

Shane Pruitt and Shelly Melia

REACHING GENERATION ALPHA



A Ministry Guide for Discipling
the Church Beyond the Screen

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For every person who wants to reach Gen Alpha with the gospel and see them thrive in their relationship with Jesus.

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Introduction

Ever-Changing World and Never-Changing Truth

There are two things we can be absolutely certain of today: the world is ever-changing, but the truth is never-changing. In fact, our ever-changing world is in desperate need of that never-changing truth.

As the authors of this book, we hold firmly to that belief. The next generation of young people is being deeply affected by the temporary world around them, and their greatest need is eternal truth. Therefore, it's our highest calling as parents, grandparents, guardians, leaders, ministers, coaches, and teachers to know that truth and to make that truth known by reaching, discipling, and empowering the next generation.

So, welcome to this journey of faith, adventure, and truth! If you are reading this, there is a high probability that you are doing so because you care about Generation Alpha—the first generation to be fully immersed in the digital age from birth. They've grown up with smartphones, smart homes, artificial intelligence, and a world more connected than ever before. Information is at their fingertips,

and entertainment is only a tap away. But amidst all this, one question remains timeless: What is the meaning of life?

Throughout history, every generation has searched for purpose, identity, and truth. The good news is that the answer has never changed. It is found in Jesus Christ, the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Yet, as young people navigate a world filled with shifting trends, digital noise, and countless opinions, how can we help them discover and hold onto this truth?

That is why we believe this book is incredibly important. Not just because we wrote it, but because it is written with Generation Alpha in mind—a generation that we predict will shape the future in ways never seen before. They are digital natives, creative thinkers, and innovative pioneers. But they are also a generation with deep questions, searching hearts, and a desire to make a difference. The world offers countless voices telling them what to believe, but we are here to explore what God has to say. His voice has been speaking since the beginning of time, and it still calls out today.

Who Is Generation Alpha?

Of course, we will discuss this more thoroughly throughout the rest of the book, but here is a brief snapshot to open with: Born roughly between 2010 and 2024, Generation Alpha is unlike any that came before. They are growing up in a world where social media is a primary source of connection, where virtual reality and artificial intelligence are shaping daily experiences, and where global issues like climate change, technological advancements, and cultural shifts in sexuality and gender are part of everyday conversations. The way they think, learn, and interact is different from past generations, but one thing remains constant: God's ultimate plan for their lives.

The Bible tells us that Gen Alpha was created on purpose and for a purpose (Col. 1:16). No matter how fast the world moves or how much technology advances, they are not just another “generation” or statistic. They are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27), and are uniquely designed, loved, and called to be a bright light in this dark world (Matt. 5:14–16).

Why This Book?

This book is an invitation to dive into the eternal truth of God and how it is still relevant for every generation—especially the Alpha Generation. The truth is that God loves them and has a plan for their life. They were born into a time when the world seems louder and more confusing than ever, but God’s Word offers clarity, peace, and direction.

In these pages, we will explore key questions that matter to this generation:

- Gen Alpha: Who Are They?
- Gen Alpha and Their Guardians
- Gen Alpha and Their Worldviews
- Gen Alpha and Their Views on Sexuality and Gender
- Gen Alpha and Their Security Blanket
- Gen Alpha and Mental Health
- Gen Alpha and Artificial Intelligence
- Gen Alpha and the Gospel
- Gen Alpha and the Church
- Here Comes the Betas

In these chapters, we will observe hard data, real-life challenges, biblical wisdom, and how to practically move forward in discipling

a generation for the glory of God. This is not about passing on a world religion to the next generation; it is about helping them have a real relationship—a relationship with the God who knows them, sees them, and has an incredible plan for their life.

Navigating a Digital World with Truth

One of the biggest differences between Generation Alpha and every previous generation is the role of technology. From the moment they were born, screens have been a part of their life. Whether through online education, video games, social media, or digital communication, technology has shaped the way they experience and see the world. While technology is a powerful tool, it also brings many challenges.

The Bible teaches us in Romans 12:2a, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (NIV). This means that, even in a digital age, young people are called to think differently. Not everything they see online is true. Not every trend is worth following. Not every opinion deserves their attention. Learning to filter information through the lens of God’s Word is one of the most important skills we can help teach them.

Jesus taught about building a life on a firm foundation (Matt. 7:24–27). In a world where opinions change rapidly, helping Gen Alpha build their life on His unchanging truth will give them strength, peace, and direction. Technology should be a tool, not a distraction. It should serve their purpose, not steal it. However, we can’t just sit back and watch the young people we love attempt to figure this out on their own. As adults, we play a crucial role in their life by helping them balance faith and technology, making sure that

what fills their minds leads them closer to God rather than away from Him.

