



**DYNAMIC GOSPEL
NEW EUROPE**

CONVERSATION
AND GATHERING

May 2021 Conversation

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Welcome

The May 2021 Lausanne Europe Conversation focusses on the challenge of reaching the next generation. We have two fascinating articles by specialists in this area. We will look at some very recent research into the younger generation and reflect on what this might mean for the transmission of faith to children and young people. And we will also hear from someone whose ministry is specifically communicating the gospel among today's Global Youth Culture. But given that last month saw the centenary of the birth of one of the fathers of the Lausanne Movement, John Stott, we will also take some time to reflect on his legacy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email us at conversation@lausanneeurope.org

And if you are just starting your Impact Group, or are confused about what they are about, then check out the introduction pages to the [Conversation](#) and [Impact Groups](#) to find out more.

Instructions

1. Introductions and Prayer

Give time for everyone to introduce themselves if this is your first Impact Group. Ask someone to pray that God would speak to us as we meet together.

2. Europe's Younger Generation

Understanding and Discipling Youth

The first element in this month's Conversation is an article by Jo Haaijer, the European Director for One Hope. It presents the results of One Hope's Global Youth Culture Study, with a particular emphasis on the insights it gives to the values of European young people.

The Spiritual Hunger of a Secularised European Youth Culture

How might we bridge the gap between the Church and the globalised youth culture? That is the question asked in the article by Luke Greenwood, European Director for

Steiger, a ministry that is focussed on reaching the secularised youth of today.

We would like you to give most of the time in this month's Impact Group to discussing the two articles about the younger generation. Together the two articles cover the full breadth of the challenge that faces us, both in discipling the children and young people who are raised in the church, or are in contact with it, and reaching the largely secularised youth generation who have no time for church but are still spiritually hungry. Feel free to answer the questions in any order but please make sure you discuss question 3.

1. How can we help this next generation discover the life-giving truth that God's Word has for them and develop a hunger for Scripture in their lives?
2. How can we create safe spaces for young people to wrestle with life's hard questions and their struggles

with identity and relationships, and engage the Bible as a trusted guide?

3. Both articles emphasised the challenge of passing on religious faith from one generation to the next. How can we help parents become aware of the influence they have and strengthen families to disciple the next generation within the home?
4. How can we build bridges across the cultural gap between the globalised youth culture and the church in order to share the gospel?
5. Were there any other questions or statistics in the articles that caught your eye and that merit discussion?

3. The Legacy of John Stott through the Lausanne Movement

Billy Graham was the visionary and convener of the 1974 Lausanne Conference for World Evangelization, but it was John Stott who shaped the Lausanne Movement which emerged from it. The 100th anniversary of his birth would seem an appropriate moment to reflect on his life and influence and give thanks to God for him.

We would like the Impact Groups to spend a few minutes reflecting together on the impact of John Stott's life and ministry. The following questions might help you to do that.

1. There will be very few of us who have not read any of John Stott's books or commentaries. Which of his books has made the most lasting impression on you and why?
2. Were there any parts of the story of John Stott's influence on the Lausanne Movement that particularly caught your attention? Share those together in your Impact Group.
3. The article concluded with the statement that the Lausanne Movement is characterized by 'the spirit of Lausanne' - a spirit of humility, friendship, prayer, study, partnership, and hope. Are these values still as critical as they were in 1974 and, if so, how can we continue to exemplify them today?

4. Prayer

Always make sure that you leave enough time to pray together every time you meet. Here are the prayer points for this month's Conversation:

1. Pray that the Church might have the courage, wisdom, creative ideas, and guidance from the Holy Spirit, to know how best to bridge the gap between the Church and the globalised Youth culture today. Pray that we might know how to seize opportunities to open up conversations about God such that we might speak to the hearts and minds of today's children and young people.
2. Pray for Christian parents, that they might recognise their unique role in influencing the next generation and specifically that they know how best to disciple their children in the ways of Jesus.
3. Pray that God might grow the desire among our children and youth to boldly live out their faith in Christ and be ambassadors for the Kingdom in their generation.

4. Give thanks for the life of John Stott, for the influence he had and continues to have, in making Christ known to all peoples. Pray that we too may be good stewards of the opportunities God has given us to reach our generation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. Make Your Contribution to the Conversation

We really want to hear back from your Impact Group after each session. Please find a few minutes to summarise what you hear from God, the highlights of the discussion, and any questions that were raised, in the comments box immediately below.

[GO TO THE CONVERSATION](#)

Understanding and Discipling Youth

By Joke Haaijer

[Go to the article online](#)

I am so thankful that from a young age my parents introduced me to the Bible and took me to kid's camp, conferences and youth groups. I met some wonderful people that loved children and teenagers, and that cared and invested in me. I have experienced what it is like to depend on God for a miracle and have seen God move in unique and powerful ways. I have loved the depth of Scripture. Even through some desert periods in my young years my faith was never shaken. It was under the surface sometimes yes, but never shaken.

Why do we need all generations to learn how young people think and how to connect with them? We need a bigger group of people to train up the young. Like the African proverb says: "It takes a village to raise a child". An entire community of people must interact with children for

them to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment.

This is just the same for raising children and youth to become disciples of Jesus. We cannot leave it to the parents alone or to the youth leader. We need all and everyone to help.

