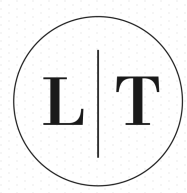


LEADING  
TOMORROW

**STRATEGIES FOR A NEW GENERATION**

Jolene Erlacher, Ed.D.  
[www.leadingtomorrow.org](http://www.leadingtomorrow.org)

# Mobilizing a Risk-Averse Generation



# Generations Today

- *Silent*: Born 1928-1945
- *Boomer*: Born 1946-1964
- *Gen X*: Born 1965-1980
- *Millennials/Gen Y*: Born 1980-1995
- ***Gen Z/Homelanders*: Born 1995-2010**
- *Generation Alpha*: Born after 2010

Based on your experiences and relationships with Gen Z, what do you see impacting their willingness to engage in missions/count the cost?



# Different Cultural Context Impacting Missions Experience for Next Gen

## Silent Gen/Boomers/Gen X

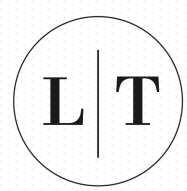
- Modern values & norms
- Cultural morality with biblical influence
- Church attendance the norm
- General understanding and support of missions (1956; Ecuador)

## Millennials/Gen Z

- Post-Modern values & norms
- Post-truth, anti-biblical cultural norms
- Post-Christian: church attendance/influence in decline
- Post-Missions: lack of education regarding missions; changing perceptions of missions (2018; John Allen Chau)

# Sources of Age Diversity

- Life cycle effects: Young people differ from older people, but may resemble them later in life (idealism)
- Period effects: Major events (9/11, recession, pandemic, etc.) affect people differently based on location in life cycle
- Cohort effects: Period events and trends that influence young adults as they are developing their core values (culture shift, education, parenting, technology)



# Cultural Trends Leading to Risk Aversion

- Safety First/Culture of Fear
- Emotions vs. Facts
- Focus on  
Individualism/Identity
- Biblical Illiteracy

## Cultural Trends: Culture of Fear

- Well-being of children has dominated national debate
- Culture of fear driven by 24/7 news and social media
- Fear of parents/culture projected onto young people
- World feels dangerous due to access to information
- Cultural messaging communicates need to be careful, be safe
- Lack of encouragement to take appropriate risks decreases resilience (lawnmower parenting)





## Cultural Trends: Emotions vs. Facts

**post-truth** *adjective*

*Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.*

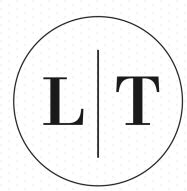
--Oxford Dictionary 2016 Word of the Year

*“Facts are your friends.”*

--Dr. John Delony







*“Tolerance is the new buzzword and the new law of the land, and it has a different definition than it did just a few years ago. Tolerance used to mean that we recognized and respected other people’s beliefs and value systems without agreeing with them or sharing them. **Today tolerance means that everyone’s values, belief systems, and lifestyles should be accepted.**”*

## Cultural Trends: Individualism/Identity

- Individualism is behind the most fundamental changes of the last few decades
- Gen Z most individualistic generation; able to customize and personalize their lives
- Individualism encourages people to feel good about themselves



## Cultural Trends: Individualism/Identity

- Individualistic times tend to be less religious times. Religion involves believing in something bigger than yourself, following certain rules and joining groups, factors that don't fit an individualist mind-set; identity determined by self, not group



## Cultural Trends: Individualism/Identity

- Relationships conflict with message Gen Z hears that: “You don’t need someone else to make you happy—you should make yourself happy.”
- Income inequality or economic uncertainty (culture of fear) drives a sense of needing to get ahead, stand out, be unique (competing in a global market)



