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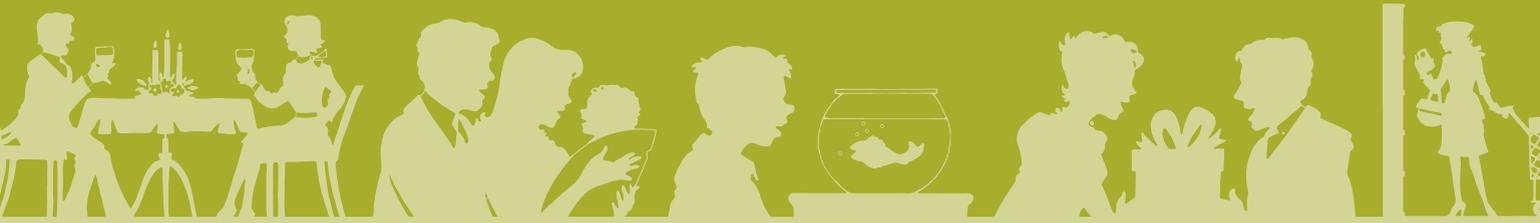
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Magazine | Spring/Summer 2017 | Vol. 3 No. 1



CONTEXT AND CONNECTION



Understanding Generations as Cultures



FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

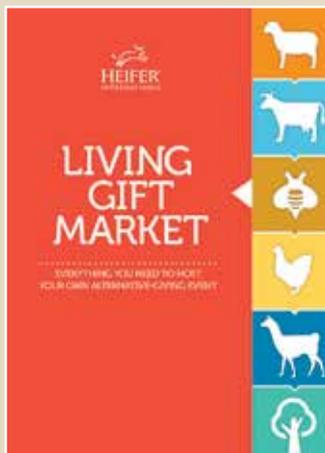
Bring “love your neighbor” to life year-round with Heifer International church programs.

Dan West, a farmer and member of the Church of the Brethren, founded Heifer when he had the idea to offer dairy cows as a source of ongoing nutrition to people in need rather than temporary aid.

Heifer’s mission ever since has been to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. We do this by empowering families to become self-reliant through gifts of livestock and training in sustainable agriculture.

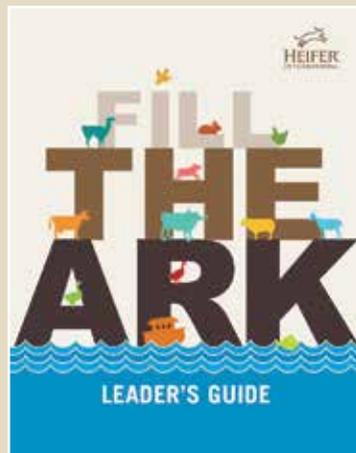
A TIME TO GIVE

These **FREE**, hands-on resources can help you transform hearts in your own church while helping to end hunger and poverty worldwide.



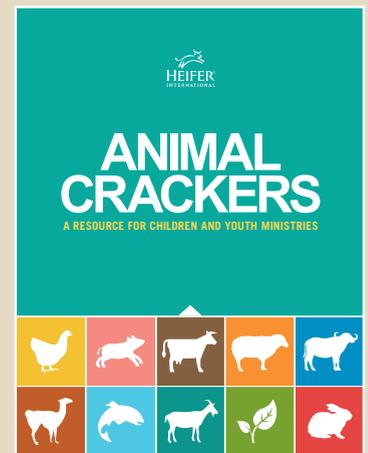
LIVING GIFT MARKET

Host an event that allows your church to purchase “living gifts” like goats, bees and cows through Heifer International that help feed hungry families.



FILL THE ARK

Challenge your congregation to help end hunger when you “Give Up to Give Back” with this daily missions-giving calendar.



ANIMAL CRACKERS

Through simple Sunday School lessons, Animal Crackers is designed to help students feel connected to the global family. The program is also perfect for Vacation Bible School.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EVANGELICAL?

Oliver Crisp, professor of systematic theology, likes to discuss such questions with his students—to “think, talk, agree, and disagree together,” he says, “in the pursuit of truth.” It’s because of faculty like Dr. Crisp, who brings a rich and seasoned history of theological

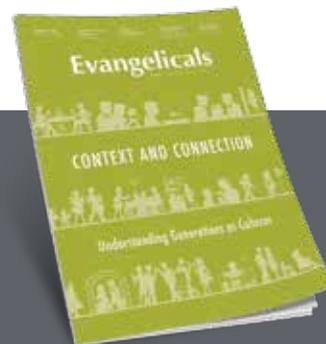
scholarship to the classroom, that Fuller graduates overwhelmingly affirm the quality and intellectual depth of their academic experience. Explore the master’s degrees offered by Fuller’s School of Theology, where you’ll study with faculty like Dr. Crisp.

Fuller.edu/SOT



Evangelicals

The Magazine of the National Association of Evangelicals



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Today's Conversation provides opportunities for you to hear from leading thinkers, theologians, activists, culture-makers and more.

EVENTS

Our breadth and diversity of partners allow us to organize unique gatherings that encourage and enrich leaders in the evangelical community.

MEMBERSHIP

We are a body of believers made up of nearly 40 denominations and thousands of churches, schools, nonprofits, businesses and individuals who understand that together we can do more.

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Family holiday gatherings often bring multiple generations to the same table. It quickly becomes apparent how different people in the same family can be. In the best of families, younger members take the wisdom of their elders to heart. Older generations dote on the young ones. Patriarchs hand over leadership responsibilities to emerging adults in the family. Some traditions are kept and new ones are formed.

These things don't just happen. Families must learn to understand the experiences and values of differing members. They must give grace to one another as they enter new stages of life and as roles transition. It's the same with church families. We must understand each other to serve each other.

Researchers and the media have drawn generational boundaries, identifying common characteristics and values of groups of people connected by their place and time. While not everyone fits exactly into the mold of their generation, considering common value systems can help denominations, organizations and churches create specific strategies for ministry and can help bridge gaps between generations.

