

## Christian Youth Exodus and Suggested Solutions

Outline by:

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Some quick thoughts by the author: This outline is a “work-in-progress” – it’s not finished. However, I have used it (or prior versions of it) when speaking on this very important topic. When complete, it will be converted into a PowerPoint and then made available for use for free (the only reason I’m copyrighting it is concern over the possibility of others copyrighting it and then preventing me from using my own work in the future). I hope this information will reach far and wide given how important this topic is to the future of Christianity (at least within western society, USA in particular). Don’t be afraid to contact me ([ryan.huxley@cox.net](mailto:ryan.huxley@cox.net)) about making use of this outline based on the copyright notice above – I generally have no problem granting permission and would love to learn how others may be making use of this information. In this regard, please also let me know of any suggestions you have regarding possible changes or additions to the outline. Thanks for reading and I hope you find this helpful. Please do let others know about the Christian youth exodus – it needs to be on every parent’s radar and addressing it should be a significant part of any church’s work to help preserve the faith of our youth and the future of the church.

1. What are we talking about?
  - a. Christian youth exodus: significant numbers of young Christians (less than about 40 years old) have or are leaving church and their faith.
  - b. Basis for youth exodus data – most studies taken for same or similar life/generational period, with several longitudinal studies (i.e., following same group over time):
    - i. BARNA (founder George Barna, now David Kinnaman) surveys and books
      1. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church...and Rethinking Faith* by David Kinnaman (YLM) at <http://youlostmebook.com/>
      2. *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity... and Why it Matters* by Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman at <http://www.unchristian.com/>
      3. Many articles available at <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials?limitstart=0>
    - ii. *Already Gone: Why your kids will quit church and what you can do to stop it* by Ken Ham and Brit Beemer (AG) at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/store/product/already-gone-book/?sku=90-7-508> (also a short review article at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/survey-churches-losing-youths-long-before-college-39433/>)
    - iii. *Sticky Faith: Everyday ideas to build lasting faith in your kids* by Dr. Kara Powell and Dr. Chap Clark of Fuller Youth Institute (SF) at <http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/store/sticky-faith-everyday-ideas-to-build-lasting-faith-in-your-kids>

- iv. Lifeway Christian Resources (LCR) surveys/reports at <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/LifeWay-Research-finds-reasons-18-to-22-year-olds-drop-out-of-church> and [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-27-1Amillfaith27\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-27-1Amillfaith27_ST_N.htm) (millennials more “spiritual” than “religious”)
- v. Spirituality in Higher Education (SHE) surveys/reports by UCLA Higher Education Research Institute at <http://spirituality.ucla.edu/>
- vi. *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* by Dr. Christian Smith at <http://global.oup.com/academic/product/souls-in-transition-9780195371796?cc=us&lang=en&> (SIT)
  - 1. “Emerging Adults” = ages 18-29 (phrase coined by psychologist Jeffrey Arnett)
  - 2. Follows same group, as they continue growing up, in prior book (2005) *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*.
    - a. Teenagers adopt common mainstream version of faith – Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD).
      - i. Summary by Al Mohler on MTD (<http://www.albertmohler.com/2010/10/19/souls-draft/>): a faith in a moralistic deity who expects his human creatures to behave, to feel good about themselves, and to run their own lives without too much divine interference or intervention.
  - 3. WSJ book review “The Fate of the Spirit: The wobbly religious lives of young people emerging into adulthood.” (10/2/2009) <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970203440104574399822355625960>
  - 4. Christianity Today interviews Dr. Smith about this book in “Lost in Transition” (10/9/2009): <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/october/21.34.html>
  - 5. Albert Mohler’s book review “Young Souls in Transition — Emerging Adults and the Church” <http://www.albertmohler.com/2010/10/19/souls-draft/>
- vii. National Study of Youth & Religion (NSYR) reports from the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill at <http://www.youthandreligion.org/>
  - 1. This was previously directed by Dr. Christian Smith, now at Notre Dame (since 2006), who’s authored several books based on his studies at UNC.
- viii. Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project
  - 1. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>
- ix. Analysis and summaries of some of the above in a presentation by Dr. Norman Geisler (*College Bound Where Have All Our Teenagers Gone?* 2010).
- x. Los Angeles Times
  - 1. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/17/opinion/la-oe-1017-putnam-religion-20101017>
  - 2. <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/dec/28/opinion/la-oe-nicolaou-religion-undeclared-20121228>
- xi. USA Today

