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INTERNATIONAL ORALITY NETWORK

July 2014

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## Young Adults Need Storying

**W**hen I led a Sunday School class for our church's college students, I was astounded one Sunday when one long-time Christian and faithful attender blurted out, "Just tell us what to believe." My Baby Boomer generation grew up doubting the Establishment with its political corruption, humiliated televangelists, rampant inflation and unethical business practices. The Baby Boomer mantra was lifted straight from Karl Marx, "Question everything."

This was unique to me. I belonged to a youth group at church, but went to public schools, participated in the student council and played sports. I started looking at these college kids more closely. Over time I realized that it is possible for young adult followers of Jesus to live in a parallel universe that does not intersect with the larger society. Many Millennials that profess Christ were raised, schooled, dated, got jobs, married, and began the cycle all over again raising kids within a Christian bubble.

Millennials are an age grouping in the U. S. that includes the oldest members born in the early 1980s, now in their 30s, and it goes down in ages to those born 14 or 15 years ago. But when I look around churches where I teach and preach, I don't see significant numbers of Millennials beyond those in the most vibrant youth groups. Just look at the 2010 census counts to see the majority of Millennials are unengaged.

And I'm convinced it's not always the crowd that "loves Jesus, but hates the church" described in Steven Crainie's book. Tom Gilson, in a review of the book *unchristian* by David Kinnaman, points fingers at our churches, "This book robbed me of sleep, revealing, as it does, how badly the church is disconnected from younger Americans, and how negatively we are viewed. The source of the disconnect, I'm convinced, is that our discipleship has been weak, sloganistic, not very thoughtful, not loving enough, shallow. Though 29 percent of Americans say they are highly committed to Jesus Christ, only 3 percent espouse a biblical worldview, defined for research purposes as adhering to eight basic doctrines of Christian religion."

Leaders of Bible studies using Bible Storying methods likely have the best chance of effective disciple-making among Millennials. However, I believe two groups of Millennials may have to be evangelized and discipled as if they were two different people groups.

1. Those with a strong evangelical background may need to be challenged more to be evangelistic than those who are from the "lost" ranks.
2. Those with a nominal Christian background are biblically illiterate. An active witness cannot assume any Millennials that they encounter with the gospel know any Bible stories, not to mention basic Christian doctrine. Bible verses used in tracts will be from an unknown context and use words unfamiliar with the lost. Millennials raised in the Christian bubble will have just as difficult time and will likely need cross-cultural training to gain significant relevance among their own peers. Believers need reproducible methods and tools that Storying provides.

Bible stories and Storying methodology provide vital tools for advancing the gospel among those in the next generation to the glory of God. Using Bible stories or proverbs as illustrative points in a conversation can flow naturally and plant gospel seeds for future conversations.

Being a friend that cares is one thing. Being involved in an important community project that they're invited to be alongside you is probably even more important. Sharing life together provides a witness when it is verbalized in a relevant but moving story from God's Word.

If an oral approach is ignored, I'm afraid that young adults will consider Christ is no different from, well, Karl Marx.

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