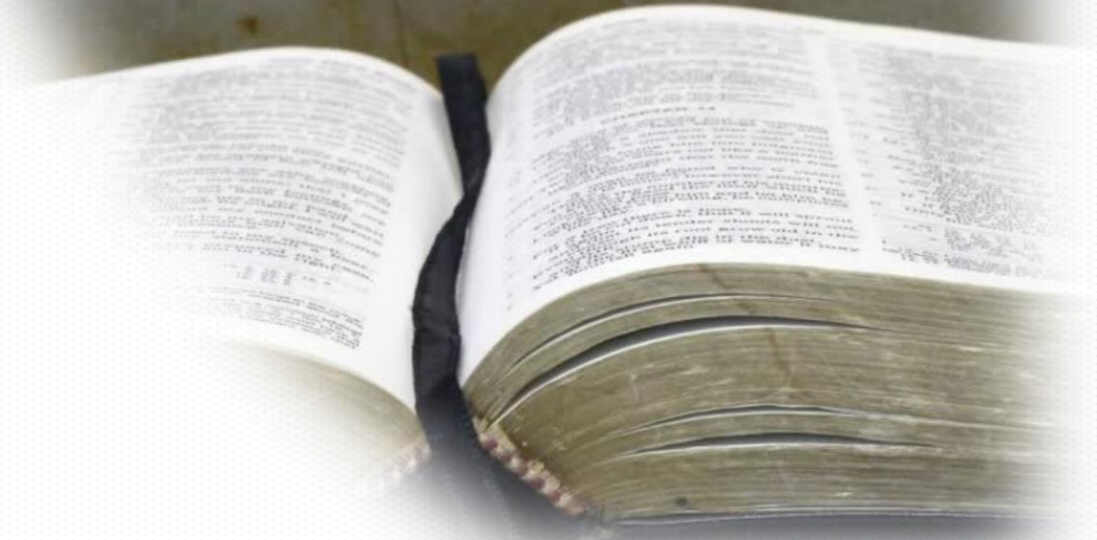


## Cultural Trends: Biblical Illiteracy

Lifeway Research found:

- One in 5 Americans has read the Bible at least once.
- About half of Americans (53%) have read little of the Bible: 13% have read a few sentences, 30% say they have read several passages or stories; 10% has read none of it.
- The more Americans attend church, the more likely they are to read the Bible daily; 39% of those who attend worship services at least once a month read a bit every day.

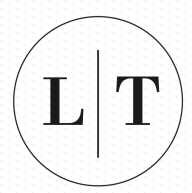
truth



# Mobilization Needs Resulting from Cultural Trends

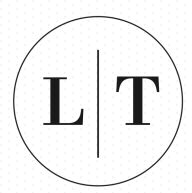
- Need a healthy understanding of & encouragement to take appropriate risks
- Need help processing emotions and understanding facts
- Need discipleship in godly identity
- Need discipleship understanding biblical truth that can sustain them through difficulties



