

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.

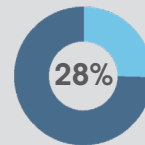
- Prior to the 1980s, young adults moved fairly seamlessly from high school and an identity under the umbrella of their parents (e.g. “That’s Bob’s kid, Mike”), to adulthood, where they had their own identities (e.g. “That’s Mike, the lawyer”).
- Since the 1980s, however, a new life stage called “Emerging 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.

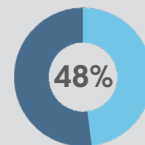
- To continue on in faith, young adults need to renegotiate their childhood roles as adults (e.g. working as a summer intern at their home church), or negotiate a role in a new Christian community (e.g. attending or serving at a Christian camp away from home).
- Young adults who cannot differentiate 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

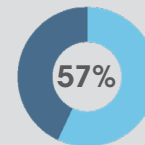
How many young adults in post-secondary studies connect with a Christian campus group?



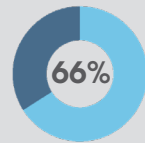
of all young adults in the study



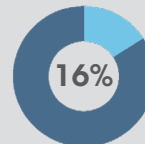
if they had a home church mentor



if the home church mentor stayed in contact after high school



if someone from their home church tried to make a connection

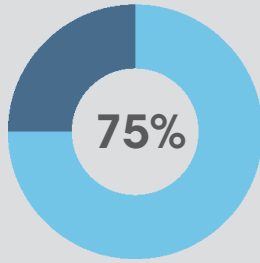


if no one from their home church made a connection

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 RenegotiatingFaith.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 P2C-Students responding?

Power to Change - Students seeks to help students know Jesus and experience His power to change. We have always been about sharing the message of Jesus and discipling students to live for Him in the context of caring communities. We will continue doing these things, but how does this research impact how we move forward?

Recognizing the importance of September to meet and welcome students

- On campuses across Canada, staff and students *host welcome week initiatives and outreach events* during the first few weeks of school. There is a significant amount of follow-up throughout September to help get students connected and integrated into Christian community on their campus.

Partnering with churches to connect high school graduates to Christian community

- Through *NEXT initiative*, P2C-Students' staff and volunteers reach out to Grade 12s and youth influencers, sharing about the importance of connecting with a Christian community. We meet students at their high schools, youth groups, and youth events, before they even step onto campus.
- The *community offered through Power to Change* is one where relationships matter, lives are changed, and students are involved in a cause bigger than themselves. It is a safe space for young adults (both Christian and non-Christian) to ask questions, discover Jesus, and go deeper in their faith. This happens in small group Bible studies, one-on-one discipleship, mission trips, and annual retreats and conferences.

Helping students renegotiate roles of leadership as they become adults

- Student ministries on campus help young adults negotiate a role in a new Christian community by providing them with *leadership opportunities*, where they take ownership and receive mentoring. For instance, student leaders facilitate prayer meetings, lead small group Bible studies, and coordinate weekly meetings and worship nights on their campuses.
- We encourage students to be *involved in a local church* as well, in a deeper way, beyond simply attending once a week.

Sharing the gospel in response to UGRE

- We are wrestling with how to engage today's students with the gospel by addressing the question of what it means to be human. We are engaging students with how the gospel connects to issues of *humanity and identity* in a way that helps students reconsider prevailing thoughts and beliefs.
- *Events and debates* on campus address and challenge worldviews commonly held by students in post-secondary education.
- We *partner with like-minded organizations* (like RZIM and Alpha Canada) to present the gospel, address barriers to faith, and host discussions to help students journey towards Jesus.
- We have an unchanging message to share in the midst of an ever-changing culture. We continue to adapt in order to bring the good news of Jesus to students who need him desperately.





You can help young people renegotiate their faith

- Share “Renegotiating Faith” - this research impacts what we can do through our churches and ministries to help young adults.
- Tell youth about Christian communities - make them aware of groups like P2C-Students that are active on college and university campuses.
- Connect a high school student - invite them to connect with someone from their future campus: p2c.sh/next, or email next@p2c.com.
- Invite a speaker - organize a time for a P2C-Students staff, student, or alumni to talk with the youth at your local church.
- Be a mentor - come alongside a youth or young adult today and encourage them in their faith.
- Make a gift to P2C-Students - help students renegotiate their faith and find their place in Christian community through your giving and generosity. Go to p2c.sh/givecommunity to impact the faith journey of today's young adults.

Learn more about Power to Change - Students online at p2c.com/students.



Students