



# WALKING TOGETHER ACROSS GENERATIONS

By Arnold du Plessis  
Christian Centre Abbotsford

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## Introduction

Togetherness is an essential necessity. We must be able to do life together as an intergenerational church.

When they were fighting the Amalekites and Moses was on the mountain, Joshua got the victory when Moses' hands were lifted up. Moses was on the mountain with Aaron, his older brother and Hur, his nephew. They helped lift up his hands. Joshua was fighting the battle in the valley. They accomplished the victory by working together; they needed one another. The Lord said it must be remembered and to make sure that Joshua knew what happened.

*Exodus 17:8-14 (NIV) <sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it ...."*

*Ephesians 4:16 (NIV) <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

The "supporting ligaments" are the healthy relationships between one another in the body. We are not held together by knowing or doing our part, but by the relationships we have with one another.

*1 Corinthians 12:12 (NIV) <sup>12</sup> The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*

*Ephesians 3:5 (NIV) <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.*

*Psalms 100:5 (NIV) <sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

*Psalms 145:4 (NIV) <sup>4</sup> One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.*

*Psalms 145:11-13 (NIV) <sup>11</sup> They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, <sup>12</sup> so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*

*Psalms 145:11-13 (NIV) <sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.*

*Proverbs 4:7 (NIV) <sup>7</sup> Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.*

*Proverbs 11:12 (NIV) <sup>12</sup> Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.*

*Proverbs 14:29 (NIV) <sup>29</sup> Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*

*Proverbs 15:21 (NIV) <sup>21</sup> Folly brings joy to one who has no sense, but whoever has understanding keeps a straight course.*

*Proverbs 18:2 (NIV) <sup>2</sup> Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.*

*Proverbs 24:3 (NIV)* <sup>3</sup> *By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established;*

We need understanding to work together as different generations.

## HOW TO BRIDGE THE GENERATIONAL GAP IN THE CHURCH

### Understanding Generations

**The “generation” a person belongs to can shape his or her life.**

(Primary influence)

**The previous two generations has contributed to the shape of a person’s outlook on life.**

(Secondary Influence)

**The “generation gap” means: the empty space in which people born of different times do not understand each other because of their differing attitudes, values, communication and interests.**

Understanding different generations will help people have more appreciation for the values, concerns and issues of each era that contributed to their culture.

**One of the special things people own is their “value system”, which helps them to achieve career success, setting goals and developing relationships with others**

Value systems are formed by the direct effect of your environment, method of parenting, **education and events during one’s younger years.**

Each generation has its own influences that give them a mind-set towards life. It causes a problem when people try to apply one generation’s values to others

The generations express definite differences in outlook toward family, religion, politics and the roles people play.

**Each individual’s generational perception is open to interpretation;** it has a specific expectation and in practice its own application.

### The Generations

- Lost Generation (1883-1900) fought and died in World War I
- G.I. Generation (1901-1921)
- 1. Silent/Traditional Generation (1922-1945)
- 2. Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
- 3. Generation X (1965-1980) – 51 million born
- 4. Generation Y (1981-1996) – 75 million born
- 5. Generation Z (1997 – 2012)
- 6. Generation ALPHA (2010 – 2024)

#### 1. The Silent or traditional Generation (1922-1945)

An adaptive generation, 95% of this generation is retired or no longer with us.

They value privacy and sharing inner thoughts may be challenging.

They believe in hard work and **“paying their dues” before recognition.**

Their word is their bond and they value honesty.

Communication, propriety and procedure are formal.

They were raised in an orderly society with clearly defined roles and functions.

Because they survived the Great depression and World War II, they are not wasteful and value saving and making do.

They are economically aware and generally trustful of the government.

They are optimistic and willing to sacrifice. Patience is a virtue.

They like formal communication. Clear, concise messages are good, but short, to the point messages may seem rude to them.

Mailed letters or face-to-face contacts work well. Phone calls are okay.

Popular toys: doll babies, tin cars and trucks, wagons, homemade wooden toys and books

Entertainment: Movie musicals and conservative love stories. Enjoyed the element of fantasy in the movies. Radio music and soap operas popular. TV beginning.

World influences: The Great Depression (these were children of it), World War II, Korean War, beginning of the Atomic Age, the nuclear family.

## 2. The Baby Boomer Generation (1946-1964)

An idealist generation, often stressed out.

They grew up in a time of economic prosperity against a background of rebellion.

They value peer competition and strive for challenge and change.

Value hard work to help them move to the next level. The work place will be dominated by this generation until 2015.

This is a show-me generation and body language is important.

They work well in teams and do not like having rules for the sake of rules.

They will fight for a cause they believe in. Health and personal growth are important.

**They thought their parents' world needed a makeover so they saw their role as one of questioning, justifying and creating change.**

They like messages that explain clearly what is happening without sounding like someone is controlling them.

They want their questions answered without too many conclusive, direct statements. They like to be invited to share rather than watch.

They respect letters, but they get overwhelmed with mail so they probably prefer email, they like phones and answering machines.

Popular toys: Barbie dolls, Hula Hoops, electric trains, Hot Wheels, sleds, bicycles.

Entertainment: Movie musicals in decline; more realism in movies. Unhappy endings okay. Movies and TV begin to push limits. Traditional family life portrayed in TV shows but this was changing in real world.

**First real influence of "teenagers" in society as people with ideas and opinions.**

World influences: Nuclear bombs, space race, Cold War, Sputnik, man walking on the moon, civil rights, hippie movement and Woodstock, Vietnam War, Watergate, Salk polio vaccine.

## 3. Generation X (1965-1980)

A reactive generation, street wise.

This is the first of the "tech" generations.

They are economically aware because they grew up with double-digit inflation and unemployment stress.

