



**churchINcomplete:  
Working Toward  
Solving the  
Generational Hole**

**November 7, 2012 Webinar**

**Presented by: Rev. Mark Hilbelink & Amy Vander Vliet**

**Who are the  
Millennials?**

# The Generations

- GIs (1904-1924) – 60 million
- Silents (1925-1945) – 55 million
- Boomers (1946-1964) – 76 million
- Gen X (1965-1979) – 52 million
- Millennials (1980-2000) – 78 million
- Wired (2001-Current)

# Traits of Millennials: Relationships

Source: *Millennials* by Rainer & Rainer, *Millennial Values Surveys* by PRRI/BC

- Family-focused: 60% of 18-24 year olds talk to their parents at least once a day
- Looking for guidance
- Insecure
- Communication gap

# Traits of Millennials

Source: *Millennials* by Rainer & Rainer, *Millennial Values Surveys* by PRRI/BC

- Distrust of government & church:  
86% of 18-24 call it “the” government;  
only 12% say “our” government
- Reconcilers
- Impatience
- Openness/noncommittal:  
25% of 18-24 year olds attend  
worship services once a week

# **Religion and the Millennials**

# Christianity & Millennials: Beliefs

Source: *Millennials* by Rainer & Rainer

- 65% said Christianity preference
- 20% defined self as born-again
- 6% affirm basic evangelical statements
- 26% believe in heaven/hell after death

# Christianity & Millennials: Practices

- 50% pray once a week or more
- 24% attend worship gatherings once/week
- 21% read Bible once/week
- 15% meet with others to study Bible once/week

**Source: Millennials by Rainer & Rainer**



# Christianity & Millennials: Influences

- 70% believe North American churches are irrelevant
- 25% of 18-24 year olds are “religious unaffiliated” now, while only 11% were in childhood
- 88% say parents were positive influence (3% negative)

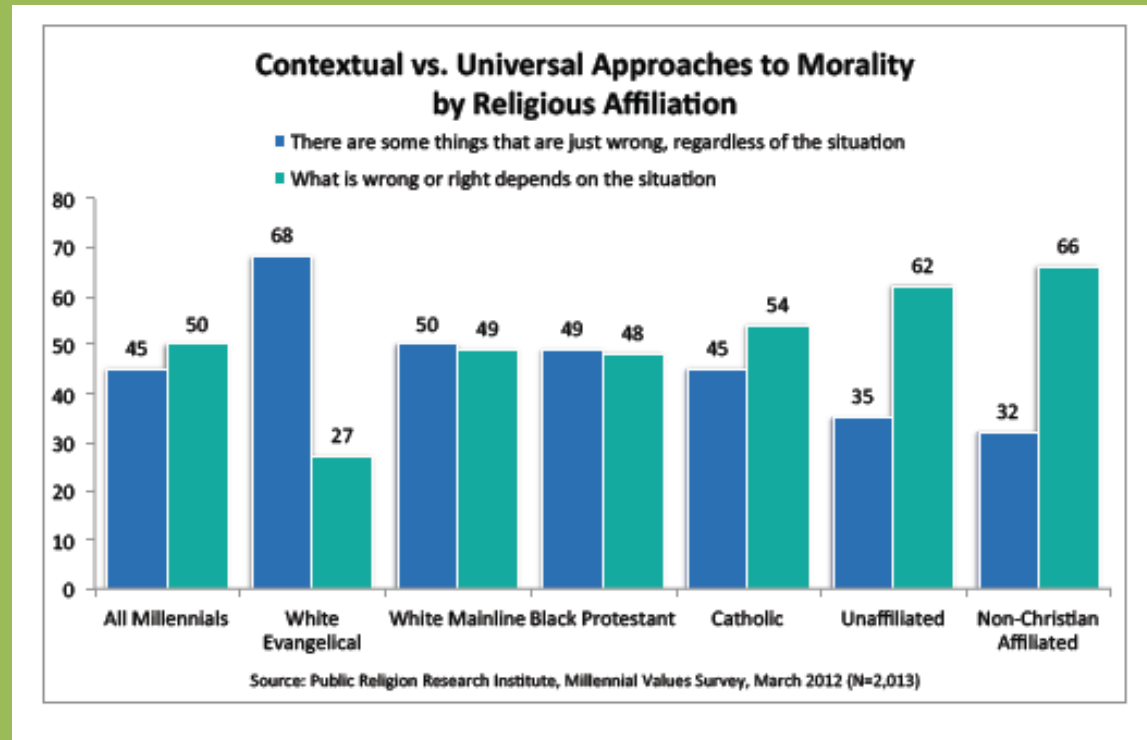
**Source: Millennials by Rainer & Rainer**