There are a lot of good reasons to connect and minister to people in the same generation. They understand each other. They are in the same stage of life with the same level of cognitive reasoning. But there are a lot of missed opportunities when we value one generation over another or when we rush to judgments or dismiss people of other generations.

This edition starts a conversation to promote understanding and to “make God’s faithfulness known through all generations” (Psalm 89). It doesn’t offer an in-depth understanding of all generations or all the best ministry techniques to reach people in different phases of life. This is a tool to begin the process.

We know when our families are flourishing. How are our churches doing? Invite different generations to the table and value the unique contribution each brings.

American Feelings Toward Evangelicals

“ Just over four-in-10 Americans (44 percent) feel very warmly toward evangelical Christians, while 38 percent rate them in the middle of the thermometer and about one-in-five (18 percent) express cooler feelings toward this group. These ratings also include many people who consider themselves to be evangelical Christians (28 percent in the sample analyzed); once self-described evangelicals are excluded, a smaller share of non-evangelical U.S. adults (32 percent) rate evangelicals in the warmest third of the thermometer...

Across the board, Americans express warmer feelings toward religious groups when they are personally familiar with someone in the group, consistent with findings from the June 2014 survey. Those who do not know anyone who is Buddhist, for example, give Buddhists an average rating of 56 degrees on the feeling thermometer, compared with a much warmer 75 among those who do know a Buddhist. People who do not know atheists or Muslims rate these groups on the colder side of the scale, but those who do know someone who is an atheist or a Muslim rate these groups on the warmer side of 50.

Pew Research Center, January 2017



Talking About Ministerial Compensation

“ Similar to the experience I had with the board at my first pastorate, I suspect many pastors and boards have difficulty talking about compensation. Like many people, pastors, staff and other employees of the church are reluctant to share their financial needs with the governing board and leadership, while the governing board is unsure how to express their love and generosity in a healthy and constructive way. I think that a contributing factor to this problem is that many church boards may not have the necessary information and resources necessary to create a fair, reasonable, and well-balanced compensation package.”

George O. Wood, General Superintendent, in the Assemblies of God's Ministers Letter



Be an Honest Broker

“When you are an honest broker, it not only allows you to influence a politician when you do agree, but you also gain credibility to have a voice where you do not. The influence on issues where there is disagreement will not always be seen — usually it is found in policy actions that do not take place and are therefore difficult to point to — but it is real influence. So while the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Association of Evangelicals strongly disagreed with the Obama administration in areas like religious freedom, they were vital allies on protecting the social safety net, immigration reform, and advancing nuclear nonproliferation efforts. And it was, in part, because their efforts were so necessary to advance those causes that they had influence on issues where there was disagreement.”

Michael Wear, who served in the White House Office of Faith and Community Partnerships under President Obama, in Christianity Today

Power From the Margin

“Historically, the church in America has been at the center and has been able to speak from the top and has been able to assume a degree of authority and influence with the culture. That is no longer the case, and increasingly the church is being pushed to the margin, which is an experience that for the white church is new, but it’s not for the black church. The black church has always spoken from the margin. And perhaps that’s the most important lesson that the black church can teach now is the ability to speak with power from the margin and trust God to work with that.”

Claude Alexander, Senior Pastor of The Park Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, in Today’s Conversation at NAE.net/alexanderpodcast

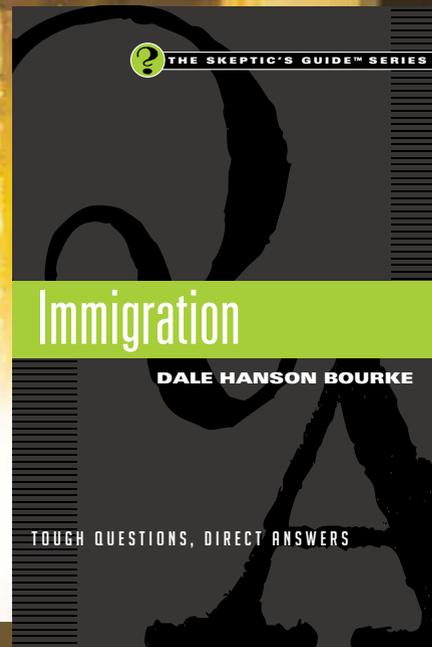
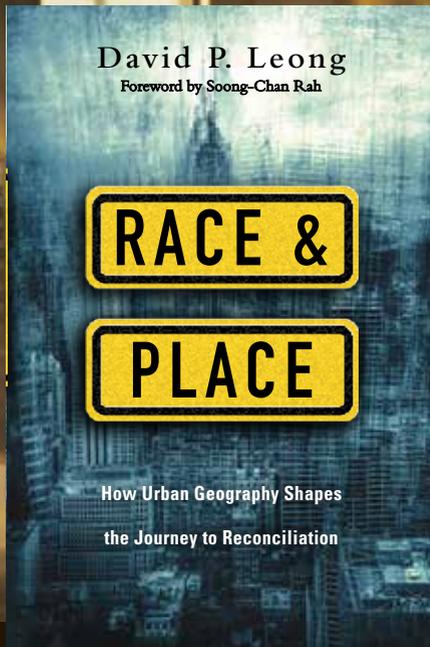


As a granddaughter, mother and VP of immigrants, I thank @CCCUtweets @NAEvangelicals Politi.co/2jGSqv #WeWelcomeRefugees Jennifer Jukanovich @Gordon_VP

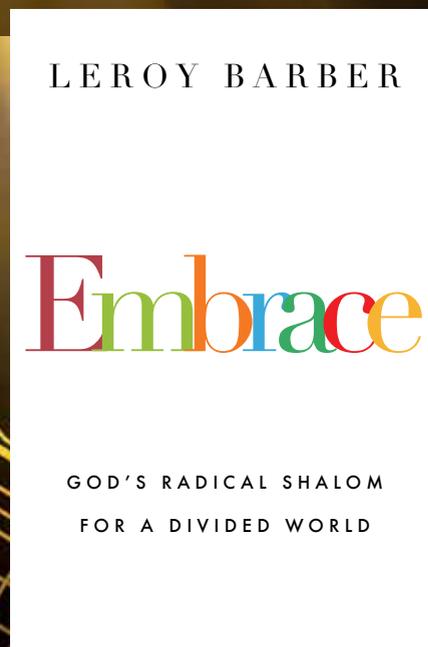
Extremely impressed by high caliber of the students I met at the @NAEvangelicals Christian Student Leadership Conference. Hopeful future! Sy Garte @sygarte

The @NAEvangelicals changed my mind abt environmental stewardship yrs ago. It's not just politics, it's abt the poor. NAE.net/loving-the-least-of-these Rachel Hope Anderson @RachelHopeAnd

BOOKS FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



These prophetic resources offer Christians a biblical response to the immigration and refugee crises dominating our headlines today.