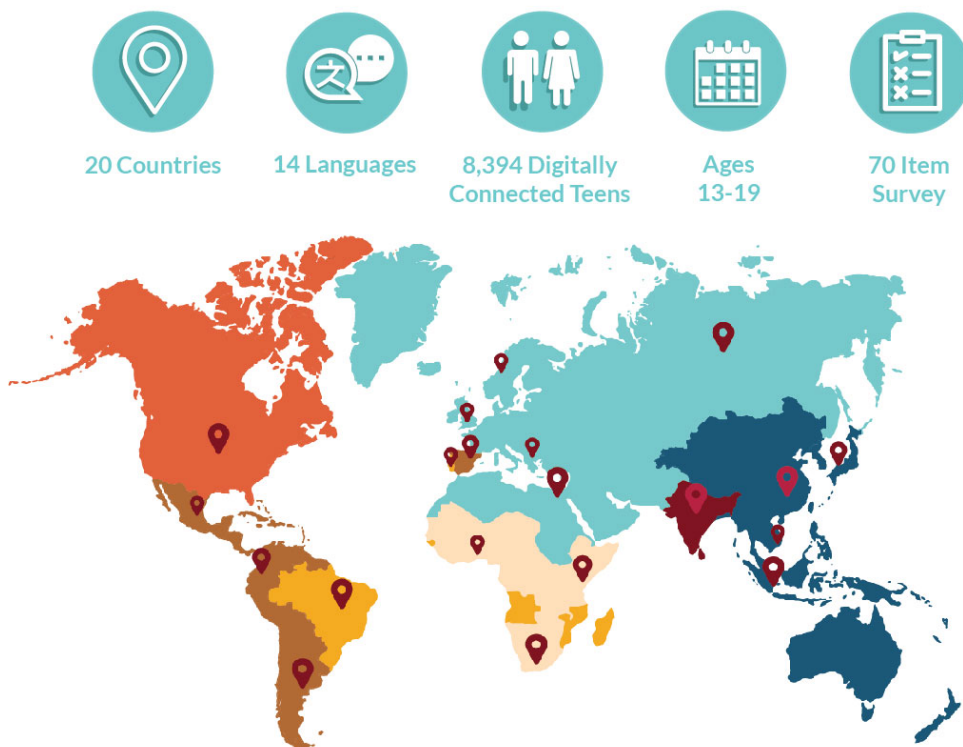
With this article I want to give a voice to the younger generation and cry out to all Committed Christians! It is urgent, and you are needed!

When we dive into the results of the Global Youth Culture Study we undertook at Onehope during 2019 and 2020, it is clear that we are dealing with a group of people who are open-minded yet confused, who can be found in their

schools with their peers , but who also spend many hours a day on their phones. We found out about their struggles, their beliefs, their relationships, their connectedness and who and what influences them. We heard of their longing for authentic relationships and experiences. And we saw a significant and positive difference in those who identified as 'committed Christians'; those who are disciples.

It is of the highest importance that we study Youth Culture. I keep thinking of that part of Paul's letter to the Corinthians when he says that he became a Jew to the Jews, and a Greek to the Greeks, and all of this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. So if you want to reach youth, you must study them so you can find ways to connect. All for the sake of the Gospel: to make disciples!

Each new generation is unique in its own way and research can help us understand how the world looks through different eyes. The world's current generation of teens and young adults is sometimes called Generation Z.



Across Western Europe, there are more than 6.6 million Generation Z teens aged 13-19 years old which comprises about 8% of the population of those countries.

The data is part of a larger global study that surveyed teens across 20 countries. We believe this study is the most comprehensive of its kind in terms of taking an in-depth look at the faith of this generation. The thousands of data points we collected create a picture of this global

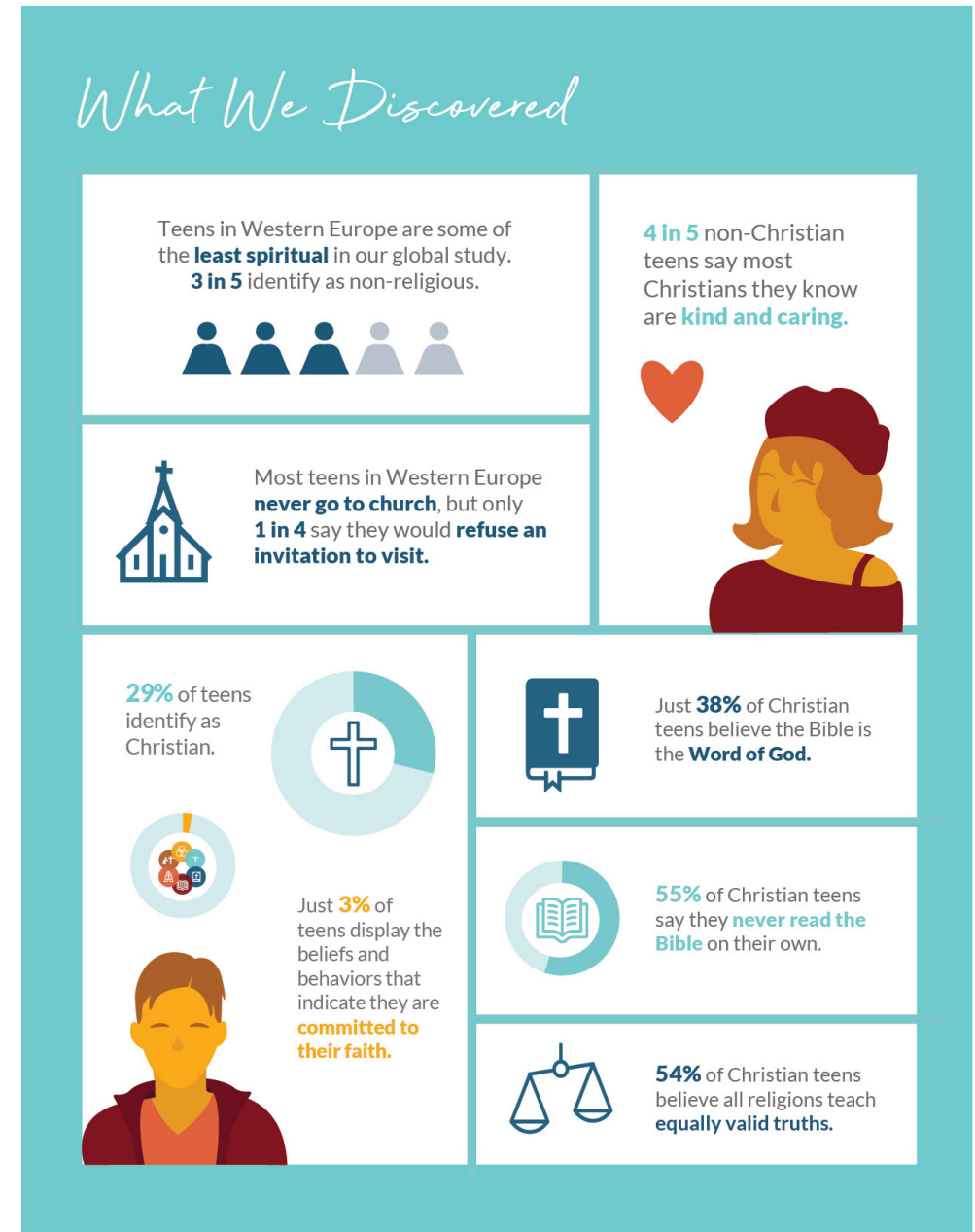
generation including the values they share, the struggles they face, and what teens are looking to when seeking for answers and hope. In Western Europe we interviewed 800 young people in the UK and in The Netherlands.

1. RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

In Western Europe, 29% of the interviewed teens calls themselves 'Christian'. But is this because of cultural upbringing, their families' habits and stories, or did they themselves make a choice to follow Jesus? In Romania, 79% consider themselves 'Christian' but is this because their family by tradition is part of an Orthodox church? Non-Europeans tend to think that Europe has a high percentage of Christians. But here we can see that a high percentage does not necessarily mean that these are committed Christians.

So what is the difference between the groups in their thinking and behavior? This research shows a huge difference in thinking and behavior of GenZ when they see themselves as Committed Christians.

Saying you are a Christian and being serious about living out your faith can be two different things. We looked at the core beliefs and key spiritual disciplines that would



reveal a teen is a Committed Christian.

One in four Christian young people said children's ministry was important (to them) but half said they didn't actually participate.

In Western Europe out of the 29% who identify as Christians, only 3% display the beliefs and behaviours that indicate they are committed to their faith. See the infographic '6 traits of a Committed Christian'. Only 38% of the teens who identify as Christian believe the Bible is the Word of God. 55% never read the Bible on their own and 54% of Christians teens believe all religions teach equally valid truths. In Romania only 3% is a committed Christian.

Conclusions from the full report

Today's young people are not hostile towards Christianity; they just aren't thinking about matters of faith. In fact, non-Christian teens have a positive perception of the Christians they know giving us an open door for sharing with them. How can we start conversations with this non-religious generation that awakens them to the spiritual things they are missing out on?

Let's disciple teens to grow and read

Our research revealed very few committed Christians in the Netherlands and the UK. How can we help teens mature in their beliefs and spiritual disciplines in order to experience the life transformation the Gospel holds for them?

Teens need the truth of God's Word in their lives, but more than half of Christian teens say they never read the Bible. How can we help this next generation encounter the life-giving truth God's Word has for them and develop a hunger for Scripture in their lives?

6 TRAITS OF COMMITTED CHRISTIANS



Let's strengthen church and youth ministry

Teens in Europe have a positive perception of the Christians in their lives. Even though the vast majority never attend church, most say they would consider coming if invited. So it doesn't hurt to ask!

