



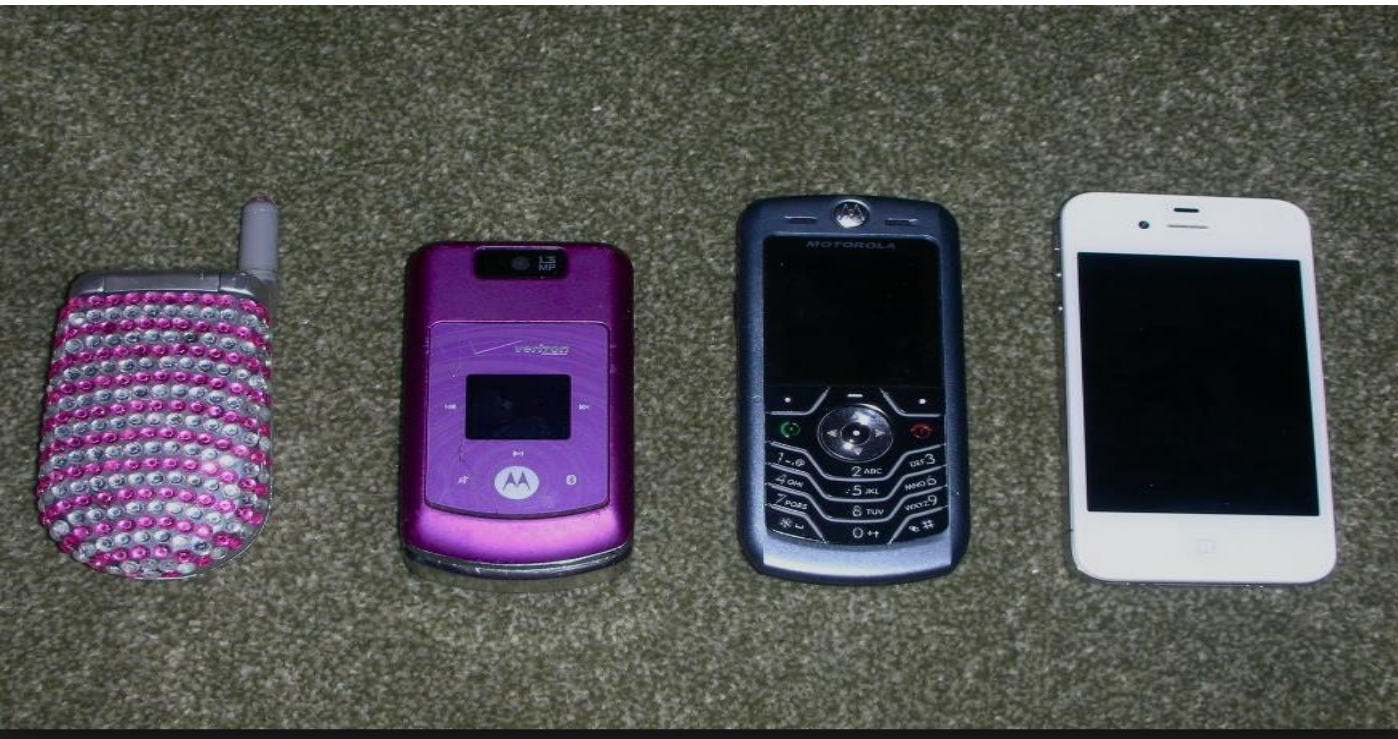
# Generational IQ

**Christianity Isn't Dying,  
Millennials Aren't the Problem,  
And the Future is Bright**

# Generational Intelligence

- We are living longer - 30 years longer than 100 years ago. Previously we had 3 generations.
- For the first time in history, we have five generations in our families, churches, and communities.
- We struggle with other generations because we don't understand them.
- Each generation is shaped by the events and culture in which it has lived.





# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- **WWII - “shell shocked” and they don’t want to talk about the war**
- **Vietnam - “messed up” and treated like “baby-killers” when they came home**
- **Middle East Conflicts - honored when they return, lots of help from military and general public**

# A New Lens






- We must look at other generations in a new way.
- We need to understand other generations' assumptions, as well as our own.
- Generational Intelligence doesn't make the key teaching of Jesus to "love one another" easy, but it does make it easier.