1. [http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d\\_churchdropout07.art.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d_churchdropout07.art.htm)
  2. [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-27-1Amillfaith27\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-27-1Amillfaith27_ST_N.htm)
- xii. CNN
1. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/07/27/why-millennials-are-leaving-the-church/>
- xiii. TIME
1. <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2108027,00.html>
2. Is the problem real? If so, how serious is it?
- a. Yes – real problem.
  - b. Seriousness:
    - i. LCR
      1. 70% stopped attending by age 23  
([http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d\\_churchdropout07.art.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d_churchdropout07.art.htm))
    - ii. AG (age group now early 20s-30s – millennials):
      1. ~2/3 of those that used to go regularly
        - a. Example used in AG: Imagine while in church looking all around you, seeing all the kids with their families. Now imagine 2/3 of them vanish.
    - iii. YLM:
      1. ~3/4 leave – but nuanced
        - a. 1/9 lose faith - prodigals
        - b. 4/10 wander – nomads – may or may not lose faith
        - c. 2/10 not connected, but Christian – exiles
        - d. 3/10 stay
    - iv. Past studies provide baseline (from 1976-1996 via 2004 NSYR “Are American Youth Alienated From Organized Religion?” at <http://www.youthandreligion.org/sites/youthandreligion.org/files/imported/publications/docs/Alienation.pdf>) indicate numbers hadn’t changed much over 20 years (study focused on 12<sup>th</sup> graders):
      1. ~2/3 generally not alienated by organized religion (Baptist, Protestant, Catholic/Orthodox, Jewish, Mormon, Other Religion & None).
      2. ~1/3 feel alienated (about half of the 1/3) or indifferent (the other half)
    - v. Last two decades have seen substantial increase, and largest growth rate, in those without any religious affiliation, with the most prominent in younger adults (under age 30 – see <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/> and <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2108027,00.html> and <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/17/opinion/la-oe-1017-putnam-religion-20101017>). There seems to be almost a one-to-one correlation with church loss and gains in “nones.”
      1. SIT (WSJ book review <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970203440104574399822355625960>): “[In 2009] [o]nly about 20% [of emerging adults] attend[ed] religious services at least once a week, a 22% decline from

Mr. Smith's survey, five years ago [in 2004], of the same group of young people.”

2. Based on studies by Putnam

(<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/17/opinion/la-oe-1017-putnam-religion-20101017>), most significant indicator was political views.

- a. “Some Americans brought their religion and their politics into alignment by adjusting their political views to their religious faith. But, surprisingly, more of them adjusted their religion to fit their politics. ... We were initially skeptical about that proposition, because it seemed implausible that people would make choices that might affect their eternal fate based on how they felt about George W. Bush. But the evidence convinced us that many Americans now are sorting themselves out on Sunday morning on the basis of their political views. For example, in our Faith Matters national survey of 3,000 Americans, we observed this sorting process in real time, when we interviewed the same people twice about one year apart.”
- b. “Increasingly, young people saw religion as intolerant, hypocritical, judgmental and homophobic. If being religious entailed political conservatism, they concluded, religion was not for them.”
  - i. These same reasons for the backlash are seen in other studies.
  - ii. My thoughts: Relativism and distorted understandings of tolerance have fueled much of this backlash.
- c. “Continuing to sound the trumpet for conservative social policy on issues such as homosexuality may or may not be the right thing to do from a theological point of view, but it is likely to mean saving fewer souls.”

c. Isn't this just a phase?

