



EVANGELIZING
TODAY'S
GENERATION



EYITOPÉ LALA



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Evangelizing Today's Generation

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EVANGELIZING TODAY'S GENERATION



CHAPTER ONE



■—————■
*The devastation of that which is right has begun!
God's response? The mobilizing of an army of artists &
creative people who will learn to utilize their 'seer' gifts (the
different media of arts) to not only press back the present
darkness, but to also seize the future.*

- Ernest Paul

■—————■

In the 21st Century, the terrain has changed completely. The world that existed 10 years ago has become extinct. Today's children are faced with challenges that most people didn't experience until they were in their early or late twenties.

Technology is improving lives and helping us achieve more results (upgrades) but on the other hand, moral values are dropping like dumbbells (downgrades) happening just as Daniel (Dan. 12:4) and Apostle Paul prophesied (2 Tim 3:1-8).

One word captures all this; CHANGE! Change is happening all around us on many levels. We have changes in the following areas:

Changing definitions (what we say things are): A few

of physical property he could amass or physical products he could sell. Nowadays indicators of wealth have changed. Companies or individuals that possess intellectual property have become billionaires. Two clear examples are Mark Zuckerberg, a young man in his 30s who invented Facebook (a virtual “continent” of about 1 billion people with a financial value of UD\$100B¹) and Steve Jobs, whose company, Apple, is on a mission to “reinvent the mobile phone with its revolutionary iPhone and App Store, and is defining the future of mobile media and computing devices with the iPad.”² Even everyday words have taken on new meanings, some positive and others negative.

Changing Perspectives & Value Systems (how we perceive things like good and evil): The change has also affected our value systems and the way we look at things. Cultural and national lines have become blurred as access to various nations has become easier. The advent of new media technologies has changed the way we've looked at marketing, education and communication (the most obvious being communication). Communication has taken on new forms with the rise in new forms of media (especially the social media revolution). Traditional views are being questioned and sexual deviation and perversion have risen. In fact, it seems that the moral compass of a lot of

today's individuals are either reprogrammed or completely broken. Most movies now don't focus on the good vs. evil storyline. Most tend to plow the line of "not so evil" versus "very very evil".

Changing Technologies (how things are now done):

The surge in technological advancement has completely changed our world. Mobile communications technology and the internet are just some of the technologies that have revolutionized our world completely. Now we can achieve things faster and easier. The change is not only seen in science and technology as other areas have evolved and discovered better ways to achieve results in sports, business, family life and government. Note that technology refers to way the we do things.

All these changes point to the fact that the world is no longer what it was just a decade ago. It is into this kind of society many young people find themselves and majority of them have no clear guides to take them through this minefield.

One truth Christians have seemed to ignore is this: if we are able to capture the youth, we have the future in our hands. If we lose them however, then we can be sure the future is lost. I believe this is what Satan, the archenemy of mankind knows and uses to his advantage in


fulfilling his threefold agenda of destruction (steal, kill and destroy-John 10:10a). He has been able to conveniently capture a good deal of today's generation and send them on a journey into lawlessness (ultimately ending in both physical and spiritual disaster). As far as Satan is concerned, it really doesn't matter how it happens, people must go to hell. In view of this we cannot just stand by and watch, expecting things to just right themselves. We must do something and that not just because we want to preserve a legacy for ourselves but because God is trans-generational and He wants to know each individual personally and has plans for each generation. Besides this, we have received a commission from Jesus Himself to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19, 20).

This is the reason we must introduce the next generation to this God we have seen, touched and experienced! However, for us to effectively minister the gospel of Christ to this new generation, we must first accept that things have changed completely and drastically. And it is only clear to say that if things have changed, then our methods must also change! I must also sound a clear note of warning. That times have changed does not mean our values and principles must be dropped. We only need change our modus operandi. This we must do without compromising our principles.


FOOTNOTES

1. http://business.financialpost.com/2013/08/26/facebooks-market-value-tops-us100b-as-mobile-ad-business-fuels-stock-turnabout/?_lsa=b662-8ba1
2. <http://www.businessinsider.com/apples-new-mission-statement-2013-8>

EVANGELIZING TODAY'S GENERATION



CHAPTER
TWO

The chapter title is centered on the page. It features the word "CHAPTER" in a smaller, all-caps serif font above the word "TWO" in a significantly larger, all-caps serif font. The text is flanked by two symmetrical, ornate decorative flourishes that resemble scrollwork or floral motifs, one positioned above "CHAPTER" and one below "TWO".

■—————■
*Using a dull axe requires great strength,
so sharpen the blade. That's the value of wisdom; it
helps you succeed.*
Ecclesiastes 10:10 (NLT)
■—————■

As sons of God born at a time as this, we must understand and be established in the timeless, fundamental truths of God and locate innovative and creative ways to present them to the world.

