A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROFILE OF YOUNG ADULTS IN YOUR CONTEXT

What values are Millennials, and now Gen Z, bringing with them into adulthood? What kind of world are they already building? What is their relationship to faith? The reality is that members of this age cohort are hardly “the next generation” anymore. Newcomers no longer, they are a formidable force, actively shaping the future of our workplaces, media, politics, arts, neighborhoods and, yes, churches.

For a groundbreaking global study, Barna Group combined its research expertise with the reach of World Vision, the largest child-focused Christian humanitarian organization in the world, to interview more than 15,000 adults ages 18 to 35 in 25 countries and nine languages. This report represents a summary of the findings specifically within Australia and New Zealand, providing a regional snapshot of a group we’re calling The Connected Generation.

Through quantitative research, data visualizations and field guides, these pages reveal both sobering and surprisingly hopeful trends among a globally minded generation, including:

• An overview of young adults’ goals, fears and emotional well-being in an anxious age
• New data about attitudes toward spirituality, religion and the Christian Church in a secular climate
• Contextualized insights about how to support and partner with 18–35-year-olds in your area as they fulfill ambitions toward vocation, justice and leadership

In addition to original writing from Barna president David Kinnaman, this country report from The Connected Generation project features commentary from local leaders in Australia and New Zealand, including Grant Bayldon, Sam Bloore, Melinda Dwight, Alan Jamieson, Claire Rogers and Mark Sayers.

Join us in learning more about—and from—this connected generation.

Get more information about The Connected Generation project and related resources at theconnectedgeneration.com.
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The CONNECTED Generation

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The concept of a generation gap is not new. Yet, elders and commentators in our public square seem to have a particularly unhealthy obsession with the apparent gulf between emergent generations, like Millennials and their predecessors.

Let’s not be naïve: The gap is real. The generation raised in the shadow of the so-called War on Terror, who graduated into the global financial crisis and are now trying to settle down amidst record housing prices certainly don’t carry the same institutional trust of their forebears.

As a result, humanity’s first digital natives, who came of age with technology that flattened social hierarchies, opened access to information and created the concept of a ‘personal brand’, have taken to ‘disruption’ as their watchword.

Perhaps, rather than bemoaning these changes and belittling lived experiences with throwaway comments, we need to take up the mantle of understanding new perspectives and in turn growing, improving, even changing, as a result.

This generation gap presents a unique challenge for Christianity. Two thousand years into the gift of ‘the Church’ we find ourselves in the era of disruption, worshipping a Saviour who is “the same yesterday, today and forever”.

Not only that, but in recent years a string of moral failings within the Church have been laid bare. We have our work cut out not only reaching Millennials and Gen Z, but rebuilding our standing with generations famously short on institutional trust.

Yet there is great hope.

Globally, we see churches thriving, growing rapidly in areas where the gospel has been held back for years. In our own churches, we see young people coming to know a God by whom they are fully known and fully loved, and in so doing, finding not only salvation but a salve for the weariness and detachment that has come to be part of modern life. That is why World Vision commissioned this research.

For decades, World Vision has been on mission alongside the Church. Core to our organisation is the firm belief that the Church is not only the greatest God-ordained force for holistic transformation, but also at its best in uniting the full diversity of God’s people. We have a responsibility to heal divides, whether they be racial, cultural, class or, indeed, generational.

We didn’t want our mission to be distracted by stereotypes or informed only by assumptions. Instead, we wanted to hear the voice of young adults, to learn how we might unleash them so their communities might thrive and so they may see the love of God on earth, as it is in heaven.

This research, therefore, represents a direct contribution to our mission for this new generation. Our prayer is that it will be of great value to you, to your ministry and to our world.
MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTED GENERATION
AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY’S SAMPLE BY REGION AND COUNTRY

For more than a decade and across multiple projects, Barna Group has kept a close eye on the generation known as Millennials (defined in the United States as those born between 1984 and 1998). We’ve watched them navigate new technology, develop passions for community and justice and balance particularly high ideals and ambitions. Our recent research has tracked their entrance into adulthood, career and family – and, among a significant proportion, a simultaneous departure from religion. We see similar trends now among the leading edge of Gen Z (born between 1999 and 2015), who, so far, are even less inclined toward religion than their Millennial peers.

Barna partnered with World Vision, a leading voice in global activism with a shared vision of engaging the next generation, to dramatically widen – and focus – the lens with which we view young adults around the world. We interviewed more than 15,000 adults ages 18 to 35 in 25 countries and nine languages, asking them about their goals, fears, relationships, routines and beliefs. This report represents a summary of the findings specific to Australia and New Zealand.

Though some themes vary by country and context, there are other similarities across borders. In the following pages, you’ll meet maturing respondents who don’t just want to be ‘reached’ – they want to be involved and make a difference. Many of these driven adults are wary and weary, wrestling with questions, longing for deeper relationships and facing significant societal, professional and personal obstacles. Yet we see that faith is one important factor associated with their well-being, connection and resilience. When – or, for many, if – they walk into a church, they’ll need concrete teaching from leaders they can trust and meaningful opportunities to contribute to a faith community.

Through this report, Barna’s aim is not only to help the global Church to better understand 18–35-year-olds around the world, but to truly partner with them in discipleship and activate them in leadership. We invite you to join us in learning more about, and from, this connected generation.
LIFE IN AN ANXIOUS AGE

A CONFLICTED EXPERIENCE OF CONNECTIONS

'S often feel . . .'
A Global & Local Profile of Young Adults

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF A TRULY GLOBAL GENERATION

Eighteen–35-year-olds around the world follow many of the same trends in terms of stage of life. The priority of their early adulthood has been establishing themselves financially and professionally, as many delay getting married or having children. For most of the generation, family follows career and education. Young adults value building their vocational foundation before turning toward home.