- i. Ask for audience input – what do you think?
- ii. 6 Myths

1. 1-5 from Barna - <http://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/534-five-myths-about-young-adult-church-dropouts?q=youth+exodus+six+reasons>):

- a. Myth 1: Most people lose their faith when they leave high school.
  - i. (repeat from above) ~3/4 leave – but nuanced
    1. 1/9 lose faith - prodigals
    2. 4/10 wander – nomads – may or may not lose faith
    3. 2/10 not connected, but Christian – exiles
    4. 3/10 stay
- b. Myth 2: Dropping out of church is just a natural part of young adults' maturation.
  - i. Many do stay.
  - ii. In first half of 1900s, had roughly same young and old in church.

- c. Myth 3: College experiences are the key factor that cause people to drop out.
  - i. Many youth “leave” well before college (consider AG information)
- d. Myth 4: This generation of young Christians is increasingly “biblically illiterate.”
  - i. Similar “illiteracy” in young and old Christians – difference is more young non-Christians are significantly “illiterate.”
  - ii. More anti-Christian hostility present in culture, especially younger age groups.
- e. Myth 5: Young people will come back to church like they always do.
  - i. Research suggests otherwise – youth generally holding off until much later in life many typical “milestones.”
  - ii. Also, consider rise of “nones” noted previously.
    - 1. Consider atheist’s “hopeful” blog commenting how some western cultures became primarily secular in just a generation or two (e.g., Quebec or northern Europe) - <http://www.skepticblog.org/2013/09/25/losing-our-religion/>. (He also opines that religion is a significant factor in America often falling behind in science to other western industrialized nations – mainly due to “creationist-evangelical influence on our culture.”)
    - 2. SIT: Myth 6: their faith is internal, not external
  - iii. LCR survey when asked if they plan to return (see Geisler PPT #8):
    - 1. Yes – 38%
    - 2. Don’t know – 30%
    - 3. No – 32%
    - 4. Of those 38% that do return, often return with doubts motivated them to leave (see Geisler PPT#9).
      - a. 24% don’t believe Bible inspired
      - b. 42% don’t believe Biblically accounts
  - iv. Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow in *After the Baby Boomers* (2011) notes ([http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d\\_churchdropout07.art.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/printedition/life/20070807/d_churchdropout07.art.htm)) “Unless religious leaders take younger adults more seriously, the future of American religion is in doubt” because the proportion of young adults identifying with mainline churches is “about half the size it was a generation ago. Evangelical Protestants have barely held their own.”
- d. Unexpected results of some studies (AG):
  - i. Going to Sunday school more often actually resulted in less Biblical worldview (on topics related to marriage, sex, abortion) than if only attended a few times! (See Geisler PPT#6)
  - ii. When did they start leaving?
    - 1. Grade School—4%
    - 2. Middle School—40%

