a cell-group which focuses on transformative spirituality. Most Church youth groups seek to move young people into the transformative stage too quickly before they have fully explored the formative; this can result in a shallow or short-lived faith. For many young people, Legacy remains a social and recreational centre. From Legacy's viewpoint, it is providing Jesus' welcome and affirmation to such young people. Legacy's key points for developing joined up youth work and mission are included in Appendix 3.

In terms of dreams for the future, Legacy hopes to continue to support local youth groups in any way they can and within the next 2-3 years envision planting a satellite youth congregation in a nearby area based at another community based facility. (3 other case-studies where this 3 point model is being followed and is working well can be found in Appendix 2).

Conclusion

We need a 'baptism of the imagination' as called for by Graham Cray, about the form of church in a changing world.³ He describes many different models:

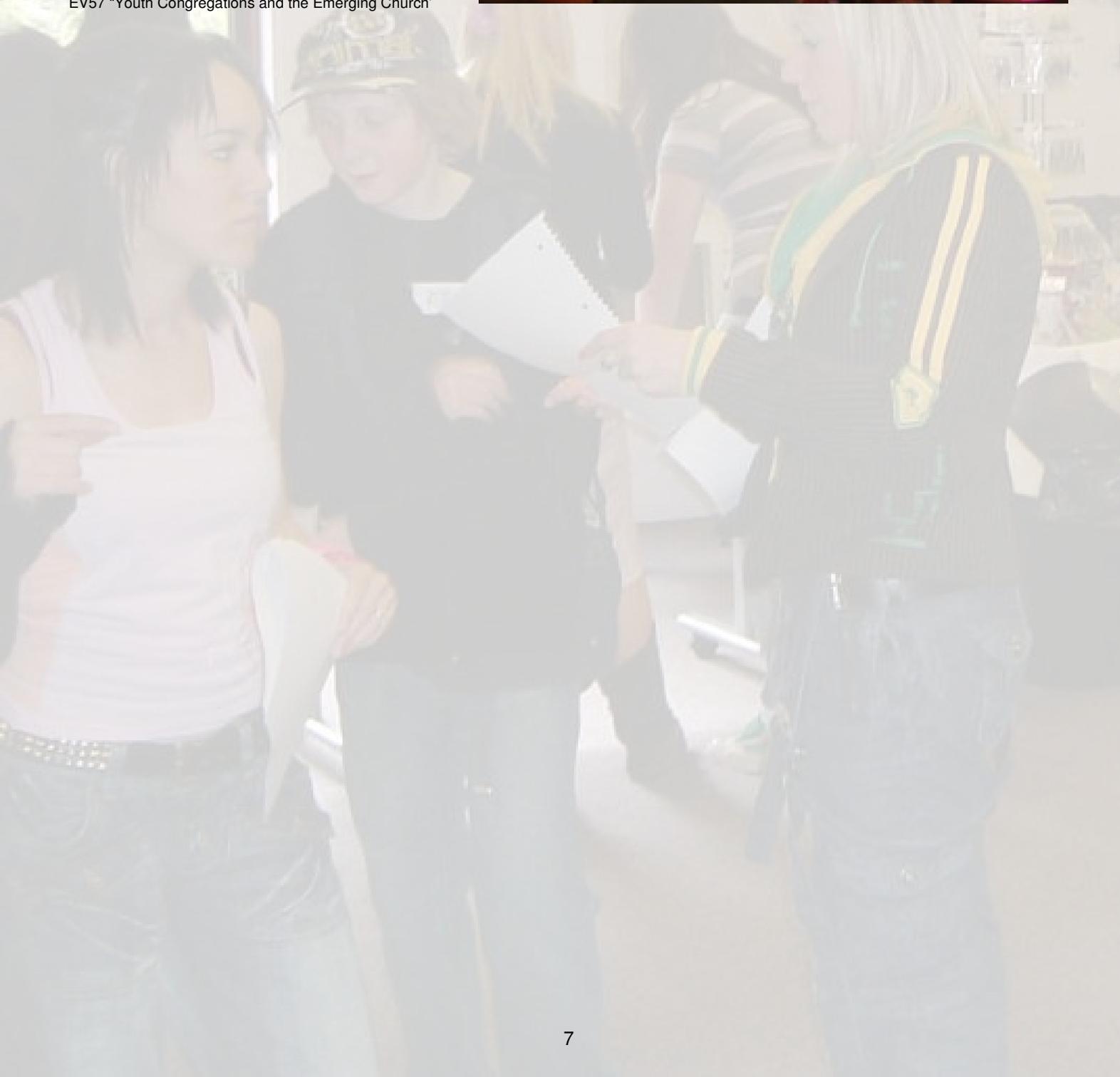
- Youth-oriented church plant (eg 'Soul Survivor', Watford)
- Youth congregation within a large Church (eg 'MFI' at Holy Trinity, Winchester)
- Church plant of an existing Youth Congregation under the wing of a larger church (eg 'South Survivor', Harrow)
- Youth gathering emerging out of detached youth work and under the wing of a parish (eg 'Joy' in Oxford)
- An area celebration (eg 'The Mix', Bristol)
- Parish initiative with deanery support (eg 'Eternity', Bracknell)