Purpose and Calling with Gen Alpha

You might be wondering, “What difference can I make? I’m just one person. Plus, Gen Alpha is still really young, so there isn’t much they can really do yet anyway.” Well, if you’ve ever read through the Bible, you know that God used young people to change the world. David was a shepherd boy when he defeated Goliath (1 Samuel 17). Esther was a young girl when she saved her people (Esther 4:14). Josiah became king at just eight years old and led his nation back to God (2 Kings 22). Age is not a barrier to God’s calling.

Generation Alpha is not too young to lead. They are not too small to make an impact. The world needs young people who are bold in their faith, unshaken by culture, and committed to truth. The choices they make today will shape the future. Will they be a generation that follows the crowd, or will they be a generation that follows Christ? Will they be a generation that follows the world, or will they be a generation that follows the Word? Will they realize God’s purpose for their life and live it out? Will they understand the calling to know Jesus and make Him known? In the future, will they rise as a generation of adults who’ll faithfully point their kids and grandkids to the eternal truth of God? Will they be a revival generation that turns the world upside down for the glory of God?

As the current primary adults in their lives, we get to help determine the answers to those questions.

An Invitation to the Greatest Journey

This book is an invitation—not just to read about Gen Alpha, but to engage Gen Alpha. Not just to learn about Gen Alpha, but to help Gen Alpha truly live. Not just to help Gen Alpha hear about God, but to help Gen Alpha know Him personally. Not just to *understand* how Gen Alpha thinks about and sees the world, but to help *shape* how Gen Alpha thinks about and sees the world.

Over these next ten chapters, we will explore what it means to equip and empower Gen Alpha to live a life of real faith in this fast-paced world. We will talk about challenges, victories, doubts, and discoveries. But most importantly, we will discover the unshakable truth that Jesus Christ is still “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) for the Alpha Generation.

So, are you ready?

Are you ready to start the journey of learning about who Generation Alpha is, and more importantly, how to help them have a faith that is bigger than trends, deeper than screens, and more lasting than anything this world can offer?

If so, let’s begin. The adventure starts now.

Chapter 1

Gen Alpha: Who Are They?

“One generation will declare your works to the next and will proclaim your mighty acts.”

—*Psalms 145:4*

Every single Christian is a benefactor of next-generation ministries.

What do we mean by this?

If you are a born-again Christian, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and are a disciple of Jesus Christ, then you are standing on the shoulders of faithful men and women from previous generations who were intentional about proclaiming the “mighty acts” of God to the next generation (Ps. 145:4). Then, that generation rose up and pointed the generation after them to the next generation, and so on, and so on, and so on . . . until it finally arrived to each one of us.

This is how the kingdom of God and His eternal truths continue to advance—from generation to generation. This God-ordained model is personal to us as authors, and we’re sure it is personal to you as the reader as well. Someone (possibly a parent, minister, volunteer leader, schoolteacher, coach, friend, coworker, or total stranger) was faithful to share the eternal truths of God with you.

For me (Shane), it was a faithful pastor in his mid-sixties and a deacon at a local church showing up at my house on a Tuesday evening, when I was sixteen years old, to share the beautiful gospel with me and my parents. In that moment, both my mom and dad were born again, and a gospel seed was planted in my soul that would come to fruition five years later through the preaching of an evangelist. For me (Shelly), it was my parents passing their faith on to me at a young age, involvement in a wonderful children's ministry at my church, and then dedicated youth leaders that helped me decide to follow Christ more personally when I was a teenager.

The truth of God was faithfully passed on to us from previous generations, and now it is our turn to be faithful to pass it on to the next generation. It is your turn as well.

From the beginning, God's design for passing on truth and advancing His kingdom has been rooted in generational discipleship—one generation declaring His "mighty acts" to the next generation (v. 4). This command, found in Deuteronomy 6:4–9, to pass on the faith is timeless and unchanging, as each new generation benefits from the spiritual legacies of previous generations.

"Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates."

Today, Generation Alpha is the next generation in need of parents, leaders, educators, and coaches to step up and play their part in God's ancient story of generational discipleship.

When missionaries approach a mission field, they take the time to study the culture, the values, the language, and the beliefs of the people group they are trying to reach with the truth of Jesus. As parents, grandparents, ministry leaders, educators, coaches, and guardians who are called to reach, teach, and mobilize the next generation, we must approach Generation Alpha with the same mindset. To effectively guide them, we must understand their culture, values, language, and beliefs.

However, often, as adults, we can tend to overthink connecting to young people so much that we forget the basics of what has always been true and remains true today. If we have been bought by the blood of Jesus and have the Holy Spirit of God living inside us, we are a part of the kingdom of God. And, being kingdom members, we must never forget that we're a part of an ancient work of God. The kingdom was here way before us, and the kingdom will be here way after us. We don't start anything, and we don't end anything. It is just our turn to be faithful and point the next generation to the mighty acts of God! In fact, it's our primary purpose as followers of Jesus—to know Him and to make Him known to others.