EVANGELICAL CALENDAR

Please join the evangelical community at these events hosted by the NAE and its members. **Your prayers are welcome too.**

Many of these events include downloadable resources for promotion and participation.



JUNE 9-10, 2017

The Justice Conference

Chicago, IL

World Relief

TheJusticeConference.com

Designed to catalyze works of justice around the world, The Justice Conference has emerged as a premier gathering for Christian leaders, justice practitioners, students and learners.

@TheJusticeConf



SEPTEMBER 21-23, 2017

Foundations: Missions Leaders Conference

Dallas, TX

Missio Nexus

MissioNexus.org

Church and missions leaders will be encouraged and equipped to make disciples of all nations. This is the place for learning and networking within the missions community.

JUNE 27-29, 2017

Amplify Conference

Chicago, IL

Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton College & Mission America Coalition

AmplifyConference.tv

At Amplify, church and lay leaders will reimagine an evangelism for our day that is winsome, soulful, creatively and deeply grounded in Scripture.

JULY 17-19, 2017

Chaplains Training Workshop

Minneapolis, MN

NAE Chaplains Commission
NAE.net/chaplainsworkshop

Each year the NAE Chaplains Commission hosts a training workshop for the benefit of its chaplains and candidates, as well as chaplains from NAE denominations. The 2017 workshop will focus on faithful and compassionate approaches to ministry.



JULY 9, 2017

Pray Together Sunday

National Association of Evangelicals
NAE.net/praytogether

Join with churches across the country and ask God for spiritual renewal. Together we will lift our voices on behalf of our communities and nation.



SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

See You At The Pole

National Network of Youth Ministries
SYATP.com

Since 1990, students have gathered around their school's flagpole to pray for their school, friends, families, churches and communities.

✓ Cutting Back on Refugees

President Donald Trump’s executive order lowering the number of refugees allowed to resettle in the United States by more than half raised alarm among many evangelicals and led to World Relief’s decision to close five U.S. offices and lay off over 140 staff members. World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, is one of nine federally approved resettlement agencies.

NAE President Leith Anderson said, “Christians and churches have been welcoming refugees for 2,000 years, and evangelicals are committed to continue this biblical mission. Thousands of U.S. evangelicals and their churches have welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees over the past 40 years through World Relief and other federally approved resettlement agencies. We don’t want to stop now.”

Galen Carey, NAE vice president of government relations, was one of seven panelists at a briefing for members of the U.S. House of Representatives. He spoke to the value of refugee resettlement — calling it the “crown jewel of American humanitarianism” — and also addressed security concerns.

“Our track record over the past 37 years since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 is impressive: 3 million refugees have been resettled from all regions of the world, including particularly from countries with which we had been at war, either the hot wars in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, or the Cold War against communism. Thanks to security screenings and clearances that have increased exponentially since 9/11, to date, zero Americans have been killed on U.S. soil by a resettled refugee,” Carey said.

In addition to a press statement and taking media interviews, the NAE joined with other evangelical leaders in a letter to President Trump and in a full-page pro-refugee advertisement in The Washington Post. The NAE will continue tracking the issue and advocating for the continuation of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, which is critical at a time when the world faces a significant refugee crisis.



Roxanne Engstrom/
World Relief

For More Information on Refugees

Listen to Today’s Conversation podcast with Scott Arbeiter, president of World Relief, on Our Refugee Crisis at NAE.net/arbeiterpodcast.

Read Galen Carey’s remarks at the U.S. House of Representatives Briefing at NAE.net/refugeebriefing.

Hear Vinh Chung’s refugee story of rescue and redemption at NAE.net/chungpodcast.

Visit WorldRelief.org to learn how you and your church can help.

✓ Pray Together Sunday

Calling Churches to Join in Prayer on July 9

The National Association of Evangelicals encourages churches across the country to commit to a time of prayer for spiritual renewal during their worship service on July 9. Together we will lift our voices on behalf of our communities and nation.

At the heart of Pray Together Sunday is the belief that Jesus changes everything. With one voice, we will ask him to transform our congregations, communities and nation for his glory. We will join together and ask God for renewal in our own hearts and in those around us.



Register your church to pray on Sunday, July 9, and download a free church bulletin insert at NAE.net/praytogether.

✓ Financial Solutions for Pastors and Churches

The majority of pastors faithfully serve in small congregations with financial challenges. Others serve in churches with larger budgets and salaries. Regardless of what a pastor's personal and church income looks like, all can benefit from discovering the best financial practices for their home and church. The NAE Financial Health project launched a website to help pastors do just that.

NAEfinancialhealth.org offers self-assessment surveys where pastors can learn their Financial Health Score and discover action steps for improvement in different areas of financial health. The site also brings together a vast collection of Best Practices resources from financial health experts. Pastors and their spouses — or pastors and church leadership teams — can also sign up for online training in which they meet once a month and work together on shared goals.

The NAE began planning for the project in 2015 with surveys of pastors and denominational leaders, a consultation of church leaders and an initial assessment of existing financial resources designed for pastors. The NAE is also partnering with a small group of NAE member denominations to offer matching grants to pastors with financial needs.