Above all, the need is to create communities, where young people can discover and develop talents, through being attracted by what is being offered to them in social/recreational terms and where they can experience the love and acceptance of Jesus through Christian leaders. This may be where they stay for a short time or forever; it may be a gateway to another place, still within the same community, where they can explore faith with others of a similar age who share their

interests. As they continue to develop networks with others in this community young people may be led by the Spirit to join activities which help them to grow and mature and in time, through God's grace, see their faith mature. Through offering young people these different choices which are integrated and yet distinct, the Church will reach young people of this generation.

References

- 1 Bob Mayo, *Making Sense of Generation Y*, Church House Publishing, 2006
- 2 Danny Brierley, *Joined up*, Spring Harvest Pub, 2003
- 3 The Bishop of Maidstone (Graham Cray), Grove booklet EV57 "Youth Congregations and the Emerging Church"



Appendix A:

What is Generation Y?

The term 'Generation Y' largely refers to today's youth, people born since 1982. Starting around aged 14 the end of youth cannot solely be based on age; social factors are important also, such as marriage, age of 'settling down', getting a house – these stages are occurring later than in previous generations and so help to extend the 'age of youth' to about 25 years on average.

Bob Mayo in 'Understanding Generation Y'¹ describes the worldview of Generation Y as a '**Happy midi-narrative**' – this describes the storyline of young people's world view. Central to this world view is the belief that the universe and social world are essentially benign and life is okay. Although they know that difficult things happen, young people essentially believe that there are enough resources within themselves, family and friends to enable happiness to prevail. Generation Y seems self-reliant, confident and upbeat; tolerant and community minded, valuing their families and friends, intending to marry and have their own family. They are quite traditional and conservative in number of core areas. The Happy Midi-narrative worldview operates on a medium-term scale, here and now (rather than beyond); yet it is not an individualistic, 'mini-narrative'.

Themes present in the happy midi-narrative

- **Life** - young people care deeply about life; symbolised in new borns, children, the planet, animals
- **Family** – identity formation (who am I?) is firmly located within the network of family and friends. The family provides ultimate security even in the face of death.
- **Intergenerational vertical** ties form the stable "warp" of life while horizontal ties (lovers, partners, spouses) provide the flexible "woof" in relationship networks. The intergenerational 'blood' relationships provide security
- **Celebrities** – are believed to enjoy creative well-paid work and live the happy midi-narrative full time.

- **Commercialism** – music in particular symbolises creativity, choice and identity; but when a product becomes too commercial, whatever value it once had is destroyed. Popular arts have to have an 'edge'. Tension is felt by young people in that the market enables choice and autonomy, but also destroys creativity and independence through commercialism.

Themes absent from the happy midi-narrative

- God, sin, fear of death, romance and sexual fulfilment, achievement and structural inequalities
- Sin – no concept of sin as moral transgression, moral degradation or that salvation from sin is needed. Young people don't feel the need to rebel against their parents; much held in common with them, eg both enjoy watching soaps together.
- Fear of death – less of a problem than ageing. Death is far away. There **is** respect for religious ritual surrounding death.
- Romance – romantic relationships are seen as peripheral and problematic. Young people have more fervent faith in the family as a source of unconditional support
- Achievement – material success is admired in celebrities but not central to young people's world view; happiness is seen as relationally-based
- Structural inequalities – racism is not an issue but there is no great desire to be inclusive either
- Young people's problems and solutions belong to a midi, not a meta-narrative. They want to know who they are as individuals, but a wider social identity is irrelevant. The only real threat they feel is getting 'stuck', either through commercialism or through personal failure to 'get a life'.

