



Protestant Church Strategy in Building Spiritual Identity for Generation Alpha

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Abstract: This research aims to explain Protestant Church strategy in building Christian identity for Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) amidst the adverse effects of globalization. Currently, the generation is navigating the complex terrain of a postmodern era characterized by the pervasive dissemination of concepts such as skepticism, subjectivism, and relativism. Gen Alpha has experienced a profound shift in cultural values, with a marked transition from religiosity to secularity. Consequently, Church must direct its attention towards the ideological and spiritual well-being of the generation. The influence of distortionary forces on the perception of reality is a matter of concern, stemming from various sources such as peers in the community, the educational system, social media, and the vast expanse of the Internet. The result show that Gen Alpha has been raised in the context of post-Christian and post-Church cultural environments. In this research, a qualitative research approach is used, predominantly through an extensive review of pertinent literature. The examination commences with an in-depth exploration of Gen Alpha and the formation of spiritual identity. Subsequently, the strategic initiatives conducted by Protestant Church are examined and the initiatives include worship services, fatherly mentorship, and cultivating a strong Christian identity. The conclusion shows the collaborative efforts of Church with the pastoral team, in the construction of its ministry. This is characterized by the implementation of transpersonal actions, the guiding of healing initiatives for the needs of families, and the cultivation of personalized spiritual practices. An important component of the comprehensive strategy includes the training and education of fathers to assume a central role in building the spiritual development of children. Furthermore, Church values the spiritual building of children aged between 4 and 14 years to fortify Christian identity.

Keywords: Generation Alpha; Church; Christian; healing; social media

Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) is the third generation to witness rapid advancements in digital technology. Gen Alpha is commonly referred to as the Digital Native generation or Gen Z, inherently navigating social media and the Internet. Additionally, it is known as the “Polar” generation, denoting political polarization and the alarming trend of polar ice cap depletion due to climate change. The generation inhabits a postmodern era characterized by substantial influence and unrestricted access to concepts such as skepticism, subjectivism, and broad relativism, as well as having a general suspicion of the role of ideology.¹ Confronted daily with a world where reality is often distorted, these young minds have been shaped since childhood by interactions in the community, educational institutions, social media, and the Internet.

¹ Duignan, “Postmodernism Philosophy.”

Furthermore, the pervasive influence extends to the experiences in Christian Church and family, creating unique challenges in navigating the “real world.” Gen Alpha has its limitations, namely [1] the attention span and concentration are compromised due to the inclination to simultaneously engage with multiple screens and scan through information. [2] The limited time for traditional socializing has led the generation to predominantly inhabit the online sphere. The individuals learn, engage in recreational activities, and interact through various social networks. [3] The development of imagination and creativity is impaired due to the reduced use of physical toys. [4] Reduced ability to achieve happiness, considering that excessive use of smart-phones and social media increases depression, anxiety, and loneliness.²

Church has a hard time reaching this I-net generation in the seductive era of globalization, with a fast-changing digital world, social media engagement, mobile activity, and free virtual space. Gen Alpha resides in two distinct dimensions increasingly converging to form the physical and virtual world. The sense of identity tends to develop more passively, particularly in terms of spiritual identity. This disparity is an outcome of a substantial transformation in cultural values, which has shifted from a sacred to a more secular orientation.³ The term “Generation Alpha” was not associated with religion or agnosticism but grew up in a post-Christian and post-Church culture.⁴ Uniquely, Gen Alpha and parents (Generation Y) have the same characteristics, existing in the space of media and information technology. The spiritual identity of parents is not fully cultivated but marked by limitations and lacks the necessary refinement, setting a potentially detrimental example.

In this context, the demographic is important in the world market as the next customers to influence decision-making process of parents.⁵ These children are raised in an environment where their desires and passions are heavily influenced by technology and media with consumerist tendencies, potentially leading them from adhering to traditional spiritual values. Literature shows that Gen Alpha has a considerable influence over consumer behavior, technology trends, educational paradigms, market dynamics, and various economic variables.⁶ Even though 55% of children aged between 7 and 12 have used social media, about 76% of respondents believe that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Therefore, technology has become the tool of choice for Gen Alpha, with 77% adopting the concept at the center of all activities, including learning. A total of 82% believed in learning more when granted access to technology.⁷

² “Generation Alpha Will Lead a 100% Digital World.”

³ Landrum, “Gen Z Is Spiritually Illiterate.”

⁴ Walker, “5 Reasons.”

⁵ Rani Thomas – Madiya – MP, “Customer Profiling of Alpha,” 75–86.

⁶ Rani Thomas – Madiya – MP, “Customer Profiling of Alpha.”

⁷ Retail SEE Group, “The Values and Identity.”

Another influential factor is the changing nature of the traditional Christian family due to LGBTQ+ developments, which are accepted in about 56 countries.⁸ Same-sex marriage has been legally recognized, affording individuals from Gen Alpha the opportunity to exercise the right to parenthood through adoption. In these cases, both gay men and lesbian women have the option to become legal parents through the use of surrogate mothers or mothers.⁹ Sperm banks have become prevalent in developed countries, facilitating the possibility for women to volunteer as surrogate mothers for gay and lesbian family. These children are typically conceived through the In Vitro Fertilization method and there is a growing number of Gen Alpha who has entered the world through adoption, raised by family against traditional Christian beliefs. These circumstances pose a significant challenge for Protestant Church and Christian family in the efforts to maintain Christian identity in Gen Alpha.

