

**THE CHALLENGE OF THE NOW GENERATION  
AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR NAZARENE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

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## THE CHALLENGE OF THE NOW GENERATION

A generation has come of age since I left these sacred precincts. Because I am partly responsible for it as a father, pastor, and professor, I thought it might be advantageous to share together some observations in the areas where I am most familiar. Time for January 6, 1967 calls this generation "The Now Generation" and it has already become the subject of several discussions. But he can best be viewed from the Campus. Perhaps he presents a challenge to Nazarene Religious Education and Theology as well as to its Evangelistic Mission.

Of course this isn't the first time this generation has been analyzed. No less than eighteen studies have appeared in current events magazines since 1961. Look in 1961 called it "The Explosive Generation, January 3, 1961, because young people are the leaders of revolt and marches in all parts of the world. Newsweek before that year was out, called them "The Fun Worshippers" - December 11, 1961 -. Since only about five percent are activists, Saturday Evening Post - December 23, 1961 - said it was the "The Cool Generation" just what we have made them and very often what we have said they were not. Saturday Review - December 8, 1962 - in 1962 suggested they were the result of "The Television and Advertising Generation" and were a new generation committed to some good causes and identified with the deprived. By the time 1963 Saturday Evening Post - October 12, 1963 - was calling them

"The Tormented Generation" because of their uncertainty, anguish, tension, and suicidal records. U. S. News and World Report - February 17, 1964 - in 1964 could see a "serious, but spoiled generation". Time - January 19, 1965 - and Newsweek - March 22, 1965 - carried articles in 1965 portraying their fads and fancies, but a psychiatrist in the Chicago Daily News - May 15, 1965 - called it an "abandoned generation" because parents have given them too much too soon and have left them too much to their own control. Last Fall, Look - September 20, 1966 - saw them as an "open generation" trying to find that which is missing in life, and also in 1966 Paul C. Harper, Jr. in Vital Speeches - November 1, 1966 - said they are preoccupied with give topics: money, sex, automobiles, education, and the war. Now Time chooses the "under twenty-five age group" as its 1967 Man of the Year because they will soon represent the majority of the population, are characterized by accelerated change engrossed in the culture, highly pragmatic, finding and sensing meaning on many levels, issue-oriented . . . yet influenced by few organized movements and widening a generational gap which may be the crucial social issue in the next fifty years.

What is so significant is that they are "not merely a new generation, but a new kind of generation". Never has one been so assertive, so articulate, so well-educated or so worldly". They are a vista of change accelerating in every direction. More has happened in many fields in their short lifetime than has happened in a dozen previous generations. They have seen Buck Rogers trans-

disconcerting to realize that the arena is being removed from the college classroom. The college age may be too late to do any further improvement. Studies made by Philip E. Jacob in Changing Values in College - New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers 57 - conclude that they come with a set of values and in the same set. A boys club leader in Chicago recently reported that they were turning to a pre-adolescent age in order to correct and improve potential gang members. If this is not successful, he says he will go to the 6-8 year old group. The President of the United States proposed January 10, 1967 lowering the age of the Head Start Program to three year olds to reach children before it is too late.

America is concerned about its end product. We in the Colleges are concerned about the kind of person we produce. Studies are constantly underway to try to improve. But we are becoming increasingly concerned about the product coming to us.

All of the resources of all our institutions should be brought to bear upon the problem of challenging the New Generation which has the possibilities of doing so much. The generational gap has always existed, but a chasm need not develop. We can adjust to some of the differences. Change need not bother us. Some of it will be taken in stride - just as the father refused the auto to the son because he walked when he was that age; the future father will refuse the rocket ship by saying, " why, when I was you age...."

I...". Charles Malik says that change only touches the less important . . . never the heart and essence . . . . Far from burning incense to the god of change, we must therefore humbly give God the praise - Saturday Review August 6, 1966.

So this message must be proclaimed, and if it is proclaimed someone must warn, encourage and point a proper direction. Perhaps my purpose for this paper is to suggest that Nazarene Christian Education has some possibilities to become an interpreter. However it has its dangers. We add the fourth "B", brains, to Stuart Chase's three - Bombs, Babies, Bulldozers which could destroy us. The educated man brings into reality the gadgets which could destroy us, yet it is the "Brainy" crowd that sits and dreams in a theoretical world little caring what goes on around them. Hitler rose to power while the German Scholars were enamored with their abstract thinking. The great philosopher, Karl Jasper, has admitted he neglected seeing anything wrong in the Nazi rise to power - SR February 5, 1966. Eric Hoffer says "The intellectuals didn't let out a peep as the Stalinist cult arose in Russia".