Looking ahead, young adults point to goals centred around personal development, family and following their dreams. Home ownership, marriage and parenting all rise in importance. Entrepreneurship also emerges as a primary goal, likely tied to the emphasis on finishing education, starting a career and gaining financial independence.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AMONG 18–35-YEAR-OLDS

YOUNG ADULTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND STRONGLY ALIGN WITH THE GLOBAL PROFILE, THOUGH THEY ARE LESS LIKELY THAN AVERAGE TO LIVE IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THUS FAR EMPHASISE FOUNDATIONAL MILESTONES

FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

COMPLETED EDUCATION

STARTED A CAREER

GOT MARRIED

GOT MARRIED AND HAD CHILDREN

FUTURE GOALS SHIFT TOWARD THE PERSONAL

BUY A HOME

GET MARRIED

FOLLOW MY DREAMS

START A BUSINESS

BECOME A PARENT

n=15,164 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
Inside Young Adults’ Hearts & Minds
A GENERATIONAL STRUGGLE TO BALANCE HOPE & ANXIETY

What is the emotional climate of this connected generation? Their self-reported feelings indicate some serious challenges come from within; inner battles with anxiety and fear often exceed levels of hope or optimism and hinder the well-being of young adults.

The research shows that those facing anxiety lag in connection and community – and accordingly, when they engage with a place of worship, they are motivated to find meaningful relationships.

“Barna defined ‘anxiety’ as often feeling at least three of the following emotions: ‘anxious about important decisions’, ‘sad or depressed’, ‘insecure in who I am’ or ‘afraid to fail’.”

n=15,369 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
Many respondents across the 25 countries in this study appear to share a sense of global connectedness, so the researchers hypothesised this might serve as a lens to bring this generation into clearer focus. The researchers developed a ‘connectivity index’ based on a series of eight factors in four categories that speak to the unique risks and potential rewards presented to this generation. Each factor concerns a different aspect of how a person perceives their connection to the world.

Young adults who qualified as having weak or even medium connectivity lack both a feeling of optimism and strong interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, those with strong levels of connectivity experience boosted well-being across several realms of life.

People of faith are more likely to show strong connectivity

PEOPLE OF FAITH ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHOW STRONG CONNECTIVITY

Practising Christians  Non-practising Christians  Other faith  No faith

Barna’s Connectivity Index

UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORTING HEALTHY, HOLISTIC CONNECTIONS

CATEGORIES OF CONNECTION

Weak Connectivity

Medium Connectivity

Strong Connectivity

WEAK CONNECTIVITY

GLOBAL

I feel connected to people around the world

29% 36%

25% 30%

6% 9%

Events around the world matter to me

56% 61%

86% 92%

33% 38%

I often feel deeply cared for by those around me

8% 8%

38% 35%

8% 8%

I often feel someone believes in me

6% 4%

28% 29%

1% 1%

I often feel optimistic about the future

7% 8%

42% 43%

8% 8%

I often feel able to accomplish my goals

4% 6%

25% 24%

7% 7%

What it takes to be an effective leader is changing

14% 20%

20% 19%

21% 21%

OUTWARD-ORIENTED

Others oriented*

27% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

7% 7%

20% 20%

20% 20%

20% 20%

Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

7% 7%

20% 20%

20% 20%

20% 20%

Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

7% 7%

20% 20%

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20% 20%

Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

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Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

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20% 20%

Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

7% 7%

20% 20%

20% 20%

20% 20%

Others oriented*

29% 38%

31% 38%

21% 21%

7% 7%

20% 20%

20% 20%

20% 20%

Others oriented*
In this connected generation, pessimism about the future runs rampant; fears and worries drive decisions; and isolation and loneliness are creating a significant population of people who feel they have to make it on their own. This field guide will help you and your team think through how some of these concerns might be answered by your specific community. In other words, this guide is designed to help your church better discern how it might be the Church in your specific context.

This guide will be best read through as a team or presented to a team – no individual church leader ought to try to answer generational problems on their own! As you read through these questions and begin to form a plan for your church, consider the giftings of your community and how those might address some of the real needs that young adults have.

Guiding questions
As you begin, answer the following questions:

- What are your thoughts and feelings after reading this section? Does it reflect the reality you’ve seen and experienced in your own context? How so, or how did it differ?
- If 30 percent of young people in your surrounding culture often feel a range of anxious emotions, what might be some reasons for this anxiety? How does that mirror or stand in contrast to fears expressed by other generations in your community or congregation? Where might the wisdom of the past have something to offer to young adults, and where might new strategies be needed?
- Connection to others is a clear felt need for many people in the 18–35-year-old age range. In what ways do you think your church or gathering is equipped to address this need? What are some other ways you might be able to more intentionally answer this need?

Forming a plan
The data in this report show two clear trends that you and your team can address through the context of your faith community. The first is that those who are anxious may be predisposed to seek out community. And the second is that connectivity for young adults is a key factor in their optimism about the world, and in feeling cared for. These two factors are intimately related, and your expression of the local church is uniquely suited to help 18–35-year-olds navigate these difficult questions.

Cultivating connection
If a young adult feels they’re facing an uncertain reality with no support and a limited amount of opportunity, it’s no wonder they feel anxious about the future. The Church is called by God to address this disconnection. A participant in your community ought to have immediate access to multi-generational connection and shared purpose. This is not to say anxiety will disappear, but the call of Christ is one that provides connection to a larger body and a hope that perseveres in spite of an uncertain future. If disconnection may be a root cause of young adults’ anxiety and pessimism about the future, then the relationships and connections offered by church communities may be a potent antidote.

For this antidote to work, you’ll need to ensure connection can flourish within your context. And here, it’s best to take a hard look at what your church is offering to young adults and where you have room to grow.