Aside from family issues, another part of this problem is the high dependency on media technology devices. Topping the list of content most likely to influence Gen Alpha to buy something are online videos, mentioned by 24% of survey participants. However, a third of young teens (13–16-year-olds), around 32%, are influenced by social media content, as well as 15% and 9% of 10–12-year-olds and 6–9-year-olds. A total of 41% are actively tagging friends to share exciting content, rising to 49% among 13–16 year olds. Same-sex marriage has been formalized, providing the right to have children through adoption. Gay men or lesbian women can become the legal parents of children by using surrogate mothers and fathers.¹⁰ Therefore, the quality of happiness, level of life satisfaction, and expectations of others tend to decrease. There are even persisting increased levels of pessimism and children are more depressed and anxious than previous generations. The generation is inundated with an abundance of choices, information, and technology, leading to a sense of overprotection.¹¹ The profound impact of technological changes is evident in the way members live, think, feel, and behave. They heavily rely on technology to explore the world, and this reliance has led to a reduction in dependence on interactions with their peers compared to earlier generations. Moreover, there is a trend of decreased emphasis on religious matters among these individuals.

The perspective of Stanisław T. Zarzycki centers on the role of Church in unveiling biblical spirituality as the embodiment of the gospel and salvation history, reaching its apex in Jesus Christ. In history, the redemptive act of humanity is proclaimed, transcending knowledge and faith, while maintaining its profound significance, thereby imparting theological meaning to people across generations.¹² Antje Jackelén placed a spotlight on the digital world complex dynamics, featuring polarizing

⁸ Flores, “Social Acceptance of LGBTI People.”

⁹ Flores, “Social Acceptance of LGBTI People.”

¹⁰ Cox, “Social Media.”

¹¹ Vlasuk, “Generation Alpha,” 363.

¹² Zarzycki, “‘History’ as a Category,” 385.

forces, populism, protectionism, post-truth narratives, patriarchal influences, and the intricate interplay of secularization and the newfound visibility of religion. In the context of spiritual leadership, the important role of resilience, coexistence, and hope as indispensable theological elements were considered for navigating uncharted territory. These elements serve prophetic, ethical, and theological functions, improving the growth of digitalization to enhance the mental and spiritual well-being of religious individuals.¹³ Meanwhile, Merensiana Hale provided a comprehensive overview, considering the unique characteristics and developmental needs of the generation. This includes insights into the upbringing and early exposure to future-oriented thinking.¹⁴ Amrit Kumar Jha expressed the need to shape the understanding and contextualization in the 21st century global ecology by envisioning a promising future.¹⁵ There is still a significant gap in the research connecting Gen Alpha with the levels of spirituality. Therefore, this research places its primary focus on understanding Church strategy in building Christian identity. The analysis is important, considering the unique challenges and circumstances to be encountered.

This research explores Protestant Church strategy in building strong Christian spiritual identity in Gen Alpha. The methodology used is qualitative, relying on a comprehensive examination of relevant literature. The discussion initiates with an introduction to Gen Alpha, analyzing the current spiritual identity. Subsequently, this research offers an in-depth examination of the strategy used by Protestant Church to cultivate Christian identity through different means. The strategy was examined, considering specific concepts, and drawing multiple conclusions. The central argument shows that Protestant Church strategy for building Christian identity in Gen Alpha revolves around shaping the character of parental religiosity, establishing a bridge for outreach, and enhancing the quality of the divine family unit in households. The framework for implementing these strategies includes Church services, designed with various components to address the specific needs of the generation. Furthermore, the role of fathers in family is important, and the age range of 4–14 is identified as a crucial phase for enhancing conversion experiences.

1. Christian Identity in Gen Alpha

Gen Alpha was born between 2010 and 2024, as the first demography belonging to the 21st century, where technology and change occur very fast to shape childhood. Furthermore, it can easily relate to previous generations without any sharp

¹³ Jackelén, "Technology, Theology," 6.

¹⁴ Hale, "Generation Alpha," 240–245.

¹⁵ Jha, "Understanding Generation Alpha."

distances.¹⁶ The generation starts many new social development dynamics and is the first to fully be connected to online. Gen Alpha is also the most diverse generation, as the first to live in “unconventional” homes, to possess globally accessible groups, and many other firsts. The individuals were born from the collapse or partial recovery of the global economy, the pandemic. Gen Alpha grew up in post-Christian and post-Church mindset¹⁷ from idealistic Millennial parents, with a small portion of the realistic Gen Z. In addition, it is considered the Generation of Hope, which is more adaptable, connected, diverse, and empowered to lead the future.¹⁸ The generation has grown up in a world where technology has been accessible. According to results, contemporary young individuals allocate an average of nine hours daily to screen time,¹⁹ translating to 63 hours per week. As a result, a 14-year-old girl (the age of the oldest Gen Alpha) is likely to have more cultural similarities with a boy of the same age in another place than with a 60-year-old. This means there is a phenomenon of similarity and duplication of lifestyles that afflicts almost all members of Gen Alpha.