Check out assessment surveys, resources and online training options at NAEfinancialhealth.org.



✓ Abortions Drop Below 1 Million

The number of abortions in the United States dropped below 1 million per year for the first time since 1975, according to a January Guttmacher Institute report. The rate fell to 14.6 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44 in 2014, which is a decline of 14 percent since its most recent survey in 2011. The total number of abortions peaked at more than 1.6 million in 1990.

While abortion remains legal in the United States, stricter state legislation and changes in public opinion have contributed to the decline. Pro-life advocates are hopeful that Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch will side against abortion on demand. Though he has not ruled on *Roe v. Wade*, he called for a consistent pro-life ethic in his book, "The Future of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia." Gorsuch is known as a strong defender of religious freedom as well.

Good news also came in January when President Donald Trump restored the Mexico City Policy. This policy directs that federal funds will not be made available to foreign organizations that provide or promote abortions as a method of family planning, ensuring that U.S.-supported international health programs assist efforts to save lives rather than end them.



Galen Carey is vice president of government relations for the National Association of Evangelicals.

Raising Generations of Advocates

While the National Association of Evangelicals brings together top evangelical leaders to address pressing public policy issues, we also invest in training young advocates whose influence in both church and society will grow over the course of their careers. This is a commitment we have had for more than 60 years.

Begun in 1956 as the NAE Federal Seminar, and now known as the Christian Student Leadership Conference (CSLC), the NAE has used its influence and connections on Capitol Hill to introduce thousands of young evangelicals to the real challenges and opportunities of public service.



Dan Coats

Representative, Senator and Ambassador

As a student at Wheaton College in the early 1960s, Dan Coats attended the NAE student conference and

listened to representatives, senators and ambassadors speak about the issues of the day. Over the next five decades he would go on to serve his country in all three roles.

After a tour of duty in Vietnam, Coats attended law school, practiced law, and then joined the staff of Rep. Dan Quayle. When Quayle ran for Senate in 1980, Coats ran for and won his boss' House seat. A few years later, when Quayle was elected vice president, Coats was appointed to fill out Quayle's Senate term, and was re-elected twice.

President George W. Bush appointed Coats as the U.S. ambassador to Germany in 2001. In 2011 Coats returned for a final term in the Senate, before retiring again in 2016. But he continues to serve his country. He was nominated by President Trump to serve as the director of national intelligence, the highest ranking intelligence post in the U.S. government. While many nominations have been hotly contested, the Senate confirmed Coats on a bipartisan vote of 85-12.



Bill Wichterman

Mission Field: Washington, D.C.

Two decades after Coats, Bill Wichterman attended the NAE conference while he was student body president at Houghton College. When he heard then-Congressman Dan Coats speak about being a faithful disciple in Congress, Wichterman's career plans changed dramatically. He had been considering going to the mission field, but a short-term assignment abroad convinced him that this was not his calling.

Instead, he went to work as a legislative assistant to Rep. Bob Walker, then became chief of staff for Rep. Bill Baker and later Rep. Joe Pitts, and then served as a policy advisor to Senate

Majority Leader Bill Frist. Wichterman went on to serve as special assistant to President George W. Bush and deputy director of public liaison for the White House.

Wichterman remains active in presidential politics and on Capitol Hill as a strategist, and he is the president of Faith & Law, a ministry to congressional staff who seek to integrate their faith in Christ with their calling to the political sphere. Like Coats, Wichterman frequently returns to the Christian Student Leadership Conference as a speaker, inspiring the next generation of students who will follow in his steps.

Faithful Advocates

While some CSLC alumni have served in Senate and congressional offices, the White House, federal agencies, the judiciary, think tanks and advocacy organizations, the conference also teaches that just and compassionate governance is part of our calling in creation regardless of one’s particular career path. CSLC alumni have become life-long advocates for the poor, the unborn, and other causes of importance to evangelicals. They are equipped to pray for their leaders and to participate as informed citizens and voters.

A typical NAE student conference includes presentations by senators, representatives, White House officials, ambassadors, policy experts, advocates, and members of cabinet agencies and the judiciary. Several Supreme Court justices have addressed CSLC conferences, including Justices Samuel Alito, Harry Blackmun, Sandra Day O’Connor, Anthony Kennedy, William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, Potter Stewart and Clarence Thomas.



Looking Ahead

The 2017 conference, which was co-sponsored by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, drew 100 students from 16 colleges to consider the theme “Faithful Advocacy.”

Students heard from Senators Roy Blunt, Sherrod Brown, John McCain and Sheldon Whitehouse, and Representatives Trent Franks, Randy Hultgren, and Steve Russell on issues ranging from religious freedom and marriage to poverty and creation care.

Students went on the floor of the House of Representatives — a rare privilege not available to tourists — and heard from Rep. Mark Walker, a pastor who now represents North Carolina’s 6th congressional district. We pray that some of those students will return to the House chamber as elected representatives to pass laws and seek to bless the nation with good governance.

On the last few days of the conference, students visited their congressional offices to advocate on particular issues of importance to them, and many participated in the March for Life.

Stewards of Citizenship

The path from college student to elected representative or senator may be a long one. Many get their start as volunteers on campaigns or interns in congressional offices, and work their way up over years or even decades.

The rough and tumble of political life is not for everyone. Some students who attend the CSLC will ultimately find their calling in other fields. But as citizens of the most powerful nation on earth, each of us has the privilege and responsibility to participate as informed voters, to express our views to our elected leaders, and to pray for them as they carry out their responsibilities.

As Wesley Wilson of Southern Wesleyan University said, “The Christian Student Leadership Conference was a week I will never forget. Overall it was an enlightening experience that far exceeded any study I had received in American politics.”

