Are Current People Group Presentations Engaging the Next Generation?

A *Mission Frontiers* interview with Andrew Feng and a group of NextGen believers.

BY **ANDREW FENG**

Andrew Feng (andrew@indigitous.org) worked at KPMG Corporation and then in the consulting industry for 10 years. He served with his wife in East Asia for five years and is currently the US Expansion Lead for Indigitous (www.indigitous.org). His passion is prototyping new pathways for digital missions via micro-projects to reach the next generation.

Why is engaging NextGen with people group information important?

Barna estimates that three out of four US churchgoers have either never heard of the Great Commission or do not know what it means. Yet, we are depending on the NextGen to be our missions sending force of the future. Something must change. It is critical to engage a younger generation of Christians with unreached peoples.

In your experience, what is a younger generation's view of people groups in general? Is it part of their grid?

Most of the younger generation is completely unaware of people groups being a strategic focus for missions. The concept of people groups with little to no access to the gospel is not part of their thinking. I don't believe NextGen is feeling challenged, and few have a burden to serve or engage with unreached peoples. More frequently, they feel God calling them to stay and be senders rather than goers.

Are other paradigms more important to a younger generation than traditional ethnolinguistic groupings?

With the advance of technology, interacting with people worldwide only depends on one's internet speed. For example, a quick search on Reddit will reveal how globalized everyone is, and the idea of a Third Culture individual is becoming more common. Traditional barriers to the gospel are being reduced, and young people tend to feel more connected based on social relationships than ethnicity.

Do traditional people group presentations motivate a younger generation?

From the people group presentations I have seen from sites like Joshua Project and Go31, I can say that traditional methods have not motivated the younger generation. I don't think NextGen relates to lists and statistics as much as previous generations. Stories and narrative seem more impactful today. As a younger person myself, the most motivation and engagement I have seen has been through personal sharing. I have found others are willing to listen and learn about people groups when I am in relationship with them.

How can people group information be better presented to impact a younger generation?

I strongly believe the presentation of people group information needs a younger voice and brand identity that understands the trends and desires of the younger generation. Fresh presentations need to be made by NextGen themselves. Instead of asking people to read an encyclopedia or look at a statistical website, we need to engage them on the platforms they are using such as Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and Quora. Video and discussion forums are key.

What is the greatest need you see in the people group information space?

Unfortunately, whenever I sit in mission consultations, I often notice that I am one of the few that does not fit the description of an older, Western, white male. A key need is creating space for younger Asian, African, and Latin American unreached peoples data managers, thinkers and leaders.

How can NextGen's skills be best used in unreached people efforts?

Companies such as Airbnb, Uber, and Fiverr have leveraged the younger generations skills with the gig economy model. Similarly, an idea is to offer missional micro-projects that are centered around community and creating impact among unreached peoples. How might we help people redeem their skills beyond the four church walls? Imagine a world where we can innovate ways to bring first-world skills to the ends of the earth.

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