

Equipping the Saints:  
Being the Church  
for Young Adults and All Ages  
in the midst of protests and a  
pandemic

Conversations with the saints of  
John Calvin Presbytery

Saturday, August 22, 2020 • 10-11:30 a.m.

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# What is the plan for this morning?

- Introductions and prayer
- Being the Church:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:1-6
- Interruption vs. Disruption
- Four practices shaping ministry with youth and young adults.
- Being the Church:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16-17



By way of  
introductions...

- Share your name
- Share your church
- Tell one thing that is giving you life these days.





Adriatic Sea

Thessaloniki

Aegean Sea

Corinth

Athens

Ephesus

Mediterranean Sea

# What was the Corinthian church like?

Paul arrives around 50 CE after establishing churches in Philippi and Thessalonica. Spends at least 18 months there.

Combination of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. Mostly gentiles yet knowledgeable about Jewish practices (e.g. sabbath and circumcision).

Combination of wealthy and poor, powerful and powerless.

Diversity is a gift and an incredible challenge.

Gathered in a home, usually the largest home available.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:1-6 (NRSV)

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:1-6 (The Message)

Does it sound like we're patting ourselves on the back, insisting on our credentials, asserting our authority? Well, we're not. Neither do we need letters of endorsement, either to you or from you. You yourselves are all the endorsement we need. Your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you. Christ himself wrote it—not with ink, but with God's living Spirit, not chiseled into stone, but carved into human lives—and we publish it.

Are we in an  
interruption or a  
disruption?





# Interruption

- An episodic, temporary pause in or suspension of our ongoing ministry.
- This pandemic and the protests over injustice have caused us to stop what we are doing for now.
- When this interruption is over, we will resume what we were doing.
- “This is just temporary. We need to just hold on and maintain until all this is over.”
- “I can’t wait until we can get back to normal.”
- “It will be so good to return to doing things just like we did before all this started.”

# Disruption

- A dramatic pause in or suspension of our ongoing ministry that affects the future of our ministry.
- More than simply stopping how we have been doing ministry, a disruption causes a shift in one's identity, culture, and practice of ministry.
- When this pandemic is over and when the protests of injustice have reached a new state of being, we will be transformed. We will be different.
- "I am seeing my calling and work differently now."
- "I am not sure exactly how, but I know we will be changed when we get to the other side of this."
- "This is the time to innovate. This is a time for imagination and agility. We need to be exploring new ways of ministry."



# Generations according to Barna.com

## Barna Research Gen Z report

- Gen Z: Born 2002-2020 (Birth-18 years-old)
- Millennial: Born 1984-2001 (19-36 years-old)
- Buster/Gen X: Born 1965-1983 (37-55 years-old)
- Boomer: Born 1946-1964 (56-74 years-old)
- Silent: Born before 1946 (75+ years-old)

Four emerging descriptions of younger Millennials and older Gen Z

- They are screenagers.
- They are very diverse.
- They are career-driven.
- Their worldview is post-Christian and global.

# 1. Church must engage a digital generation

- 67% of younger Millennials and older Gen Z use screen media 5+ hours per day.
- Digital technology is shaping how they think (visually and in brief spurts) and interact with others.
- There is a rise in young adults (persons in their 20s and 30s) seeking “technology sabbaths” but the number is still small.
- Technology connects young people to the globe.







## 2. Church must directly address racial injustice.

- Millennials (61%) and Gen Z (64%) say the U.S. “definitely” has a race problem. 28% of both generations agree it is somewhat true.
- Millennials (75%) and Gen Z (68%) say they are motivated to address racial injustice.
- Majorities also agreed that the history of slavery still impacts the United States and that the Church is more likely to be part of the problem than part of the solution.
- Other injustices, especially gender and sexual identity were named but much less so.



**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

### 3. Church must directly deal with loneliness and anxiety in young adults.

- Despite (and some say because of) the many hours spent on social media, record numbers of young adults report deep feelings of loneliness and anxiety.
- “Looking at other people’s posts makes me feel bad about the lack of excitement and friends in my own life.”
- These numbers anecdotally have risen during the pandemic and protests.
- Last month, Barna reported that 25% of young adults said they feel lonely all the time. Among all US adults, it was 12%

Video clip of Samsung Galaxy commercial:  
The perfect day.



## 4. Church must be missional more than attractional with young adults

- Barna reports that interest in doing something to help others has risen to 72% last month from 64% last year.
- 47% said that “sharing one’s faith” was wrong and 59% said the church is not relevant to me. 48% said they find God other places.
- Being missional means going out and meeting people where they are. Being attractional means we try to offer what we can and wait for them to come to us.

## Attractional Church

We evangelize (or outreach) by marketing to people to get them to come to us. We try to produce events and worship gatherings that are attractive to a demographic.

**Come to Church**

**Is different from**

## Missional Church

Our evangelism is Relational. We invest in people and society, living out our faith in Christ. We find ways to go and live like Christ with people in their regular, everyday activities. Living like Christ is distinctly different, but not irrelevant.

**Be the Church  
with me**

Video clip from Sister Act.



Four practices shaping ministry with youth and young adults...

1. Church must engage digital generation.
2. Church must directly address racial injustice.
3. Church must directly deal with loneliness and anxiety in young adults.
4. Church must be missional more than attractional with young adults.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16-17 (NRSV)

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16-17 (The Message)

Because of this decision we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone, a new life burgeons! Look at it!

Video clip from Google Commercial from  
Super Bowl.