3. High School—44%
  4. College—Only 11%
3. What are the causes?
- a. Consider the impact of naturalistic philosophy taught in schools and common in mainstream media
    - i. Time spent in public secular school combined with watching mainstream media versus time receiving Christian education – it’s about 30:1 (see Geisler PPT#15) – how can you overcome that amount of influence?
    - ii. Quote from Dinesh D’Souza in his book *What’s So Great About Christianity* (as seen at <http://crossexamined.org/youth-exodus-problem/>):
      1. “Children spend the majority of their waking hours in school. Parents invest a good portion of their life savings in college education and entrust their offspring to people who are supposed to educate them. Isn’t it wonderful that educators have figured out a way to make parents the instruments of their own undoing? Isn’t it brilliant that they have persuaded Christian moms and dads to finance the destruction of their own beliefs and values? Who said atheists aren’t clever?”
  - b. AG:
    - i. Sunday school teachers unprepared/untrained
      1. They’re unprepared to answer questions from youth asking about conflicts between what they learn in school and church.
      2. Kids develop dichotomous views – school (data/facts) vs church (morals/ethics)
        - a. School teaches about history/data/facts – reality
        - b. Church teaches about morality and ethics – where’s the relationship with Christ???
    - ii. Many causes claimed by youth: (some of these are echoed by others - <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/07/27/why-millennials-are-leaving-the-church/>)
      1. Boring service (12%)
      2. Legalism (12%)
      3. Hypocrisy of Leaders (11%)
      4. Too Political (10%)
      5. Self-righteous people (9%)
      6. Distance from home (7%)
      7. Not relevant to personal growth (6%)
      8. God would not condemn anyone to hell (6%)
      9. Bible is not relevant/practical (5%)
      10. Couldn’t find preferred church in area (5%)
        - a. Quote from 2011 CNN article (<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/07/27/why-millennials-are-leaving-the-church/>):
          - i. “...young adults perceive evangelical Christianity to be too political, too exclusive, old-fashioned, unconcerned with social justice and hostile to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people ... young evangelicals often feel they have to choose between their intellectual integrity and their faith, between science and Christianity,

between compassion and holiness. ... the evangelical obsession with sex can make Christian living seem like little more than sticking to a list of rules, and how millennials long for faith communities in which they are safe asking tough questions and wrestling with doubt. “

- ii. After presentation “...a pastor raises his hand and says, ‘So what you’re saying is we need hipper worship bands.’ ... And I proceed to bang my head against the podium.”

iii. Other studies echo above:

1. LCR:

- a. Dr. Ed Stetzer: “Too many youth groups are holding tanks with pizza. There's no life transformation taking place, ... People are looking for a faith that can change them and to be a part of changing the world.”

2. SF:

- a. “Sin management” identified by late Dr. Dallas Willard – list of do’s and don’ts – miss point of Gospel message and transformational relationship with Christ.

iv. Actual causes (per AG survey

<http://cdn.answersingenesis.org/doc/prod/etc/chapter/10-1-412-ap.pdf> – p. 172 “Believe all the accounts/stories in the Bible are true/accurate?”): 62% doubt various aspects of Biblical accounts (~44% No, ~38% Don’t know).

1. Identified causes for beginning doubting Bible:

- a. Written by men 24%
- b. Not translated correctly 18%
- c. Contradictions 15%
- d. Science shows old earth 14%
  - i. Aside: Problems YEC have:
    - 1. Make YE element of Christian orthodoxy
    - 2. YEC: “You believe fallible man’s word rather than infallible God’s word”

c. YLM:

i. 6 reasons (<https://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church>):

- 1. Reason #1 – Churches seem overprotective.
  - a. If church doesn’t deal with uncomfortable topics appropriately (e.g., sex), they get input/feedback from internet and peers – think of what that kind of secular influence is and if that’s how you want your kids to get information and direction.
- 2. Reason #2 – Teens’ and twentysomethings’ experience of Christianity is shallow.
- 3. Reason #3 – Churches come across as antagonistic to science.
- 4. Reason #4 – Young Christians’ church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic, judgmental.
- 5. Reason #5 – They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity.
- 6. Reason #6 – The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt.
  - a. This is echoed also in Sticky Faith book by