Just as we steward our money and talents, we can be stewards of the gift of our citizenship for the health of the nation and for the glory of God. ❸

This January, students came from the following Christian colleges:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Asbury University | Dordt College | Lancaster Bible College |
| Bethel University | George Fox University | Olivet Nazarene University |
| Bluefield College | Gordon College | The King’s College |
| Calvin College | Grace College and Seminary | University of Northwestern - St. Paul |
| Campbellsville University | Houghton College | Wheaton College |
| Delta College | John Brown University | |

Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto is assistant professor of counseling at Denver Seminary and co-author with Craig Blomberg of "Effective Generational Ministry: Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities."



CONTEXT AND CONNECTION

Understanding Generations as Cultures

Every generation takes for granted the good that goes before it, reacts against the bad, and responds within its own historical context. This lays the foundation for how we understand generational culture, particularly in North America.





Like members of a family or parts of the body, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials each contributes something unique and valuable. Similarly, each member needs to be understood for its individual identity, while also being appreciated for what it contributes to the whole.

Of course, not everyone fits exactly into the mold of their generation. But understanding generational characteristics gives a baseline tool for pastoral counsel and ministry development and helps people of different generations bridge gaps that otherwise may have been missed connections.

Baby Boomers

Context. Baby Boomers are named for the “baby boom” that took place after World War II in 1946 and lasted until 1964. Boomers entered the world at a time of economic growth, social expansion, and personal development. By the time they entered the workforce, there were more jobs than people; the world was theirs for the taking!

Baby Boomers are the last generation who predominantly grew up in a “traditional” household, with two parents who stayed married, a bread-winning father and a homemaking mother. They value deferred gratification, loyalty, economic growth and security, and personal responsibility.

Boomers believed that if they worked hard enough for long enough, they could create a life of significantly greater comfort and options for their children than they had. They embraced capitalism, democracy and the Protestant work ethic, as not just American values but as “Christian” values, blurring the lines between faith and politics.

Materialism — couched under the labels of “work ethic” and “personal growth” — caused many to see their identity defined by their job titles, professional accomplishments or materialistic gains. For the first time in American history, personal and professional development trumped loyalty to family commitments, and divorce became more commonplace, even among Christians.

Connection. As many Boomers reached young adulthood they explored faith and religion apart from their families, choosing that which ultimately felt personally right for them (Joshua 24:15).

Baby Boomers sought to create, build and redefine their place in American society reflecting God’s endowment to people to be creators and innovators. They sought to bring social change by challenging racism and other social injustices on a large scale, reflecting God’s heart for justice and equality among all people.

As Boomers enter their retirement years, many find themselves caring for aging parents, others are caring for grandchildren, and some are functionally family-less due to divorce, death or geographic distance from loved ones. For many, now is a time to discover their identity apart from their paid work, and in this some face an existential crisis of meaning, purpose and legacy.

The Church must find ways to help Boomers process this new stage of life, and to utilize Boomers as mentors, teachers and adoptive grandparents within their community, mutually benefiting all involved.

Generation Xers

Context. The lost child of the generations, Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1981 and were named to reflect their unknown identity. Just as in algebra, the X marks a mystery value, something to be figured out, or something not readily apparent or understood.

The smallest of the generations, Xers entered American society at a time of economic, social and political upheaval. Additionally, Xers were raised at a time when children were often seen as a hindrance to their parents' personal and professional development. This "latchkey generation" comes from the highest percentage of divorced homes, and expresses the least desire to marry or have children of any generation.

Generation Xers value independence, skepticism, grass-roots efforts, and tending to their own sphere of influence. Their childhood experiences led many to believe that the only way to succeed in the world was by their own efforts, merits and creativity.

The family as an institution could no longer be trusted, let alone the presidency, or the Church (think Nixon, Swaggart and Bakker). Societal heroes were a thing of the past and the American dream was just that: a dream. Entering into a saturated workforce meant the Boomers' values such as paying one's dues and longevity left Xers at a disadvantage, and therefore values of creativity, resourcefulness and entrepreneurial effort took their place.

The world felt big to this small cohort, so rather than attempting to change the world with picket signs and sit-ins, they turned to neighborhood gardens, local fundraisers and cancer walks in honor of a friend's mom who died, believing that small but direct efforts can ripple into something bigger.

Connection. Xers sought to find their own way in a culture, and a Church, that were not designed for them. They embraced postmodernism and relativism, and valued personalized faith, defining themselves as spiritual, rather than religiously affiliated.

As believers, they reflect Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 3:4-9) and challenge affiliation along mere denominational lines. Xers seek justification for the ongoing existence of rules that they see as pharisaical, inviting the Church to reflect on what is biblical, rather than cultural. Xers value community and connection with those who actively engage with the least of these in our society.

The Church has the opportunity to be the chosen family of a generation whose families are broken or absent, and to engage the innovative, resourceful and creative approaches that Xers can bring.

Millennials

Context. As the largest generation in American history — now expected to reach 90 million by 2020 due to immigration — Millennials brought generational culture into American vocabulary. Born between 1982 and 2001, Millennials were named for their historic location as the first generation to reach adulthood in the new millennium.

The most diverse generation in history, Millennials were taught to value the inclusion of different people, thoughts and perspectives from the time they were introduced to Sesame Street, Barney, and Dora the Explorer. To this generation, differences are to be praised and honored.

Millennials were also taught that they could do or be anything they choose (and got a sticker for any attempts at



Our challenge and comfort is to come together in understanding and appreciation of one another, so that we may learn to love and support each other better, and therefore present a fuller picture of the gospel to a divided world.

getting there). They enter the workplace and Church with an expectation of acceptance, promotion and immediate success. This is not to be mistaken for entitlement, which assumes that one person is better than another and therefore more deserving. Instead, like most of us, they expect that what has been their lived experience in the past is likely to be the pattern for the future.

There is an idealism and a hope that this cohort brings that is not found in previous generations, which can be both naïve and inspiring, and should not be squashed.

Connection. Millennials are the least religiously and spiritually interested of the three adult generations. Their world is one of constant movement, information and change where everyone has something to sell, and the Church is seen as no different. Discipleship, not simply conversion, must be the Church's focus.