Multi-generational wisdom: One source of connection may be the older adults in your church, who can offer wisdom and discernment to the Millennials and Gen Z in your midst. Avoid being patronising or dismissive to the concerns of the young adults in your context – inside or outside of your church community – and instead focus on real relationships and deep connections between people of different ages and experiences. Practise listening, understanding and cultivating a community of compassion and empathy.

Bearing burdens, navigating milestones:
Research shows that many 18–35-year-olds are hoping for vocational security before marrying, having children or home ownership. While these markers are of course not necessary for any person – much less any Christian – they are still fraught for people trying to navigate them alone. Your community can help equip young adults find a sense of stability and discern how best to pursue their hopes (or discern to change those hopes!), while offering a safe, helpful place to do the hard work of discernment. For instance, if someone in your context is burning out or fearful about making a marriage commitment or having children because of financial stressors, provided those desires are not counter to God’s call, your church could help bear financial burdens or bless young adults with marital guidance, childcare or other practical aid.

Common purpose: At their best, church communities provide a sense of purpose and meaning to all participants in their community and invite outsiders into a shared sense of mission. While this has value to everyone, it may hold particular meaning for a generation where many feel an acute lack of connection to a larger purpose or community. Discern how your church’s mission is invitational and aspirational, and how you can disciple people in your church context into a welcoming community that fosters connection and hope.

How can your church community be an answer for the following feelings reported by many young adults?

- I’m uncertain about the future
- I feel pressure to be successful
- I feel sad or depressed
- I’m afraid to fail
- I feel anxious about important decisions
ENGAGEMENT WITH SPIRITUALITY & THE CHURCH

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION ACROSS THE CONNECTED GENERATION

CHRISTIAN | OTHER FAITH | ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, NO FAITH

NORTH AMERICA
- U.S.: 53% Christian, 12% Other Faith, 35% Other
- Canada: 51% Christian, 13% Other Faith, 36% Other

EUROPE
- UK: 41% Christian, 16% Other Faith, 44% Other
- Germany: 49% Christian, 10% Other Faith, 41% Other
- Spain: 41% Christian, 13% Other Faith, 47% Other
- Switzerland: 41% Christian, 13% Other Faith, 47% Other
- Austria: 63% Christian, 13% Other Faith, 24% Other
- Romania: 90% Christian, 8% Other Faith, 0% Other

ASIA
- India: 87% Christian, 9% Other Faith, 4% Other
- South Korea: 32% Christian, 13% Other Faith, 55% Other
- Indonesia: 31% Christian, 12% Other Faith, 57% Other
- Singapore: 22% Christian, 54% Other Faith, 23% Other
- Taiwan: 14% Christian, 58% Other Faith, 28% Other
- Philippines: 85% Christian, 9% Other Faith, 4% Other
- Malaysia: 54% Christian, 8% Other Faith, 29% Other

OCEANIA
- Australia: 31% Christian, 22% Other Faith, 47% Other
- New Zealand: 32% Christian, 14% Other Faith, 54% Other

AFRICA
- South Africa: 74% Christian, 8% Other Faith, 18% Other
- Nigeria: 59% Christian, 35% Other Faith, 8% Other
- Ghana: 77% Christian, 17% Other Faith, 6% Other
- Kenya: 91% Christian, 4% Other Faith, 0% Other

n=21,580 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
**Relationship to Faith**

**THE SPIRITUALLY OPEN STANCE OF THE CONNECTED GENERATION**

**DESPITE BEING A GENERATION OFTEN CHARACTERISED AS ANTAGONISTIC TO RELIGION, THE MAJORITY (BOTH GLOBALLY AND IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND) IS QUITE CONFIDENT IN THE EXISTENCE OF SPIRITUAL FORCES**

Only about one out of 10 is completely certain they do not exist. Young adults’ feelings toward faith specifically are more complex, but they lean toward seeing religion as good and important.

**THE CONNECTED GENERATION’S OPINIONS OF FAITH VARY**

- Faith is very important to me
- I am actively working to grow my faith
- I do not have a faith
- My faith is stagnant
- I am not sure what faith is
- Faith is irrelevant
- Faith is foolish
- None of the above

**... AND SUGGEST A DEEP AMBIVALENCE ABOUT RELIGION**

- Religion is good for people
- Religion is important to society
- Neutral
- Religion is harmful to people
- Religion is a detriment to society

**MOST YOUNG ADULTS BELIEVE IN SPIRITUAL FORCES**

- 58%
- 45%
- 21%
- 30%
- 53%
- 39%
- 23%
- 21%
- 30%
- 27%

**Most young adults believe in spiritual forces**

**... BUT ARE STILL WRESTLING WITH SIGNIFICANT DOUBTS**

- What makes you doubt things of a spiritual dimension?
  - Yes, I am certain they exist
  - I think they exist but I’m not sure
  - No, I do not believe spiritual forces exist

n=15,167 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
The Church’s Mixed Reputation

VIEWS OF – AND BARRIERS TO – THE CHURCH, FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FAITH

Young adults with some proximity to religion in general or Christianity specifically hold respect for the Church, while those furthest from religion – and particularly those who have detached from it – show great opposition.

Many young Christians are considered ‘church dropouts’ – respondents who either grew up Christian and no longer affiliate with the Church or still identify as Christian but attend a place of worship infrequently (less than every few months).

Just over half of Christians in the total sample meet the Church dropout definition; however, that rate is far higher in Australia and New Zealand.

In order to maximize statistical efficiency and effectiveness, Barna aggregated some faith segments in Australia and New Zealand for analyses. Although this does not allow for comparisons between the two countries, it strengthens the findings’ validity that may otherwise be weakened by small sample sizes among these particular segments.