Summary

- Two main solutions to life's problems are available: self-reliance and a supportive family.
- Strong individuals work out their own salvation.
- Moral thinking is linked to the imperative to be happy, not linked to transcendent values.
- Goodness and evil are always contextual, not seen as inherent realities in the world.

A secularised world view

Through the use of symbols and icons, Bob Mayo's researchers found that traditional religious concepts and stories don't form part of young peoples' natural frame of reference. Discussions on moral issues from soaps and films showed that ethical judgments don't rely on a conscious connection with traditional religious rationales of right and wrong. Experiences of clubbing are generally well rooted in experiences of a night out, not a way of transcending oneself to connect with a deeper reality. This lack of overt religious awareness didn't appear to lead to disenchantment or of feeling lost in a meaningless world. Rather, young people found meaning in the reality of everyday life which the popular arts helped them to understand and imbibe. In a nutshell, the world view of these young people is: **'the world and all life in it is meaningful as it is'**.

Where does the church fit into Generation Y's world view?

Church is irrelevant to most young people in Britain although Churches with professional youth workers fare better. Conservative churches which embrace charismatic spirituality which engage the emotions as well as the rational mind, seem to have more appeal than those of a more liberal and non-charismatic persuasion.

Whilst the church does not have any meaningful contact with the majority of young people, it still has the capacity to help those it does engage with towards transformative spirituality through some of its dedicated youth programmes.

Young people's beliefs about religious and spiritual ideas taken from national surveys:

2001 census ⁵:

- Young people show great deal of uncertainty and vagueness about traditional Christian beliefs, but they ARE in the background of young people's minds.
- Christian and other religious or spiritual ideas make little real impact on young peoples day-to-day living (apart from in times of crisis)
- Young people usually see God as benevolent; more likely to offer comfort than punishment; when life goes wrong, God is someone to pray to and hold on to. God is **not** one of awesome power who created the world and performs miracles.
- They are indifferent to the Church, not necessarily anti-church, happy if it helps others and there to mark key events in life.
- There is more cultural diversity than ever before. White Christians remain largest single group by far. 40 million (7 in 10) people described their ethnicity as White and religion as Christian. Majorities of Black people and Mixed ethnic backgrounds also identified as Christian (71 and 52%). Only 15 percent of the population reported having no religion.

Believing without belonging involves a level of individual belief without any commitment to a religious institution; it implies a level of approval of the existence and purpose of religious institutions. There is a new tolerance of (and suspicion of) the role of religious voices in the public arena – on grounds of tolerance and pluralism, which have largely replaced the earlier sacred/secular divide.

What happens to the children of these non-affiliated believers? Do they retain the level of belief received from their parents; will they become people who neither believe nor belong, but approves of vicarious religion? This research suggests this could be the case.

The British Household Survey (2005) ⁶

- the most significant influence on children's attitude to religion is their parents. Evidence suggests that two non-religious parents will pass on their lack of faith; two religious parents have

approximately 50-50 chance of passing on their beliefs. The conclusion being that young people most often hold their beliefs as part of a view of life which they do not even consider spiritual.

'Mission-shaped Church' (2004) ⁷

40% of adults in England and Wales are non-churched; they have no regular involvement with any church as adults nor did they have as children. Therefore the proportion of young people with no faith background at all is likely to be in substantial decline.

Why do young people have so little interest in transformative spirituality?

To answer this it's important to look at how Generation Y's world view is constructed.

Major cultural and social transitions

These have shaped this generation so it is constructed entirely differently to previous ones. Generation Y is the first fully formed generation of the Post-Modern era. Three major transitions have taken place in Post-modern society which interlock with each other and radically change the way we experience and interpret the world. These are the shift from: producer to consumer; industrial to electronic society; sovereign nation to globalized world.

1) Consumerism

Generation Y is the first 100 percent consumer generation. Society has moved from one which shaped its members mainly as producers, who believed in progress, in producing something that contributed to the better life that was to come through education and hard work. Today society shapes its members mainly by its need for them to play the role of consumer.

This means that the central value of society has moved from progress to choice: the absolute right of the individual to have freedom to choose. Choices lie at the centre of consumerism, providing its emblem and core value. This is also seen in religion – forms of religion are increasingly chosen rather than inherited or imposed; churches are chosen which are often far away; the Church faces "competition" from other activities on Sunday.

Consumerism has become the religion of the times. It can create a very self-indulgent society

– pleasure lies at its heart; it proclaims pleasure as the right and obligation of each individual. The pursuit of pleasure is the new image of the good life – very similar to the vision of the happy life of the Generation Y young people.

Lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self identity and daily activity. Identity is no longer formed through family, work etc,. Instead, identities are 'constructed' through consuming.

2) Electronic media

Contributes to the establishment of novel contexts of social interaction; alters the significance of face to face relationships and brings us into daily contact with once remote or strange cultures.

Understandings of truth have been changed as a result; we cannot escape the reality of a pluralist world. Such a world promotes the theory of relativism - through so much information and choice there is no absolute truth.

Promotes the move from a book culture to a screen culture. This has caused significant changes in the way people learn. Although individual tv sets, internet, walkmans, iPods provide individual entertainment, there is an instinctive community between those who use them. Many young people have their own web-pages which shows a search for community. Usage of MSN and websites means that the distinction between the written and the oral blurs; use of the mobile phone and texting contribute to the same phenomenon.

The use of narrative fits well into an age of visual digital media. It is abstract one-way 'communication' which fails to communicate with Generation Y.

The apparent limitless supply of electronic imagery and information helps confirm Generation Y's belief that its midi-narrative is all that's necessary. Research shows that those most influenced by electronic culture participate in church at far lower levels than those of previous generations. The failure of the church to deal with changes brought by electronic culture is a major factor in its decline.⁸

According to Andrew Walker: **‘We have a fundamental problem of communication because we are still bound to an anachronistic literary culture’**⁹

3) Globalization

Refers to both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. It creates a changed experience of space and time – the core matrices of the development of identity. These are undergoing radical social restructuring. According to Paul Virilio, we are at ‘the end of the era of space and the emergence of the era of speed’¹⁰. This involves change of emphasis from the future to the present.

Other reasons for a lack of connect with Church:

Culture as a blindfold

How we feel about anything has become increasingly important and the basis of our authenticity. Generation Y far more than other generations looks inwards for its final source of authority – there is a general trend towards individualism in Western societies. According to Ulrich Beck **‘History is shrinking to the eternal present and everything revolves around the axis of one’s personal ego and the personal life’**¹¹

Constructivism : the key to Generation Y’s self understanding

Generation Y believes that human identity and understandings of truth are socially constructed. Constructivism today is the ideological opponent of the Church – it is partly right, for humans are made in God’s image to be culture builders and their sense of identity is built up in that activity. But if God is withdrawn from the picture, humans see themselves as self-generating.

The self has no centre, thus the goal of life is an endless pursuit of new experiences, values and vocabularies. Sharing the gospel involves the ‘stumbling block of creation’, of our accountability to the creator, long before we reach the stumbling block of the Cross.

For Generation Y the self is both central and fragmented – it needs to be flexible enough to keep changing in new circumstances. The key therefore is ‘keep the options open’ not identity building.

Generation Y freely embraces the uncertainty of life; it’s a buzz for them. It has a benign and idealistic view of the family because the consumer culture and its presuppositions are the shared environment of the whole family – they all sing from the same consumerist hymn sheet. The world view of Generation Y is also the world view of an increasing number of adults and the shape of things to come.

Some may become disillusioned when life does not deliver happiness; but this doesn’t guarantee they will change and search for God: Instead, they may become fatalistic or feel they are to blame for failing to make the right lifestyle choices.

References

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- 6 The Economic and Social Research Council, The University of Manchester, The British Household Study and Key Issues in Religious Change, 2005
- 7 Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context, Church House Publishing, 2004
- 8 Sample, The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World
- 9 Andrew Walker, Telling the Story, SPCK, 1992
- 10 Paul Virilio, in John Armitage (ed), Virilio Live: Selected Interviews, Sage, 2001
- 11 Ulrich Beck, Individualisation, Sage, 2002

Appendix B:

Examples of Christian projects

Using the 3 part model

Xlp (www.xlp.org.uk)

Christian charity started by one local church youth worker, now works across South and East London secondary schools.

Four clear aims:

- Serve communities, meeting the social and educational needs of young people;
- Educate young people to make wise lifestyle choices
- Empower young people to reach their potential;
- Mobilise young people to go into their communities to serve, educate and empower.

Discovering and Developing Talents

young people are given opportunities to find talents and develop socially/emotionally through building relationships:

Pioneering arts programme, now a London-wide arts show-case

Exploring Faith

young people are given opportunities to engage in 'formative spirituality' and begin to explore 'transformative spirituality' through:

- School lunch clubs (60 per month)
- RE and PSHE lessons (120 per year)
- Links with local Churches

Growing and Maturing

young people are given support to work out the personal implications of the Christian faith through:

- Mission programme with links across world

- Gap year programme
- Links with 'Soul in the City' and other Christian youth networks.