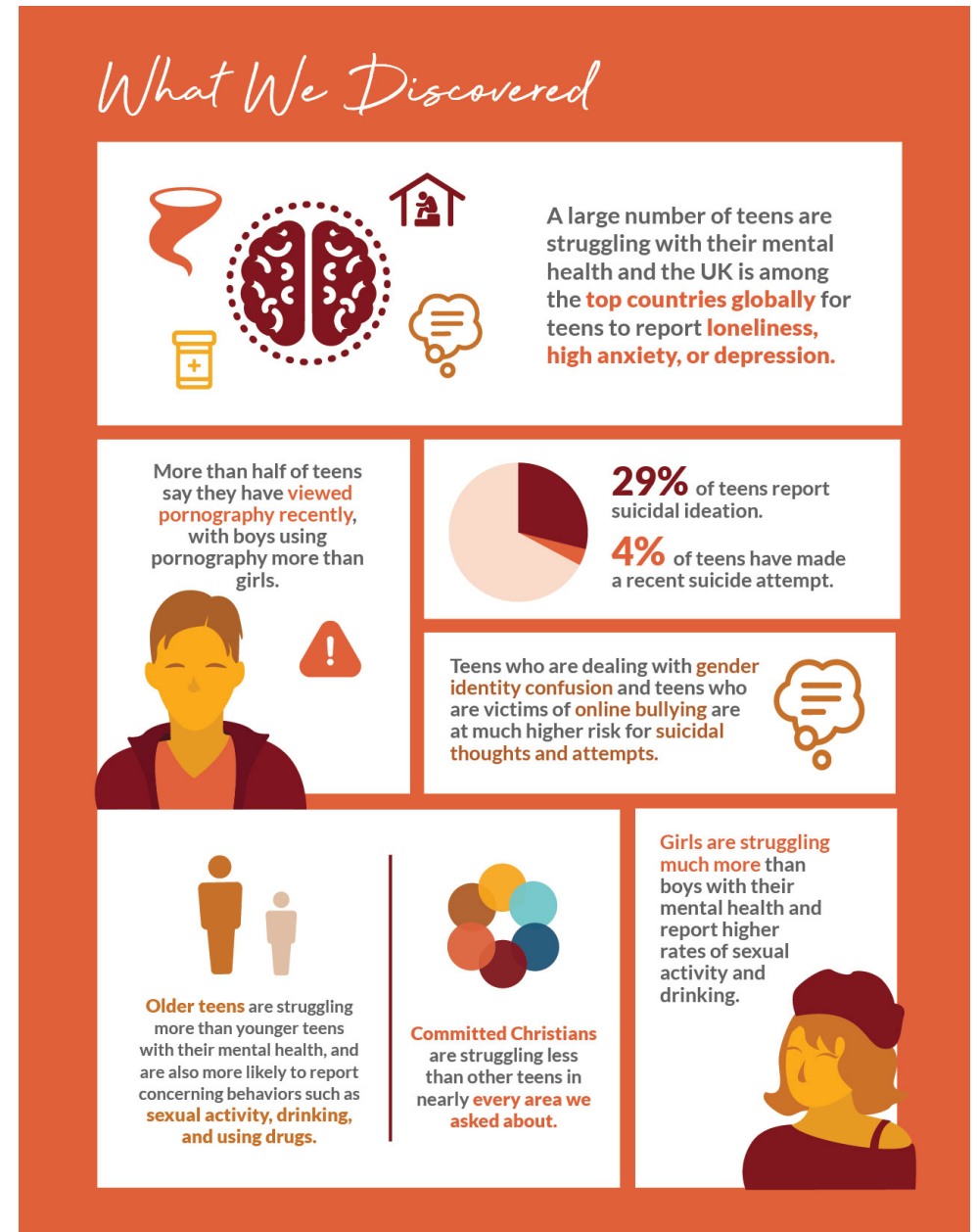
Many Christian teens report that they did not attend a children's ministry and that their current church does not have a youth pastor. Yet the data revealed that 11 is the pivotal age of commitment for most Christian teens. How can we ensure this generation is being well cared for spiritually within our churches so their faith can become strong and mature?

2. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES

What we learn from the full report is that the struggles teens are reporting should deeply concern us. Every young person's situation is different, and there is no one answer to the challenges they may be facing. But it is critical that we be aware of the nature and seriousness of the realities teens say they are experiencing.

This generation is struggling with their mental health.

A large number of teens are reporting loneliness, high anxiety, or depression, especially in the UK which ranks



among the highest countries globally for these issues. How can we come alongside young people and encourage them in the midst of the challenges they are experiencing? 29% of teens in Europe have tempted by suicidal thoughts and 4% have attempted suicide at some point". How can we help young people see the light and embrace the hope of the Gospel for their lives?

Committed Christians struggle less.

It is good news that teens who are taking their faith seriously are also experiencing less struggle. How can we help teens commit to the core beliefs of Christianity as well as to the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Scripture engagement that are seen to make such a big difference in their lives?

Girls need additional support.

Girls are struggling more than boys with their mental health and we cannot ignore this. Consider the unique struggles girls may be facing and how we can empower mature women of faith to disciple this next generation.

Pornography is hiding in plain sight.

This is a significant issue for today's teens in Europe and around the world. Neither age nor faith protect a teen

from sexual feelings and urges. And those urges can be so easily met thanks to the easy access the Internet provides. How can we address the pervasive issue of pornography usage that has ensnared this next generation?

3. DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS AND IMPACT

Constant connectedness to digital platforms is a way of life for today's young people. How do we engage them effectively with the Gospel message they need to hear? Here are some ideas to consider:

Teens connect digitally.

They spend a lot of their online time chatting and talking. How can we empower them to have meaningful, thought-provoking conversations with their peers? In addition, how can we as the church engage in meaningful, thought provoking conversations with teens on these chatting platforms?

Videos are very popular.

Videos are part of every teen's daily life - 97% say they watch video content every day - and they can be a powerful vehicle to reach young people. Teens are constantly returning to platforms like YouTube and Netflix. How can we use this appealing medium to reach young

What We Discovered



Nearly all teens check their social media daily, but **3 in 5 say they spend an hour or less** on these platforms.

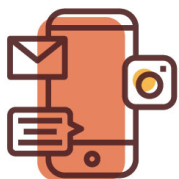
Teens who are **heavy internet users** (10+ hours daily) are struggling more with their mental health and report a more negative family experience overall.



97% of teens say they **watch video content every day** on platforms including Netflix and YouTube.



Teens in the Netherlands and the UK are **less likely than others** in their global generation to experience or participate in **online bullying**.



Teens have **mixed emotions about social media**. More than half say it contributes to their **life satisfaction**, but almost half report it sometimes or often makes them feel **sad, anxious, or depressed**.

Teens are spending an average of **7 hours online daily**, which is slightly below the global average.



people for Christ?

Social media generates mixed responses.

Teens check their social media feeds every day, but most don't spend a lot of time on these platforms. Teens are also divided on whether or not social media is helping or hurting them, with girls more negatively affected than boys. Consider the content you are putting out for them and how you can help them navigate their complex relationship with their digital devices.

Teens on the other side of the screen might be suffering deeply.

While we can't say technology is causing these problems, it is clear that those who are spending a lot of time online may be dealing with some serious mental health issues. How can we come alongside young people and encourage them towards a healthy outlook in the midst of the circumstances they face?

4. IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

A person's opinions do not stay the same forever, but for now we have a good view of what teens believe on the important topics of gender identity, sexuality, and

marriage. In addition, we know where they are turning to for guidance and advice on these matters.

In Western Europe this generation is split on its view of gender identity.

Around half of today's teens believe gender is determined by sex at birth, while the other half say gender is something that can be self-determined according to one's personal feelings or sexual desires. How can we engage teens in holistic conversation about this topic and the implications of these important life choices?

Same-sex attraction is a significant issue for this generation.

Teens in Western Europe are some of the most likely in the world to be having these feelings. In addition, teens who are experiencing this may also be dealing with gender identity confusion, high anxiety, or loneliness. How can we create safe spaces for teens to share what they are going through and be able to encounter what the Bible has to say about this multifaceted and complex area of their life?

The conversation around gender and sexuality is confusing.

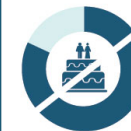
Teens are divided on where to turn for guidance on these

What We Discovered

Teens in Western Europe are **divided on their view of gender identity**, with many saying it is something a person can **determine for themselves**, but many maintaining a traditional view that gender is based on a person's **sex at birth**.



Teens in the UK and Netherlands are in the **top 5 countries globally** to believe that people should be able to **change their body to become a different gender**.



82%

of teens believe marriage **does not have to be exclusively between a man and a woman** and just 4% of teens have a biblical view of marriage.



Around **1 in 4** teens report having felt **sexually attracted to someone of the same gender** within the past three months.

Girls

have a **less traditional view of gender identity** than boys do and are more likely to say it is **acceptable to change your body to become a different gender**.



Gender and sexuality is a complex topic, with no single source that teens consistently say they turn to for **information**.

topics and the voice of culture is loud. How can we ensure teens have wise counsel and trusted people in their lives to safely discuss their personal experiences and questions in this area?

Girls have different viewpoints and experiences than boys.

They are much more likely than boys to report same-sex attraction and have a more flexible view of gender and marriage as well. How can we be intentional in providing healthy support for girls that guides them to reflect more deeply on what God has to say about these topics?

Teens have their own perspective on marriage.

Teens in Western Europe say a strong no to marriage as exclusive between a man and a woman, and teens in the Netherlands specifically are unsure if marriage should be a lifelong commitment. How can we help teens understand God's plan for marriage and the benefits of commitment when it comes to covenant?

Christians need discipleship in the area of sexuality.

In Eastern Europe the beliefs and behaviours of Christian teens and youth are not that different from non-Christians when it comes to sex before marriage. How can we guide

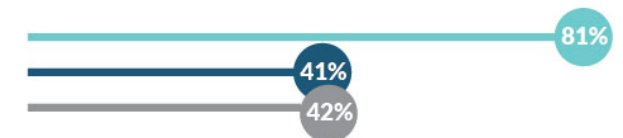
GENDER & SEXUALITY CONVERSATIONS

Where I go most often for information or guidance about gender, sexuality, and sexual issues:

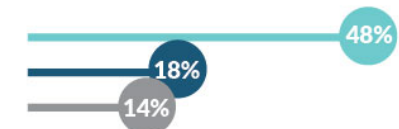
- 1 **FRIENDS/PEERS 35%**
(23% GLOBALLY)
- 2 **ONLINE/SOCIAL MEDIA 30%**
- 3 **FAMILY 22%**
- 4 **TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 8%**
- 5 **OFFLINE MEDIA 4%**
- 6 **RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 1%**

THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

Gender is primarily based on the sex a person was born as.



It is not ok for someone to change their body to become a different gender.



young people to a more biblical lifestyle that values and stewards the gift of sexuality?