But we are living in a time when the resources of the intellectual world are being brought to bear upon the problems of our world. The educators have been speaking out. By this time, you are asking what does all of this have to do with us? Just this: young people are ready to act and are prepared to do something; but the adolescent can solve the problems of the world, but he cannot solve his own problems. Therefore, he needs a leader. Arthur

A, Cohen, in speaking of Judaism in his new book - reviewed in Saturday Review, January 26, 1963, p 49 - observes: "We have no prophets now. Instead we have theologians", So my message is a plea for the return of the prophet - the interpreter of the times and communicate it to a generation which is ready to act.

In spite of being accused of defensiveness and prejudice, one notes that we have been greatly concerned about the higher institutions of learning in our church as it affects the ministry. Several studies have been made and excellent suggestions have come, and we welcome them. But wonders if we are asking enough questions?

While we share some of the blame for a shortage, we have been producing good laymen. Our Olivet Alumni Study - 1965 - shows 72% of our lay graduates are active in the work of the church. The percentage still Nazarene corresponds closely with our present student body. The number of ministers has decreased over the years, but only ten percent of the Junior-Senior High School students out of 1200 on our campus last Fall came to our religion career seminar. Seventeen percent of our present student body indicate some full-time Christian service as a vocation. Recent services by a General Superintendent, Missionary, and Music Professor show one has little difficulty getting Olivetians to volunteer for service if God calls.

The image of the average Nazarene minister is not as bad in

the minds of Freshmen and Sophomores. 65 % of them see him as a soul winner or burden bearer; 60% see him as a godly person. The highest bad characteristic is only 15%.

Our Alumni Study shows we have been successful in most every area of our objectives except the ones which make us a college per se . . . academic excellence. A cartoon film still attracts more students than a lyceum lecture. Asking ministers on four districts what was the latest book they had read proved to be such an embarrassing conversation topic that it forced this writer to change the subject. So we have not instilled in them too great a desire for books or the theoretical world.

We shall produce more Christian workers, but we ask what happens to the minister after we have trained him? Is Thomas Mullen correct in saying that we have a lot of insignificant men doing insignificant work and that we have enough good men fit for the ministry, but we do not have a ministry that is fit for our best men - The Renewal of the Ministry. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963. p. 35.

The growing number of ordained elders coming to us doing other work to educate their children (for ministers children drop out more frequently than we like, more often than children of custodians) causes us to ask if the culture in which we live doesn't demand something more than we are giving. The missionary is provided some freedom from certain worries in this area, but little

is being done in the States for the minister. Tension develops every time a student quotes a church leader as authority to justify a major in education in order to make a living in a small pastorate. Trying to mix two professions is impossible; one or the other suffers and it isn't fair to the church or the school.

This leads to a second question - how much or how far has the culture affected us? Some would respond quickly like the man who didn't believe in pre-natal influences - he said his mother dropped a record just before he was born and it hadn't affected, affected, affected, affected - him. One only needs to look at statistics and see that the value of church buildings has increased more than seven times faster, and the total raised for all purposes has increased at least three times faster than the church membership in the past twenty years.

Dr. Edwin Espy has remarked that those who take a stand of anti-involvement in the culture are the ones most often victimized by it. Are we victims of our culture or can we rise above it and transform it?

In a recent assembly the leader wanted the pastors to report the number of conversions by faith, but few reported this item in comparison to the budgets paid because the back wall over the pulpit had a huge chart of those paid. What we advertise or propagandize, we sell as being important. One District Church School Board Chairman cried that all Nazarenes could talk about was Sunday School.



attendance, but looking at his page in the district paper, this is what one sees. A survey of such papers might reveal what we consider to be important.

It is interesting to note that the Cadillacs driven by five full time evangelists on our campus recently is quite different from the Ford with two gas tanks driven by an early General Superintendent to my campus a generation ago. This speaks volumes to our students about the effect of the culture upon us.

