

Joshua successfully led the Israelites to cross the Jordan and inherit the Promised Land, a place flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8), and at the end of Joshua's glorious career, we were told, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel" (Joshua 24:31). Besides leading the Israelites to inherit God's promises, Joshua led them to faithfully serve God and worship Him in his generation and the generation after him. While we are wowed by the faith of the Israelites that lasted two generations, sadly, this amazing trend didn't last.

"And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the

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Lord to anger. They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:10-13).

I am sure that we are shocked by the outcome and have questioned what had happened that resulted in the loss of one generation. I don't think we will ever know the real reason, but there are similar challenges we face today as we think of the next generation in our midst – *a different worldview, a different experience of God, and the lack of role models.*

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George Barna, a professor with Arizona Christian University, has shown that a person's worldview is often in place by the time they reach the age of 13 (Barna Group, 2019) and in a research conducted by the Barna Group of nearly 2,000 teenagers aged 13 to 18 years old between 2016 and 2017, the



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researchers found that spiritual maturity ranks low on the list of priorities for most Gen Z* (Barna Group, 2019). While there are many different theories on the change in the worldview of our young people on spirituality, the questions we need to ask is what shapes their worldview? And what role are we playing in shaping their worldview?

It should not be surprising that a large proportion of the Gen Z in church, are second, third, or even fourth generation Christians. Growing up in a Christian family does not imply that our children will automatically have a personal faith and relationship with Christ. The truth is, many are trying to make sense of the faith that their parents believe in. While our children seek to make sense of their faith, as parents, we can certainly do more to help them to know God. God gave parents a simple instruction on discipleship at home. "These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Lastly, we need to ask if we are our children's role model. Last weekend, I preached on how we are to be salt and light in the marketplace. We must certainly consider

how we can be salt and light at home to our children. Our children today are looking for role models who can show them how to live out an authentic faith in a world filled with deep and dark challenges. It's a daunting task, but enabled by God, nothing is impossible.

As we celebrate Youth Day (3 July 2022), let's commit ourselves to prioritise the next generation, let's pray for them and work to disciple them well so that they may know God and remain faithful in serving Christ for the generations to come.

Do also join me in welcoming Revd Andrew Yap who starts his posting with us from 1 Jul. He will oversee the Sat 5.30pm and Sun 7.30am services. Do keep him and his family in prayer during this period of transition and you can certainly look forward to interact with him as he goes to preach at the different services next weekend!



Revd Andrew with wife (Diana) and daughter (Mikayla)

*Generation Z are those born between 1997 and 2012. They would be between 10 to 25 years old in 2022.