

# BRIDGING THE G.A.P.S. 4

**G**.enerations **A**.ppreciating **P**.erspectives and **S**.imilarities

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”* Hebrews 13: 8

## “WHEN VALUES CLASH”

“EVERY GENERATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
\_\_\_\_\_ THE NEXT GENERATION TO \_\_\_\_\_.”

### 1. HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THE \_\_\_\_\_

Generation X has also spawned a new cultural phenomenon called “\_\_\_\_\_”.

### 2. HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THE \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THEIR \_\_\_\_\_

If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generation, we must find our values, and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of God, His \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_.

If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generation, we must find our values and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of Jesus Christ, His \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_.

If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generations, we must find our values and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of the Holy Spirit; His \_\_\_\_\_ and his Constant \_\_\_\_\_.

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## **“WHEN VALUES CLASH”**

Our Thursday edition of the Tribune on the Religion page, included an article about a Bishop in the Episcopal Church granting permission for Priests in His diocese to not only marry homosexuals, but to grant the blessing of the church on couples choosing to cohabit in ‘committed’ (though unmarried) relationships. I, like you, was troubled, and anxious, as our own church continues to struggle with similar issues. I was disheartened by the decision, but thought it appropriate to introduce my message for today. As we continue to learn about Bridging the GAPS between the generations we have been studying, we are confronted with values that not only differ between generations, but actually clash with those of other generations. And I thought an attempt to answer the question; “what do we do when our values clash?” might be helpful. So let me begin by reminding you of our foundational principle, then delving deeper into our subject of the morning:

### **“EVERY GENERATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WINNING THE NEXT GENERATION TO CHRIST.”**

I want to examine a number of subjects today. I want to consider how the 4 generations we have been observing: The Builders, the Boomers, the Xers, and the Millenials, view certain ‘value laden’ subjects, and then try to answer our question: “What do we do when our values clash?” Much of the information I’ll be sharing today comes from a book about understanding generational differences called Boomers, Xers and other Strangers, written by Dr. Rick and Kathy Hicks.

#### **1. HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THE FAMILY**

When the Builder Generation was growing up and starting their own families, by and large, mothers stayed home to raise their children and be homemakers, while fathers went to work to earn the money necessary to live. Dad was still the authority in the home, and many a child grew up under the duress of “you just wait till your father gets home.” These families were generally very close and strong. Extended families were also more likely to live near each other. (While I grew up all my father’s relatives lived within about a 60-mile radius of our farm.) The tendency in the Builders was to marry only once, and the divorce rate was relatively low.

As the Boomers grew up and became parents, more mothers began to work outside the home. This added to the hurried lifestyle of the family, with people going multiple directions at once. During this time we also saw the divorce rate increase significantly. Often the immediate families became more dispersed because of divorce, but the extended family also became more dispersed as mobility increased and young families moved to follow careers or to relocate in the suburbs. (At one point during our second year of marriage while living in Kentucky, I had a brother living in Phoenix, a sister in Washington, a brother in Spearfish, and a brother in the Twin Cities.)

The divorce rate continued to climb and really took its toll on Generation X. There was an increase in the number of single mothers, as well as both parents working, resulting in many children coming home from school to empty houses or apartments, and locking the doors till a parent came home. (Thus the name Latchkey Kids)

The Millennial Generation, while still dealing with an abundance of families led by single mothers, and a growing number of single fathers, they are also becoming adept at growing up in multiple households (spending time with each parent), and becoming comfortable with looser family structures that result from divorced or blended families.

Perhaps the biggest clash of values results from the difference in each generation's view of marriage. The Builders, of course, felt that once married, you should be married until 'death do you part.' The Boomers, with their fast-paced lifestyle, rejection of traditional values, and focus on their own needs, saw divorce as a solution when relationships became difficult.