No one can return to the good old days, but the frightening thing is that the now generation is more often influenced by the present than the past. They know more about Roy Rogers than Buck Rogers. With all due respect to a great church leader one admired, they know more about Charlie Chaplin than J. B. Chapman. It does little good to quote any older generation unless they can see some of that generation in us. Bishop Emsley of the Methodist Church has said that the church has become so much like the world it is powerless to change the world. The Editor of our Kankakee Daily Journal quotes one of his reporters who studied news accounts of the churches as saying, "Reading these, one gets the idea that all they are interested in could be Bazaars, Bingo, Buildings". J. S. Coleman suggests that the modern adolescent needs some contrasts in our society with which to judge - The Adolescent Society. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961. Perhaps we need a return of the dedication of people like the Rechabites of Jeremiah 35,

but G. Campbell Morgan suggests these were bound by the trammels of tradition. We need to ask, can we tolerate some contrasts and still have unity? Perhaps our mission stations could teach us a few lessons, for we have been able to absorb cultural differences there much better than we have in the States. This is not to advocate the dumping of our traditions, for Elton Trueblood warns, in a new book for Spring, we face an "orphan generation" cut off from the past, if we fail to see many of the ideas of today are repetitions of older errors. - Christianity Today, January 6, 1967.

Augustine's concept of grace becomes the basis for a Professor in the University of Chicago to answer the "Theothanatologists", to use a Gridexian phrase. A graduate student there, asking twenty simple Bible and Religious questions, diagnosed the mental illness of 90% of 50 cases chosen in a random sample. This does not mean that one who knows the Bible will be a psychiatrist, but it does mean the age-old problems are similar. In the modern controversy over nature, some of the great men of the past have taught the stewardship responsibilities, as one pointed out that Martin Luther was appointed keeper of the community fishpond. Martin Marty remarked in a student conference last Fall that ours is not a purely secular society; scratch the surface, one can see the religious influence.

A third question deals with our methods. Someone has asked, which is better to do the right thing in a wrong way or the wrong thing in a right way? To answer that question is like asking, have

stopped beating your wife? Either answer gets one in trouble. But the pragmatism of the Now Generation reminds me of that Church School Board Chairman who said to his district convention about attendance: "I don't care how you do it, just so you do it". When he was questioned, he thought it best to change the subject by asking for a dollar for the offering for the Assembly Leader who had just lost his beautiful suits by theft. Many of our success stories have a certain pragmatic ring to them. We Accept whatever gets the job done, but we must be willing to give an account for the consequences of what we inadvertantly teach. This may be what they are learning more often than what we deliberately espouse as our ends. I have seen some evil come from Bible Quizzing in the years I have been associated with it at Olivet. Bickering over rules has brought hard feelings. I heard the other day of one boy who has figured a way to beat the game. When his father told him it was cheating, he responded, they deliberately foul in a basketball game to get the vall so why can't I give aid to my team-mate - all I will get is a foul.

What we teach by worshipping may be more than we can deliberately teach in the classroom. In a recent meeting, the pastor went through his form while saying he was free from form. Students seeing worship leaders and visitors talking on the platform during service learn how to "turn off" the evangelist in a

similar fashion. Need I go on?

Fourth, are we victims of our own success in our emphasis upon a personal experience in the two crises of salvation and entire sanctification? Reading of the number at the altar shows we prize the crisis quite highly. Some must be repeaters. One of our greatest problems with college students is the fact that they have tried and tried, and failed because of some problem which needed to be understood, so they have failed, so why try again? I realize it is easier to tame a fanatic than to put life into a corpse, but one hates to hear a person deride his earlier childhood experiences which were real. Another one of his problems is related to growth and development of his body. For instance, one leader among the men estimates 60% of the spiritual problems of men students relate to sex - masturbation or human arousal. Another area deals with the generational gap - parents and children are quite far apart. Parents have no time for them.

This brings the fifth question into focus. What do we do with a generation that is sensing meaning on many levels and is trying to understand his humanness? It is true we have written about holiness and the human element, but we probably could spell it out much more plainly. A recent chapel series on ethics was criticized by our student newspaper because we didn't become more specific to their actual problems.

Quite often their questions relate to the day by day de-

cisions, not often in the realm of right versus wrong, but in the area of the good and the better. Their future depends upon the decision to turn or not turn the knob on this or that door of opportunity. One young man might still be alive if he had not been persuaded to stay for the revival service and had driven back to the campus earlier. Perhaps he has chosen the higher value, but a needed voice is gone.

Maybe we need more Journals and Letters of leaders in print. John Wesley's materials in these areas provide valuable source material even today. Students tell us that the best chapel programs are when Faculty members just relate a testimony of experience.

q John Wesley defended the use of one's mental powers, "I neither teach nor believe that the ordinary operations of the Spirit do overpower the natural faculties" - Letters, IV, p.123. An honest and reverent decision made by a committed Christian in the best light and knowledge he has at the moment must be the will of God or else God is obligated to open or close the door of opportunity. The Bible often gives credit to God for actions and decisions made in a very human way. God doesn't often speak in audible voices or extraordinary manners - most often in the day by day human workings. One might ask if the Now generation has to turn to the secular city for advice or can he sanctify all of life?