For us to effectively evangelize (transfer God's truth to) today's generation, there are 3 major dynamics that we must then know, master and maximize. They are:

1. The Format
2. The Technology
3. The Content

Let's examine these dynamics one after the other to get a clearer picture.

THE FORMAT

(The container the message is wrapped in)

The format is the package the message is wrapped in.

How attractive the package is will determine how well received the message will be because man looks on the outward appearance. The container the message is wrapped in is very important because man judges based on appearances. It is this excellent packaging that will grant us access into the palaces of the kings and into the hearts of the youth of today. The world respects excellence and detests mediocrity and if we will be active players in creating the influence we desire through the gospel of Christ, excellence must flow out of all our efforts.

The format is not just limited to making the package excellent but also inviting and approachable. This means we may need to employ new forms of ministering the gospel and also learn to make the older methods more contemporary.

The following are “containers” that can be used to package the gospel for today's youth:

- Fashion (shows, fashion trends, etc) e.g a fashion event that focuses on beautiful and trendy dressing without promoting immoral or loose dressing. (Daystar Christian Centre and Covenant Christian Centre have both organized shows)
- Music (Rap, R&B, Fuji, etc)
- Sports

- Movies (drama, choreography, etc)
- Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest)
- Print media (magazines, books, comics, newspapers, etc)

THE TECHNOLOGY

(The means/platform used to deliver the message). As mentioned earlier, technology refers to how we do things or how we achieve our results. Technology refers to using knowledge to create practical solutions to problems. For example sweeping the floor with a broom is a form of technology but a more advanced and effective one would be using a vacuum cleaner.

Both technology and format are quite similar but are also clearly different. In the case of our subject, technology refers to how the message is communicated i.e. the platforms that are used to transfer/transmit the message. In the past years we have employed methods like morning cry, tract distribution and so on. Some of these things require upgrading and some have become less effective in the 21st century. We must obtain new wineskins.

The following are technologies that we can take advantage of in evangelizing today's generation.

- *New Media* -The internet has become a hub where

over 1 billion users),

- **Blogs:** For example, the RAMPAGE Outreach blog at rampageoreach.org, which focuses on teaching creative Christians how to use media as tools of influencing the world with values of God's kingdom and was able to get 3000+ views in just 6 months of posting.
- **Emails:** A young Nigerian, Lanre Fatokun, started a bible study group to help Christians based in busy metropolitan cities study the entire bible two chapters a day using Yahoo email groups. The group has grown from a few people to 3 groups of about 200 each, reading through the entire bible in two years.
- **Print Media** - Francine Rivers and Ted Dekker are just two of the many Christian authors who use fiction to pass on the values of the kingdom of God.
- **Radio** - Sharing Life Issues (on Inspiration FM, Lagos) is a radio show where people call in to receive counsel on all kinds of life issues. I've heard of people giving their lives to Christ on this show and the show reaches people of all kinds of religious backgrounds majority of whom are young people!

- **The Arts** - This consists of drama, music, dance, choreography, movies, stage plays and so on. They present opportunities for evangelizing this generation because this generation thrives on entertainment. A good case in point is how the Alfa Sule Theatre Group, whose movies cut across various social strata amongst youth (and old) caused a tidal wave in the Yoruba movie industry. Movies like *Fireproof* (produced by Sherwood Media of Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Georgia, USA) and others by Tyler Perry Productions such as *Why Did I Get Married*, have greatly influenced youth and even turned many to Jesus for salvation. The Olori-Okò song by the music group Infinity and Midnight Crew's Igwe have also shown that the gospel, on the wings of music, can penetrate religious strongholds.

If we use the technology available to us, there are more opportunities to share the gospel with this generation than ever in the history of mankind. We only need to ask God to show them to us! It is obvious that we have a message this generation needs! However our effectiveness in getting this message to the world has been marred by obsolete methods and ineffective skill development. We must then step up and not just sit back relaxed. The kingdom of God is advanced forcefully!

THE CONTENT

I've left the most important part of it all for the last. It is the message we are trying to pass across. It is the most crucial aspect of it all. Our message is simple: *Man has been separated from God through disobedience (sin) but Jesus Christ paid the price to have us restored to a complete relationship with God as Father and escape His judgement of sin.* Our major source of content is the written Word of God, the Bible.

I have observed that one of the traps most Christians have fallen into in evangelizing today's generation is compromising the Truth while trying to innovate in the delivery of the gospel. Most have been so focused on creative presentation and have discarded or watered down the Good News. It seems we are challenged with knowing how to accurately balance creative, inspiring presentation with the content, which is the Good News.

Considering that we have access to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, the One who searches all things, it is surprising that we sometimes lament a lack of content. The truth is that it requires a high level of skill and creativity to be able to weave the Word into stories, music and so on in ways that unbelievers can understand and receive. Asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom and revelation is a simple key to receiving this skill.



CHAPTER THREE



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