Millennials remind the Church that the gospel is about relationship, restoration and unity, and any attempts at evangelism and discipleship must begin with these things. They challenge hypocrisy and value expressions of faith that are messy, in process, and include the opportunity to express deep doubt.

In "You Lost Me," David Kinnaman offers an analogy of Millennials to Daniel and his friends in Babylon. The Church has the exciting challenge of training, equipping and launching this generation in a way that enables them to engage the culture from the inside.

Millennials need the Church to ground them in an ultimate Truth that the world cannot offer, and launch them to engage the world for Jesus, pursuing a life that is lived for something greater than themselves.

Better Together

Every generation is fallen and in need of redemption. And every generation is fiercely loved and pursued by the Creator. The strengths of one generation are not holier than those of another. And the sins of one generation are no less forgivable than another. Our challenge and comfort is to come together in understanding and appreciation of one another, so that we may learn to love and support each other better, and therefore present a fuller picture of the gospel to a divided world. **E**





Building Faith

Reaching the Next Generation of Families

The world is changing — and faster than ever. A quick study of generations reveals the drastic differences in values, priorities and tendencies between age groups. Technology, world events and family makeup significantly impact the culture of a generation.

As people change, families change as well. Our approach to passing faith to the next generation must consider the needs and values of today’s young family.

“Real” Rather Than “Relevant”

Churches must reach today’s young parents — who were generally born between 1980 and 1991 — in order to reach the next generation.

These young parents care about source. They show their preference for things that are organically grown, locally sourced, sustainable and traceable. They want the purest version of everything they consume. Fog machines, large personalities and performance driven productions are not attractive to today’s parents who crave authenticity and honesty.

In this ever-changing world, young parents are drawn to the anchors of a historic faith. They want to expose their children to the rich traditions of our beliefs. They are moved by ritual, sacraments and the purity of spiritual disciplines, and are attracted to authentic relationship with God. Churches need to connect families to the source of our faith and the simplicity of the gospel.

Partnership With Parents

Churches must remember that parents are the main faith influencers for their kids. Research verifies that faith is nurtured primarily in the home. In a given year, the average parent has 75 times more hours in the life of a child than a church leader. So, churches must make it top priority to support parents in sharing their faith at home.

When I first had kids of my own, I became aware of my deep desire to introduce my children to the God I loved so deeply. But where was I to start? Even the best-intentioned families are anxious for ideas and well-timed reminders. Parents are desperate for support and encouragement. They welcome any resource that helps them share their faith in their home. Parents are hopeful for cues for how to invite their kids into their relationship with the Lord.

Churches need to prioritize ministry that goes beyond well-executed children and youth programming each weekend. Here are some steps churches can take to partner with parents:

- Cue parents at strategic times. Provide prompts that make it easy for parents to engage with their kids about faith at home.
- Provide resources and tools for parents to navigate the difficult days of parenting. Create written materials as



teaching resources. Host events that explore important topics like discipline, technology and navigating crisis or divorce. Ensure your church refers or offers counseling for parents that need extra support.

- Offer opportunities for parents to connect with other families of faith. This might be in the form of small groups or meet-ups in which young parents can build a strong community of support and encouragement.

Intergenerational Connection

Churches need to be intentional about helping young people make connections across generations.

In one of the most compelling stories in the book “Sticky Faith,” researcher and author Kara Powell describes Thanksgiving dinners when she was a child. She explains how the adults would sit at the dining room table with fancy china and silverware. Meanwhile, the kids would sit nearby at the “kid table,” a folding card table with paper plates and plastic utensils. She shares, “In theory, we were at the same meal. In reality, we had two very different experiences.”

Sometimes, in an attempt to create compelling and relevant environments for young people, we unintentionally separate them from the opportunity to see faith displayed across generations. While age-appropriate worship

opportunities with kids are important and necessary, intergenerational relationships and worship experiences are also key to building lasting faith in young people.

The research by Fuller Youth Institute shows us that young people who experience more worship alongside other generations tend to have higher faith maturity. Shared service opportunities, worship experiences and age-diverse relationships showed one of the most robust correlations with faith maturity.

Engage Other Adults

Churches need to mobilize other adults to step into the lives of young people. We need to encourage parents to invite other adults with shared values into the lives of their kids.

As a longtime researcher of youth and family ministry, Chap Clark of Fuller Youth Institute shares that for years, youth ministers used the 5:1 ratio in youth ministry — one adult invested in the lives of every five kids. But, he proposed, we actually need more like five adults all invested into one kid.

These adult partners may include other family members, coaches, teachers or their small group leader at church. In our house, I should probably be offended at how excited my children get when they have a babysitter! But I choose these sitters with great intentionality. They invest in my kids and become important influences in their lives.

Decades of research show that kids are most likely to follow Jesus into adulthood if they grow up amid a group of Christ-following adults. As Reggie Joiner, founder and CEO of Orange, a nonprofit that supports children and youth ministry, says, “The best way for a kid to know God is to know someone who knows God.”

Mission Minded

Finally, churches need to give families an opportunity to engage. One of the marks of the next generation of families is that they desire to be a part of positive solutions in their communities and in the world. They want to wrestle with difficult topics and be given opportunities for action.

In my ministry with families, I find them most often asking for support in navigating hard topics with their kids. They want to lead their children on topics of diversity and global awareness. Families are also hungry for opportunities to serve together.

We have an opportunity to position the church to welcome the next generation of families. Imagine if churches presented a community of authentic believers passionate about relationships with young people, and offered opportunities for families to use their gifts to care for the broken world around them. That would catch the attention of families. **E**



On Baby Boomers & Beyond:

Amy Hanson

Amy Hanson is a speaker, writer and consultant with a passion to help older adults discover a life of Christ-centered meaning and purpose. She speaks throughout the United States to pastors, health care professionals, and older adults on the unique needs and opportunities of a graying America. At the age of 23, Amy became the full-time active adult minister at Central Christian Church in Las Vegas, Nevada, where for five years she led a ministry of over 300 adults 50 and older. Amy has a bachelor's degree in Bible and family ministry from Manhattan Christian College, a master's degree in gerontology from Abilene Christian University, and a Ph.D. in human sciences from the University of Nebraska.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIETAL IMPACTS OF THE 75 MILLION BABY BOOMERS ENTERING THE AGE OF RETIREMENT?