The sixth question is how can we reach an "issue-oriented" generation who identifies especially now with the deprived and under-privileged? We shouldn't have any less emphasis upon the necessity of dealing with sin in man, but have we taken a stand when we refused to take a stand in many prominent and clear cases?

A study of our Sunday School literature made by an unprejudiced non-Nazarene rates us good and excellent in all objectives except the Church and the Christian Social Order, where we rate only a fair grade. Perhaps this is partially due to the lack of a doctrine of the Church and the Millenium, as much as our emphasis upon personal regeneration versus social improvement.

Faced with the warning of Herbert Wallace Schneider in The Puritan Mind. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1958, p.264 - that when people lose their piety they turn to doing good, I still ask, where do our people get their social and political ideas? From the labor unions, the street hawkers, the coffee klatch? Personal regeneration and entire sanctification are primary, but my sanctified Nazarene parents still would insist upon a Negro going to the back door. Pentecost didn't change Peter until God sent a special revelation. What is our obligation in a day where issues are so important to dignifying every man? I do not advocate lawless marching, but I wonder if we have courage to put truly integrated pictures in our literature besides the standard missions "Jesus loves the little children" picture? Perhaps our Kankakee ministers had just reason, but they refused to sign a

statement in the paper recently recognizing racial brotherhood and the wrongs our society has placed upon the Negro. Yes, we witnessed!

The seventh question the Man of the Year raises is related to the institutional church. Can we reach them through it? I am not so ready to give up on the church. I could state a case for the organization, but God quite often bypasses the regular channels. This is seen in the Bible in Melchizedek, Jehphthah, Amos, Bethlehem, Jesus, the disciples, Paul. At times centrifugal forces have pushed men like Luther, Wesley, Bresee out of the older groups. The fifth form of Christian nurture, the Sunday School, started outside the church.

J. Donald Butler, says, "While the efforts were genuinely benevolent it should not be assumed they were nothing but benevolent, for they were mixed with fear, fear of what would happen to the so-called better people, and to English society as a whole if these evils of a newly created society were allowed to thrive and grow unchecked . . . . Few if any great social advances are achieved by pure motivation. Sometimes rather good things are done for rather bad reasons" - Religious Education. New York: Harper & Row, 1962, pp. 55-56.

God has worked in Youth For Christ and is working in Campus Crusade for Christ International. Will He more often work outside than inside?

James D. Smart says God sometimes tears down what we have built, theologically and practically, in order that he may clear the ground for a planting and building of his own. - The Interpretation of Scripture. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961, p. 307.

Dr. Trueblood states that one of the greatest theological gains of the twentieth century has been widespread recognition of the necessity of the Church in any vital Christianity . . . the fellowship is intrinsic and is never optional, if the life of Christ is to make an impact on the world - Christianity Today. January 6, 1967. There is a possibility of doing something for Kenneth S. Latourette, a leading Church historian, has said, "how can anyone talk about a post-Christian era, when there has never been a Christian era?"

With the corrective possibilities within the church fellowship I believe it is time for us to spell out a doctrine of the Church. In closing may we ask - is it not time to really evaluate the work of the local church, not only just from a clinical point of view which is gaining greater success, but also to see if we are really accomplishing our objectives in the life of the individual?

Perhaps the Now Generation can remind us that Now is the time of salvation . . . if we will hear His voice and harden not our hearts. . . for they represent not just one half of the population and evangelistic potential but 70% of all those we reach.



## A D D E N D U M

NDCEF CONFERENCE - August 22-24, 1967

I. Since this paper was presented in Kansas City in January, other articles have appeared in leading periodicals to verify the challenge of this generation. Kiplinger's Changing Times - June, 1967 - has an article suggesting they are a "Restless Generation" ready to go into action to change the world the adults have made.

Dr. Milo Kaufman asked University of Illinois students what they would like to hear in a Centennial Symposium on pressing issues: (1) What invests me with value as an individual? (2) What absolutes, what givens, impose limits upon my freedom? - Christianity Today, February 17, 1967.