5. INFLUENCES AND GUIDING VOICES

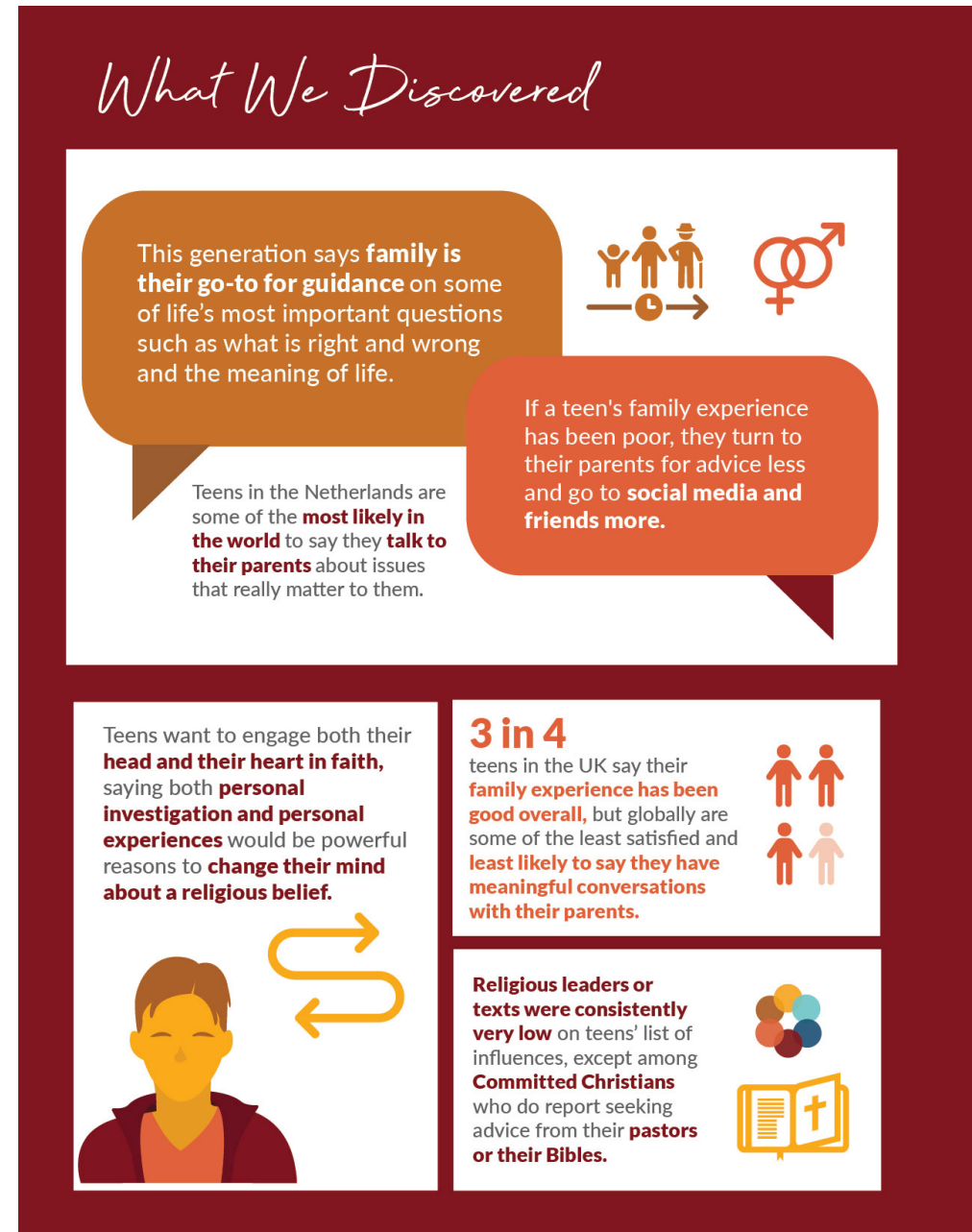
As today's generation navigates life's complex and confusing issues and looks to their future, the voices they are listening to are critical. The sources teens trust and turn to shed insight on what they will believe. And what you believe has profound implications for how you will behave.

Parents have an important role to play!

Encouragingly, teens and youth report a positive family experience and parents are the first ones they go to for some of life's most important questions. But when the family environment is not positive, teens instead speak to their peers or go online for guidance. How can we help parents become aware of the influence they have and strengthen families to disciple this generation within the home?

Scripture and the church's teachings are not a primary influence.

Even for most Christian teens and youth, God's Word is not the first place they go for counsel. How can we create



safe spaces for them to wrestle with life's hard questions and engage the Bible as a trusted guide?

Youth want to engage faith with both their head and their heart.

This generation needs logical reasons to change their mind about religious beliefs, but is also hungry for authentic personal experiences of faith. How can we create opportunities for them to have personal experiences of faith, especially in digital spaces where teens spend so much time?

The Global, Eurasia and Western & Eastern Europe reports are available and [free to download](#) on our website.

**RIGHT AND
WRONG**
CONVERSATIONS



Where I go most often for information or guidance about right and wrong.

- 1 FAMILY 50%
(GLOBAL 50%)
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS 24%
- 3 ONLINE/
SOCIAL MEDIA 12%
- 4 TEACHERS/
COUNSELORS 7%
- 5 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/
TEXTS 4%
- 6 OFFLINE MEDIA 3%

**MEANING
OF LIFE**
CONVERSATIONS



Where I go most often for information or guidance about the meaning of life.

- 1 FAMILY 41%
(GLOBAL 41%)
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS 26%
- 3 ONLINE/
SOCIAL MEDIA 17%
- 4 TEACHERS/
COUNSELORS 7%
- 5 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/
TEXTS 5%
- 6 OFFLINE MEDIA 4%

The Spiritual Hunger of a Secularised European Youth Culture

By Luke Greenwood

[Go to the article online](#)

A study released in 2018 entitled “Europe’s Young Adults and Religion,” by British professor of theology and sociology of religion Stephen Bullivant, demonstrates one of the most crucial issues for mission in Europe today.

In the Czech Republic, 91 percent of young adults categorised themselves as religiously unaffiliated, while in the UK, France, Belgium, Spain, and the Netherlands between 56 percent and 60 percent said they never go to church and between 63 percent and 66 percent said they never pray. According to Bullivant, many young Europeans “will have been baptised and then never darken the door of a church again. Cultural religious identities just aren’t

being passed on from parents to children. It just washes straight off them”.

Youth For Christ released another eye opening study, focused on Gen Z (12-18 year-olds), showing that only 32% of British teenagers believe there is a God, and of these, only 18% would be interested in finding out more. This is a staggering reality facing the future of the church and it’s mission.

The current urban generation, connected by consumerism, social media, and the entertainment industry forms the largest global culture to ever exist. It spans from Europe to South America, from Asia to the

Middle East, holding the same values, listening to the same music, watching the same movies, and sharing the same posts.

This global culture is largely influenced by one predominant worldview: secular humanism. God is dead and we are at the centre. In this relativistic culture we are god, and consumerism is our religion. This is a generation that does not look to the church for answers, as it believes it to be a dead and empty tradition of the past. Either there is no God, or if He is there, He doesn't really interfere with our lives.

And yet the God of the Bible is on a mission and His heart is broken for this lost generation. The message of His love –the gospel–is for everyone, and it is not right that young people today don't get to hear it because we're not making it accessible to them. They don't come to us, so we need to go to them. As Jesus' church, we need to realise the necessary changes in mind-set and lifestyle, and the need for a paradigm shift in missions.