The Compass, Chesterfield

Former pub, renovated and refurbished, sponsored by Acorn Christian Ministries (local Christian organisation of different local churches).

Aim: a Christian run centre for the community to develop individuals socially, emotionally, practically and spiritually.

Discovering and Developing Talents through:

- Drop in coffee bar and studio lounge
- Life Skills Training for disaffected and disadvantaged young adults in partnership with local agencies

Exploring Faith through:

- Christian courses provided in the Compass training suite
- 18/30 Young Adults' Forum – structured programme of social and faith building events

Growing and Maturing through:

- 18/30 Young Adults' Forum – structured programme of social and faith building events
- Training Programme for Acorn interns (residential accommodation at the Compass)

The Big Deal, Message Trust, Manchester

a year of united community action bringing together churches, council, police and communities to transform the city by reducing crime, and sharing the gospel.

Since May 2005, 'The Big Deal' has brought together churches, people of good will, public services and private enterprise to work for a more caring and more sustainable community. The project started in Salford and was followed in 2006 by Stockport and subsequently, South Manchester and Macclesfield.

Discovering and Developing Talents through:

Involvement in projects to improve the environment; sports; children's and youth activities; arts and drama activities.

Exploring Faith through:

Schools work – in 2005/06 a team of youth workers and a schools band went into every High School in Salford to deliver a programme designed to challenge young people about issues of citizenship and teach RE. Also included was a stage production presenting 'The Big Deal' of the Christian faith in an inspiring relevant way.

Growing and Maturing

Training to deliver projects – regular training weekends offered for young people.

The Eden Bus, Message Trust, Manchester

A mobile youth centre (started in 2000) through which youth teams reach out to socially excluded young people on the streets.

Discovering and Developing Talents; emotional and social development through:

Activities offered on the bus and through conversations with youth workers

Exploring Faith through:

- 'Faith dimension' at the end of each Bus session – helps young people to deal with problems of drugs and alcohol and other destructive elements in their lives.
- Schools work – youth team lead RE/PSHE lessons and build on relationships with young people they meet on the bus

Growing and Maturing

Young people who have participated in projects are given training and opportunities to serve on the youth teams on the Bus and in schools.

Quote from the website: *'Since the launch of the Bus project in 2000, there has been a constant demand, it's effectiveness in reducing crime, juvenile nuisance and anti-social behaviour has been proven over and over again. It's not unusual for the police and local councils to specifically request the Buses to visit an area strategically'.*

Appendix C:

Key points for developing a youth work (almost) from scratch, provided by 'Legacy XS'

- **Flexibility** – The willingness to try new ideas and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.
- **Creativity** – To develop new and experimental forms of communication and engaging with the gospel, worship and prayer. We try to be brave and keep looking for new ideas to try out. You must be aware from day one that what grows among the young people as their expression of church will almost certainly look very little like yours!
- **Empowerment** - Absolutely vital is giving authority and decision making to the young people involved. Doing it all for them is the quickest way to disaster. As quickly as the Spirit reveals them to you start investing in the key “leaders” and empower them to lead. Listen to them and spend time with them.
- **Safety** - As leaders our responsibility is to ensure a safe environment in which young people can develop patterns of church that connect with their culture. We are there to provide a framework in which such developments can safely flourish.
- **Continuity** - We are not here to re-invent the church. Established and even rediscovered aspects of the church’s rich heritage can be enormously helpful in making connections between congregations which may seem very different but at whose heart is the worship of Jesus as Lord and Saviour.
- **Patience** - The model of “belong, believe and behave” is absolutely central to all of this. Among the youngsters who are part of Legacy are those who have made a commitment to Christ, those who are on their way to doing so and some who (at present) have no idea what that means at all! But they all belong. No-one is set on a pedestal as being further advanced than any others and, sometimes, you would be hard pressed to spot which category a particular young person falls into. This is because changing behaviour as a result of a walk of faith is also a work of Grace that needs time to be nurtured and to develop.
- **Dreams** - It is vital that as the church we dream big dreams. We must believe that God can transform a community or people group through his Spirit and through his people here and now. We must open our minds to the dreams that God wants to give us. He wants us to dream His dream of a community where His Kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.