Gen Alpha or post-Christian generation is numerically the largest among population demographics. This means that the generation is becoming the most influential religious force in the West.²⁰ In 2017, James Emery White referred to Gen Z as American first post-Christian generation but this has been disproved. The introduction to the Gospel is at an all-time low in American history even when comparing teenagers raised in Church settings.²¹ The pattern of failure passed down through successive generations has left a lasting legacy. The initial hypothesis posits that Gen Alpha represents a departure from convention as the first generation where religious engagement has significantly reduced.

The digital world is entirely separate from the physical but does not relate to the existing cultural narratives told through social media and other applications. However, it is elementary to understand that these worlds have no relationship with each other. Gen Alpha has the following traits: [1] highly connected – permanently connected to new technologies as a way of life; [2] independent – independent in making decisions and managing digital identity; [3] visual – video is their format of choice; [4] highly diverse – in ethnicity, gender, tastes, lifestyles, and viewpoints.²²

Marius Drugas describes Gene Alpha as the “Screenagers” or “the wired generation.” The definition shows a generation connected to smart devices, and characterized by more significant curiosity, creativity, and independence than their

¹⁶ McCrindle – Fell – Buckerfield, *Generation Alpha*, 19–21.

¹⁷ Astapenko, “Personal Characteristics.”

¹⁸ Peña, “Generation Alpha.”

¹⁹ Edwards – Fox, “Teens Spend.”

²⁰ White, “An Early Look at Generation Alpha.”

²¹ Conner, “3 Cultural Stories.”

²² “Generation Alpha Will Lead a 100% Digital World.”

predecessors. Technology dependency also leads to relational and emotional problems, hence, “screamers” are used to describe the angry behavior.²³ The research by Evgenia V. Astapenko, Tatiana V. Klimova, Galina A. Molokhina, and Elena A. Petrenko showed that the dominant system of children-parents relationships in the family has implications for the peculiarities of recreational activities in conditions of epidemiological self-isolation. This dramatically affects the intrapersonal structure and the state of resources.²⁴ Therefore, when parents stay with children who spend more virtual leisure time, the implication is a reduced level of acceptance, willingness to cooperate, and symbiosis with one another. Closest relatives such as parents lack the religious skills to show the gospel as inspiring, fun, and providing new hope. In the context of spiritual values, the level of religiosity is very dependent on the social media consumed daily. This situation implies that when Gen Alpha shows a strong curiosity and interest in technological advancements, while largely excluding spiritual elements or God from their pursuits, their religiosity is at a critical juncture, with potential consequences for the decline. The significant shift is closely related to the comparatively lower spiritual quality of parents, who belong to Gen Y. The presentation of Kerrin Huth regarding the 2016 Australian census results shows a good trend, where Gen Y, aged 18–34, represents the highest percentage of non-religious individuals in society. This at 39%, compared to an average of 30% for the entire Australian population. Therefore, Gen Y is increasingly adopting alternative forms of identification rather than adhering to traditional institutional religious practices.²⁵ Most of Gen Alpha owned and followed the digital footsteps of Gen Y before understanding the term Gen Z (the group that was born between 1995 and grew up with the rise of social media). Millennials understand social media as a tool, but for Gen Alpha, the concept is a way of life. Data shows that 40% of parents are willing to replace or add a robotic caregiver in the home.²⁶

Research published in the August 2012 issue related to the *Journal of Marriage and Family* found that young adults of Gen Y believe parental support is abnormal and unnecessary.²⁷ In this context, before Millennials began to marry and have children, the notion that parental influence is not entirely indispensable in the development of children character and spirituality has been adopted. Consequently, it is common to observe parents in Gen Alpha who lack a strong spiritual identity and the ability to impart religious teachings to the offspring. In a research, half of parents report that teenagers share “all” of the religious beliefs. Meanwhile, an additional four out of ten parents state that children share “some” of their religious beliefs.²⁸ It is

23 Drugaš, “Screenagers,” 1–11.

24 Astapenko, “Personal Characteristics.”

25 Huth, “Connecting with Generation Alpha,” 24–27.

26 “Why Generation Alpha and Z Is Non-Religious?”

27 Divecha, “What Gen Y Needs from Parents.”

28 Pew Research Center, “Shared Beliefs.”

clear from the above explanation that some essential points to be considered include. [1] Gen Alpha continues to have the characteristics of the Digital Natives category and live in a digital, virtual, intelligent, and technology-dependent world. [2] These individuals inherited a low level of spirituality from parents. [3] Technology dependency also leads the generation to dangerous relational and emotional problems.

2. Church and Ministry Strategy for Gen Alpha

Gen 1:26–28 states that God created man, both male and female, in His image and likeness with the cultural mandate to be fruitful and have dominion over the earth and the creation. Humans are given extraordinary abilities and capacities as “Gods” on earth (Ps 82:6). In Gen 5:1–3, the Bible shows that Adam was created in the image and likeness of God and given a human name at creation. After Adam lived for 130 years and had sons, the Bible makes the distinction that he begat a son in the image and likeness of man and named him Seth. The quality of the divine seed was degraded when Adam, created in God image, changed to Seth, who was born in the image and likeness of man.

