

Mobilizing Gen Z for Missions

A CHURCH LEADER'S GUIDE
TO USING SOCIAL MEDIA



Introduction

In today's world, social media isn't just entertainment. It's **the new public square** — a place where the next generation finds community, learns about the world, and searches for meaning. It's where identities are being formed, ideas are being shaped, and stories are exchanged. Missions will inevitably need to look different as the growing populace increasingly exists online.





Did you know?

- **91%** of Gen Z social media users are on Instagram.
- **86%** are on TikTok.

These aren't just platforms. They are spaces where opinions are shaped, passions are discovered, and purpose is explored. Historically, the Church has been slow to adopt new communication tools including:

- The printing press
- The radio
- Television
- The internet

All were met with resistance. But eventually, each became a powerful avenue for spreading the Gospel.

Social media is no different. It's not going away. It's evolving — and it's time for churches to view it for what it really is: a digital mission field.



Case Study — **Digital Mobilization in Action**

Consider the story of a small-town church with fewer than 200 members, tucked away in rural America. For years, they struggled to connect with their youth and spark interest in missions. Then, in 2023, they decided to experiment with TikTok and Instagram, launching a simple series called **“Mission Mondays.”** Each week, they shared a 60-second story —sometimes a clip from a missionary in the field, sometimes a highlight from a past mission trip, sometimes a quick prayer challenge for a specific nation. At first, only a few teens engaged. But within six months, their videos reached over **15,000 young viewers**, sparking conversations in schools, coffee shops, and youth group circles. This visibility didn’t just inspire; it **mobilized**. They raised **\$20,000 in missions funding** through social media campaigns, and **five students signed up for their first short-term mission trip**. What started as a simple digital experiment became a movement within their congregation proving that when churches step into the digital mission field, they can create real-world impact and inspire the next generation toward Kingdom work.

This guide will help you:

- Break through the myths that keep churches from using social media effectively.
- Understand how social media works (and why it matters for ministry).
- Learn actionable strategies to connect with Gen Z and mobilize them for missions.

At TEAM, we have been where you are — unsure of how to engage this digital space without compromising our mission. But once we saw social media as a **tool rather than a threat**, everything changed.

Here's what this eBook will help you do:

1. Debunk the myths keeping churches hesitant.
2. Understand the mechanics behind social media.
3. Integrate practical strategies for using these platforms for missions.

Let's dive in.

Debunking the Myths

Myth #1

Social media is only for young people

Reality: While younger generations dominate certain platforms, wisdom and maturity are still needed in these digital spaces. Your church has a voice the next generation needs to hear.



Myth #2

Social media is going away

Reality: Platforms change, but the concept of everyone having a voice online will remain. Gen Z expects your organization to have a digital presence, often looking for your social accounts even before visiting your website.



Understanding the Mechanics

To use social media effectively, churches need to know **how it works** — and how it affects those who use it.

1. The Algorithm

Every platform uses algorithms to decide what content people see. In short:

- The more **engagement** your content gets (likes, shares, comments), the more it's shown.
- Content that sparks **strong emotions** (outrage, excitement, inspiration) spreads faster.
- Platforms reward **consistency** — post regularly or you'll disappear from feeds.



2. The Attention Economy

Social platforms aren't just free tools. They're businesses designed to **capture and sell attention**. Every notification, every like, every endless scroll is intentional. **Ask yourself:**

- Are we using these platforms purposefully or are they using us?
- How can we model digital stewardship for the next generation?