CHURCH TEACHINGS COMMONLY POSE CHALLENGES TO ENGAGEMENT

Global Christians Other faith No faith Church dropouts

- I prefer to distance myself from the politics of the Church
- Faith is more relevant in the hard times of life
- There is corruption in the Church
- Church teachings have flaws or gaps
- Being part of a church is not an essential part of my faith
- People at church are judgmental
- My personal beliefs do not align with the Church’s
- I already know most of what I need to know about faith
- I may become more active with a church later in life
- The Church does not address real issues in my society

OPINIONS OF THE CHURCH PRESENT A CLEAR DIVIDE

Global Christians Other faith No faith Church dropouts

- The Church is good for people
- The Church is important to society
- The Church is a detriment to society
- The Church is harmful to people

n=15,369 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 11, 2019.
Ideas About Christianity, Christians & Christ

Confusion about what and who the church should represent

Groups who are distant from the Church struggle not only to see value in the institution but to connect to its tenets. Many young adults who aren’t part of the Church identify Jesus as a historical figure or just a man, and their metric for Christian identity is built around church attendance, rather than certain beliefs or virtues that Christians indicate is central to their faith expression.

Non-religious young adults see the modern church differently

% say this term describes present-day Christianity ‘a lot’ or ‘some’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>‘a lot’</th>
<th>‘some’</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-homosexual</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judgmental</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypocritical</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of touch with reality</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too involved in politics</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has good values and principles</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A faith you respect</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently shows love for other people</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches the same basic idea as other religions</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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There is uncertainty about Jesus’ nature

‘Who do you say Jesus is?’

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<tr>
<td>Believe Jesus was the Son of God</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<td>Pray to God</td>
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<td>28%</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<td>A prophet</td>
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<td>A historical figure</td>
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<td>38%</td>
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<td>A miracle worker</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>28%</td>
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<td>A humanitarian</td>
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<td>Just a man</td>
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<td>A character from a story</td>
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<td>A myth/legend</td>
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<td>21%</td>
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<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A false prophet</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An imposter</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An oppressor</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to maximize statistical efficiency and effectiveness, Barna aggregated some faith segments in Australia and New Zealand for analyses. Although this methodology prevents comparisons between the two countries, it strengthens the findings’ validity. If they otherwise be weakened by small sample size among these particular segments.
Resilient Discipleship & The Impact of Church

In Faith for Exiles, Barna president David Kinnaman examines four groups who grew up with Christian backgrounds. This study extends those categories across 25 countries and observes similar groups and patterns of Christian faithfulness around the world, among:

**Prodigals** – grew up Christian but no longer identify themselves as Christian.

**Nomads** – identify as Christian but do not regularly attend church.

**Habitual churchgoers** – identify as Christian and attend church at least once a month, but do not qualify as resilient disciples.

**Resilient disciples** – identify as Christian and (1) attend a local church regularly and engage with their faith community above and beyond worship services; (2) trust firmly in the authority of the Bible; (3) are committed to Jesus personally and affirm his death and resurrection; and (4) express a desire for their faith to impact their words and actions.

**WHILE AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND MIRROR THE GLOBAL PROPORTION OF RESILIENT DISCIPLES, THEIR SHARE OF PRODIGALS AND NOMADS STANDS OUT AS MUCH HIGHER THAN AVERAGE**

In order to maximize statistical efficiency and effectiveness, Barna aggregated some faith segments in Australia and New Zealand for analysis. Although this does not allow for comparisons between the two countries, it strengthens the findings’ validity that may otherwise be weakened by small sample size among these particular segments.

**PRAYER & SCRIPTURE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF RESILIENCE**

‘At least once a month I . . .’

**CHURCH IS DEEPLY IMPACTFUL ON IDENTITY & VOCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pray on my own</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read scripture on my own</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray with others</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give money to my place or community of worship</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a small group or a scripture study</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=786 adults ages 18 to 35 in Australia and New Zealand who grew up with some type of Christian background, December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
Worship Practises & Perceptions

Why do resilient disciples in Australia and New Zealand continue to attend their place of worship? Learning about God and commitment to their faith top their list of reasons. Friends are the primary thing missing from their experiences with a place of worship. Habitual churchgoers, however, also say that they hope churches might offer support groups for the challenges in their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT YOUNG ADULTS SAY IS MISSING FROM WORSHIP COMMUNITIES</th>
<th>Habitual churchgoers</th>
<th>Resilient disciples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My friends attending</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family attending</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social gatherings outside of the worship space</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support groups for challenges in my life</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to fight injustice and oppression</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops for strengthening relationships (marriages, families, etc.)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development opportunities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to connect with older generations</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachings relevant to my life</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY YOUNG ADULTS PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP COMMUNITIES</th>
<th>Habitual churchgoers</th>
<th>Resilient disciples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To grow in my faith</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn about God</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is how I live out my faith</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachings that are relevant to my life</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom for how to live faithfully</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship/music</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the right thing to do</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be involved with my community</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom for how scriptures apply to my life</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer events</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to maximize statistical efficiency and effectiveness, Barna aggregated some faith segments in Australia and New Zealand for analyses. Although this does not allow for comparisons between the two countries, it strengthens the findings’ validity that may be weakened by small samples among particular segments. n=242 adults ages 18 to 35 in Australia and New Zealand who grew up with some type of Christian background, December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
In the first part of this field guide, we explored how a lack of connection may be contributing to the anxiety that many 18–35-year-olds feel. We also looked at how your community could offer a real and authentic source of connection and hope to young adults.

Now comes the difficult part: making a case to young adults that there is value in being associated with a place of worship in the first place. Field Guide 2 will help you think through some practical steps your church can take toward this end.