Every human life lost the glory of God after man sinned and the earth was dominated by Satan. This incident shows the trend that great and marvelous abilities of man can turn into a catastrophe when Satan is worshipped (Eph 2:2; John 12:31). Man no longer has faith and is trapped by Satan tricks (2 Tim 2:26), as well as enslaved by the power of evil (1 John 5:19; Eph 2:2). Even Jesus, the fasting man, faced severe temptations from Satan in Matt 4:8–9. Satan wanted to question the divinity of Jesus by presenting the splendor of the world kingdoms, hoping to be worshipped. The fall of humanity into sin disrupted harmonious relationships between fellow humans and also fractured the ability to govern and manage the earth in unison. Even though humans can create, the creations often tend toward malevolence, and as time progresses, the concept multiplies. Under Satan dominion, people are subjugated through the law of sin, replacing the culture of God kingdom with a counterfeit culture that contradicts the Gospel. In the current context, Gen Alpha, characterized as a digitally savvy and knowledge-hungry cohort shows an inversely proportional relationship with spirituality. Consequently, the generation requires a unique approach to spiritual guidance to instill Christian identity. There are several strategies used by Church to communicate spiritual identity.

2.1. Church and Transpersonal Practice for Gen Alpha

Church accompanies Gen Alpha physically and online in gaining spiritual experience. It must be more active and creative in providing ways and facilities to understand

and practice the faith in building spiritual identity. The transpersonal approach as a solution is the spontaneous transmission of spiritual life experience. The experiences include profound spiritual, mystical experiences, oneness with the universe, and out-of-body experiences without ignoring spiritual, transcendental, or aspects. The research of Benjamin D. Crace showed that the transpersonal psychology approach was participatory and mediated the research of spirituality.²⁹ John Knights, Danielle Grant, and Greg Young mentioned that transformational personal experiences allowed an individual to enter a new level, becoming an authentic, ethical, caring, and more effective leader in the 21st century.³⁰ Therefore, the approach can be used in participatory spiritual identity building, showing the ministry of Church and pastoral team in imparting conscious spiritual experiences. The initial and exceedingly crucial aspect is the worship experience. Each worship service conducted should not be considered as a passive and devoid of meaning ritual. In this context, Church must be willing to adopt a transformation of its style and liturgy, while preserving the sanctity and significance of worship. This adaptation should captivate and stimulate the curiosity of Gen Alpha and religious experiences can find expression through digital media, as exemplified by innovations such as “Jesus Phone” or “Coffeeism.” In this hypermodern society, digital media comprise the sacred and the profane, elevating the concept to a form of sanctity.³¹ This means that breakthroughs in media worship should be possible. Church and its media ministry can inspire holiness, even when used for profane activities. In addition, praise and worship become the primary means of transformation for disciples and restoring self-image in knowing God. Church services can provide a great space, time, and opportunity for Gen Alpha to experience God presence personally. The critical focus is that discipleship and self-image restoration should be related to the character of the generation.

The second facet of the transpersonal approach includes Church commitment to educating individuals about the value of appreciating every creation of God. Jennifer Mata-McMahon offered topics on building children spirituality with spiritual meaning-making in relationship with God, as well as forming identity and self-awareness.³² At the core of this teaching is the profound value of cherishing Christ act of forgiveness through the crucifixion, as the greatest gift for humanity (John 3:16). Gen Alpha is guided to comprehend that forgiveness of sins leads to salvation. The spiritual journey of identity formation becomes pronounced when an individual fully comprehends the experience of forgiveness and personal redemption with complete self-awareness. The process significantly depends on the consistent and progressive practice of experiencing a new birth through genuine repentance from an early age.

²⁹ Crace, “A Transpersonal Conversation.”

³⁰ Knights – Grant – Young, “Developing 21st Century Leaders,” 6–21.

³¹ Lewis, “Social Media,” 517–532.

³² Mata-McMahon, “Reviewing the Research in Children’s Spirituality,” 140–152.

The third aspect states the importance of Gen Alpha understanding that spiritual encounters are connected to the consciously managed thoughts, emotions, and will. This recognizes the significance of yearning for and desiring to partake in God benevolence. The fundamental dimension of experience includes personal acceptance, healing, the receipt of love and grace, acts of kindness, and the restoration of inner strength. Conscious spiritual experiences also guide the generation towards cognitive growth and spiritual encounters enriched by deep appreciation and unwavering trust in God.