Baby Boomers have always made an impact on society — partially because of their sheer size! We built more schools to accommodate them, and as they moved into the workforce we made more jobs for them. As they head into retirement, the government, travel and leisure industry, retail outlets and car manufacturers are adjusting to the bulge of an aging population. Some see this as a time of doom and gloom and think that Boomers will drain social security and put a strain on the health care system. But I think the aging Boomers present huge opportunities for greater service, volunteerism and intergenerational relationships. Boomers want to remain active. They are not interested in being called a “senior,” nor are they content to simply retire to the rocking chair on the front porch. They want to make a difference.

WHAT ARE THE BIG LIFE ISSUES THAT BABY BOOMERS ARE CONCERNED WITH?

Boomers are dealing with relationships with adult children, becoming grandparents, caring for aging parents and navigating their own health challenges. While many Boomers are still working, others have retired, and nearly all are thinking about retirement and what it will look like.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OLDER CHURCH MEMBERS FEEL MARGINALIZED BY A PRIORITIZATION OF REACHING A YOUNGER GENERATION?

Older adults care deeply about young people and want to see them come to faith and live vibrant lives for Christ. Making a mark on future generations is one of the greatest desires of today's older adults. Being invited to be a part of the outreach will go a long way in helping older adults not feel forgotten. An empty nest couple in my church, invited three newly married, Millennial couples into their home for pizza. Both generations loved the interaction and when they see each other on Sunday mornings, everyone feels that they belong. There is nothing wrong with a church focusing on reaching younger generations, but reaching the young does not mean we need to move away from valuing the older.

HOW CAN CHURCHES RELATE TO BABY BOOMERS AND MILLENNIALS AT THE SAME TIME?

Boomers and Millennials have a lot in common. They both care about social justice issues and making a difference with their lives. Both have an entrepreneurial spirit and are not afraid to try new things. Both groups are technologically savvy, and both are interested in strong friendships that cross generational lines. Focus on these things. Don't be afraid to put people together and see what happens.

HOW SHOULD PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS COUNSEL BABY BOOMERS AS THEY CONSIDER RETIREMENT PLANS AND GOALS?

Society says we spend the first half of our lives working hard, so we can relax and focus on ourselves during the remaining years. As leaders, we need to speak a counter culture message. We need to showcase those who are serving in their retirement years — the ones who go on the mission trip, invite their unchurched neighbors to dinner, mentor kids in the underprivileged school. And we should teach biblical concepts that show how God uses people in their later years (e.g., Caleb in Joshua 14 or Anna in Luke 2).

NEVER BEFORE HAVE SO MANY ADULTS MOVED INTO THE LATER YEARS OF LIFE WITH SO MUCH HEALTH AND VITALITY. HOW CAN CHURCHES CAPITALIZE ON THIS?

Expand the way you engage older adults in serving. Sometimes we assume that the only jobs for older adults are folding the church bulletin, being a greeter

or making coffee. These are important tasks, but we've got to call people to something greater. We need to take responsibility for helping people identify their passions and show them how those can be used for ministry. We need to come alongside the retired CEO and the former school teacher so they can leverage their experience and make a kingdom impact. This might mean bringing retired individuals onto your team as unpaid staff. There are endless possibilities as to how we can unleash the time, experience and resources of this generation.

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS ARE ADULTS OVER 50 LOOKING FOR IN CHURCHES OR MINISTRIES?

Boomers look for environments where they can have fun, form meaningful relationships and have their needs addressed. They are looking for purpose and will respond to opportunities where they can utilize their gifts and talents to help others, but this may not be inside the walls of the church. They may be more likely to serve at the homeless shelter than teach a Sunday school class. When it comes to getting involved, they respond to opportunities that provide flexibility and are short-term commitments. They are more apt to say yes to a project if they can do it on their own time and in their own way, rather than being asked to be present at a weekly meeting for the next year.

WHY SHOULD CHURCH PLANTS AND CHURCHES MADE PRIMARILY UP OF YOUNG ADULTS SEEK TO RECRUIT THOSE OVER 50? AND HOW CAN THEY REACH OUT?

Psalm 78 speaks of one generation speaking of the things of God "so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children." Intergenerational relationships are powerful, and they are an effective way for faith to be shared. Older adults want to leave a legacy. Invite them to be a part of something of eternal significance and to give of their time and energy so others can find their way to God. 



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Blessed are the Millennials for They Will Inherit the Church

Whether you approach Millennials with confidence or confusion, the fact remains: This is the generation that will inherit the Church. With this in mind, do we have a vision for the role Millennials can play in the Church of today?

Proverbs 20:29 offers a starting point for what I believe can be one of the most exciting partnerships life has to offer. “Youth may be admired for vigor, but gray hair gives prestige to old age” (MSG).

Hair styles aside, the point is clear: What the next generation has in passion, it often lacks in wisdom. And I would add that what the older generation has in wisdom, it often lacks in passion. It seems we need each other!

As leaders in the Church, we have been given the charge not only to train up young leaders but also to collaborate with them. I can think of at least three areas where the Church needs the passionate voice of these Millennial leaders.

A Clear View Into the Changing Cultural Landscape

The next generation is connected to the pulse of culture. This perspective is necessary for the Church to respond clearly and compassionately to current issues. Passion meets wisdom when older leaders help young leaders wrestle with current issues through the lens of Scripture and history while we (the Church) find an apologetic that connects.

Honesty and Sincerity

The next generation is looking for ways to remove layers of religious noise in search of true substance. They don't want more words; they want authentic connection. Passion meets wisdom when older leaders guide those coming behind them on the importance of the essentials, while we (the Church) let go of those traditions that don't matter.

