**YOUTH CULTURE**

**CULTURE – values, customs, attitudes, beliefs**

YOUTH TODAY

* They are “**Now” minded**
  + The past doesn’t matter too much, the future doesn’t matter too much.
  + “I just did what seemed right at the time.”
  + The “now” mindset means I get what I want now.
* **Peer groups** are becoming more important in **influencing decision making**
  + Family has less of a hold than it once did. Parental example is still #1 but less influential than in the past.
* **Objectivity** is out, **subjectivity** is in
  + Decision making is less based upon biblical moral absolutes of right and wrong than decision making based upon the situation—situation ethics, cultural relativism.
* Our actions have changed from **being centered on God to being centered on man**
  + Man has become God-like. Our pleasure, our desires…that’s what’s important.
* They are **globalized**. No longer isolated from each other.
  + No limits on culture or geographic boundaries.
* **Technology Age** -
  + Students today have always had an internet, cell phones, microwaves, and Amazon.com.
  + They are media-wired and gadget driven. (They walk around with ear buds hanging out of their ear.)
  + They don’t have to ask mom and dad when need to know something. They can google it. If they need to know how to change the oil in their car, they watch it on YouTube.
* Parents due to busyness, lack of knowledge, lack of connection, etc. have **delegated a lot of childrearing** to schools, coaches, youth pastors, and other “experts.”
  + Learn a lot of values from media, culture, and peers.

**STATS** – taken from Barna and Lifeway Research

* ½ of the world is under age 25
  + Massive unreached people group
* The top 10 “in-demand” jobs in 2010 didn’t even exist in 2004.
* Half of what is learned in year one of a 4 year technical degree is outdated by year 3.
* Youth today will have 10-14 jobs by age 38.
* There are 8 times more fatherless families now than during the 1960’s
* Parents are the #1 support kids count on (some of these not on notes have to write down)
* 60-70% of those in our youth groups are dropping out after high school. 1/3 to ½ may come back by age 30.
* In the 70’s 4 out of 5 were married at age 25. Today less than half married at age 25.
* In 1900, average age for puberty was 14.5 years. Today it commonly begins at age 10.
* Adolescence lasts a LONG time. Only 46% of women and 31% of men have finished their education, are married, and financially independent by age 30. That’s about half of what it was in 1960. A new sociological phenomenon known as “adultolescence” exists because of these factors.
* 35% do not feel that church is a safe place to express doubts, fear, and honest questions.

**MILLENNIALS** – (Millennials by Thom Rainer and Lifeway Research)

**3 major characteristics** of this next generation of leaders and how it affects us as a church and us going forward

* **They desire to serve**
  + They no longer like to hear what needs to be done. They like to do it. Only problem is they find themselves too busy to fulfill these desires.
  + They are very impatient with groups that are not willing to go beyond the church doors.
  + 96% believe that they are destined to do something great. They are the “trophy generation” where everyone was given an award and told of their greatness.
* **They think deeper and are more serious**
  + The problems they face, the homes they come from require more thought and seriousness.
  + The philosophies and world views they encounter require thought and seriousness.
* **They are very family oriented**
  + Desire desperately a sense of family in their lives.
  + They want to get back to a family mindset, family is the most important thing to them.
  + Desire groups to belong to that feel like family.

**KEEPING THE FAITH** (David Briggs, Association of Religion Data Archives, reports from The National Study of Youth and Religion)

* 1 percent of teens ages 15 to 17 raised by parents who attached little importance to religion were highly religious in their mid-to-late 20s.
* In contrast, 82 percent of children raised by parents who talked about faith at home, attached great importance to their beliefs and were active in their congregations were themselves religiously active as young adults.

HOW DO WE MINISTER IN THIS CULTURE?

**THE MESSAGE**

* + Teach the **inerrant word of God**
    - No more youth groups that are holding tanks with pizza, separate from the church.
  + Put ourselves in their shoes so the message will be relevant and don’t  **worry about trying to produce a hip version of Christianity**
  + Present the faith not as an intellectual exercise. **Show faith as a reference point for life.**
    - We have to show how truths of God are a reference point for experience. We have to show how Scriptures are not just teaching points but what we come to as the standard for evaluating life. Our faith affects experience, affects conduct, affects how we see things. When we present truth as cold, hard, doctrine we are short-changing it. When we present truth as doctrine but also a direct reflection of the nature and character of God, then we are giving them something to relate to.
* **Tolerate doubt**
  + The message doesn’t always make sense to them. They need to work on the message, to examine it. Don’t trivialize, marginalize, or patronize. Allow for questions and discussion.

**THE MENTORING**

* DAVID KINNAMAN - To battle A new standard for viable youth ministry should be – not the number of attenders, the sophistication of the events, or the ‘cool’ factor of the youth group – but whether teens have the commitment, passion and resources to pursue Christ intentionally and whole- heartedly after they leave the youth ministry nest.
  + **Start with an end game**. What is the vision for a student that comes through your ministry? What do you want to see from them?
  + **Model the truth**
    - Why? It is not the videos, pornography, or the music that cause students to move away from the truth as much as the lack of correct models.
  + **Give them opportunities to engage**
    - Help at VBS.
    - Have them do a small group lesson
    - Put them side by side with adults doing service
    - Bring them in on a witnessing situation
      * Research shows that the more students are engaged in the overall life of the church, the stronger their faith. – Kara Powell (Fuller Seminary Youth Institute)
  + **Encourage contact with adults** in the church
    - Teach them to go out during welcome
    - Form prayer partners
    - Try not to have so many segregated events and trips
  + **Love unconditionally**
    - Through thick and thin.
* David Kinnaman – “Disciples cannot be mass-produced. Disciples are handmade, one relationship at a time.”
* Emma Sleet from *You Lost Me*:

**“I want you to be someone I grow up to be like. I want you to step up and live the Bible’s standards. I want you to be inexplicably generous, unbelievably faithful, and radically committed. I want you to be a noticeably better person than my humanist teacher, my atheist doctor, or my Hindu next-door neighbor… I want you to live like you actually believe in the God you preach about. I don’t want you to be like me; I want you to be like Jesus. That’s when I’ll start listening.**

**THE MOVEMENT**

If we view faith as a chore, as a checklist, as mundane, then our kids will view it as such. Our kids don’t need another event in their lives. They don’t need another activity.

* + **Present faith as a journey**. We are not “complete” until glorification.
  + **Present faith as a movement**.
    - A movement of God’s people on mission for Christ.
    - Seek first His kingdom. The move of God means more.
    - Help them to see the bigger picture. This is God’s plan of redemption for the nations, for creation.
    - **Help them to worry more about their faith than the “youth group**.” They are not as interested in bringing the world into the church as they are in bringing their faith into the world. If you make it about “the group” you are not making it a movement.