# Part I

**How when you were born  
affects your relationship with God?**

# Five Generations Working Side by Side in 2020

 <b>TRADITIONALISTS</b> Born 1900-1945	 <b>BOOMERS</b> Born 1946-1964	 <b>GEN X</b> Born 1965-1976	 <b>MILLENNIAL</b> Born 1977-1997	 <b>GEN 2020</b> After 1997
Great Depression World War II Disciplined Workplace Loyalty Move to the 'Burbs Vaccines	Vietnam, Moon Landing Civil/Women's Rights Experimental Innovators Hard Working Personal Computer	Fall of Berlin Wall Gulf War Independent Free Agents Internet, MTV, AIDS Mobile Phone	9/11 Attacks Community Service Immediacy Confident, Diversity Social Everything Google, Facebook	Age 15 and Younger Optimistic High Expectations Apps Social Games Tablet Devices



# Traditionalists - Born before 1945

- Also called Builders, Elders, the Silent Generation, and the Greatest Generation
- Grew up in the 1920s through early 1950s
- Survived the “Great Depression”
- WWII taught sacrifice and patience
- Move from farms to cities

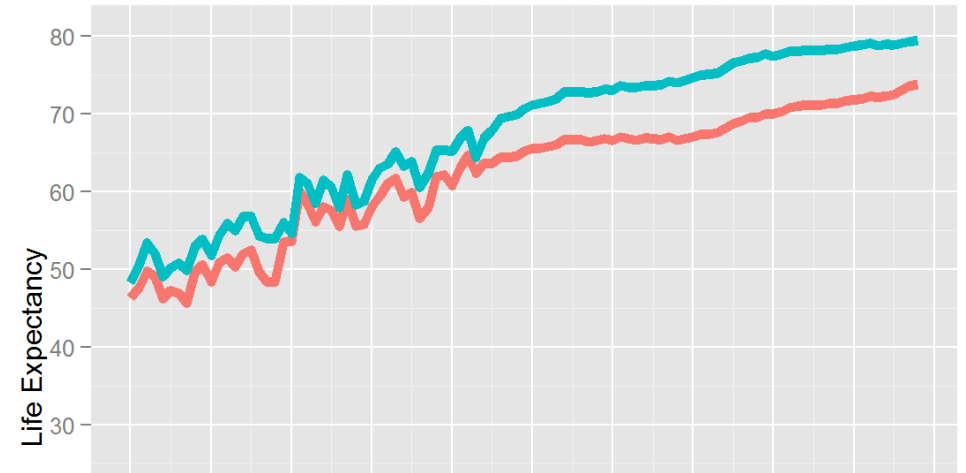


# Culture Milestones - Traditionalists

- Golden Age of Radio
- Believed the experts knew everything
- Very trusting of authority
- Oseola McCarty illustration - pg 34
- Lower expectations of organizations
- Savers vs. spenders

# Temptations for Traditionalists

- Struggle with Purposeless Retirement
- Retirement is NOT Biblical
- Life expectancy is now 75+
- Construction of another life after retirement
- How do we build our retirement dreams around what God wants from us in our later years?



# Baby Boomers - Born 1946-1964

- Born to returning vets after WWII - largest spike in history
- Parents wanted kids to have a better life
- Medical advancement provides longer life
- The “Television” Generation
- Economy good - hard work = success



# Cultural Milestones – Baby Boomers

- Parents told them they were “special”
- Shift from sacrifice to self
- Television and targeted marketing
- Affluence level of parents
- Working parents = more freedom

# Baby Boomers - Retirement

*“...they plan for retirement,  
but they don't plan to retire.”*

# Baby Boomers' Strengths & Temptations

- **Hyper-individualism - “The Me-Generation”**
- **Jesus is a friend, wanted relationship**
- **Worship more about me, church hopping**
- **Bible Study became conversations**
- **Psychology replaced theology to explain who we are**

# Generation X - Born 1965-1980

- Gen-X, the Overlooked Generation
- Computer/Internet Generation
- Higher divorce rate, higher abortion rates, more working women
- High short-term debt
- Highly skeptical of authority





# Cultural Milestones – Gen-X

- **Parody TV Shows, “The Simpsons & South Park”**
- **Higher Rate of Abortion - fewer siblings**
- **Divorce the Norm - 29%: Boomers 15%; Traditionalist 13%**
- **Higher Emphasis on Friends than Family**
- **Inflation - College expenses quadrupled**

# Gen-Xer's Strengths & Temptations

- **Community is High Priority**
- **Practical expressions of Faith - Community Projects**
- **Family is Important, must be balanced**
- **Truth is relative for each person**
- **They are realists, not optimists, many even cynical**

# Millennials – Born 1981-2001

- Heavy Parental Involvement
- High Self-Esteem - “You can do anything!”
- Consumer Generation
- Technology Integral for Life
- Later Adulthood - Around age 26



# Millennials Strengths & Temptations

- **Look for Meaning in What They Do**
- **Authentic, Open**
- **Work with Others = Teams**
- **Uncertain about Moral Beliefs - No Absolute Truth**
- **“You are your own theologian.”**

# Millennials and the Church

- It is not that important, maybe later in life
- Only 1 in 6 would seek spiritual guidance at church
- See hypocrisy in institutions - and leave
- Focus on “The Kingdom of God” more than local church
- “Be Good, Feel Good, Live Your Life”