Guiding questions

Before you dig into this field guide, consider the following questions as a team:

- What is the perception of our surrounding culture toward Christianity? Do the findings of the study we just read about match our ideas of that perception? How are they similar or different?
- Do you think young adults’ ambivalence or negative feelings toward religion and Christianity is fair? Why or why not? How has the Church in your region contributed or defended against those feelings?
- How is your church equipped – or not equipped – to minister to and foster reconciliation with those who have been wounded by Christians or churches? With the high number of dropouts in your cultural context, what are some ways you feel your community or the broader church in your society can begin to help in healing the wounds of the dropouts?

**Ambivalence … and antagonism**

Many members of this generation show a deep ambivalence toward religion – and in some cases, a deep antagonism. While a majority of young adults say they believe in spiritual forces, when that spirituality is tied to a religious group, doubts and opposition crop up. Young adults say the hypocrisy of religious people is the biggest reason they doubt there is an thing spiritual. There is even a large minority – around one-third of young adults in some countries – who believe that religion is harmful to people and detrimental to society.

The situation for churches is even more stark when it comes to trying to address people who grew up in the Christian faith but have left, or those who don’t attend church very often despite identifying as Christian. This group views the Church as politically problematic, judgmental and insulated from real problems in society. Church teachings, likewise, are considered flawed or insufficient.

The reality is hard for many churches. And yet, there are still steps you can take to help the young adults in your midst seek and know God.

**An unfair responsibility**

Addressing church wounds is never easy. A person might have burdens from a different tradition or theology you personally find abhorrent; there might be reasons beyond the gospel. Some of this is theological variance; some of it is carelessness. Often churches are unclear in their treatment of issues that need to be dealt with and sensitively. Work on your church’s words and deeds. Make sure that when you hear opposition, it’s because your community is following Jesus, not because you accidentally let people believe something you don’t.

**Help people find what they’re missing**

Even the young adults who are active and happy at churches still report some things they miss. And these aren’t just preferences – going to church without any distractions or interruptions is possible! Where can you offer new opportunities for young adults to find community and connection in your church?

**Disliked for the wrong reasons**

There are plenty of ways that churches in any culture will stand in opposition to some surrounding cultural values. A community of peacemakers seeking to do justice, show mercy and walk closely with God in his will will naturally fall outside the norm. And yet, many young people are suspicious of Christianity for reasons beyond the gospel. Some of this is theological variance; some of it is carelessness. Often churches are unclear in their treatment of issues that need to be dealt with and sensitively. Work on your church’s words and deeds. Make sure that when you hear opposition, it’s because your community is following Jesus, not because you accidentally let people believe something you don’t.
"Our society is facing a crisis in leadership because there are not enough good leaders right now."

% strongly or somewhat agree

**SECTION THREE**

**POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT**

DISCONTENTMENT WITH THE STATE OF LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>0-59</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80-89</th>
<th>90-100</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH AMERICA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROPE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCEANIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=13,369 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand). December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
Global Concerns & Generosity

HOW YOUNG ADULTS SEE SOCIETAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR POTENTIAL TO BE INVOLVED IN SOLUTIONS

This generation closely aligns on what they perceive as the most pressing issues facing the world's future, just another indication of their global mindset.

Nearly half of this generation is involved, in some way or another, in causes they care about. They are especially likely to invest in local initiatives.

IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION STAND OUT AS TOP REASONS FOR GLOBAL CONCERN

FEARS ABOUT THE WORLD’S FUTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global climate change</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme poverty</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger and famines</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disasters</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth inequality</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEARS ABOUT THE WORLD’S FUTURE IN AUSTRALIA

- Corruption: 31%
- Global climate change: 37%
- Pollution: 36%
- Extreme poverty: 31%
- Racism: 31%
- Hunger and famines: 22%
- Natural disasters: 22%
- Wealth inequality: 22%
- Education: 23%
- Healthcare: 20%

FEARS ABOUT THE WORLD’S FUTURE IN NEW ZEALAND

- Corruption: 40%
- Global climate change: 44%
- Pollution: 40%
- Extreme poverty: 35%
- Racism: 35%
- Hunger and famines: 22%
- Natural disasters: 22%
- Wealth inequality: 22%
- Education: 23%
- Healthcare: 23%

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, I HAVE ...

- Signed a petition: 36%
- Donated to a local charity: 37%
- Volunteered or served others: 30%
- Raised awareness for a cause: 24%
- Donated to a national charity: 20%
- Donated to a Christian charity: 16%
- Donated to an international charity: 13%
- Sponsored a child: 10%
- Took an international trip to volunteer: 4%
- Lived internationally as a volunteer: 3%
- None of the above: 23%

THE CHARITIES YOUNG ADULTS ARE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING

- Local charity: 79%
- International charity: 47%
- Local Christian charity: 48%
- International Christian charity: 56%

PARTICIPATION IN CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

- Have given money: 68%
- Have participated in a form of advocacy: 62%
- Have volunteered: 43%
The Changing State of Leadership

In an effort to better understand, disciple and empower young adults – representatives of the present and future of leadership – we asked them what they identify as barriers to leadership, in both local and global contexts.