7. Note that 4 of 6 (#2, 3, 5, 6) are apologetics related
    - a. Apologetics **not** a silver bullet – far more complex – stop teaching Christianity and live/model it authentically (do as I say AND do).
- d. SF & others
- i. Lack of
    1. Intergenerational relationship
      - a. Problem of youth feeling "disconnected" with church due to a lack of intergenerational relationships:
    2. "Social Capital"
      - a. Need other parents and adults you respect and recognize influence in your kids' lives to invest emotionally and spiritually in them and to mentor them.
  - ii. SF (book): <http://stickyfaith.org/articles/the-church-sticking-together>
  - iii. National Center for Family Integrated Churches: <https://ncfic.org/> (they have a free short film you can watch that covers some of the key points in about an hour: <https://ncfic.org/resources/view/divided-the-movie>)
4. Solutions
- a. Church Efforts:
    - i. Geisler & AG: Transform Sunday school & youth programs!
      1. Geisler: Stop entertaining & start training
        - a. Start apologetics in late grade school – 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up!
          - i. Why? (per religious surveys by Barna noted by Geisler)
            1. Religious views set around age 13.
            2. Morals usually set around age 9.
        2. Geisler: Live consistent Christian lives
          - a. Get rid of hypocrisy & legalism – work *from* grace, not *for* grace.
    - ii. WSJ SIT book review  
<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970203440104574399822355625960>: "So why are most emerging adults so morally unmoored and religiously alienated? Mr. Smith suggests that **religious institutions haven't done a very good job at educating kids in even the most basic tenets of their faiths.** And **religious parents often shirk their duties**, too, perhaps believing the "cultural myth" that they have no influence over their children once they hit puberty." (emphasis added)
    - iii. Cooperate with other local churches and stop worrying about "turf wars"! If exodus rate continues, won't have any "turf" left to fight over!
      1. Must recognize the reliance pastors/churches have on their membership for financial sustenance – they're reluctant to advertise events at other churches or cooperate; instead they may end up focusing on differences rather than commonalities.
      2. Difficult problem that must be overcome – remember church is PEOPLE **not** a building! **You** can help get word out about exodus with friends at other churches and helping develop programs to address it.
  - b. Parent Efforts:
    - i. Geisler:
      1. Homeschool
      2. Good Christian School & College

- a. However, even “good” schools/colleges may have “bad” influences through other students in attendance or some of the professors.
  - i. *Toughest Test in College* documentary by Focus on the Family showed even Christian colleges suffer many of the same social problems (e.g., drinking, drugs, students having abortions, etc.).
    - 1. (This film primarily covers the faith challenges most students face when they go to college – regardless of institution being Christian or not. Get a free copy by filling out form online at <http://www.scienceandgod.org/offer/>)
- 3. Control TV/iPod/Computer/etc.
  - a. For average child, ratio of these influences to church influences is over 30:1.
- ii. Dr. Christian Smith (author of SIT):
  - 1. Interview in CT
    - <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/october/21.34.html>
      - a. “The **most important factor is parents**. For better or worse, parents are tremendously important in shaping their children's faith trajectories. ... But again, we emphasize **above everything else the role of parents**, not just in telling kids about faith but also in **modeling it.**” (emphasis added)
- c. Which seem to be most effective?
  - i. Relationships with others, especially parents and other intergenerational ones:
    - 1. (Dad’s and grandparents - <http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles/helping-kids-keep-the-faith> review of book [http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0199948658/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0199948658&linkCode=as2&tag=fulleryouthin-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0199948658/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0199948658&linkCode=as2&tag=fulleryouthin-20) )
    - 2. SF notes this as a primary point, through concept of “social capital”
    - 3. Dr. Christian Smith interview in CT <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/october/21.34.html>:
      - a. “In some cases, having other adults in a congregation who you have relationships with, and who are supportive and provide modeling, also matters.” (this is echoed by others, e.g., SF & NCFIC)
      - b. “ ... the implications of our work for churches, the two key words are *engagement* and *relationships*. It can't just be programs or classes or handing them over to the youth pastor. Real change happens in relationships, and that takes active engagement.” (emphasis in original)
    - 4. Mohler’s SIT book review:
      - a. “... several factors that encourage emerging adults to remain connected and committed to churches and beliefs — and these have mostly to do with the **roles played by parents and other adults in their lives**. Young adults who remain closely related to

their parents, and who have parents who put a premium on maintaining that relationship, are far more likely to remain both connected and committed. Significantly, their continued commitment also has a great deal to do with the **roles played by other adults in a congregation.**" (emphasis added)