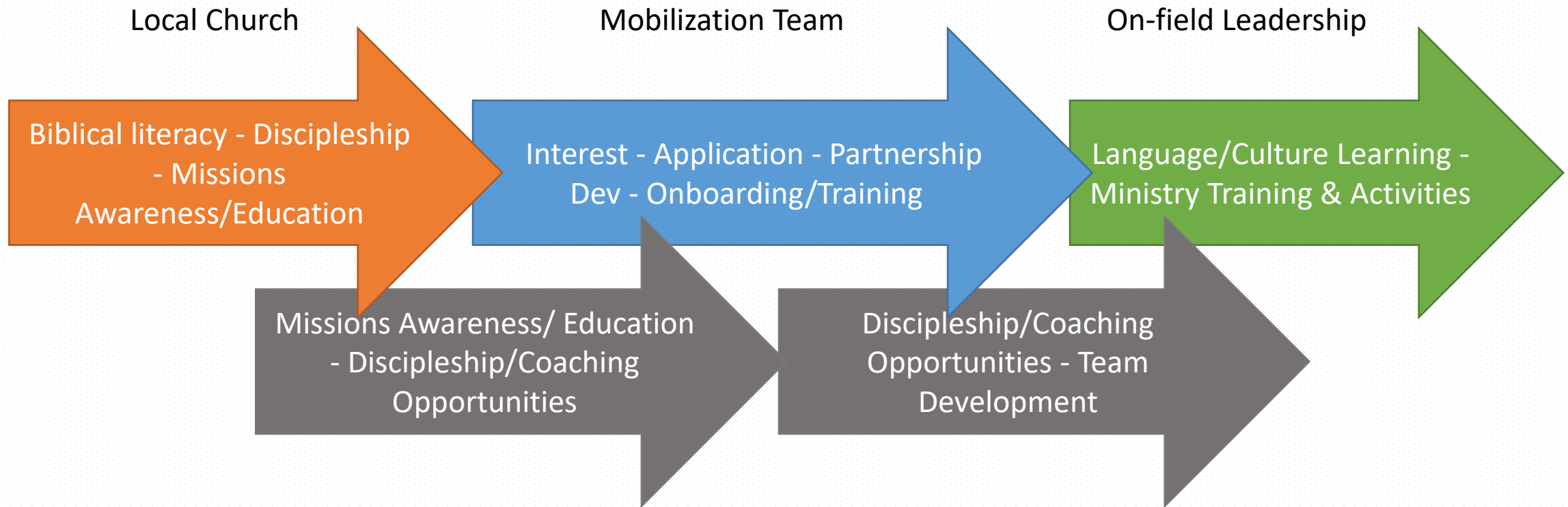


# Traditional Mobilization Pipeline

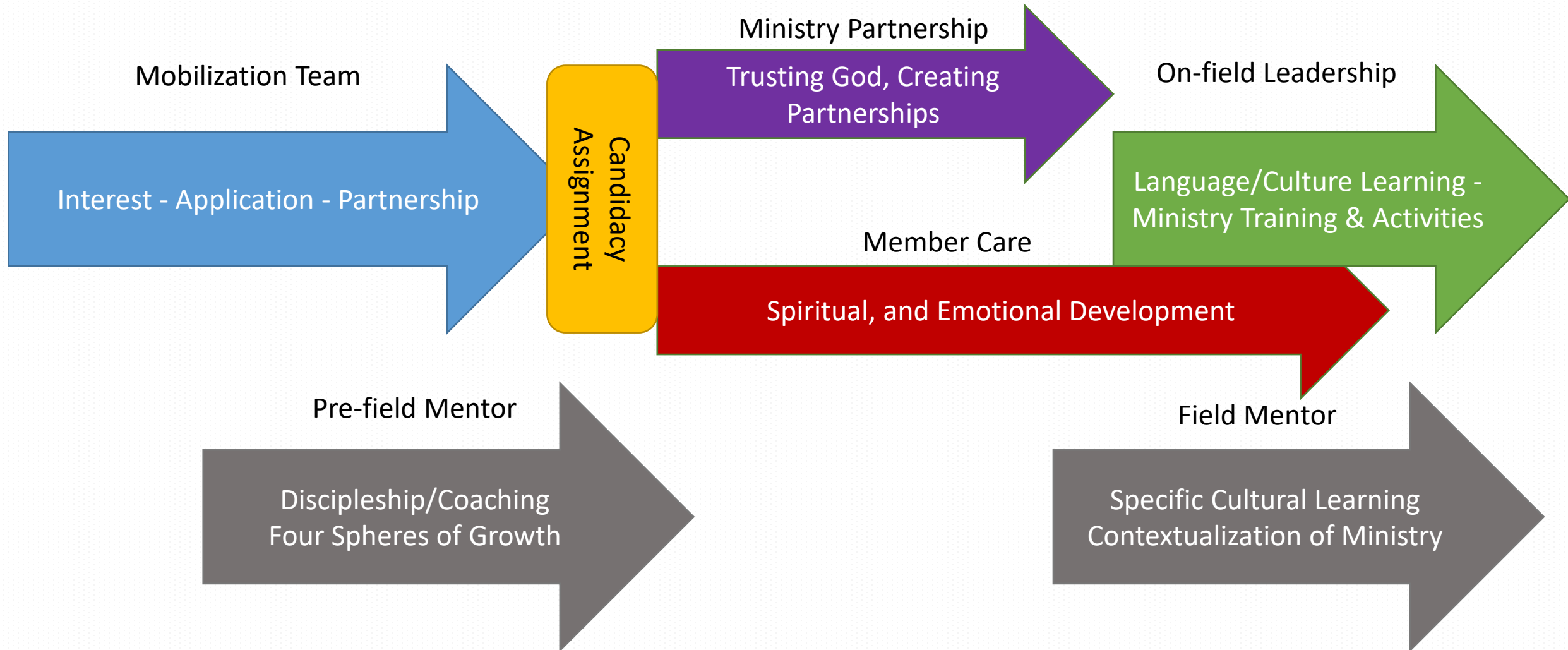




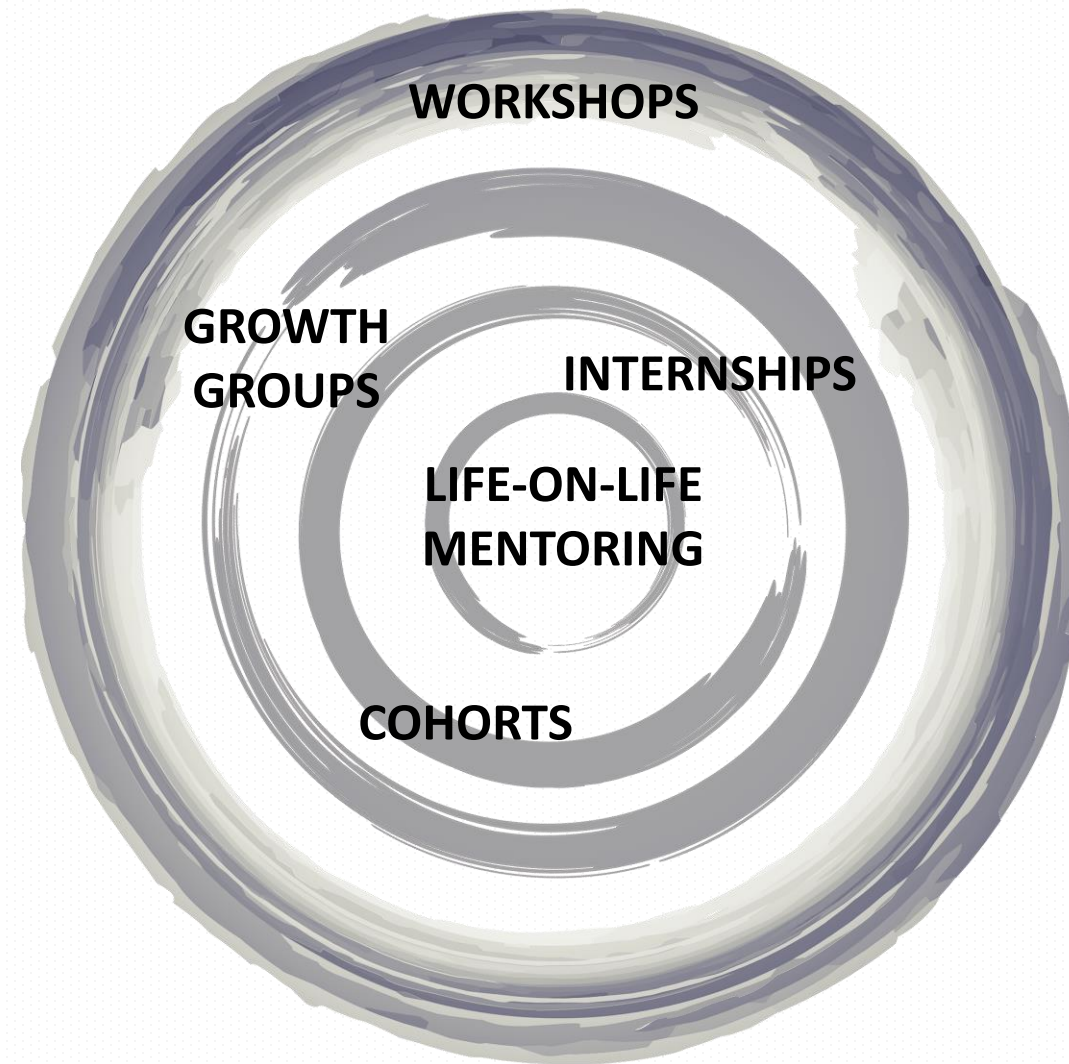
# New Mobilization Pipeline Considerations



# MAF - Waypoints







# Gen Z's Role in the Global Age of Missions

*“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ This phrase, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” **Hebrews 12:26-28***



# Challenges for future generations in missions

- Post-Christian culture; Biblical illiteracy
- Post-missions culture; deconstruction of missions; lack of missions understanding
- Gen Z values: tolerance, individualism, financial security and personal happiness
- Helicopter/Lawnmower parenting; lack of resiliency, confidence
- Culture of fear, “safety first”
- Anxiety about important decisions, fear of failure, and uncertainty about the future (emotion-driven responses)
- Identity and sexual brokenness
- Technology addiction