A Deep Hunger for Jesus

Above everything else, I believe this generation is hungry for Jesus. They have faith and a clear mission to love God and others. Passion meets wisdom when we offer ourselves as mentors, sharing life and encouraging Millennials in their pursuit of Jesus while they revive our churches to love him more.

Millennials are worth the risk, because they are our future. But that future depends on making them our present. As wisdom complements passion, I believe this future is bright. **E**





Unlock Keychain Leadership

Sharing Power with the Right People at the Right Time

Our pastor has been transformed by Jesus, and now he's the definition of authentic. In fact, he's the most authentic person I know. And he doesn't treat us like we're kids. ... He treats me like I'm his younger friend. -Mark, age 23

Remember your first set of keys?

Stephen — who goes by “Stretch” — received his first set of keys when he was 16. His town handed him a driver's license, and his parents handed him the key to the family car. Heart pounding with excitement, he climbed behind the wheel and pulled out of his driveway for the first time on his own. Stretch couldn't believe the newfound freedom and responsibility he had been given. He took a step away from childhood and a step closer to adulthood.

As Stretch pulled onto the street and began to accelerate, he faced an important and practical question. Where should I go? Within a moment he knew the answer. Over the past several years, his church had become like a second home to him. There he felt known, accepted and valued. So naturally, he headed in that direction.

As he drove into the parking lot, the church's childcare was wrapping up for the day. One of the coordinators who knew Stretch noticed him driving the car. Given a recent shortage of childcare workers and seeing that he now had transportation, she asked if he was interested in helping after school.





She was only halfway through the question before Stretch knew his answer. He would get to hang out at the church, spend time with kids, and on top of it all ... he would get paid. This day couldn't get any better!

Until a few minutes later, when she returned from the church office and handed him a key to the church. "If you're going to help us, there will be times when we'll need you to lock up," she explained.

Stretch was staring so intently at the key that he barely heard her words. The pastor had this key. His Sunday school teacher had this key. Other adults who were mature — who had power — had this key. But him? It was like he had been waiting on the sidelines during the big game and was now being called to step onto the playing field.

Life was truly as good as it could be. Until it got even better.

A week later, while Stretch was working in the childcare center, the youth pastor dropped by. "You know, Stretch," he said, "if you have your license and are already at the church, would you be willing to stock the soda machine for me? The job comes with all the Mountain Dew you can drink."

Key to the car. Check.

Key to the church. Check.

Key to the soda machine. Check.

Stretch knew he had arrived.

Later that night, Stretch received the final "key" that forever changed the course of his life. Standing alone in the empty church, he heard God speak to him — not audibly but distinctly.

"You like to be here, don't you?" God asked.

"Yes, I do," Stretch answered.

"Well, get comfortable, because you're going to be here a lot."

From that day on, Stretch knew that both his future and his vocation were closely tied to church ministry. Leaders he deeply respected had entrusted him with access and authority by giving him keys, both literally and figuratively. In the several decades that followed, others continued to entrust him with the keys of leadership, and he's now been a youth pastor for over 20 years. Today Stretch, his senior pastor, and the culture of Immanuel Church of the Nazarene exemplify a powerful kind of leadership pervasive in churches and parishes that grow

young — a type of leadership that can unleash the limitless potential of young people and infuse your entire congregation with new life and energy.

Churches that grow young are brimming with staff, volunteers, and parents who demonstrate keychain leadership. Whoever holds the keys has the power to let people in or to keep people out. Keys provide access to physical rooms, as well as to strategic meetings, significant decisions, and central roles or places of authority. The more power you have, the more keys you tend to possess.

When we refer to keys, we mean the capabilities, power, and access of leaders that carry the potential to empower young people.

By keychain leaders, we mean pastoral and congregational leaders who are:

- Acutely aware of the keys on their keychain; and
- Intentional about entrusting and empowering all generations, including teenagers and emerging adults, with their own set of keys.

Beyond simply the launching of a student leadership team, keychain leadership is a spirit and commitment demonstrated by both paid and volunteer leaders that permeate every area of the church. 🗝️



Based on research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults. This excerpt from *Growing Young* © 2016 by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder and Brad Griffin is used by permission of Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Order at BakerBooks.com.





What Age is the Best Age?

Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest president in the history of the United States on September 14, 1901 at age 42. Donald Trump became the oldest candidate inaugurated president on January 20, 2017 at age 70.

Moses spent 80 years preparing to become one of the greatest leaders in human history — 40 years as a prince in Egypt and 40 years as a shepherd in Midian. He rose to historic leadership as an octogenarian, long after most Americans would have enrolled in Medicare.

This year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther launching the Protestant Reformation. Luther was then 33 years old, the same age as Jesus when he died.

In John Kennedy's inaugural address on January 20, 1961, he made much over the importance of changing generations saying that "the world is different now." At 42 he was the second youngest American president and the youngest man ever elected to the office. "Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans," he said.

So how important is generational sociology? Are we simply caught up in an American cultural idiosyncrasy where we prioritize the young and minimize the old? If we were born in Asian gerontocracies, would we turn the chart upside down and honor age over youth?

Generations and age were important to Bible authors. When Israel wandered in the desert, all over age 18 were denied access while everyone in the younger generation was welcomed into the Promised Land (even though some were 57 by the time they arrived). Identification by age and generation is frequent in our Scripture.

The underlying principle is the Christian adaptation to cultural identities in order to spread the gospel and build the Church. There are four New Testament Gospels, each targeted at different audiences. Could there have been just one Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Yes, but the early Church recognized that those with Hebrew heritage would best grasp the message from Matthew, and those with Greek heritage would best understand Mark.

As biblical Christians, we don't change the message but we adapt to different groups. Compare the language approach of Christianity to Islam — we translate the Bible into the native languages of others and do not insist that Christians learn Hebrew and Greek; Muslims maintain schools around the globe to teach adherents to recite the Qur'an in Arabic.

Christianity is the biblical faith for all ages, languages and generations. We do not change or compromise God's message, but we translate and adapt to fulfill the commission of Jesus to "go and make disciples of all nations" ... and all generations! **E**



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