Why Is Understanding a Generation So Important?

You maybe be asking, “*Why are y'all* (Shane is from Texas and Shelly is originally from Oklahoma, and they tend to use the word *y'all* a lot) *writing a book on reaching Generation Alpha?*”

Well, that is a great question. The purpose of this book is to educate and equip parents, leaders, educators, coaches, and all adults with an understanding of Generation Alpha—their beliefs

about God, family, and the church; the impact of technology on their lives; the decline in mental health; their worldview; and the cultural influences shaping their beliefs on sexuality and gender. More importantly, practical steps will be outlined for reaching them with the gospel, discipling them in God's Word, and mobilizing them to be the church—not just in the future, but today. Though often labeled the “next generation,” those redeemed by Christ and filled with His Spirit are the church right now, ready to be empowered for His mission.

One of the most common questions we receive is: *“How do you know what generation you or others are technically a part of?”* This is an important question that is very relevant to this particular topic, because you could look up ten different sources describing what determines each of the six generations, and you would likely get ten different answers of how each one of those is defined.

We realize that it can be very confusing, but as an attempt for all of us to be on the same page, here is how we define the six generations who currently attend our churches:

Builders: Born before 1946

Baby Boomers: 1946–1964

Generation X: 1965–1979

Millennials: 1980–1994

Generation Z: 1995–2009

Generation Alpha: 2010–2024

Generation Beta: 2025–2039

However, as the authors, we do want to make clear from the beginning that the foundation of what we believe is that you can

read the Holy Bible all the way from Genesis at the beginning to the maps at the back, and you won't find terms like *Builders*, *Baby Boomers*, *Generation X*, *Millennials*, *Generation Z*, or even *Generation Alpha*. What you will find is people made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27) whom God loved so much that He sent His one and only Son for (John 3:16), who desperately need salvation (Acts 4:12) and who need to be discipled, baptized and taught the Scriptures (Matt. 28:19–20), then empowered (Acts 1:8) and equipped (Eph. 4:12) to go make Jesus known to others!

With these truths in mind, we believe it is incredibly important to know and understand people. The more you understand what shapes and influences their thoughts, feelings, and worldviews, the more effective you will be at understanding them, reaching them, and discipling them. One of the clearest ways to begin to understand people is through generational studies, because we can clearly see how people are affected by rapid changes in culture and technology.

Often, it's easier to understand older generations and how they function because they've been around longer to study and learn about. Younger generations are a little more challenging to understand, because there isn't as much information readily available, as we are all still waiting to see how they will be shaped and molded by the influences around them.

Unfortunately, this is where many churches and ministries have struggled in the past when it pertains to young people. The default was to *react* to the cultural beliefs, struggles, and needs of a generation as they got older. But sadly, for some, it was too late. And for others, they now carry many scars and wounds from living in a broken and fallen world. Many ministry leaders, parents, teachers, coaches, and guardians felt ill-equipped and helpless when it came to helping the young people of previous generations.

That's why understanding Generation Alpha, while they are still very young, is so important. We get to move from being *reactive* to being *proactive*. As adults, we won't be perfect, and we know this book won't protect every young person from everything the world throws at them. But, maybe, this resource can help them be more informed, better equipped, and proactive adults in the world that will help Generation Alpha be one of the spiritually healthiest generations we've ever seen for the glory of God.

Who Is Generation Alpha?

Generation Alpha, or Gen Alpha, refers to individuals born between 2010 and 2024. As the first generation born entirely in the twenty-first century, they follow Generation Z (1995–2009) and are just ahead of the emerging Generation Beta (2025–2039). The term Generation Alpha was coined in 2009 by Australian social researcher Mark McCrindle.¹ Other names could be considered, such as the Covid Generation, Generation AI, or the Polars²—reflecting the increasing polarization of their world—but Generation Alpha is the one that stuck and remains the most widely accepted name.

Describing generational cohorts always involves stereotypes and broad generalizations. Certainly, not all Gen Alphas fit within these descriptions, and most generational research does not distinguish between Christian Gen Alphas and non-Christian Gen Alphas. So,

1. "Generation Alpha: Mark McCrindle Q & A with *The New York Times*," McCrindle, October 21, 2022, <https://mccrindle.com.au/article/topic/generation-alpha/generation-alpha-mark-mccrindle-q-a-with-the-new-york-times/>.

2. Jean Twenge offered the title "Polars" in her *Generations* book. Jean M. Twenge, *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America's Future* (Atria Books, 2023), 451.

as you read this book, remember these generalizations (particularly from secular sources) do not consider the religious influence in the life of a Gen Alpha.