### CHALLENGES YOUNG ADULTS PERCEIVE AND HOW THE CHURCH CAN OVERCOME THEM

#### WHERE DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A LEADER?

**Global**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your family</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your job/workplace</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A church or faith community</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nonprofit or social cause</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In government</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never thought of myself as a leader</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### BUSYNESS, DISTRACTION & COMPETITION CULTIVATE A WORLD IN WHICH IT’S MORE DIFFICULT TO LEAD

**What are the biggest challenges to leadership in society today?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is too busy and distracted</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone has to compete now in a global marketplace</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society is becoming so fragmented into different groups</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults are not letting younger leaders actually lead</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger adults do not want to put in the time to become great leaders</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People follow the news headlines instead of leaders</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial inequality</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What it takes to be an effective leader is changing</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one wants to be a follower anymore</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### THE CHURCH HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN INSPIRING AND GROWING LEADERSHIP

- **I have been inspired to be a leader based on the example of someone at my church:** 26%
- **I have access to leadership training for ministry through my church:** 21%

**THE CHURCH HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN INSPIRING AND GROWING LEADERSHIP**

- **I have been inspired to be a leader based on the example of someone at my church:** 26%
- **I have access to leadership training for ministry through my church:** 21%

**n=15,369 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.**

**n=4,092 adult Christians ages 18 to 35 who attend church at least monthly (including 153 in Australia and 89 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.**
Belief in Action
THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH AND THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT

The connected generation tells us their worldviews inspire or motivate them toward a number of charitable activities or attitudes. A deep faith is often accompanied by strong conviction, while those furthest from religion are less likely to report altruism and activism.

The connected generation is looking for the Church to provide real, tangible, meaningful, developmental opportunities. As David Kinnaman says, 'They want the Church to be a laboratory of leadership, not just a place for spirituality'. Church-goers also indicate a desire for faith to intersect with the realities of life and address social issues.

n=4,092 adult Christians ages 18 to 35 who attend church at least monthly (including 153 in Australia and 89 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.

n=6,072 adults ages 18 to 35 (including 1,071 in Australia and 567 in New Zealand), December 4, 2018–February 15, 2019.
You’ve seen how and why many young adults in your context have ambivalent and even negative feelings about religion and church. You’ve heard about a generation wracked by anxiety about the future, and how fostering connection might be a part of that. But a big question remains: What kind of connections are they looking for?

This generation is clearly engaged (or hoping to be engaged) in making a difference through causes they care about. They show a strong willingness to get involved or even lead when they have a shared sense of mission. Might this be a place of overlap for your community to minister to young adults in your context? Read through this guide as you think about how you can match the passion of young adults in your midst with the call of Jesus.

Guiding questions

Young adults also see significant barriers to leadership. And yet, many of them claim to feel like leaders in a variety of contexts.

- As this generation comes into positions of leadership in your culture – and in your church – what are some ways you can begin to address these leadership barriers? How can you connect young adults’ passion to address world problems with leadership opportunities?
- What do you think about the link between faith and activism? What would it look like for your church to embrace a God-centred activism? Where do you think there would be gospel-based clarity, and where would the risks be with that mindset?
- Read through the list of concerns 18–35-year-olds say they care about. With the closing exercise, brainstorm some practical ways that your church might be able to engage with these anxieties.

Action and activism

The data from this survey strongly suggest that young adults in your cultural context have very specific and sweeping concerns – ones shared by other members of their generation around the world. Things like climate change, pollution, extreme poverty, racism and hunger/famine are all major worries for the connected generation. But God’s people are meant to be people who care for creation, work to address poverty, oppose racism in all its forms and work to feed the hungry. Talk as a team about what kind of things you can do in your church to make your Christian commitment to these areas more visible and intentional.

Invite young adults in

One simple way to make these things a priority in your community is to invite the very people who fear these things to be part of the solution. Talk to the young adults in your church – are there any who have a passion for addressing any of these issues? Are they ready to be a leader in this area?

This kind of invitational leadership can also help young adults in your community feel they are overcoming the barriers they see to leadership. It also provides an immediate witness to the surrounding culture: ‘You are saying – rightly! – that God is concerned with the fears expressed by young adults, and that you trust their generation to help bring about God’s hope in these anxieties.

Provide a real launchpad

Your church can also help young adults learn how to lead and equip them to lead with success. Consider forming a mentorship program, connecting older leaders in your church with young adults; work on fostering a vocational ministry that can aid in helping Millennials and Gen Z connect their faith with their work and the things they care about. Learn about the causes they care about and support and release them to form their own communities of action. Remind them – in sermons, prayer and budget – that faith and action are absolutely linked. This may become even more apparent once you begin to develop the young leaders in your midst.

As they do their part to carry out God’s mission in the world, they are demonstrating that the Christian faith is a driving force for robust engagement with important issues. By offering strong formation in how God’s people are commanded to take action in the world around them – peacefully, courageously, compassionately – you’re allowing a leadership platform for young adults who can make a huge difference in the world around them.

How might the church and the way of Jesus offer hope in the midst of these concerns?

- Climate change
- Corruption
- Racism
- Hunger/famine
- Extreme poverty
- Wealth inequality
- Healthcare
‘I think it’s now time to believe that God can do something. And also have compassion for Millennials. There are a lot of easy, cheap shots to be made, but they were made at the Boomers at one time too, so remember that. How do we actually think forward? How do we reach across?

To a Millennial generation, it can feel sometimes like it’s hopeless, but I actually think there’s a wonderful new thing in this chaotic moment. Chaos comes at the beginning of Genesis. The world is this chaotic place – but then the Spirit hovers over it.’

‘The message is timeless; the methods of sharing it are not. Over the centuries, the message rings out. “Come follow me”, said Jesus, “and I will make you fishers of men”. That message still resonates today. But how it is implemented, articulated and activated has to be addressed by each generation. It was to this age group that Jesus’ invitation first came. So there must be ways of seeing them discipled today. We need knowledge and understanding. In asking for wisdom from the Holy Spirit, we walk the pathway of faith and the commission of discipleship.’

‘I can think of at least two ways that global events and issues can be sources of stress. The first is a constant pressure to be aware of the right things in the right ways – which are always evolving. Millennials have admitted to me that they fear the scorn of the mob if they miss any of the latest developments in global politics, race relations, sexuality, the environment, etc. The second source of stress is simply that much of our information comes to us unfiltered and uncontextualised, a never-ending feed of (usually bad) news. The top 10 world stories on the NZ Herald app as I write [include] child pornography, espionage, infanticide, rape, bribery, a drug bust, two (increasingly unpopular) world leaders and a hurricane. I think one of the gifts that organisations like World Vision can provide for this generation is the context behind the issues, and the balancing of harrowing stories with redemptive ones.’