# Public Perception of Christianity

Source: *Millennial Values Surveys* by PRRI/BC

- 58% of 18-24 year olds think Christianity is “hypocritical” (saying one thing, doing another)
- Christian and religiously-unaffiliated Millennials think Christianity teaches the same basic ideas as other religions (65% v. 68%)
- Christian and religiously-unaffiliated Millennials think Christianity is “anti-gay” (58% v. 79%)

# Millennial Approaches to Morality



<http://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/120419BC-PRRIMillennialValuesSurveyReport.pdf>

# **The CRC & Young Adults**

# National Trends Playing Out in the CRC

- Mega churches and age targeting
- Decreasing denominational loyalty
- Education transitions creating disconnects
- Emphasis on relationship and authenticity
- Mistaken assumptions about family formation
- Missional focus/neighborhood connections
- Diverse circumstances/needs

# The Manifesto: Strengths

- Background: a CRCNA young adult microcosm
- Strengths: theological faithfulness, steps toward greater local/synodical young adult involvement, ongoing leadership development

# The Manifesto: Challenges

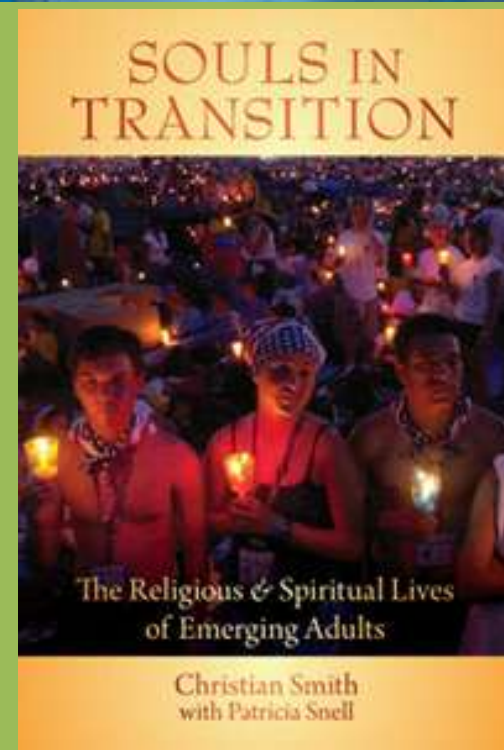
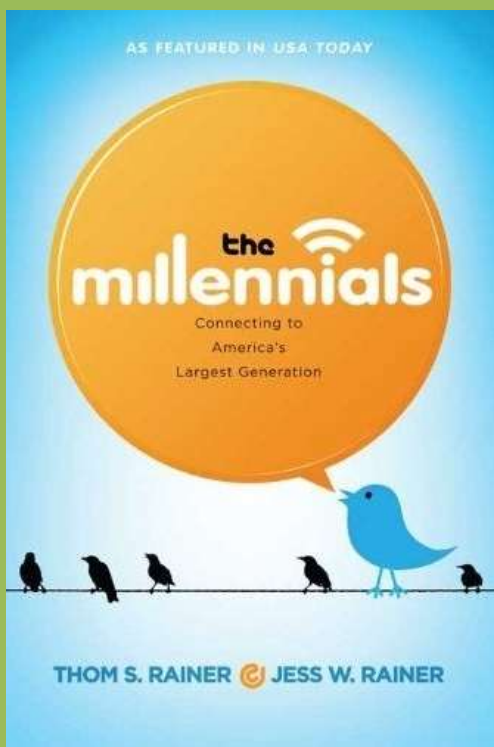
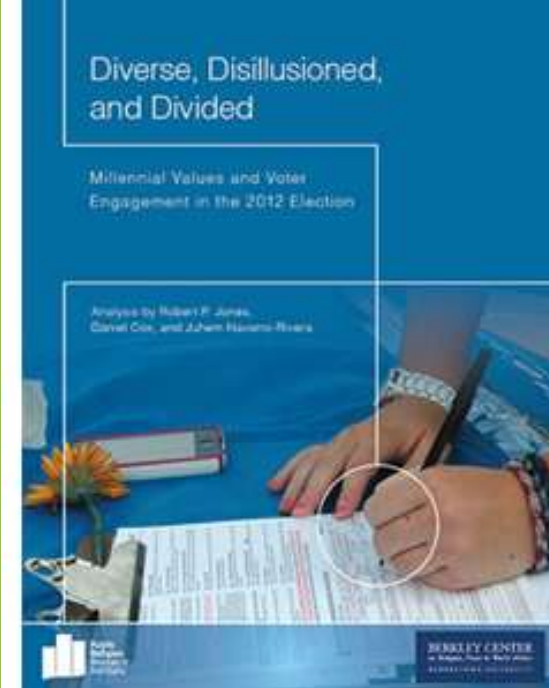
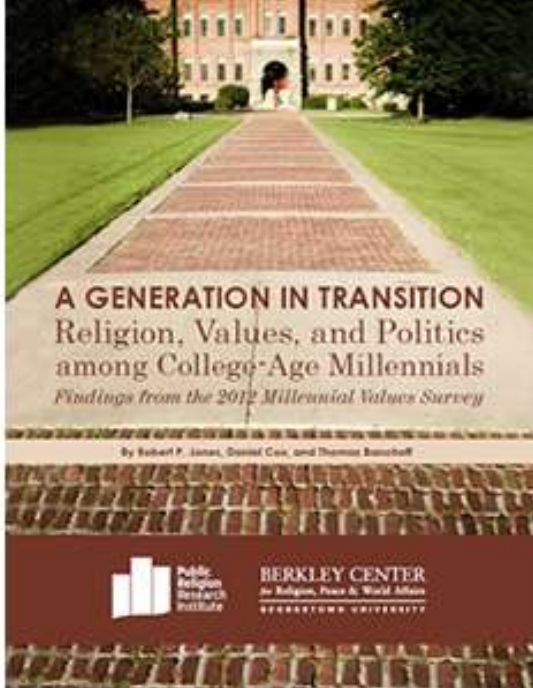
- Challenges: ministry training, fear of failure, worship resourcing/creativity, disjointed faith formation, intergenerational communication/activities

