

A Pentecostal Paradigm for Emerging Generations

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Introduction

In recent years, particularly in the last decade, we have witnessed the explosive growth of the “emerging generations” in Latin America and the United States. They have played a major role as they awoken to the church’s mission. The emerging generations are among us; therefore, it is important that we meet their needs and, at the same time, be a driving agent to guide them.

This paper will provide a critical reflection on the emerging generations. To begin, we will focus on defining the term and describing their reality within a biblical exegetical framework. Finally, we

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will develop an emerging Pentecostal theology and place it in the context of inclusion in the church's mission.

Getting to Know the Emerging Generations

Latin America is witnessing the appearance of the most numerous generation of young people in modern history. Some predict that in the next few years, 70% of the population in Latin America will be under twenty-five years of age.¹ Therefore, if the Pentecostal church wants to reach this generation, it needs be more intentional in its way of being church and develop a more practical theology from the Pentecostal viewpoint.

Young people from every social stratum are part of these emerging generations that are charting the direction for current-day society, and studying them is nothing new in this day and age. For contemporary Christian author Junior Zapata, this generation is called "emerging" because "they are surging, blooming, practically invading our society."²

Yet countless members of the emerging generations are living in situations of deprivation, limitation, and multiple forms of violence which affect their enjoyment of a full and productive life. According to the final document from the 2010 Pre-Lausanne Regional Conference on the Church, Emerging Generations, and Violence in Latin America,

Violence is one of the principal causes of death among the young men and women of Latin America and the Caribbean. The percentage of homicides among people between fifteen and twenty-six years of age is the highest in the world. In addition, every year nearly 6

1. Lucas Leys, *El ministerio juvenil efectivo* (Miami: Vida, 2009), 13.
2. Junior Zapata, *La generación emergente* (Miami: Vida, 2005), 53.