# Opportunities for future generations in missions

- Innovative ministry methods, teams, and programs (mid-term; loan forgiveness; team models; coaching & mentoring in ministry)
- Opportunities afforded by technology for ministry/work
- Emerging “gig” and global economy; flexible and mobile work/ministry options
- Emergence of the “Global Age” of missions, opportunities to partner in a variety of ways, often to learn
- A resilient remnant of young believers

# Season of a Remnant

- There is a countercultural 10% of young Christians whose faith is vibrant and robust.
- Just under four million 18-29-year-olds in the US who follow Jesus and are resiliently faithful.



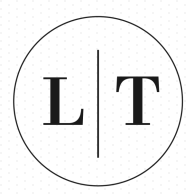


# Season of a Remnant

An implication of the current trends in church attendance is that the young people who are going to step up in this context and say they want to participate in missions are going to mean it because it is not normal, but countercultural. With an overall decline in church attendance, the number of potential missionaries is also declining.

-- Savannah Kimberlin, Director of Published Research at Barna





# The Call of a Remnant to the Global Age of Missions

*“The great commission is still for everyone. But now the mission is from everywhere to everywhere. The future we know is going to be different than the past, and as we look to the future, my hope is that we will listen to voices of the majority world who are already modeling what integral mission with a priority on evangelism can and does look like.”*

--**Ed Stetzer**, Executive Director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center and Dean of the School of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership

*I believe that every person has been called to go...the call to go is from everywhere to everywhere...and God has not announced that He has stopped sending Americans, God has not announced that He has stopped sending Europeans. Thank God that it is the day for Africa to rise up. As Africa, Asia, and Latin America are rising to do missions, God did not say America stop, it is now time for Africa, it is now time for Asia. No, no. We have to work together, this is Kingdom work, and God has called all of us to work.*

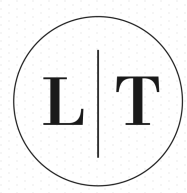
**--Reuben Kachala**, National Director for Frontier Missions International in Malawi



“The speed and interdependence of events had produced new dynamics that threatened to overwhelm the time-honored processes and culture we’d built...I began to view effective leadership in the new environment as more akin to gardening than chess.”

—General Stanley McChrystal, USA (Ret.), and author of *Team of Teams*





*Intergenerational relationships are crucial. The number one predictive factor as to whether or not a young Christian will retain his or her faith is whether that person has a meaningful relationship with an older Christian.*

--Drew Dyck, Next Gen Author

# A Coach Approach to Mobilization

Applying coaching concepts and skills to how we engage, teach, and equip Gen Z. The key skill of coaching is asking the right questions to help the individual work through their thoughts, process information, examine options and develop a plan.