Generation Alpha can be found in both the children's and student ministries of the church. Younger Gen Alphas and their young Gen Z parents are firmly entrenched in the preschool and children's ministry while older Gen Alphas, parented primarily by Millennials, have just reached driving age and will soon completely saturate the student ministry.

Unlike previous generations, the childhood of Generation Alpha is marked by a world where the lines between the digital and physical worlds are blurred and seamlessly intertwined, so much so that knowing who and what is real and what isn't can be challenging. Voice-activated assistants, artificial intelligence, virtual companions, personalized content algorithms, adaptive educational experiences, and instant access to infinite and unfiltered information shape their daily lives.

Yet, beneath the technological advancements lies a formidable challenge that all adults must be aware of: Generation Alpha is growing up in a polarized world where truth is subjective, relationships are increasingly virtual, identities are fluid, faith is increasingly syncretic, and their attention is the most sought-after commodity. If the church is to reach them with the gospel, we must understand who they are and the powerful cultural forces molding their worldview.

Understanding Generation Alpha Survey Results

As authors, we certainly don't believe we have everything figured out when it comes to Generation Alpha. That's why we asked so many of our trusted ministry friends, parents, guardians,

volunteers, teachers, and coaches about their experiences with Generation Alpha. We did this by conducting an Understanding Generation Alpha (UGA) survey between February and April 2025 using a SurveyMonkey email and social media campaign. The survey consisted of eighteen questions designed to gather feedback and better understand the challenges facing Generation Alpha. Throughout this book, we will share findings from the survey, including statistics, open-ended responses, and observable trends that offer deeper insight into Generation Alpha's world.

Who Took the Survey?

A total of 714 individuals including student, children, and family ministers; parents; foster parents; guardians; volunteers; teachers; and coaches responded (along with a few pastors, grandparents, denominational leaders, etc.). Participants were largely from suburban community settings (64%), with 28 percent from rural community settings and 6 percent from metro-inner city settings.

Survey Says . . .

Participants were given eight options and asked to select the top three cultural influences they see most impacting Generation Alpha. Their choices were social media and technology, peer influence, family challenges, cultural agendas, absence of shared truth, relational poverty, distracted parents, and elevation of feelings over facts. Among all participants, here were the top three influences:

1. Social Media and Technology
2. Cultural Agendas
3. Elevation of Feelings over Facts

Throughout the book, you'll see how these three cultural influences are interwoven into each chapter. Participants reflected

further upon cultural influences impacting Gen Alpha through the open-ended question: “What is the biggest barrier for spiritual growth in Generation Alpha?”

- “They’re often like herding cats. In our context we just had a large influx of that age group. It makes the dynamic in the room much different than in previous years where our group skewed older. The groups are just very different. This age group (Gen Alpha) has been more intellectually advanced, but significantly less socially advanced.” (student minister)
- “What I have noticed is a major disconnect between parents and children. Parents are either over-the-top protective and tend to hyper-spiritualize every little instance in their child’s life (this leads to kids either putting up barriers with their parents, acting out, and having unhealthy social boundaries with each other) OR parents are emotionally unavailable, biblically illiterate themselves, and passive on what influences their child. This leads to many of the same results. As church leaders, we need to do damage control with a whole generation of parents in order to effectively reach Gen Alpha.” (children’s minister)
- “Being able to discern truth from Scripture and not from social media consumption.” (family minister)
- “The biggest barrier in my ministry context is bridging the gap that exists between Alpha

Each generation has had its MINISTERIAL FOCUS.

We have witnessed a focus on Millennials and Generation Z. We are in a time when the next generation (Generation Alpha) is just now old enough to enter student ministries. This generation (like the ones that have gone before it) has its own unique needs.

Generation Alpha has been raised exclusively in the technological age. Many of their relationships are fostered via technology. This resource offers expertise provided by on-the-ground interaction from Shane Pruitt as the national next gen director at NAMB, but is also paired with scholarly research from Shelly Melia who oversees the family and children's ministry programs at Dallas Baptist University.

In *Reaching Generation Alpha*, Shane Pruitt and Shelly Melia provide professional, personal, and well-researched insights into reaching the next generation. This book offers more than just a guide on how to handle specific situations often associated with Generation Alpha. More importantly, **it discusses the ways for ministry leaders to effectively connect with this upcoming generation and present them with the gospel.**



SHANE PRUITT serves as the national next gen director for the North American Mission Board (NAMB). He and his wife Kasi reside in Texas with their five children. He has been in ministry for more than twenty years as a church planter, lead pastor, and student pastor. Shane is also a traveling communicator, evangelist, and Bible teacher. Every year he speaks to more than a hundred thousand people about the good news of Jesus Christ.



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