‘Relationships matter! [This includes] personal relationships with Christians, being able to observe and participate in the 24/7 life of a Christian community; and experiencing face-to-face friendship with those who suffer, are marginalised or impoverished, both nearby and in third world contexts. Personal engagement with crippling global issues through meeting and coming to personally know those who suffer frees our 18–35-year-olds from the dominating concern for their own well-being and anxieties. It allows them to become more concerned about the struggles of others and empowers them to be active in providing solidarity, care and help. This research confirms anecdotal hunches that practising Christians have higher senses of connectivity and shows that such personal and deep belonging positively affects the degree to which events around the world matter to us.’
We must slow down and listen to a generation that is too often talked at and talked about. We must stop ignoring or dismissing teens, twentiesomethings and thirtysomethings who are coming into their own. They are desperately in need of a wise, compassionate, listening ear—and we are desperately in need of their partnership as we look to the Church’s future.

Cultivate Resilience
Start with resilient disciples. Their faith is much more than what happens in church—though, among the majority, church experiences certainly have much to do with it. More than half say they were ‘very active’ in practising Christianity in their teenage years (56%), compared with 29 percent of other self-identified Christians (nomads and habitual churchgoers). They also tend to strongly agree they had adult, non-family friends in their church when they were growing up (61% vs. 29%), so parents and grandparents weren’t their only models of adult faithfulness.

For faith to grow, church must be the place where young Christians practise following Jesus alongside other believers who help them discover how to bring faith into every area of their lives.

Where to start?
1. Be encouraged. Young resilient Christians can be found in your context. What can you do to learn from them, to invest in them—not just to solve problems, but to journey together and launch them into their God-ordained destiny? Don’t simply try to attract young Christians; engage them in the work. It’s not church for them. It should be church with them.

2. Understand your context. Take stock of your surrounding religious climate. What are the forces at work that arrest or accelerate disciple-making where you are? Be ready to adapt your methods and priorities accordingly.

3. Measure the right things. You get what you measure. How do you measure effective discipleship? What metrics are you using to evaluate the kind of disciples your ministry is cultivating?

4. Search the scriptures for inspiration about the kind of resilient people God is calling us to be. Stories of exile are the place to start: Daniel, Esther, Joseph, Jeremiah, 1 Peter—the biblical witness of faithfulness in exile is a reliable guide for resilient faith.

Raise up Godly Leaders
Some leadership qualities and principles are timeless and rise above cultural or generational differences: honesty, integrity, conviction and courage, to name a few. But other ideas about what makes a good leader are not always applicable everywhere to everyone. Problems with and barriers to leadership often differ, as well. ‘Leadership’ is a concept highly shaped by culture. For instance, some societies value leaders who exhibit individual merit, personal ambition and orientation toward the future; others esteem leaders who prioritise continuity with the past and handing traditions and ways of life down from elder to younger.

Whatever your cultural milieu, commit yourself to investing in tomorrow’s leaders. What kind of leaders are we hoping to be—and hoping young Christians will become? Here are four aspirations, whether we are part of the connected generation or simply cheering them on.

We aspire to be and to form leaders who are:

Connected to God. Our identity is grounded in Jesus and we bring a God-centered presence to a self-centred age.

Connected to ourselves. We are humble, sacrificial people of peace. We reject wrong ideas about leadership and influence that say our worth is what we create and our influence equals the size of our platform. We are conscious of the relentless pull toward anxiety and make deliberate choices to live in sync with an unruled, unharried, Godward rhythm.

Connected to others. We are emotionally connected to others in our communities and in our households. We have a healthy connection to those we lead, which is neither cold and detached nor codependently enmeshed.

Connected to the world. We are informed about the major problems facing societies, personally impacted by the needs of others and seeking opportunities to serve as agents of godly change. We are courageous and empowered to seek God-honoring solutions.

Even as the world spins toward an uncertain future, these kinds of people can make a difference—as God intends all leaders to do.●
Methodology

This study is based on online, representative public opinion surveys conducted by Barna Group. A total of 15,369 respondents ages 18 to 35 across 25 countries were surveyed between December 4, 2018 and February 15, 2019. Sample distribution based on continent and country are shown below.

Unless otherwise noted, all data referenced in The Connected Generation were collected by Barna, among a nationally representative sample of the population identified. For this study, Barna relied on online collection methods, including mobile phone users.

The study used online national consumer panels that are representative by age, gender, ethnicity and region. Respondents were fully verified by the representative sample sources. Additionally, quality control measures checked that respondents were completing the survey at an appropriate pace and paying attention to the questions asked.

The survey was offered in nine different languages, (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Romanian, Korean, Indonesian and Taiwanese), translated by a trusted translation service and verified by local partners in every country for context-specific nuance.

Barna Group is incredibly grateful to World Vision, not only for their partnership on this massive study, but their global leadership in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the kingdom of God. Our gratitude extends to the many World Vision staff members from more than 20 countries who supported this initiative through early input on the study formation, coordination of thought leaders and local contextualisation. For this Australia and New Zealand report, we would like to especially acknowledge Jonathan Fletcher, Samuel Grimshaw, James Pedrick, Matt Pyczek, Jill Roche and Philip Sapsford.

Our findings about the connected generation have been significantly strengthened by the feedback and grounded recommendations of ministers, activists, scholars and other experts spanning the globe. A heartfelt thank you to the contributors for this particular country report: Grant Bayldon, Sam Bloore, Melinda Dwight, Alan Jamieson, Claire Rogers and Mark Sayers.

