

EXCERPT



Church for Everyone

Building a Multi-Inclusive Community for Emerging Generations

February 13, 2024 | \$18, 224 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0550-7

Diversity is a high value for younger generations—but too often, they're not finding it in the church. This research-based, theologically informed, and practical book offers a wealth of practical experience and stories from the trenches of multiethnic ministry and holds out a vision for true diversity taken from the pages of Scripture.

A Desire for Justice-Oriented Diverse Churches

The protests that followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis went far beyond what had been seen as a movement of mostly angry, grieved, and activist African Americans with some allies. A truly global protest movement including Whites, Asians, and Hispanics was shown on news stations. Young White men and women showed solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and called out a conservative evangelicalism that was slow or totally silent when it came to providing a biblical call to justice amid George Floyd and so many other unarmed African Americans dying at the hands of police. They saw the deep irony of armed, White young men going into churches and schools taking lives and being arrested by police officers, not shot and killed by them.

Some of these emerging justice-oriented young Whites were drifting away from the predominantly White and suburban evangelical churches of their parents and grandparents and finding new community in multiethnic, urban, missional, and justice-oriented churches. Others were leaving the church altogether. It raises the question: are predominantly White evangelical churches that lack a biblical framework and ministry praxis for justice and diversity vulnerable to losing a significant portion of the younger generation? Or will this limit their ability to evangelize and make disciples within the younger unchurched Whites? Or both?

This book is about the Christian church and the emerging generations. But which segment of the Christian church are we talking about? And who exactly are these “emerging generations”? The authors of this book have experience in the African American church, the predominantly White suburban evangelical church, and the evangelical, multiethnic, and urban church. We both have studied, written about, and experienced either the exodus of young adults exiting the churches of their parents and grandparents or their coming into multiethnic, justice-oriented, and urban churches.

First, when referring to emerging generations, there are generalizations being made. It is fair to say that while we believe most young people seek more diverse, inclusive, and justice-oriented communities, they do not represent the whole. Around the globe, there were protests and counterprotests. Young adults were on both sides of these situations and others like them. Political divisions, polarization, and tendencies toward exclusion are evident throughout society, regardless of age. But we strongly believe that we are talking about a significant segment of emerging generations looking for diverse, representative, justice-oriented churches.

Second, this isn't the first-time emerging generations have cared about faith and justice. During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, White college students in the North risked their lives by getting on freedom buses and into cars to venture down South to confront the injustice of the Jim Crow system. Also, today's emerging generations are more ethnically and racially diverse than previous generations. While the “nones” may conjure images of hipster, Caucasian young adults, this trend is not limited to any specific ethnic demographic. There is also a growing number of Black and brown “none” and “de-churched” young men and women. The Jude 3 Project and the Black Millennial Café, in partnership with the Barna Group, are beginning to bring attention to this reality. This is important because the ever-increasing multiethnic emerging generations are truly a wakeup call for the entire body of Christ in the United States.

—adapted from the introduction

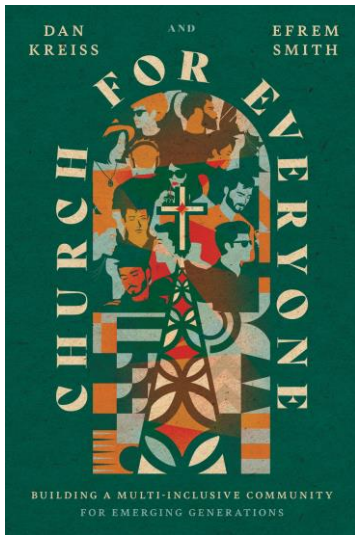


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Two Servant Leaders Breaking Down Barriers

"Emerging generations are the most diverse generation ever in ways more complex than simply ethnicity. In most aspects of their lives, they are surrounded by people different from themselves. Yet, congregations remain separated by culture, education level, ethnicity, political persuasion, and social status. The contrast between their everyday lives and what they find within a church community remains stark and gives them one more reason to dismiss the church as outdated and irrelevant. Having worked in ministry with youth and young adults for decades I wanted to address some of the issues that seemed to be a barrier to them."

— co-author Dan Kreiss commenting on what is distinctive about *Church for Everyone*

Dan Kreiss has served in various aspects of ministry for more than thirty years in a wide range of settings including long-term international and cross-cultural contexts. He has an earned doctorate from George Fox University, Leadership in Global Perspectives, and is currently the associate minister for mission and community outreach at Roswell Presbyterian Church in the greater Atlanta area.

Efrem Smith is the co-lead pastor of Bayside Church Midtown, a thriving and multiethnic community in Sacramento, California. He also serves as a collaborative catalyst for African American Church Planting, Disciple Making, and Urban Empowerment Movements. Efrem served as the superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church, and was also formerly the president of World Impact, an urban missions organization. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and received an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary. Efrem is the author of five books.



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