2.2. Church, through the Family Healing Movement, as a Medium for Self-Image Recovery of Gen Alpha

Gen Alpha shows a keen receptivity to the world and the necessity for guidance through the abundance of information available. The learning style leans towards intuition rather than a linear approach, and excels through active participation, making use of high-capacity brains. Furthermore, the perspective on the world tends to show hierarchical structures, enhancing the belief that all individuals share a more equitable standing online.³³ Gen Alpha idolizes individuals from various fields, including artists, actors, athletes, musicians, and influencers such as YouTubers and this has a profound impact on self-perception from an early age. In this situation, Church is expected to collaborate with parents in reshaping self-image. Derek J. Tidball proposed that Church should bridge the ministry gap, possess the acumen to discern generational requirements, and take a leading role.³⁴ Hyunok Yi and Malan Nel described how teenagers felt about the absence of fathers. The local Church situation with fatherless teenagers showed a lack of interaction with the pastor or congregation.³⁵ Therefore, the concern is to include parents in improving self-image of Gen Alpha. In analyzing marital fidelity, the Lord also stresses the birth of generations or divine offspring (Matt 2:15–16). Families must pass on the true Christian identity to children. In Gen 1:28, man was permitted to be fruitful and multiply, while Matt 7:16–17 mentions that every good tree bears good fruit. The role of parents significantly influences children quality and when the concept is not balanced with spiritual identity, intelligence tends to lead to various conflicts and problems. Consequently, this may disrupt the social development and spiritual identity formation of the upcoming Gen Alpha. In this perspective, there are four essential aspects that parents should understand when shaping children identity. The first aspect is building spiritual identity, where parents are tasked with teaching children to understand God correctly. Character development is the second key focus, with parents

³³ Zur Institute, “On Digital Immigrants.”

³⁴ Tidball, *Teologi Pengembalaan*, 342.

³⁵ Yi – Nel, “Father Absence,” 1–11.

responsible for guiding children on good conduct. The third aspect is knowledge, and parents play an important role in imparting insight and understanding. Finally, parents are responsible for cultivating resilience, instilling the capacity to respond maturely in various situations.

The Family Healing Movement method is Church program designed like a 2–3 day retreat outside the context of Sunday worship. The event is held in a specific and agreed place, attended by parents and children, and facilitated by Church. In the research of Jan Paul Hook and Joshua N. Hook, this phenomenon is described as the “healing cycle,” a comprehensive model that does not address a single psychological disorder. In interpersonal therapy groups, members work through grace, safety, vulnerability, truth, belonging, and confession, while the final step of confession leads back to grace.³⁶

Church pastoral team mediates in bringing the family together. The main objective is to form an intact Christian Family identity between parents and children to stay in God love. Another objective is to equip family with the capacity to establish trust among members and anticipate potential negative consequences of social media usage. The process of rebuilding troubled children self-image should commence with parents. According to Emma Thompson, Jade Sheen, and Darryl Mayberry, the fundamental importance of parenting as a life domain is crucial in guiding and facilitating the recovery of mental health. This research introduces two key dimensions of mental health recovery, namely parenting and recovery journey as shared responsibilities.³⁷ The concept of children rightful self-image and value in the family structure is gradually diminishing. Therefore, Church is expected to serve as a mediator, facilitating a renewed personal connection between parents and children with God.

The Family Healing Movement includes several aspects related to honesty and unity with an open attitude of forgiveness and acceptance of each other existence. The second aspect is to equip individuals with the truth regarding the actual image from God Word. Establishing small groups creates a platform for open communication and the exchange of thoughts on matters related to Christian, enabling an atmosphere of understanding among the members of Gen Alpha. Furthermore, the restoration of a new self-image is experienced through honesty and true repentance. The movement is concerned with the restoration of self-image, divine reconciliation, and a return to a quality spiritual identity. The concept is continuous and can be re-conducted with a customized number of participants. In Christian theology, the movement can solve reconciliation and inner healing among members. John

³⁶ Hook – Hook, “The Healing Cycle,” 308.

³⁷ Thompson – Sheen – Maybery, “Measuring Recovery,” 219–259.

S. Klaasen calls the process a pastoral care approach to address the issues of suffering, reconciliation, and shepherding the soul.³⁸

2.3. Personal Practice: Church Mentoring and Supervision Activities

Generations are connected through technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the latest technological advancement. AI is a term coined at a summer school in the mathematics department of Dartmouth University in 1956. According to John McCarthy, AI is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines.³⁹ The impact of this technological advancement is replacing humans in work projects. The second thing is the impact of manipulation, where humans manipulate the relationships with each other. The third and most dangerous impact is the subjugation of humans to their creations. AI and social media have made most humans dependent on the concept. Another well-known term is RoboGen, meaning that the identity of the generation is no longer human but robotic. This includes three leading technologies, namely holograms, AI, and robotics. Gen Alpha is destined to be the “super smart,” most educated, “self-taught,” and technologically secure children.⁴⁰

Rom 12:2 affirms that man is not bound to the world. Meanwhile, Eph 2:13–16 states that Jesus is the Door to Restoration, as the prime example of practicing divine identity. Love is also essential and must be practiced personally at all times. The definition of personal practice is the act of faithfulness in performing activities, such as devotional time and Bible meditation. The act of discipline and faithfulness is the primary key to the growth of Christian faith (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 49:3; 77:12; 119:15; Matt 26:40–41, Mark 14:38; Eph 6:18; 1 Pet 5:8). The first practical aspects to be implemented for Gen Alpha is personal prayer, which trains the weak flesh to remain in the strength of faith (1 Thess 5:17; Matt 26:40–41). The phrase “keep praying” shows the importance of vigilance in all situations, rather than focusing on the passage of time. This generation must cultivate faith-based communication and acquire the ability to discern God voice through personal prayer. True prayer increases intimate relationships shared between father and son (Luke 11:1–2, 10–13). Meanwhile, the teaching of Jesus admonishes man to build friendships (John 15:15). Church teaches that prayer requires several essential elements, namely [1] Space and Time (Matt 6:11), [2] Believing in Faith (Mark 11:24), [3] Longing for God (Matt 42:2; 63:2), [4] Perseverance (Col 4:2), and [5] Openness (Ps 139:23).