- b. "...these emerging adults cannot be reached by "ramping up" religious programs. They are reached mainly, if not exclusively, by **relationships with others, especially older adults.**" (emphasis added)

5. LCR

- a. Most of those that returned indicated invitations by friends & family motivated them to come back.
- ii. Barna 5 reasons Millennials stay - <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church#.UwacoPIdU35>
- iii. Attend Summit Ministries – only intensive short termed program showing long-term positive results directly correlating with Barna 6 reasons for leaving (see page 8 of <http://www.summit.org/media/pdf/conferences/student/2014-Summer-Conference-Catalog.pdf>).
- iv. Dr. Christian Smith (author of SIT):
  - 1. Interview in CT  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/october/21.34.html>
    - a. "Another factor is youth having **established devotional lives—that is, praying, reading Scripture—during the teenage years.**" (emphasis added)
    - b. "More generally, churches need to realize that American demographics and the American family are changing. If they are set up to minister primarily to intact nuclear families, there are whole, growing segments of the population they are not hitting. It requires self-consciously asking, 'How do we talk? Who do we cater to?'"
- d. Must be effective Ambassador for Christ
  - i. Whole package!
    - 1. Primary and Secondary commandment by Jesus
      - a. Love God with all heart, soul, MIND (and strength)
      - b. Love others – agape love – genuine care and concern – compassion radar!
    - 2. Consistent living and treatment of others.
    - 3. Grace filled and flowing over – compassionate – 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 13 Love.
    - 4. Salt and Light.
    - 5. Knowledgeable
    - 6. Tactics! – ask questions!
      - a. Identify flawed reasoning/logic
  - ii. Know basic doctrines of Christian faith AND how to communicate them effectively
    - 1. Which are essential and which are not – when to put your foot down
      - a. Ron Rhodes & Geisler's *Conviction Without Compromise*



- iii. “So why are most emerging adults so **morally unmoored** and religiously alienated? Mr. Smith suggests that **religious institutions haven't done a very good job at educating kids in even the most basic tenets of their faiths**. And **religious parents often shirk their duties**, too, perhaps believing the "cultural myth" that they have no influence over their children once they hit puberty.” (emphasis added)
  - b. Al Mohler’s SIT book review
    - i. “...this generation actually has difficulty imagining any objective reality beyond the self. As he explains, “Most have great difficulty grasping the idea that a reality that is objective to their own awareness or construction of it may exist that could have a significant bearing on their lives.” To all this he adds that these emerging adults are actually soft ontological antirealists, epistemological skeptics, and perspectivalists ...”
    - ii. “They have **abandoned any belief in the exclusivity of the gospel**. Religion is seen as a social phenomenon, claims of exclusivity are seen as **intolerant**, and heaven is seen as ‘one big party’ where **all basically good people go after death**.” (emphasis added)
- 2. Danger to Gospel
  - a. Mohler’s SIT book review:
    - i. “They claim to believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, in heaven and hell, and in any number of orthodox doctrines. Clearly, they are not theological liberals in any classic sense. At the same time, they are apparently living without any direct cognitive commitment to these orthodox beliefs.” – based on their participating in “partying” and premarital sex, based on Smith’s finding the following:
      - 1. “Therefore, emerging adults who are serious about their faith and practice have to do one of three things: choose to reject heavy partying and premarital sex; dramatically compartmentalize their lives so that their partying and sexual activities are firmly partitioned off from their religious activities in a way that borders on denial; or be willing to live with the cognitive dissonance of being committed to two things that are incompatible and mutually denying. Not many emerging adults can or will do any of these things, so most of them resolve the cognitive dissonance by simply distancing from religion.”
    - ii. “They have **abandoned any belief in the exclusivity of the gospel**. Religion is seen as a social phenomenon,

claims of exclusivity are seen as **intolerant**, and heaven is seen as 'one big party' where **all basically good people go after death.**" (emphasis added)

3. Tolerance/Intolerance
  - a. Be tolerant of people – but NOT ideas!