

Powerful Parenting for March 11, 2020

We hope you find this information useful, inspiring, challenging, helpful, sobering, insightful, etc. If you want to be added or taken off this list, just let us know. If you know someone who could benefit from it, pass it along. If you have any comments, concerns, want to be added or deleted from this list, e-mail david@claytonbaptistchurch.com.

Barna: The State of the Church in America

The Barna Research Group has been tracking all things concerning religion in America for decades. Here are some of their latest findings about the church in America:

- 1. Currently, only 1 in 4 Americans is a “practicing Christian.”** This means that their faith is very important in their lives and they’ve attended church once in the last month (just once!). In 2000, a whopping 45% of Americans claimed to be practicing Christians. In essence, the number of practicing Christians in this country has dropped by nearly half in just 20 years. Where did they all go? Half fell away from consistent faith engagement; the other half became “nones” (atheist, agnostic, none segment). Monthly committed churchgoers are about half as common as they were 20 years ago. But this means that 80 million people see their faith as important!
- 2. One-third fewer Americans attend church weekly now that in 1993.** In this 1990’s, weekly church attendance was about 43%. During 2005-2010, weekly church attendance drifted upward (to a high of 48% in 2009—right after the economy collapsed). Especially after 2012, the decline started and accelerated. 33% fewer Americans attend church weekly now. Reasons include growing numbers of Gen Z and Millennials making up the population, disputes about who gets to lead the church, past and current church scandals and perceptions about the church’s role in politics. One striking find was that the decline in attendance among “Elders” and “Boomers” increased after 2012 (which is opposite the usual trend of older Americans becoming more religious). Surprisingly, more Gen Xers attend church than Millennials.
- 3. Consistent Bible Reading has remained steady for nearly a decade.** Those committed to Bible reading have remained consistent over time. In 1993, 34% of Americans read their Bible regularly. In 2020 it’s 35%. Unfortunately, those who have never read the Bible has jumped 10% in just 8 years. Those who are committed to weekly Bible reading are also committed to their faith.
- 4. A majority of Americans still report praying weekly.** That percentage has remained consistent at 83%.

What does all this mean? Committed Christians are going nowhere. Those marginally attached to Christianity are falling away (and isn’t that what the Bible said would happen?). The change is happening far quicker than thought possible. The reasons are not as easy to nail down. The private practices of faith, like Bible reading and prayer, seem to remain consistent. It’s church attendance that is suffering. And why are different ages drifting away at the same rate? This is what churches and leaders will grapple with.

www.barna.com

Ministry Differences Between Millennials and Gen Z

Many people think these two younger generations are very similar. That’s not the case. Reaching them requires unique approaches to both:

Gen Z is Empathy Powered. They are really into “love thy neighbor” stuff. They are very considerate of those less fortunate and those of different backgrounds. Maybe that’s because Gen Z is the most diverse generation ever. They believe diversity should be cherished. They are involved

in topics like immigration, LGBT rights, and abortion. Their causes are fueled by consideration for “the other.”

Relativism and Objectivity are on the rise. It’s the “relativism of your beliefs but the objectivity of mine.” The last 15 years have shown an increase in tolerance for other people’s views. It’s even to the point that people don’t know how to challenge each other in healthy ways. Oftentimes challenges turn into personal attacks. But Intellectualism is a high priority for Gen Z. Gen Z has far more intellectual hangups than their millennial predecessors. They value facts above “God-stories” (read testimonies) as well.

Junk food is on the decline. Gen Z is way more health conscious than previous generations.

Rap is King. Rap is the most popular genre among Gen Z. There is more lyrical content now (even if one disagrees with it).

Anxiety is higher than ever. High expectations; helicopter parents; lawn mower parents; social media; whatever the reason, anxiety among Gen Z is through the roof. There’s constant pressure on social media, constant pressure for good grades to get into college. There’s pressure to be the best at whatever sport you’re playing. The National Institute of Health says 33% of Gen Z will suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. Compare that to only 20% of Millennials. The current generation doesn’t feel right or safe.

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