The second aspect includes the practice of praying, praising, and worshiping God, which is a fundamental spiritual discipline in both the Old and New Testaments (Ps 22:4; 47:1; 66:8; 100; 135:2; 149:3; Acts 15:16; John 4:22–23). The third is

³⁸ Klaasen, “African Christianity and Healing,” 1–7.

³⁹ McCarthy, “A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project,” 12–14.

⁴⁰ Uhrig, “Generation Alpha,” 87–90.

spending time in silence, specifically to meet and talk with God through prayer and meditation on the Bible. Quiet time appears to be an aspect of Christian faith that many believers often underestimate. This aspect contains essential elements such as imitating Jesus (Mark 1:35), responding to God desire (Job 7:17–18), building fellowship (Luke 10:42; Isa 50:4), filling spiritual vessels (Ps 90:14), building the inner man (Dan 6:4, 11), and gaining new strength (Isa 40:30; Lam 3:22–23).

There is evidence that religion and spirituality in youth are associated with [1] positive religious or spiritual development, [2] a plethora of positive outcomes, including moral development, [3] quality of parents-teenagers relationships, [4] psychological well-being, [5] identity formation, [6] less violence, [7] and reconciliation in the family.⁴¹ Church can take an essential role in building spirituality by teaching, educating, mentoring, and supervising the personal practice of Gen Alpha. The first step is to ensure that the generation understands and realizes the importance of daily personal practice activities. In addition, discipleship classes are necessary for opening minds and providing spiritual understanding centered on God Word. The activity of praying and practicing faith in daily life remains the focus of Church and the mentoring team. Gen Alpha requires guidance and role models from parents, Church, and spiritual peers in physical and virtual realities. The responsibilities of mentoring and spiritual oversight must be adopted to navigate and nurture a resilient spirituality during evolving times.

3. Church in Mentoring Fathers as Priests and Spiritual Models for Gen Alpha

The research conducted by David C. Dollahite and Loren D. Marks stated 12 essential roles of spiritual development in childhood. At least 4 of the roles can be used as key measures, namely: [1] issues related to answering questions including existence, intimacy, and God, [2] conversion and disaffiliation, [3] impactful personal spiritual experiences, and [4] temperament and personality.⁴² Fathers play a significant role in children developmental capacities and life experiences. This refers to freedom, broadening children outlook, firm discipline, and male role models. For children who lack fathers figure, concerning leadership qualities, Gens Y, Z, and Alpha show traits of guidance, empowerment, and inspiration,⁴³ affecting the psychological development

⁴¹ Dollahite – Marks, “Positive Youth Religious and Spiritual Development,” 2.

⁴² Dollahite – Marks, “Positive Youth Religious and Spiritual Development,” 2.

⁴³ McCrindle, “Understanding Generation Alpha.”

from a young age.⁴⁴ Children will have difficulty adapting to the environmental community when psychological development is impaired from childhood.

Church action is needed in the ministry of the community of fathers to restore the role in forming Christian identity of Gen Alpha. The actions include the formation of a particular group of fathers from young family with children of the generation. The pastor and pastoral team of Church become the prominent leaders and team that teaches and mentors fathers. This group is not a cell community or the Bible study class but a part of the pastoral counseling ministry. The primary purpose is to provide regular mentoring and discipleship to maximize fathers role as head of the household, priest, and example of faith in the family. Some fundamental concerns arise from observing the characteristics of young family that must be carefully controlled, such as [1] the influence of the Bible as God Word appears to be reduced. This can be attributed to the inclination towards the rapid acquisition of information in the digital world. The tendency to place greater trust in internet search results over pastoral counsel poses a pressing challenge. [2] A disturbing trend is observed in the attitudes of children in the family, characterized by a lack of respect, often manifested through abusive communication and this issue must be addressed promptly. [3] Despite parental efforts to reprimand and advise, there is an evident need for structured training, guidance, and building. The preoccupation with social media, which consumes a substantial portion of the time, shows the necessity for comprehensive intervention.

Firstly, Church and its stewardship must adapt to the needs of mentoring classes for fathers in young family. Mentoring and discipleship on the part of Church prevent the limitations of fathers in leading children. Fazel E. Freeks explores that mentoring and its processes can be a workable and possible solution to restore relationships in fractured family. Mentoring is an essential and effective method to help men understand fatherhood.⁴⁵ Church needs to prepare the pastoral teams through initial training and teaching basic psychological skills related to Gen Alpha. The trick is for Church to synergize with Christian psychologists and pastoral counseling must be open to experiencing breakthroughs in providing the best solutions for parenting class. This psychological perspective on religious practices can detect obstacles to personal and spiritual growth.⁴⁶

Secondly, Church mediates a program known as “Real Men,” which restores men responsibility according to the divine characteristics, and the program is aimed only at married men of Millennials. The Real Men program includes Servants of God, pastors, and Christian practitioners, acting as mentors. In addition to approaching the participants through worship and the Word, several distinctive themes are

⁴⁴ Ashari, “Fatherless in Indonesia,” 35–39.