The hope and opportunities come as we see clear signs of God in action, reaching out to the hearts and minds of this generation. There is a deep awareness among young

people today that something is missing. This generation is spiritually hungry. This is evident when we listen to the cry resounding throughout the pop-culture and social media around us.

British indie rock artist, Florence Welch, talked about this in a TV interview about her 2018 album *High as Hope*. She described her awareness of a needy love she had been trying to fill. "Something outside of me needs to fix this. . . . It's like, I can date the solution, I can drink or take the solution. . . . this record is a recognition of 'Oh, you can't!'" When asked about her hit song "Hunger" Florence explained, "I was thinking about something bigger than romantic love. . . . The song kinda came from that idea -what was I looking for that is outside myself?"

This is the key question we should all be asking. The current predominant mindset tells us there is nothing beyond what we see around us. We've been brought up to believe that all we need can be found within ourselves. But if we're honest, we know Florence is right. We need something bigger.

Most of this global generation are interested in spirituality but not formal institutional religion. The shift in culture

towards individualism and personal choice has changed how society views God and religion. We define our own belief system and mix beliefs and ideas to fit our preferences. Religion falls among the many options and categories in our consumer habits. And at the end of the day, we are left with the unsettling sense that no one really knows what to believe in anymore.

There is a cultural gap between this globalised youth culture and the church. But bridging cultural gaps has always been at the core of the missions movement. It was modelled by Jesus' incarnation, Paul's mission to the Greeks, Hudson Taylor's mission to China, and many others throughout the history of missions.

Missions has traditionally meant going to a distant land to learn a new language, eat strange food, and adapt to foreign cultures, but arguably the largest mission field today are the very cities in which we live. We need to practice the same flexibility and cultural adaptability to share Jesus in our own neighbourhood in this time when our faith has been pushed to the margins and is now seen as strange and alien to the culture around us.

Jesus' teaching on salt and light gives us clear guidance on how to be in the world yet not of it. Jesus calls us to be distinct (salt that has not lost its taste) and influential (that your light may shine!). The problem is that sometimes we, the church, are too salty. We're so salty that no one can eat the food. We're so different that no one can understand us; we seem alien to the world around us. In fear of the world, we shut ourselves up in the ghetto and lose our relevance; we have no influence.

In other cases, we fall to the other extreme. We become the pop church, the hip church, with an influential voice. Our light shines bright, but we have lost our saltiness. We become the same as the world around us, losing our values and identity, losing our distinctness, our focus on the good news of Jesus. This commercial Christianity is filled with quick solutions and easy answers but has no power. Some reject it as just another product on offer, while others consume it but experience no real change. We need to stop offering a cheap Christianity to a generation that is tired of consumerism. We need to leave the ghetto and preach again the genuine and radical message of Jesus.

The mission opportunity here is huge, if we are willing to engage with and speak truth into the cultural scene of this urban generation. Jesus has called us outside the church, to the streets, clubs, festivals, and places where people need to hear the truth. This generation might be steeped in relativism, but there is a deep spiritual hunger. We can look at the mindset around us and the apathy towards Christianity and be fearful to speak, afraid to offend. But if we show people who Jesus really is, and his victory on the cross, then the power of God moves and people want to know Him. The loneliness and heart-felt need for belonging and true community in this generation is another opportunity for missions today. We all know how hard it can be, especially for a young person, to just walk into a church. So in the same way we boldly speak truth we must also be willing to make disciples in this scene. Learning to follow Jesus needs to start in the context people come from. This is becoming all things to all men. Not only did Paul go to the Greeks to preach Jesus, but he spent time with them, often years. He lived among them and showed them what it meant to be a Greek who followed Jesus.

We need to build bridges of discipleship, welcoming people into community and relationship without the formality of a program. A young believer learning to follow Jesus in the scene he comes from, learning to be salt and light to that world, becomes a missionary from day one as he continues to be engaged in his own environment and relationships, leading others to faith.

The Legacy of John Stott through the Lausanne Movement

By Julia Cameron

[Go to the article online](#)

Editor's Note: One hundred years ago in London, John Stott was born. In honour of the centenary of his birth, this piece aims to give an overview of his global impact especially through the Lausanne Movement, which he co-founded.

John Stott was a colossus. As Jim Packer said on hearing news of his death in 2011, 'He had no peer, and we should not look for a successor.' As decades pass, history will further unfold the extent of his influence on theological thinking, on preaching, on the tensions between the gospel and culture, on the development of a Christian mind, on evangelical commitment to social justice, and supremely on world evangelization.

It was the unique partnership between Billy Graham and John Stott which would launch the Lausanne Movement, a movement committed to 'the whole gospel for the whole world' (later expounded to include both 'the geographical world, and the world of ideas'). [1]

There have already been several doctorates on Stott's life and ministry, and more will come. His networks were formidable. The way he connected people, and the synergy effected by those introductions merits new and careful research. His worldwide travels began with invitations to lead university missions on one continent after another, and students would always remain a focus of his ministry.

All his life, John Stott was committed to the Anglican church. In 1961, with much prescience, he founded the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion ([EFAC](#)) as a 'home' for evangelical clergy. He said that the two priorities of his ministry were students and pastors, and this was clearly borne out. He never made an international trip without some element of student ministry, and he would participate in the [IFES](#) World Assembly whenever he could. His three-pronged ministry to help strengthen the church in the Global South (now drawn together as [Langham Partnership](#)) provided books for pastors and for students in seminaries; created scholarships for some of the most able thinkers to help them gain doctorates; and provided training in preaching.

Stott's relationship with the Lausanne Movement, particularly in the period of 1974-1996, could be described as reciprocal, even symbiotic. His multi-faceted ministry fitted the multi-faceted Lausanne aspirations, which he had played no small part in fashioning. Lausanne channels and networks would become a major means through which he brought influence to the church globally.