# Part II

## Friends and Family

# Spiritual, but not Religious – Chapter 7

- Many want the best of each religion to build a spirituality that works for them
- There is only one god, he is god of the Bible, and all other religions
- Goal is to be happy, good people go to heaven (don't they?)
- The Religion of *ME*

# Be Good, Feel Good, Live Your Life

- Be tolerant of others' beliefs
- God's role is to make us feel good
- God is the teacher on the Playground - steps in when things get out of control
- Does NOT free us from being controlled by unfulfilled desires - we really can't be GOOD



# What Can I Say?

- **Listen More; Talk Less**
- **Ask what “religion” means to them**
- **Share personal experiences - What Jesus means to you**
- **Listen to their story - but don't forget to share yours**

# When Will My Twentysomething Move out of the Basement? – Chapter 8

- Emerging Adulthood - new stage of life
- Delayed Adolescence
- Slower to commit to work, marriage, and responsibility
- Fantasy Escape - Conqueror in Video Games
- Want to have meaningful conversations
- Better to come home than to be homeless

# How Do I Reach My Twentysomething Who Is Drifting from God? – Chapter 9

- They are less religious than teenagers or older adults
- Church is not important in their lives
- 70% will stop attending church, BUT 2/3rds will come back as they grow older
- Be open to talk about how they view God without recrimination
- Pray for them and love them unconditionally

# What Do I Do When My Kid Is Putting Off Marriage but Not Sex? - Chapter 10

- **New Morality in Emerging Adults**
  - **Our Sex-Saturated World**
  - **Unmarried Sex is Fine**
  - **Low Confidence in Marriage**
  - **Living together is common**
  - **Waiting Later to Marry**

# What Do I Do When My Kid Is Putting Off Marriage but Not Sex?

- Millennials have lower divorce rates
- In the 1920's, 50% of women who married were not virgins - but it was considered a SIN
- Marriage partner is more than a good match, now must be a satisfying partner as well
- 48% of Millennial couples cohabitate before marriage



# Part III

## Church

# Will Christianity Really Disappear in Three Generations? – Chapter 11

- In 2011, 92 percent of people said they believed in God
- In 2014, 53% indicated they attend church monthly and 80% attend occasionally
- The “Un-Churched” are less negative toward Christianity
- Image of God is not the God of the Bible who is fully seen in Jesus Christ
- Connection through relationship, not church building

# Will Christianity Really Disappear in Three Generations?

- Jesus said the church will prevail
- Church tends to panic and overreact:
  - Focus on small things and ignore big things
  - “We’re losing our young people - change the music!”
  - “We’ve upset the seniors - throw in more hymns!”



# What Should We Worry About?

- We have to connect with five generations
- The “Nones” are growing (in 2014 - 22.8%)
  - They are reached through **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Millennials may not ever come back
  - Less patience with institutions
  - Less likely to be married
  - Waiting longer to have children
  - Most Christians are too judgmental

# Why Won't Younger People Come to My Church? – Chapter 12

- Wrong question - dead-end question because it is about you and not about them.
- Right question - What will we need to do differently to reach the younger generations?
- People are afraid that the next generation will change “their” church until it won't feel like the same church they want or remember.

# Three Options for Dealing With Five Generations

- **Change the Church NOW, if you are able**
  - **Right Time - could be yes or no, or not yet.**
  - **Right leadership - need to see and understand**
  - **Right structure - stream-line decision making**
  - **Right skills - good listening skills and learning to be mentors.**

# Three Options for Dealing With Five Generations

- **Grow Old Together**
  - Target Boomers and Traditionalists
  - Start new churches or campuses with very different DNA to appeal to younger generations
  - Raise money to fund reaching the next generations
  - Send people out to serve
  - Before the church dies turn the keys over to those who are reaching the next generations
- **Pretend You Can Reach All Five Generations Well**
  - And slowly die

# Reaching Gen-X : True for you but not for me

- Help them find family in the church
- Discover whether you need more interactive worship
- Show how Jesus taught a better worldview
- Get comfortable with technology
- Get out of the building

# Reaching Millennials

- **Become the Older Friend**
- **Use humor**
- **Help them understand the “whys” behind the commandments**
- **Teach deeper, and don’t skip the hard questions**
- **Target “Be Good, Feel Good, Live Your Life”**

# What Am I Supposed to Do Now That It Doesn't Feel like My Church Anymore? –

## Chapter 13

- Older generations fear the “new” church won’t be right for them
- Embrace the Boomers in their “second adulthood” and Gen-Xers in their “emerging adulthood”
- Give your church back to Jesus -  
*“I will build MY Church...”*

# What Am I Supposed to Do Now That It Doesn't Feel like My Church Anymore? –

## Chapter 13

- **Connect strongly with Jesus - the church is not responsible for your spiritual maturity - you are**
- **Engage more deeply in the spiritual disciplines**
- **Serve others**
- **Offer hymn sings on Sunday nights**



# What Am I Supposed to Do Now That It Doesn't Feel like My Church Anymore? –

## Chapter 13

- Sign up for what Jesus has planned for the future - cancel your purposeless retirement
- Second adulthood is changing the way we look at retirement
- Help Boomers continue to make a difference by presenting them with the challenge of reaching the next generation
- Help them figure out what to do when they finally grow up!