⁴⁵ Fazel, “Mentoring Fathers,” 1–9.

⁴⁶ Nye – Savage – Watts, *Psychology for Christian Ministry*, 20–21.

presented, such as the maximum law guiding the role of maximum men and fathers (1 Cor 10:1–10), the power of prayer (1 Tim 2:8), the treatment of the wife (1 Pet 3:7), a priest in the home (1 Tim 2:8; Prov 4:20–21), personal responsibility (Gen 3:6), a transformed leader (Rom 12:1–14; 2 Tim 2:4), abiding in the Word (Jas 1:19–25), and man imagination as motivation (Ps 101:1–7). Man learned to interact with each other about the family life and discuss marital challenges, and relationships with children through the program.

Thirdly, this research proposes “Spiritual Quality Time,” which is a voluntary and conscious effort to devote particular fathers time to children in an intimate and religious space. Even though schools may provide children with play opportunities, this cannot serve as a definitive measure of success in shaping personal development within the context of family and faith. Typically, parents reserve weekends and holidays as precious moments to spend quality time with children. Church can also play a role in augmenting these efforts by offering alternative programs and serving as hosts for a variety of enriching activities. In this context, Evgenia V. Astapenko, Tatiana V. Klimova, Galina A. Molokhina, and Elena A. Petrenko addressed the peculiarities of recreational activities in conditions of forced epidemiological self-isolation. The results lead to the conclusion that in families where children invest significant leisure time in virtual activities, parents-children relationship shows decreased levels of children acceptance and a diminished desire for symbiotic interaction.⁴⁷ Gen Alpha tends to lead the learning, blurring the lines between formal and informal methods and replacing traditional one-way information transmission.⁴⁸ The program provides a measurable interactive space where Church helps men to create a different pattern of interpersonal relationships. From this perspective, a proposed solution entails facilitating exclusive playtime between Gen Alpha children and fathers, distinct from mothers. The objective is to bridge any relational gaps, supporting fluid and high-quality communication, authentic expressions of love, and the pursuit of genuine happiness that transcends social media (Titus 2:7; Matt 19:4; Luke 15:11–32). Church participates by mediating and providing the correct and maximum method. A form of this event can be a joint retreat and the activities are designed to be carried out between fathers and children, such as repeating meals, playing games, eating with musical accompaniment, or sharing stories and experiences in an open or accessible space. Shawna Mischell Dixon showed that the five most common teaching methods used were service learning, technology, student presentations, question and answer, and peer teaching.⁴⁹ Church can use these five methods in teaching how to be a religious fathers by including nature, communicating the meaning of life through stories and testimonies, and using the power of prayer in building hope and the truth

⁴⁷ Astapenko, “Personal Characteristics.”

⁴⁸ Hamedani, “The Generation Gap,” 149–172.

⁴⁹ Dixon, *A Survey of Teaching Methods*.

of God Word. For believers, the family and children serve as a reflection of the heavenly state bestowed by God, while simultaneously acting as a golden bridge leading to the promised eternal life.

4. Church and Spiritual Identity Building in the 4/14 Window

In terms of age, the oldest Gen Alpha is around 13–14 years old. This research shows the compatibility with the concept of child evangelism known as the “4/14 Window” by Bryant Myers, Director of World Vision MARC Ministries, in a presentation at the EFMA Executive Retreat. The depiction of Myers painted a picture of the quantity and plight of children and youth enduring hardship. The significance is a compelling statistic in the United States, where nearly 85% of individuals who made a life-altering decision to embrace Christ were between the formative ages of 4 and 14.⁵⁰ The megatrend of world evangelism also leads to the conversion of young people. David Kinnaman has released the results of the survey on the digital generation. The result shows that spiritual practitioners build a more fluid relationship with the digital generation, comprising 48% and 40% of youth and senior pastors. Meanwhile, evangelism and outreach were carried out by 29% and 24% of senior and youth pastors for the young generation.⁵¹

Church first mission is to prepare believing souls to become disciples of the Lord (Matt 28:19–20) and provide teaching and disciplinary action for the growth of faith. Furthermore, it continually educates the congregations to stand firm against the struggles of life (Acts 2:24). From the beginning, Church calling was to provide spiritual education and strengthen the faith of every member. The primary basis of its ministry is to equip Gen Alpha to move from darkness to the light of God (Matt 28:19–20). It is relevant to educate the generation by adequately introducing the Bible into daily life. The Bible essence of salvation, truth, and the dignity of life remains at the core of Church with an adaptive strategy. Raymond M. Rigdon pointed to gospel exploration and understanding as a core need and the most supportive correlation was the opening and deepening of the spiritual classroom.⁵² Church returns to the true mission of the Great Commission, making all believers true disciples of Christ and free from sin, bondage, evil influences, and worldly influences.⁵³ Furthermore, it is open as a founder and leader, both physically and for the development of cyberspace to nurture and teach Digital Natives.⁵⁴ The leadership team is an essential

⁵⁰ Conner, “3 Cultural Stories.”

