



# EMERGING ALLIANCE LEADERS IN CANADA

## *An inquiry into young Christian leaders (18-35)*

### *Executive Summary*

Between August and October 2020, Envision Canada conducted a national survey of young adults (18-35) in preparation and to better inform the strategic steps in the creation of a mentoring network. Especially during a period where missional engagements are not viable during the global pandemic of COVID-19 and where international travel is not advisable, the purpose of such a study served in the following ways:

1. What are the areas of focus where young adults are well supported by their local (Alliance) church?
2. What are the main areas of struggles or challenges for these emerging leaders particularly in this time of great disruption? What have been the opportunities that have arisen if any?
3. Is there a need for emerging leaders in the Alliance to be mentored in areas of focus where the local church may not possess the capacity to develop such leaders?
4. What is Envision Canada's best strategic response as a national initiative to resource young adults as well as local Alliance churches? Are these areas of focus aligned with Envision's purpose and values, and does Envision have the capacity to develop these?

Results show that the local church, campus ministry, and youth camps remain key places for young adults to serve and grow in their Christian leadership, particularly in existing ministries. A little over half of young adults surveyed still find most of their life mentors in church settings, though 43% would say that they have found their best mentors outside the church. In areas that are outreach focused (neighbourhood outreach, justice and compassion, etc.), Global Missions, Creative Arts (design, storytelling, media, etc.), College and Career ministry, Worship and Music, and Spiritual Renewal, there is a tendency for young adults leading in these realms to feel less supported and in need of guidance.

To echo a recent Canadian study on young adults<sup>1</sup>, mentors continue to play a key role in helping young adult leadership development, particularly in their Christian faith. Despite overwhelming and competing uses of the term, mentors have been proven to help young adults find a leadership role and place within the Church, identify giftings and talents for career and educational trajectories (where pastors provided the least encouragement), and can encourage skill development through project/initiative accompaniment.

After close analysis of the data, including a narrative approach to respondents' answers, we were able to draft multiple leadership profiles below that embody various characteristics of these young leaders. This methodology enables us to formulate descriptive attributes that could best capture one or multiple individuals. The profiles were not created simply to differentiate exclusively one leader to another. Rather, these profiles serve to paint the different facets of what this emerging generation of leaders look like. Some may embody one, two, or more facets in this holistic gem that God is preparing for His Church. For example, one individual could find themselves in multiple leadership profiles based on their strengths and attributes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rick Hiemstra, Lorianne Dueck and Matthew Blackaby, "Renegotiating Faith: The Delay In Young Adult Identity Formation And What It Means For The Church In Canada" Toronto, ON: Faith Today Publications, 2018, <https://p2c.com/wp-content/themes/avada-corp/files/Renegotiating-Faith-Report.pdf>.



These diverse leadership profiles give us insights on areas of interest and growth in reviewing and developing our own mentoring strategies. Thirteen profiles were created to differentiate such attributes and characteristics where a percentage represents their overall representation and average age, felt support (out of 10), gender, and education are indicated.

**1. The Swiss-army-knife Missionary (10%)**

- Highly skilled and educated in various areas, predominately female.
- 24.7 years old, 30% male vs 70% female
- 5.8/10 felt support by their local church
- 30% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 70% fully secular

**2. The Next-gen Cultivator (13%)**

- Passionate about Kids and Youth ministry
- 26.6 years old, 46% male vs 54% female
- 6.9/10 felt support by their local church
- 53.8% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 46.2% fully secular

**3. The Family Man (4%)**

- Older young adults, committed to their families and kids as a priority
- 31.8 years old, 100% male
- 4.3/10 felt support by their local church
- 50% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 50% fully secular

**4. The Engaged Culture Shifter (10%)**

- Young adults passionate about seeing justice/compassion lived out around them
- 24.8 years old, 30% male vs 70% female
- 6/10 felt support by their local church
- 40% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 60% fully secular

**5. The Worship Artist (11%)**

- Passionate about music as a career, ministry service and reimagining worship for churches.
- 25.8 years old, 55% male vs 45% female
- 5.6/10 felt support by their local church
- 18.2% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 81.2% fully secular

**6. The Creative Storyteller (9%)**

- Designers, videographers, illustrators who are passionate about storytelling
- 23.9 years old, 33% male vs 67% female
- 5.9/10 felt support by their local church
- 44.4% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 55.6% fully secular

**7. The Preacher & Teacher (5%)**

- Young adults who are passionate about teaching and preaching at their local church
- 26 years old, 40% male vs 60% female
- 7.8/10 felt support by their local church



- 60% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 40% fully secular
- 8. The Friendly Neighbourhood Evangelist (14%)**
- Young adults involved in community development, campus ministry or neighbourhood outreach.
  - 25.3 years old, 36% male vs 64% female
  - 6.0/10 felt support by their local church
  - 18.2% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 81.2% fully secular
- 9. The Spiritual Guide & Counselor (3%)**
- Passionate about spiritual care, counseling and deliverance ministry
  - 24.7 years old, 100% male
  - 5.6/10 felt support by their local church
  - 66.7% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 33.3% fully secular
- 10. The Digital Gather (Mod) (5%)**
- Aka moderators on online content creators. Those who are passionate about resourcing their church with videos, podcasts, or getting their church services online.
  - 27 years old, 60% male vs 40% female
  - 7.9/10 felt support by their local church
  - 60% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 40% fully secular
- 11. The Millennial Influencer (10%)**
- Young adults passionate about their generation in student and career ministries.
  - 25.2 years old, 60% male vs 40% female
  - 5.2/10 felt support by their local church
  - 30% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 70% fully secular
- 12. The Missional Community Host (6%)**
- Coordinating small groups, alpha classes and hosting dinner nights to engage in prayer and deeper conversation.
  - 25.3 years old, 33% male vs 67% female
  - 7.1/10 felt support by their local church
  - 50% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 50% fully secular
- 13. The Aspiring Student (16%)**
- Young adults passionate about their studies in various areas and leading something in their local church context at the same time.
  - 24.8 years old, 31% male vs 69% female
  - 5.6/10 felt support by their local church
  - 31.3% have gone through a Christian post-secondary and 68.8% fully secular