

## Kingdom Culture DNA: The Spiritual Genome for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church Trans-generational Christianity

### **How the Church stands obligated to connect the Abraham, Isaac and Jacobs of our lifetime**

American Christianity stands at the proverbial edge ready to either jump and soar into a viable reformation or fall into a quasi-spiritual, European modeled, irrelevant abyss. In order to realize the prophetic catapult, the Church in America must exhibit and transfer to the next generation spiritual DNA that will enable continuity with success, and growth with integrity.

The recent Pew study paints a picture of an American faith narrative that fails in connecting Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For example, the study revealed that 25% of all adults abandoned their childhood faith while 44% changed religious affiliation. Although many in the Evangelical world view the report as an affirmation of numerical gains in membership, the fastest growing segment of the American religious family identifies themselves as non affiliated. Therefore, the question arises; should Evangelicals and Pentecostals be concerned and what can these communities incorporate within their churches in order to assure next generation relevancy?

First, we must come to the full recognition that while in America we measure inheritance and heritage obligations within the rubric of materialism, our greatest gift to our children and posterity flows from the confines of our faith. The greatest asset we can ever leave behind does not carry the descriptor of a trust fund but rather the powerful truth embodied in a simple phrase “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”.

In addition, successful churches and ministries must learn to facilitate a platform where Abraham’s faith converges with Isaac’s passion and Jacob’s tenacity. In other words, leaders must create and implement strategies that connect the generations via the commonality of purpose rather than focusing on the differences. “My concern is that we seem to be shifting entirely on the current generation of young families and forgetting about the previous generation. In the matter of fact, the music and sermons focus exclusively on topics for 20 and 30 year olds, but what about elders of the church. Is there any way to address all three generations at one time?” inquired Craig Anderson, an elder of an Assembly of God congregation in California.

Accordingly, many today struggle with a myriad of differences in respect to outreach strategies as it pertains to the various generations circling the faith marketplace. However, the exponential increase in contemporary worship services, illustrated sermons, digital Christianity (God Tube etc...), all speak to the reality of Christian customization. In the matter of fact, church leaders see hope at the end of the tunnel as churches from Sacramento to New York City offer at least three services on Sunday mornings in order to cater to the worship and sermon delivery preferences of each generation; Boomers, Busters and the digital generation. "This format of creating services for each generation was unheard of 10 or 20 years ago", argues Rev. Ramiro Quiroz, NEXT Generation Specialist and denominational youth leader. "I do not see it as a negative but rather as a positive sign that the Church is adopting business model thinking and incorporating it within the framework of God's business", added Quiroz.

Furthermore, not only must we connect Abraham, Isaac and Jacob via the presentation and delivery platforms of services and ministries offered at the local church but we must also connect the generations via the avenue of a reconciled narrative. "Not only does there exist a generational disconnect but a biblical disconnect", explained Rev. Nick Garza, Fuller Theological Doctoral Candidate. "We connected the previous generations with the Word. The current deficiency as it pertains to biblical literacy stands poised to impede viable transference of our Christian heritage. If anything, the Word will connect our generations and serve as the catalyst for American Christianity for years to come", added Garza.

Simply stated, if the Abrahams of our lifetime stood on the Word, and the Isaacs thrived on worship, then the Jacobs of our lifetime seem to be crying out for Justice. Can we stand as a Church that rises as the nexus of biblical orthodoxy, holiness, worship and justice? Can we rise with the dictum of the Nicene Creed while we worship in Spirit and Truth all the meanwhile contextualizing a narrative of Justice?

At the end of the day, kingdom culture Christians who stand on the pillars of generational connectivity will vociferously cry out in the midst of moral relativism, terrorism, and despair; "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". Then, the God who provided the ram, the wells and the ladder will do it again for our generation and for the generations yet to come.