

A SUMMARY OF RENEGOTIATING FAITH

What is “Renegotiating Faith” ?

Renegotiating Faith: The Delay in Young Adult Identity Formation and What It Means for the Church in Canada is the fruit of a research partnership between Power to Change – Students, InterVarsity, Youth for Christ, Truth Matters Ministries and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Renegotiating Faith answers the question: How can we help young adults who are transitioning from high school to the next phase in life stay connected to church and faith? It looks at this life transition for Canadians ages 18 to 28 who had a Christian religious affiliation as a teen.

What did we learn from this research?

Emerging adulthood is a time when prior commitments are up for renegotiation.

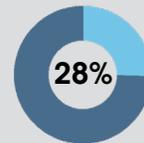
- Prior to the 1980s, young adults moved fairly seamlessly from high school and an identity under the umbrella of their parents (e.g. “That’s Bob’s kid, Mike”), to adulthood, where they had their own identities (e.g. “That’s Mike, the lawyer”).
- Since the 1980s, however, a new life stage called “Emerging Adulthood” has surfaced, due to a delay (of 5 to 7 years) in the shift to adulthood. This delay has occurred for a myriad of reasons, including economics and the rise of social media.
- Now, instead of having fully formed adult identities out of high school, young adults find themselves in their twenties, just beginning to form their own identities and renegotiating faith commitments.

Young adults either continue in faith, or reject faith.

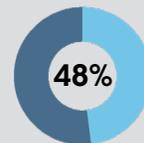
- To continue on in faith, young adults need to renegotiate their childhood roles as adults (e.g. working as a summer intern at their home church), or negotiate a role in a new Christian community (e.g. attending or serving at a Christian camp away from home).
- Young adults who cannot differentiate themselves from their family by place, marriage or profession will sometimes differentiate themselves by rejecting their parents’ faith.

MENTORS AND HOME CHURCH CONNECTIONS IMPACT FAITH TRAJECTORY OF YOUNG ADULTS

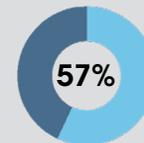
How many young adults in post-secondary studies connect with a Christian campus group?



of all young adults in the study



if they had a home church mentor



if the home church mentor stayed in contact after high school



if someone from their home church tried to make a connection

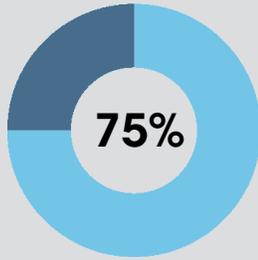


if no one from their home church made a connection

However...

- Only 1/4 of young adults said someone from their home church tried to make a connection for them
- Less than 3/10 of ministry youth workers said they have a ministry plan for making these connections

MAKING TIMELY CONNECTIONS WITH NEW CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IS CRITICAL



Roughly **3/4** of young adults who connect with either a campus group or a new church do so within the first month of starting at a new school or new location.

Many young adults from Christian backgrounds actually believe in the Universal Gnostic Religious Ethic (UGRE).

- Many young adults felt that all religions accomplish the same purpose: to help one become a “good person” and promote social harmony. They think those who insist on religious differences are sowing division. Many young adults preferred to talk about a higher power rather than God.

Young adults are facing new fears and anxieties today.

- The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), the Fear of Not Being Amazing (FNBA), and the Fear of Passionless Monotony (FOPM) press in on young adults as they look ahead to the “real world” after college or university. Young adults don’t want to be left out. They struggle to make the best choices in life and delay big decisions related to their career. They want to make a difference, follow their passions, and avoid dull, monotonous work.

Young adults who continue in their faith are well connected to churches and Christian communities.

- When it comes time to develop a Christian identity apart from one’s parents, young adults need persisting communities of faithful adults, mentors, and friends in their lives. When young adults move, it is vital that families, churches, and ministries work together to get them connected to new Christian communities in a timely manner.

To learn more about this research and to download the full report, go to **Renegotiating aith.com**



“Young adults going on to post-secondary studies are **four times more likely** to connect with a Christian campus group or chaplaincy if someone from their home church tries to make a connection for them...most young adults need someone to create a way in for them through either an invitation or an introduction.”- Pg 12

How is UCM Responding?

University Christian Ministries endeavors to create an on campus community where students can meaningfully encounter God. Our ministry has always valued hospitable community, holistic worship, and a culture of students leading students. We believe that UCM's role on post-secondary campuses is vital to helping young adults to discover Jesus for themselves and passing on the baton to the next generation.

The Importance of September connections

- UCM focuses a lot of attention in September to host welcome tables and welcome events to create a warm atmosphere for new students to find friendship and connection
- We seek partnership with local churches to connect graduating grade 12s from local churches with UCM communities
- We look for opportunities to serve new and existing students to bridge relationships through service

Relational Ministry

- The Renegotiating faith study emphasized the invaluable experience of having a mentor in their faith to help determine if young adults make their faith their own. UCM communities emphasize relationship over events and structures. Significant amounts of staff and student volunteer efforts are dedicated to providing spiritual support and relational teaching to those in our communities
- UCM staff and student leaders are trained in creating safe spaces for engagement with tough questions about faith. Young adults need a place to be open and real about their struggles, doubts, and questions, and we believe that God can handle them.



Students Leading Students

- Christian leaders emphasize that the best way to ensure continuity in faith for our next generation is to invite them in to a deeper purpose: their role in the Great Commission. At UCM, we put one of our highest values on students leading students. Not only does this increase our missional net, but it gives young Christians a deeper sense of purpose to know that God has given them a special role in the kingdom of God – and it starts right where they are.
- Our goal is also that as students graduate, they would become the next generations of mentors in their churches and their local communities

Contextualizing the Gospel for this Generation

- In our many conversations, we witness firsthand what Renegotiating Faith describes as the Universal Gnostic Religious Ethic, and hear the needs of young people to have a sense of identity and purpose. In our work, we engage in evangelistic initiatives that resonate with the doubts and longings of today's young adult generation, and seek to illuminate the value of a personal God who knows us intimately.



How Can I Help?

We invite our churches and concerned Christians to join us in helping young people to navigate the transition of emerging adulthood to embrace Jesus for the rest of their lives.

Pray

Pray for our campus ministers across B.C. and the country that they would be empowered by the Spirit to share God's invitation to a full and abundant life by deciding to make their parents' faith their own.

Invite

Pastors and Leaders of Christian schools: please consider inviting a campus minister to come share about ways to connect to faith and make it your own after high school.

Connect

Church pastors, Christian schools, youth group leaders – please help make a virtual hand-off through social media or an email from your grads to a campus leader on the campus where they are going.

Give

Be a part of the mission by supporting a campus, a campus minister, or our district movement at joinucm.org/give.

