

WHY ARE

# GEN Z

TURNING UP AT CHURCHES?

JOEL

KIRA

ISABELLA

And what are they looking for? A conversation and reflections with Isabella Senior, Kira Williams-Geohaghan and Joel Hawksworth

**CHURCH-GOING AND CHRISTIANITY AMONG GEN Z - WHAT ARE YOU SEEING?**

**ISABELLA:** Nationally in my role I have heard lots of stories of exactly what the Quiet Revival talks about - people just turning up to church, especially young men. I have heard people trying to do things with young adults, and it working.

I think it's happening towards the younger bracket of young adults - more Gen Z (aged 14-26) than millennials (born between

1981 and 1996). There is a lot of curiosity – they see content online, or have dreams - and then follow up. They just Google ‘church near me’. It’s been really exciting to see.

But there’s another side – it’s a ‘quiet’ revival, which means not everyone is seeing that. I know for many this is not happening. Or not happening for them yet: I think it’s like a tide, that keeps going. It’s hitting some people first, but then it will keep going, so I’m encouraging people to prepare.

**KIRA:** I’m based in the Heart of England Baptist Association at Cannon Street Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham. We’re a very diverse area in terms of culture as well as social economic class, situated on one of the main roads of Handsworth, so there’s a variety of people. I run the young adult ministry at my church as well.

Post-Covid we’re seeing so many new faces and so many families come through our church, which is amazing. But it is less so with young adults. I would say there’s more of a quiet revival in different areas of the country. I agree with Isabella: there’s probably a domino effect, slowly coming our way.

My question is therefore: how do we as a church, a Baptist church, prepare for that?

**JOEL:** I’m based in Newcastle upon Tyne, in a coastal town called Whitley Bay, and the quiet revival I think is booming in the north east. It’s closer to the city centre, where we have two universities. In my church, we’ve seen a handful, probably around 10 new young adults.

But I’ve seen it more outside of my church context than I have in any church. The culture is changing. I’ve had loads of conversations with people I wouldn’t have expected to. The moment they know I’m a Christian, they’re asking me all sorts. Some are trying to disprove it, but generally they’re more curious.

And then I’ve seen radical transformations. There’s one guy who gave up cocaine because he knew he needed something better. He asked me what to do. And I was like, “Try Jesus.” So he did. And then he stopped snorting cocaine, which is quite cool.

### WHY DO YOU THINK THERE’S THIS INCREASE IN INTEREST?

**ISABELLA:** There’s a sense we live in a chaotic world, with wars breaking out everywhere, with a lack of safety, including online; the breakdown of the family unit. People feel like they don’t have people there for them, supporting them and guiding them on what it’s like to be a grown up with a career or healthy relationships.

There’s a sense of where do I go for hope? For a sense of belonging? Where do I go for a sense of purpose and meaning in my life? Who do I trust? Where do I find true guidance and truth?

**JOEL:** Truth, love and hope – that’s what people are looking for. The more they look into things like the scientific method, or New Age spirituality, or other religions, they’re not finding anything true. They’re just seeing falsities.

Then they try Christianity out, they think ‘Hang on. It all makes sense.’ All the science, all the history, the culture points towards it. When they hear about this guy called Jesus who just loves them unconditionally, they’re like, ‘Yeah, okay.’

They want love - and alcohol and drugs don’t do that anymore. Well, they never did.

Jesus is the way to do the life. And some are discovering this truth.

**ISABELLA:** I also think Gen Z has something quite specific - they like to go back to ancient truths. The old is interesting and fascinating to them. You see that in fashion - they like going back to 70s fashion! But they have an interest in connecting with older generations, in being mentored by them.

When you look at the makeup of the world and the impact of Christianity, it’s very easy to think, ‘okay, maybe, maybe I’ll give Christianity a go, maybe there’s something there.’ There’s some truth in there we haven’t fully explored, or that worked in the past, and because we abandoned it, we are suffering the consequences of this.

There’s a desire to return to how things were before, and a curiosity of how things were before – and Christianity is in that mix.

**KIRA:** I think people are seeking answers, especially in the world we live in, and it’s so lovely to see people are finding Jesus.

Also in society, there’s a lack of shared spaces, and I think people crave community and

interaction. I think post-Covid some people are still struggling to interact face to face. So having somewhere that has a sense of community and brings people together, where you can just turn up as you are, is attractive.

## WHAT IS GEN Z LOOKING FOR IN CHURCHES, AND HOW CAN CHURCHES PREPARE AND RESPOND?

**JOEL:** Young people want to be mentored, so consider that. Get them speaking to different adults in the church. Getting three of the older dudes, maybe a 30 year old, a 50 year old, and an 80 year old (because they're the coolest ones!). It will give them different perspectives, and it'll just bring them into the culture.

Consider giving young people a role. Involve them in a meaningful way – and they will show up to church. I think the

culture in the Baptist church, from the ones I've seen in the Northern Baptist Association, is giving more opportunities to younger people.

**ISABELLA:** They want to know the Bible better, going deeper than just the basics. I think this younger generation is illiterate when it comes to the Bible. They don't know how to differentiate from one story to the other. They didn't grow up going to Christian schools, they don't have Christian parents, maybe only heard a little during RE at school.

*The Bible course* by Bible Society, and *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer, are courses I've heard people mention they are using with their young adults.

**Make sure your church is online, because this is how they search.**

Preparing the people in your church to talk to those young adults is helpful. And I think there's a bit of work to be done in terms of preparing the young adults already in church, to welcome those that are new joining in.

Train everyone to be disciple makers. These people are going to be coming to church, and they need people to disciple them, to walk alongside them, and people of all ages to do that, not just other young adults.

**Isabella Senior is the  
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co-ordinator**

**Joel Hawksworth has just  
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**Isabella, Joel and Kira were  
delegates at the Baptist  
World Congress in Brisbane  
in July 2025. Check out  
their reels on the Baptists  
Together social media  
channels**