⁵¹ Kinnaman, “Pastors and Parents.”

⁵² Colson – Rigdon, *Understanding Your Church's Curriculum*, 50.

⁵³ Ruhlessin, *Struktur Organisasi Dan Misi Gereja*, 14.

⁵⁴ Tulgan, “Meet Generation Z.”

intermediary and the practice of mentoring classes is difficult to be conducted for a relatively long time. However, spiritual leaders must take full responsibility for the digital era and mentoring classes. Church also acts as an initiator in developing relationships and a community. According to Paul Jarzembowski, disaffiliation and lack of adult inclusion in religious literacy failed to establish a model of ministry in responding to trends of spiritual decline.⁵⁵ Church moves from a religious to a public space with precisely the same nature through a different method. The digital generation has two lifestyles, namely physical and virtual activities. Church acts as an intermediary through the ideal team, opening up opportunities for counseling, talent development, and self-fulfillment. Church method of building community and relationships must be subjected to renewal and adaptation. The Siga Arles, John Baxter Brown, Geneieve James Manzano Jr Glicerio, Natiity Petalar, and Sokolovski Augustin⁵⁶ mission approach to spiritual development in the 4/14 window includes three methodologies that remain relevant in the digital age. Firstly, church uses a strategy of engaging children by offering entertainment infused with spiritual elements during worship services. The aim is to attract children and promote parents to participate in church activities. Secondly, individuals who have attained a level of maturity in age and spirituality serve as custodians of the quality of knowledge about God, playing a crucial role in guiding and building the growth of the congregation. Thirdly, a profound relationship exists between children, the mission, and social transformation when churches shift the focus to include the transformation of children. However, the evangelistic mission must maintain a commitment to upholding the standards of an effective and authentic testimony to Christ. Children remain primarily oriented toward supporting a personal relationship with Christ and learning how to be integral members of the wider Christian community. The spiritual development mission bridge calls for a movement to elevate the quality of children spiritual identity as active mission agents for the generation. Critical weaknesses can then be anticipated in the practice and level of children's attendance for Christ (Matt 18;1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48). Fourth, Church ministry expands the 4/14 evangelistic mission through the virtual world. There should be more than physical books and traditional games to increase the speed of literacy and knowledge of Gen Alpha. Furthermore, reading books, storybooks, and the Bible can be made into media applications. This is because physical and conservative approaches are often not very comfortable. The 4/14 evangelistic mission can be carried out in online media such as TikTok and Instagram in the form of serialized stories, straightforward spiritual content, and worship promotions or testimonies. Approximately 25% of Gen Alpha are actively engaged on social media platforms, with 28% of the online activity influenced by promotions from friends. An interesting aspect is the high receptiveness to

⁵⁵ Jarzembowski, "Mobilizing the Field Hospital," 1.

⁵⁶ Arles, *Children & Youth as Partners in Mission*.

direct engagement with commercial links. Other data shows that 19%, 24%, and 13% enjoy social media posts, online videos, and website pictures.⁵⁷ According to Thompson, Gen Alpha has behavioral characteristics focused on creativity, dynamism, leadership, and a solid connection to technology.⁵⁸

Fifth, Church opens a special pastoral counseling service for children, who possess different characteristics. The importance of this opening is because Gen Alpha is experiencing declining mental health due to the influence of parents disturbed issues. Parents mostly from Gens Y and Z are open to receive help for mental health issues. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), 35% and 37% of Millennials and Gen Z self-reported receiving mental health therapy or treatment in 2019.⁵⁹ The implication is that Gen Alpha is exposed to psychological problems before teenage. Therefore, children counseling programs may need to follow the promotion or implementation methods of pastoral counseling. The process can be carried out by youth pastors or Sunday school teachers to effectively change the look, structure, and focus of ministry for Gen Alpha.⁶⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, Gen Alpha was challenging to trust since the actions were based on personal action and observation. Church was responsible for building Christian parents and identity, as well as acting as a mentor and facilitator in the exploration of faith. Furthermore, Gen Alpha possessed the most significant number of members, inheriting an identity for the future. The strategy was to build the quality of two-way communication between children and fathers as parents. Church was expected to mentor, train, and prepare men for the role of fathers in young families. In addition, space could be opened to collaborate with creators on social media in passing gospel messages. Church should focus on the mission of spiritual development in the 4/14 window by maximizing Sunday school services and pastoral counseling for children. There was a potential for further research that could examine the impact of social media on evangelizing Gen Alpha using a quantitative approach. The result could explore the potential for extending the proposed evangelization and pastoral methods to specific denominations and Churches, such as Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism.

⁵⁷ Fletcher, "Generation Alpha," 11–13.

⁵⁸ Dos Reis, "Study on The Alpha Generation," 9–19.

⁵⁹ Fletcher, "Generation Alpha."

⁶⁰ Walker, "5 Reasons."

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