They do not trust institutions for long-term security.

This group can be discouraged about society but they are adept, clever and resourceful.

They are comfortable with change and clear about the meaning of balance in their lives.

They work hard to live, not live to work hard. They like to manage their own time and solve their own problems.

They introduced diversity, thinking globally and **"fun" into the work place.**

They want plenty of information.

**They value loyalty in the workplace, but loyalty can also mean giving "2 weeks notice."**

They like their messages in short, understandable bites.

They may not deal too well with letters because they are not a writing generation. For today, email is perfect.

They like places for feedback and want to feel a part of whatever they are asked to do.

Informal communication style is preferred.

They use cell phones and depend on answering machines.

They may not read mailed newsletters, but they may scan electronic ones.

**Popular toys: Rubik's Cube, Cabbage Patch Dolls, hand held video games, early TV video games, new Barbie, theme toys based on TV characters.**

Entertainment: Adventure movies, hero movies, happy endings making comeback, still pushing limits with TV and movie censors, MTV. Representation of family units changing in entertainment world.

World influences: Space shuttle explosion, Berlin Wall comes down, fall of communism, Persian Gulf War, AIDS, wide use of computers and the Internet

#### 4. Generation Y/Millennial generation (1981 – 1996)

A civic generation, striving to get ahead, they have a firm desire to know the reason behind what is happening and what they do.

A generation of mass world and interpersonal communication, they are rarely impressed by new technology.

They are optimistic about the future and realistic about the present, they have a good work ethic, however the motive for working hard is different; they like to see how they made a difference in life.

**They question "starting at the bottom"** and feel the best person for the job should be the one who does it best; seniority has to be justified and people have to earn respect, it's not automatic.

**"Straight-line thinking" is a challenge** for them because they believe its okay to skip certain steps to achieve what they want.

Having patience is really a challenge; they want to see immediate results and action, they will be impatient with the speed of downloading a document that would have taken weeks to research 10 years ago

They like concise action words. Emphasize that whatever you ask them to do is fun and worth their time.

**Humor can be used with the group to get a message across, but this group's humor may not be understood by other generations**

This group likes all senses to be stimulated with colors, movement and music, they want to respond quickly so email is fine. Instant messages on computers are a communication choice of this group.

All have cell phones. MXIT, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook etc. on the increase. Regular telephones are fine. Many in this group have never used a postage stamp

Popular toys: TV game systems, video and computer games, skateboards, in-line skates, Barbie, toys that make little girls seem grown up, toys based on themes from TV and movies

Entertainment: Rebirth of Disney and family movies; teenage-specific movies; home video/DVD **movies; children's classics** released or remade. Rating system emphasized. Superstars in movies, like old Hollywood. Reality TV everywhere, with average people becoming household names.

World influences: Clinton impeachment trial, death of Princess Diana, scandals in the government, the Middle East wars, breakup of Soviet Union, Terrorist attacks, war in Iraq.

## 5. Generation Z (1997 – 2012)

This generation has been raised on the internet and social media, with some of the oldest finishing college by 2020 and entering the workforce.

Generation Z spends a lot of time on social media, and advertising on those platforms needs to be customized to fit the medium. They can sniff out canned or insincere messages in seconds — take the time to meet them and create purposeful conversations.

Gen Z have a carefully tuned radar for being sold to and a limited amount of time and energy **to spend assessing whether something's worth their time. Getting past these filters, and winning their attention, will mean providing them with engaging and immediately beneficial experiences.**

They expect financial transactions to be almost frictionless. They will look for financial service providers who can fit into their digital lives.

**Their "map" of the world is an internet-equipped smartphone.**

A strong entrepreneurial tendency in Generation Z.

Gen Z like the idea of working for themselves, the majority are risk-averse, practical, and pragmatic.

This pragmatism leaves little room for top-down decision-making or order-giving.

When you take the time to explain why things operates the way they do and how their roles **contribute to that, they're excellent team players.**

**Command and control don't work with them. Sharing the bigger picture — and being transparent about motives and outcomes — does.**

Gen Z won't blindly follow without justification, and that might be their biggest strength.

They are values-driven, identifying with causes and supporting organizations that embrace them.

Gen Z is interested in racial, gender and income equality, as well as environmental issues.

Give Gen Z a reason to care about what you do and you'll find them more than willing to engage with you, as account holders and employees.

## 6. Generation ALPHA (2010 – 2024)

They will be the most educated generation in history.

They are tech-savvy, they will never know a world without the internet of things, smart technology, and virtual reality.

Gen Alphas are accustomed to having immediate access to information which makes lecturing and old models of learning obsolete. They will learn at their own pace. Along with the classrooms, online learning modules and tutorials will facilitate their approach to education.

Gen Alphas will interact with their friends and peers mostly through social media and they are connected throughout the day. While this becomes the norm, they need to be taught the importance of person-to-person interaction.

**They do not like the sharing economy, and don't play by the rules.**

Religion goes out of the window, they are constantly changing.

They would also prefer to work only for companies that align with their principles and embrace diverse work environments.

They would choose technology over human connection while at the same time require more mental health support.

And so it follows that Generation Beta will be born from 2025 to 2039.

Benefits of walking together

- 1) Avoids the trap of division
- 2) Builds bridges of opportunity
- 3) Develops healthy relationships
- 4) Clears the confusion
- 5) Attracts a blessing

How to walk together

- 1) Build with Kingdom values
- 2) Avoid favouritism
- 3) Be yourself in the journey
- 4) Practice conversation
- 5) Practice the ART

### **Managing the "GAP"**

- Be Approachable
- Be Respectable
- Be Ieachable

Conclusion

Psalm 133:1,3 (NIV)<sup>1</sup> How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity...

<sup>3</sup>...**For there the** Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.