# The Manifesto: Moving Forward

- Vision: intergenerational & intercultural, 24/7 faith rooted in life-long faith formation, recognition of diverse gifts and leadership
- Implementation: leadership development, church governance involvement, budget flexibility, technology usage



# Resources



**Best Practices  
for Engaging  
Young Adults in  
Your Church Context**

# Debunking Practical Myths

*“You Don’t Have to Begin  
at the Real Beginning”*

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“You Don’t Have to Begin  
at the *Real* Beginning”:

What are you willing to *divest* to  
*invest* engaging young adults?

# Debunking Practical Myths

*“Intergenerational  
is a Strategy”*

# Debunking Practical Myths

## “Intergenerational is a Strategy”:

In fact, it is an outcome of a cultural solution to the *adaptive* challenge of being generationally-segregated

# Practice #1: Incubation

- **Programs**

- Often provide quick results with long-term fizzle
- Example: College & Career Ministries, Coffee House

- **Program + Small Group Systems**

- Takes the positive parts of the program approach, but provides sustainability and depth through groups
- Usually still church-originated/sustained

- **Multiplying Missional Communities**

- Tends to start slower, but have much greater long-term movement potential
- Tends to be very non-centric (church sees less benefit)

# Practice #1: Incubation

- The Risk: Separatism
- The (Potential) Rewards:  
Cohesiveness amongst young adults,  
inspiration of community *throughout*  
your church, it works



# Practice #2: Visible Leadership

- **Personnel**: Select the *right* people, not the *willing* people
- **Feedback**: Find as many ways as you can to get as much *objective* information as you can about your church
- **Options**: Gives young adults an on-ramp to investment in your community
- **Early Adopters**: Like any pioneering activity, the first pioneers pave the way for the later ones

# Practice #2: Visible Leadership

- The Risk: Potential for Failure
- The (Potential) Rewards: Invested young adults, near-limitless capacity for ministry

# Practice #3: Stylistic, Cosmetic, Technological & Marketing *Changes*

- **Leverage the Leavers**: The same savviness that is currently being used against you by young adults who are leaving can be harnessed to identify areas of needed change
- **Artists**: Unleash artists in your community – the “weirder” the better.
- **Power of Story**: an already-needed corrective at many churches is a key component of Millennial marketing
- **Be Bold & Secure**: Fresh eyes only hurt insecure people

# Practice #3: Stylistic, Cosmetic, Technological & Marketing *Changes*

- The Risk: Dissatisfied/Angry people who are currently leading these areas
- The (Potential) Rewards: Honest conversations, higher quality art, much-needed changes, harnessed never-before-tapped artistic power

# Practice #4: Mentoring

- **Litmus Test**: Mentoring works best when incorporated into an already-healthy system; works worst in an unhealthy or non-existent system
- **Count the Cost**: Mentoring is the most labor-intensive and risky of all ministry undertakings

# Practice #4: Mentoring

- **The Risk:** Use up your best people in relatively small segments of ministry
- **The (Potential) Rewards:**  
Across-the-board improvement in leadership health and growth,  
potential for exponential movement

# YALT Resources

## *Shift Film*



*\$20 from  
Faith Alive &  
Terpstra Creative*

## *Profiles Films*



*Free with Study  
Guides from  
[crcna.org/yalt](http://crcna.org/yalt)*

## *Videos & Resources*



# YALT Online Resources

- Momentum Blog: *crcna.org/yalt*
- YALT on Facebook: *facebook.com/yaltcrc*
- YALT on Twitter: *twitter.com/yaltcrc*







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