1974: A Congress and a Covenant

His personal friendship with Billy Graham from the time of the Cambridge University mission in 1955 drew Stott into the early stages of planning for the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, and from which city the Movement would take its name. It was a friendship of spiritual genius from which, as we see, much would flow.

Stott was by this stage already regarded as a leader and figurehead, through participation in World Council of Churches events, and in the 1966 Congress on World Evangelization in Berlin. The 1970s included seven or eight other international conferences. But from 1974, Lausanne was to have a lion's share of his time.

John Stott's reputation for clear theological thinking, his breadth of sympathy within the evangelical tradition, and his gracious dealings with those of different persuasions made him an obvious choice to lead the process of crafting [The Lausanne Covenant](#).

The Lausanne Covenant, which reflected the voices of the 1974 congress, was adopted as a basis for hundreds of collaborative ventures over the rest of the century and

came to be regarded as one of the most significant documents in modern church history. Social justice, too-long identified as a concern only for adherents to 'a social gospel', was now declared a biblical responsibility for evangelical Christians. This proved a watershed moment for the church.

Realizing the potential impact of the Covenant, John Stott worked on [an exposition and commentary](#) published in 1975. It would, he sensed, be critical for the Covenant to be read and studied by individuals and groups. His preface, modestly written, does not record the intense pressure of working through nights to ensure all comments received from the participants were given proper consideration. It was a mammoth operation to translate them in a timely manner, but vital for the voices of the whole evangelical church to be heard. The name 'covenant' was carefully chosen. This was a covenant with God himself, and a covenant between all those who wanted to adopt it.

Forming a Movement from a Congress

After the 1974 congress, a continuation committee was set up to build on what had been achieved. In January 1975 this group met in Mexico City with Bishop Jack Dain as

chair. There was considerable support for Billy Graham to become president of the new Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, as it was then named. John Stott urged that this not be allowed to happen, or that there be several co-presidents.

Billy Graham had already articulated his preference that the Movement adopt a narrower brief of what we could call proclamation evangelism. If this were followed, the Movement would reflect neither the scriptural mandate of the church to be salt and light, nor its roots in the 1974 congress. On the strength of their 20-year friendship, John Stott, while hating discord, felt the need to speak. Jack Dain was in agreement, while others were in accord with Billy Graham, given his worldwide stature. Some totally misunderstood Stott's concern, and perceived it as a power struggle. The meetings, while painful, were pivotal. [2] The friendship between the two great men was lifelong.

In July 1989 John Stott led the crafting team for [The Manila Manifesto](#) in the Second Lausanne Congress (Manila, Philippines), which in 31 clauses built on and elaborated The Lausanne Covenant. This congress took place a month after what the Chinese government termed

the 'Tiananmen Incident' and just three months before the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. It drew 3,000 participants from 170 countries including Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but sadly none from China.

The Church's 'Mislaidd Social Conscience'

In 1982, John Stott's ground-breaking book *Issues Facing Christians Today* was published to coincide with the opening of the [London Institute for Contemporary Christianity](#). This covered such matters as nuclear issues, pluralism, human rights, industrialization, and sexuality. It became a handbook for pastors and thinking church members. It was, he said, his 'contribution to the catching-up process' since the church was 'recovering from its temporarily-mislaidd social conscience'.

The Lausanne Covenant was continuing to create waves, reawakening a social conscience which had lain dormant in many quarters for perhaps two generations. The Lord Jesus had commissioned the apostles to teach new disciples 'everything' he had commanded them. This had plainly not been done. In God's grace, John Stott and the Lausanne Movement would become a means of re-establishing significant aspects of Christian duty.

As a backdrop to his preparation of *Issues*, John continued to make Lausanne consultations a priority, and was frequently the chair. He edited the papers from all the consultations up to Lausanne II and published them in 1996 under the title, *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. As is clear from the contributors, Lausanne had the standing (helped, no doubt by John's own presence) to draw the best evangelical thinkers globally. Some papers drew considerable traction.

In 2006 Doug Birdsall, then executive chairman of the Lausanne Movement, invited John Stott to accept a lifetime title of honorary chairman, which he did, with a sense of pleasure. It had been a consistent pattern of his to accept honorary titles only if he could maintain a lively link with the endeavour, and he followed news of planning for the Third Lausanne Congress with eager and prayerful interest. Lindsay Brown, who was appointed as the Lausanne Movement's international director in 2007, and Chris Wright, who followed in John's own stead as chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group, were both old friends.

Shortly before his 87th birthday, he surveyed his years in Lausanne and looked forward with anticipation to what Cape Town 2010 would bring. In conversation with the present writer, he said he hoped the [1978 Willowbank Report on Gospel and Culture](#) would gain more attention than it had been afforded. I commend it to readers now for its lasting principles.

For as long as the Lausanne Movement is characterized by ‘the spirit of Lausanne’ (a spirit of humility, friendship, prayer, study, partnership, and hope), John Stott sensed it would be critically placed. Christ gave gifts to his church to share. Lausanne provided the table around which these gifts could be shared. True humility will always be needed.

Pray with Us

Our Father, we thank you for John Stott’s life, for the rich spiritual legacy you enabled him to leave, and for all that we can learn from his example. Help us to be good stewards of that legacy in our own generation. We pray this for Christ’s glory. Amen.

[1] Lindsay Brown in his Closing Address at Cape Town 2010

[2] For a full account of the Mexico City meeting, see Timothy Dudley-Smith John Stott: A Global Ministry (Nottingham: IVP, 2001) 220-224.