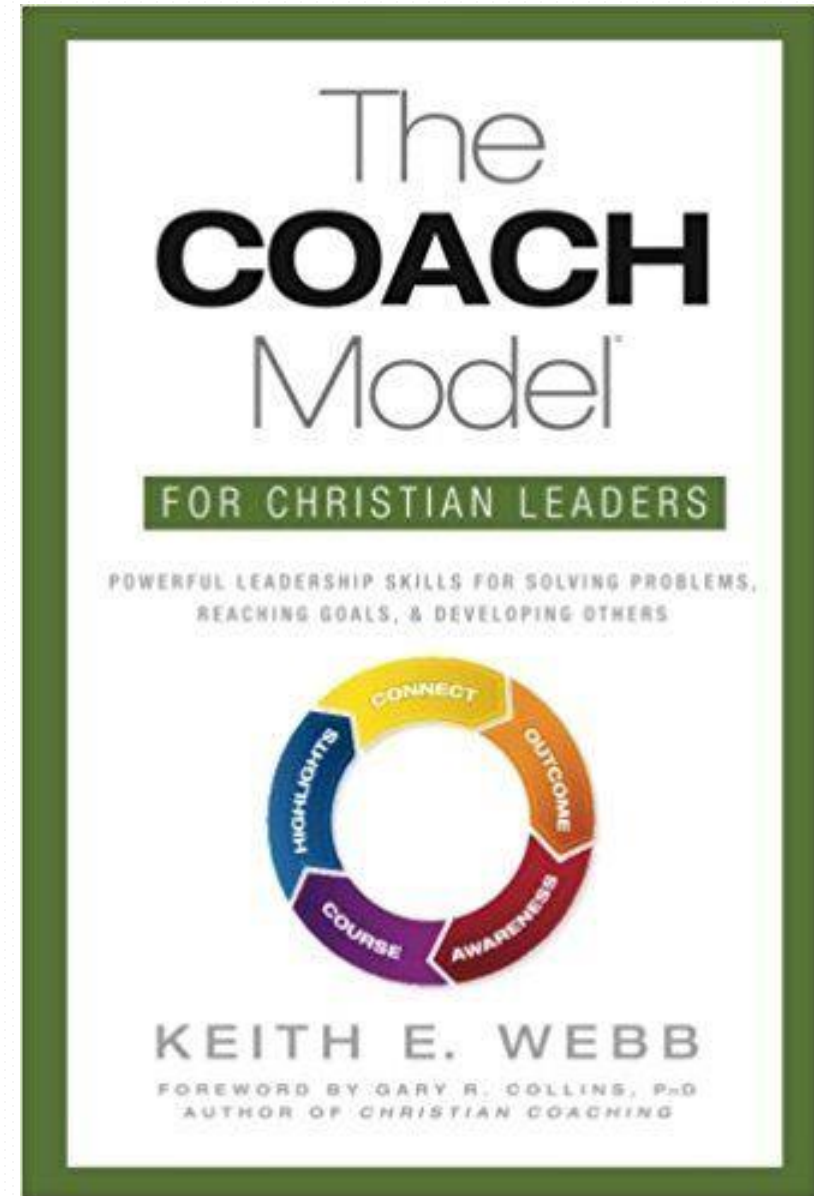
(Guiding interpretation vs. providing information)



## What is Coaching?

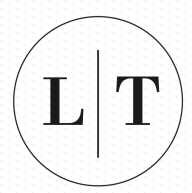
“Coaching is an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to fully live out God’s calling.”

--Keith Webb, *The COACH Model*



Webb, K. E. (2019). *The COACH Model for Christian leaders : powerful leadership skills for solving problems, reaching goals, and developing others*. Morgan & James Publishing.





*Questions are the key to the  
“coach approach”*



# Sample Questions: Processing Emotions

- What negative emotions are you experiencing and where do you think those are coming from?
- What could God be speaking to you in these fears/doubts/emotions?
- Do you see anyone expressing that emotion in the bible and how do they/the Lord respond?
- What things does this concern reveal you need to believe or trust about God?
- In what order do you want this feeling to place amongst the other feelings and beliefs you have about this opportunity?

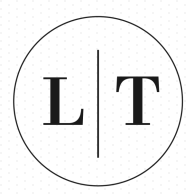




# Sample Questions: Exploring Calling

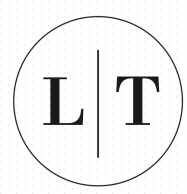
- What are your passions?
- How was God equipped, experienced, and gifted you?
- What are your God-given abilities, strengths, and natural talents?
- What are your learned abilities that you've invested a lot of time and energy into?
- How can you use these things to bring glory to God and hope to other people, instead of bring you recognition, comfort, or security?





# Generation Z Traits to Nurture

- Self Learners/Entrepreneurial
- Curious/Well Informed
- Independent and Individualistic
- Cautious/Realistic
- Diverse
- Future-Focused
- Work for Success
- Resiliency/Courage (Daniel Generation)

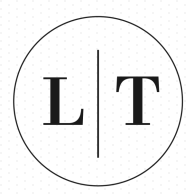


# Mobilization Considerations

- How is your current mobilization pipeline supporting the needs of Gen Zers? What needs might need to be better addressed in your process?
- Are there places to extend support earlier or later in the process? How can you partner with others (churches, on-field leadership, etc.) to do so?
- How are coaching and discipleship currently occurring in the mobilization process? How could these be further developed?

What is one tool/strategy you have found to be very effective in engaging and mobilizing Gen Z?





## Questions & Comments



More resources at  
[www.leadingtomorrow.org](http://www.leadingtomorrow.org)