The Barna research team conducted this study with coordination by Brooke Hempell. Traci Hochmuth and Daniel Copeland led development of the questionnaire, with assistance from Susan Mettes. Copeland also served as the lead analyst & writer for this country report. David Kinnaman, with Aly Hawkins, wrote other foundational pieces. Ryan Hamm developed the field guides. Alyce Youngblood provided content direction and copy editing. Douglas Brown proofread the manuscript. OX Creative designed the cover, and Rob Williams handled interior layout. Brenda Usery managed production. Mallory Holt coordinated as project manager and assisted in organising contributors. Special thanks to Rick Ifland for his vision in extending Barna’s reach internationally and Gareth Russell for spearheading the Barna Global effort.

The project team wishes to thank our Barna colleagues—Amy Brands, Aidan Dunn, Janet Eason, Pam Jacob, Marian Liautaud, Steve McBeth, Rheia Storms, Verónica Thomas, Jess Villa and Todd White—for their support as we’ve completed our largest study to date.

We would also like to thank our partners in sharing this research across Australia and New Zealand, including Alpha, ARISE Church, Barneys Broadway, Church Unlimited, Gateway Baptist Church, NewHope Baptist Church, South West Baptist Church and Venn Foundation. Through a series of forums and events, as well as the insights of numerous contributors (including Daniel Ang, Renee Bennett, Tak Bhana, Bloore, Annie Cameron, John Cameron, Paul Dale, Dwight, Ainslee Freeman, Clem Fung, Esther Greenwood, Michael Hands, Katie Iles, Jamieson, Erinn Juer, Jesse Murray, Matt Renata, Zelda Robertson, Sayers, Andrew Sercombe and many more), these partners will help put this research into action.

Acknowledgments

The Connextion Group's 2020 International Data Base, the CIA World Fact Book and available census data from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Chile, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, the UK, Germany, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Romania, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, India, Philippines and Singapore, quotas were designed to ensure the final group of adults interviewed in the study reflected each country’s distribution of adults nationwide based on age, gender, ethnicity and region.

Online surveys necessitate literacy and an internet connection, which means the sample reflects adults who have those capabilities and does not reflect those who are unable to read or lack connectivity to respond to online surveys. Thus, in spite of a robust methodology, this sample is not meant to be representative of entire national populations, regions, continents or the world. The countries selected for this study were based on countries and regions where Barna and World Vision receive frequent requests for research-based insights. These and other concerns or limitations were respectfully considered while interpreting the data.

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About the Project Partners

**Barna Group** is a research firm dedicated to providing actionable insights on faith and culture, with a particular focus on the Christian Church. Since 1984, Barna has conducted more than one million interviews in the course of hundreds of studies and has become a go-to source for organisations that want to better understand a complex and changing world from a faith perspective. Barna’s clients and partners include a broad range of academic institutions, churches, nonprofits and businesses, such as Alpha, the Templeton Foundation, Fuller Seminary, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Maclellan Foundation, DreamWorks Animation, Focus Features, Habitat for Humanity, The Navigators, NBC-Universal, the ONE Campaign, Paramount Pictures, the Salvation Army, Walden Media, Sony and World Vision.

[www.barna.com](http://www.barna.com)

**World Vision** is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. As an international partnership of Christians, World Vision’s mission is to work with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God. For nearly 70 years, World Vision has ministered alongside the Church to answer Jesus’ call in Matthew 25 to care for the least of these. Together, with churches, their leaders and others, World Vision has impacted the lives of over 200 million vulnerable children by tackling the root causes of poverty.

[www.wvi.org/connectedgeneration](http://www.wvi.org/connectedgeneration)

We would like to acknowledge Alpha’s partnership in disseminating this research and insights to church leaders across Australia and New Zealand. Alpha is a series of interactive sessions exploring life, faith and meaning. Developed first as a short course at Holy Trinity Brompton in London, Alpha has been used by millions of people around the world and translated into 112 different languages. In 1990, Nicky Gumbel assumed leadership of Alpha and placed focus on the many people outside of the Church who wanted to explore the Christian faith. Alpha is an adaptable program designed to create open conversation in safe environments. Alpha now runs in every part of the global Church, including the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and all mainline Protestant denominations.

[www.alpha.org.au](http://www.alpha.org.au)

This regional resource is best used as a companion to the global report and other resources based on this research. Stay in touch and learn more at TheConnectedGeneration.com.
What values are Millennials, and now Gen Z, bringing with them into adulthood? What kind of world are they already building? What is their relationship to faith? The reality is that members of this age cohort are hardly "the next generation" anymore. Newcomers no longer, they are a formidable force, actively shaping the future of our workplaces, media, politics, arts, neighborhoods and, yes, churches.

For a groundbreaking global study, Barna Group combined its research expertise with the reach of World Vision, the largest child-focused Christian humanitarian organization in the world, to interview more than 15,000 adults ages 18 to 35 in 25 countries and nine languages. This report represents a summary of the findings specifically within Australia and New Zealand, providing a regional snapshot of a group we’re calling The Connected Generation.

Through quantitative research, data visualizations and field guides, these pages reveal both sobering and surprisingly hopeful trends among a globally minded generation, including:

- An overview of young adults' goals, fears and emotional well-being in an anxious age
- New data about attitudes toward spirituality, religion and the Christian Church in a secular climate
- Contextualized insights about how to support and partner with 18–35-year-olds in your area as they fulfill ambitions toward vocation, justice and leadership

In addition to original writing from Barna president David Kinnaman, this country report from The Connected Generation project features commentary from local leaders in Australia and New Zealand, including Grant Bayldon, Sam Bloore, Melinda Dwight, Alan Jamieson, Claire Rogers and Mark Sayers.

Join us in learning more about—and from—this connected generation.

Get more information about The Connected Generation project and related resources at theconnectedgeneration.com.