# Part IV

Why We Need Each Other

# The Ultimate Generational Intelligence

- Do Whatever It Takes - Ephesians 4:1-3
- Humbly Turn On the Lights
- Gently Listen to Their Stories
- Patiently Bear with Them
- The Ultimate Intelligence - Acts 13:36
- Doing the will of God



# Part V

## 20 Key Take-Away Points

# 20 Key Take-Away Points

1. In previous eras, there were only three generations. The oldest generation had the money and made the decisions, and the younger generation of adults raised the children and did what the older generation asked them to until their parents died, and then their turn came to be in control. Changes in families and churches came slowly and naturally, with little disruption. (page 13)
2. But today, for the first time in history, we have five generations in our families, churches, and communities. (page 13)
3. Generational intelligence doesn't make the key teaching of Jesus to "love one another" easy, but it does make it easier. (page 19)
4. Each generation has spiritual strengths and temptations that were shaped by the ideas and images of the times in which they grew up. (page 30)
5. We've been telling young people for twenty years that their generation could be the difference makers, that their lives could be big and they are dreaming too small. It's time to tell their grandparents the same thing. (page 39)

6. Individualism brought God close, hyper-individualism applied a consumer's attitude toward churches, and it has stunted Boomers spiritual growth. (page 55)
7. Generation X is the most misunderstood and invisible of the generations. The name itself illustrates the problem. Generation Xers don't like the label. (page 63)
8. What Jesus taught about love and sacrifice only makes sense because of what Jesus thought about God. You might admire Jesus, but you won't follow him if you think he was wrong about God. It wouldn't make sense. (page 75)
9. It's good that after five hundred years of anti-faith thinking, people are more open to spiritual things. It's encouraging that people still admire Jesus. But Gen Xers are the first generation to face "true for you but not for me" for most of their lives. (page 76)
10. Millennials are confident. Their parents and teachers convinced them they are special, and the Millennials believe it. In one survey, 96 percent of Millennials agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement "I can do something great." Not one respondent disagreed strongly. (page 83)

11. Startlingly, 34 percent of the Millennials interviewed said they didn't know what makes something right or wrong, although most could explain some basis for their moral reasoning: (page 92)
12. Just as computers can get hacked and bad software installed, an alternate version of Christianity, which I call "Be Good, Feel Good, Live Your Life (page God Is Watching)," has replaced the Christianity of the Bible and the historic theology of the church. The majority of people, but especially Millennials, think it's Christianity, although a minority understands the difference. If you get nothing else from this book, you must get this—it's that dangerous. (page 99)
13. Let your emerging adults know you love them and that you want to treat them as adults, and if they live at home, that you want to live in an atmosphere of mutual affection and respect. (page 136)
14. The families that are emotionally distant and rigid in their beliefs actually drive their children from their faith. The research is clear: parents who are deeply committed to and model their faith will not compensate for an emotionally distant dad. (page 147)
15. If God is great and God is good, then there's a good reason behind every command he gives us, and in today's world we have to emphasize the reason instead of the command so that people are willing to see the beauty of the command before they accept it. (page 152)

16. God made us sexual beings even if we don't ever have sex. He wants us to find our sexuality rooted in him instead of in our bodies. There are three central reasons sacred sex is more beautiful than vital sex. (page 168)
17. I never worry that Christianity will disappear, but I am terrified that the Millennials who grew up in the church aren't significantly more orthodox in their theology than those who didn't. (page 196)
18. Hoping your church can reach everyone puts the focus on your church, not on the people you're trying to reach, and in no time you'll be asking the dead-end question again. Go young or grow old together—both benefit the Kingdom of God. Just don't fool yourself into thinking you can do both if you keep doing what you've been doing. (page 207)
19. So why does your church's youth ministry stop after high school simply because the public school system is structured that way? Why can't a couple of the youth leaders who worked with them in high school follow up on them after they scatter to college or the workforce? That simple change alone would reduce the number who drop out of church in the years immediately after high school. (page 211)
20. We may dedicate forty meetings to discussing how to change our church to reach younger people. We need to start talking with Boomers and Traditionalists about their struggle to welcome the Xers and Millennials without feeling like they're losing their home, because our silence is making the changes much harder than they need to be. (page 218)