W. D. Robertson in a speech, "The Second Shock Wave", repeats they are a "Revolting Generation" that "respects action more than slogans". Vital Speeches. April 15, 1967, p. 411. Characteristics (1) So many of them (2) physically impressive (3) uninhibited (4) concerned (5) action.

II. Survey of Scripturama Contestants - O. N.C. April, 1967 - 72 responses - by James Line

1. Appeal is to the younger teen-ages and some continuing interest  
(1) Range is 13-19 years - median 16  
(2) 55% are Juniors and Seniors (20) each but 52% of these have had 3 or more years of experience. Only 25% of these

are first year; 15% of Seniors are first year Quizzers.

(3) 43% of all 72 have 3 or more years of experience. Only 30% are first year Quizzers.

2. Above average students. A = 18% - B = 69%
3. Appeals to girls (42) more than boys (30).
4. Some indication that this is a compensatory activity for the lack of participation in the more popular school activities.
  - (1) Very few participate in the spectator-contact sports.
    - A. Boys - 3 football, 6 basketball, 14 other sports.
    - B. Girls - 3 cheerleaders, 2 basketball, 7 other sports.
  - (2) 54% belong to school choral group.
  - (3) Reading and church activities dominate spare time. 20% each.
  - (4) 94% felt their church provided enough activities.
 

(5) 57% will receive a special award from Parents or Church.
5. Average or below school leadership - High church leadership and participation.
  - (1) 14% school class officer
  - (2) 23.6% student council member
  - (3) 40% school club officer
  - (4) 62.5% NYPS officer
  - (5) 32% Sunday School teacher
  - (6) 86.1% attend church camp
  - (7) 33-1/3% are international instituters

6. Influences religious experience and other decisions -  
although not necessarily toward religious careers.
  - (1) 20% felt Quizzing influenced decision on education.
  - (2) 47% felt Quizzing changed their views, convictions, attitudes toward life.
  - (3) Only 17% are choosing religion or missionary majors in college.
7. Dominates a considerable amount of their time.
  - (1) 10 to 500 hours
  - (2) Median - 50-74 hours
  - (3) 10 hours per week was a response of several
8. No greater tensions or emotional activity than other, but it is the highest emotional activity in which they have participated.
  - (1) 77% felt it was highest emotional activity in which they ever participated.
  - (2) 29% felt health problem nausea, fainting, extreme headaches.
  - (3) 5% felt nervous tension too strong.
9. The teams could be smaller - individual representatives.
  - (1) Sixteen leading scorers made 56% of total score.
  - (2) 40% of individual scores made one half of team score.
  - (3) 75% of individual scorers made more than 36% of team score.
10. It is not a witnessing medium.
  - (1) 36% felt their high school friends were interested or enthused about it.
  - (2) 35% felt it was square, waste of time or scorn.

### III. Youth Problems

1. Survey of Lutheran youth - Merton P. Strommen. Profiles of Church Youth. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966.

	<u>Pastor's rating</u>
1. Vocational	3
2. Instruction in Christian View of Sex, Courtship, marriage	5
3. Christian outreach	2
4. Problem with self	6
5. Spiritual growth	1
6. School relationships	4
7. Family relationships	4

The generational gap is great between pastors and youth.

2. Survey of 100 Olivet Co-eds.

1. 55% felt parents understood them in high school
2. 61% felt church helped in social growth
3. 44% felt church helped in intellectual growth
4. 89% felt church helped in spiritual growth
5. Parents (61%) influenced them the most to accept faith.  
Friends (15%) - Minister (13%) - Church leader (5%)  
Relative (3%)
6. Local church has helped in personal concern of:
  - a. vocation - yes (27) - no (13)
  - b. view of sex - yes (37) - no (63)
  - c. Christian outreach - yes (55) - no (45)
  - d. problems of self - yes (48) - no (52)
  - e. spiritual growth - yes (85) - no (15)
  - f. family relationships - yes (49) - no (51)
7. Only 35% believe the church is doing an adequate job in promoting its message to the world.

### IV. Church Growth

1. Top nine Sunday Schools 585 in attendance since 1949.
  - (1) 61.5% are still on the list range from 1-8
  - (2) 56% show a loss in 15 years
  - (3) 13% show less than one gain per year
  - (4) 10.4% show 10 gain per year
  - (5) 41.3% show less than 3 per year
  - (6) 1.2% show 21 gain per year
  - (7) 34% show 3-9 per year
2. Only 5 of the churches on the list of the top 50 in giving are in cities of less than 25,00 - Herald of Holiness, May 3, 1967.