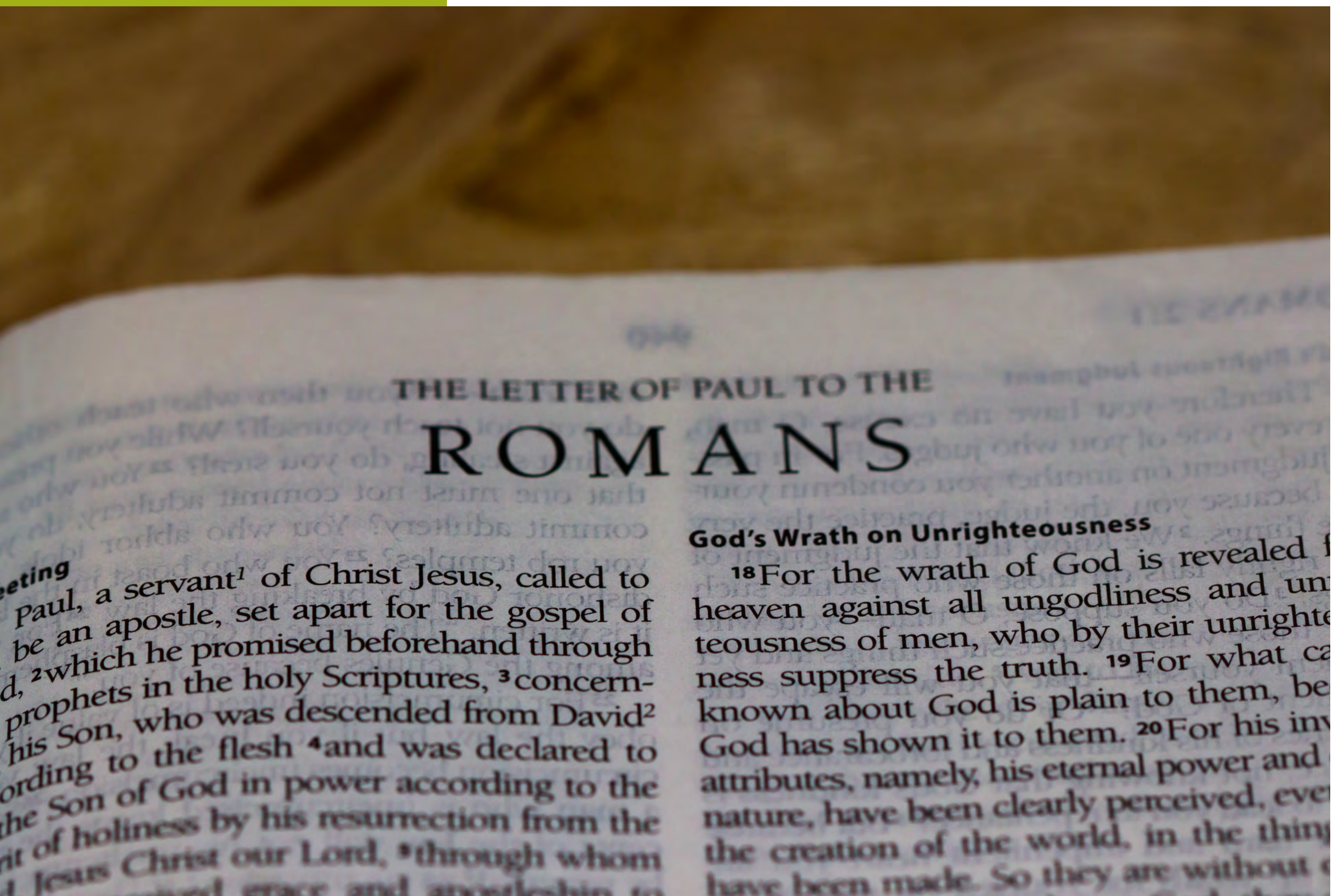
We must choose to engage with social platforms intentionally, setting healthy boundaries and demonstrating mindful, values-driven use so the next generation learns to steward their digital lives wisely.



3. Theological Considerations

- Should your church be on TikTok and/or Snapchat?
- How do you decide which platforms align with your values?
- What does healthy engagement look like for followers of Christ?

Use Romans 12:2 as your guide: *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*



Integration Ideas — Practical Strategies

1. Highlight Missions Opportunities Through Storytelling

- Post short, engaging videos of missionaries sharing their experiences.
- Host live Q&A sessions with missionaries to answer Gen Z's real questions.
- Use social media platforms to share about upcoming opportunities to go on the mission field.



2. Educate Gen Z About Global Missions

- Share stats and stories about unreached people groups.
- Feature stories of local believers leading movements.
- Feature video interviews or Instagram Live videos with young missionaries sharing their “why.”
- Offer a mini devotional series on the Great Commission and tie it into Gen Z’s desire for meaning and identity.



3. Encourage Ethical Storytelling

- Avoid exploitative images. Highlight dignity, resilience, and empowerment.
- Avoid portraying people as helpless, pitiful, or as mere “recipients” of Western aid. Focus on collaboration.
- Train mission trip participants on responsible content creation (e.g., always get informed, voluntary consent before using someone’s image).



4. Create Interactive Content

- Use polls, quizzes, and challenges to engage young followers.
- Create prayer challenges (e.g., “Pray for 10 nations in 10 days”) and encourage participation through Instagram and Facebook Reels or TikTok.
- Feature user-generated content from mission trip participants.



5. Foster Community & Discipleship Online

- Launch private Facebook or Discord groups for those exploring missions with regular group calls.
- Use Instagram Close Friends for exclusive, behind-the-scenes content.
- Pair young people with missionaries for digital mentorship.



Final Thoughts

TEAM is committed to helping EVERY Christian at EVERY AGE and stage engage with missions and the Great Commission.

If you would like more resources or ideas on integrating missions at any age/stage in your church's ministry, our Church Engagement department would love to serve as consultants or connect you to other churches effectively engaging missions in various ages. We'd be happy to connect with you or different ministry groups in your church to help educate and engage. Visit us at **team.org** to find out how we work with churches!