For many Xers, the marriage pattern they saw as they were growing up was divorce. That scared them to the degree that they tend to wait longer to get married and are hesitant to get into a marriage situation that could end in divorce. The trend of couples living together without being married continues to be a real option in many Xer's minds. This generation has also spawned a new cultural phenomenon called "starter marriages". Couples who marry young, don't have kids, and have no real intention of staying married forever, just practicing for awhile till the real thing come along. The Millenials because of their young age, have yet to establish typical marriage patterns.

## **2. HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL**

Here are a few examples of the clashing values of individuals in each generation. **Hairstyle** is one of the most visible. According to Builder's values, good guys and 'real men' had short hair. Their heroes came back from "the War" with short hair, and they thought that was the way to go. As the 60's were ushered in, the Boomers decided to let their hair grow, partly because of the influence of the Beatles, but also as part of their rejection of the values of the establishment. This really irritated the Builders. For some reason they seemed to take this more personally than many other clashes we will talk about, and my father was no exception.

After us Boomers went to all the trouble of getting long hair accepted, the Xers came along, and often preferred shorter hairstyles again, this obviously upset some boomers! Now the Millennial's come along with their long, short, part long, part short, shaved, dyed, and dredded locks to really put this clash on the map.

Let's consider an individual's **clothing**. The Builders always felt that uniforms and formal clothing were best. Have you seen an Ozzie and Harriet rerun where Ozzie Nelson is mowing the lawn wearing a tie and Cardigan sweater? That's a far cry from what Ozzie Osborne wears on MTV today!

The Boomers, always quick to reject the values of their parents, preferred casual clothing, even in the work place, and especially in public, which seems to irritate the Builders.

The Xers clothing can only be explained as bizarre. They like baggy clothes, chains, studded leather, which alienates both the preceding generations. The Millennials are a group who love diversity. They enjoy dressing up, (spending hundreds of dollars on prom gowns and tuxes) being casual, and borrowing from all the previous generations. You will see them going to school with slacks, baggy clothing, dress shirts, army fatigues, bell bottoms and T's or whatever else strikes their fancy.

**Music** is a huge indicator of individual values, and each generation has been defined by its music. The Builders preferred the big band sound and swing dancing was one of their big crazes. Boomers are defined by their love of Rock and Roll, even to this day. Generation X got into rap and alternative music, with even more extreme sounds, performance and lyrics, which previous generations considered to be immoral and hostile toward society. The Millennial's love diversity and variety. They enjoy their parent's rock and roll, and many are revisiting their grandparents swing dancing/music craze. One of the 'new' sounds 'discovered' by this generation is called ska, which combines reggae, some rap and includes brass instrumentation, and to the untrained ear sounds vaguely familiar to some big bands sounds of yesteryear.

#### 4. **HOW THE GENERATIONS VALUE THEIR MONEY**

You can tell an awful lot about people if you get a chance to look at two books in their possession – their appointment book and their checkbook! What a person does with his or her money is a chief indicator of what that person's values are.

The Builders are true to form when it comes to money. They grew up in a time when money was scarce and sacrifices were necessary.

After the depression and WWII the economy greatly improved and the financial situation of many of the builders improved with it. Most, however kept the values that they had developed which basically were: "Save money because you can never tell when there's going to be another depression."

The Builders have a serious clash with the Boomers who were raised in a time of economic prosperity. If they get money, they tend to want to spend it now. If they run out of money, they know they can go to their parents, who have been saving all that money, or they can just 'charge it.'

Generation X was raised in a more difficult financial time. They have all the desires that the Baby Boomers have; they just haven't been able to get the jobs that produce the income they want, since the boomers are still flooding and hoarding the market. The Millennials like the boomers are growing up in a prosperous economy. They believe they can get things and get them now, just like the boomers before them. They also have a new tool to find whatever they want – the Internet. This medium appeals to all three latest generations raised on 'have it your way, NOW!'

As you can see, our differences are significant, and often can be divisive, especially in the church. The builders in the church favor family style events, including worship and fellowship. Groups and programs offered to singles, or single parents can often feel to the builders like their church is endorsing alternative lifestyles. Boomers often have a short sighted overly personalized view of church, often without deep seated loyalties which cause concern for their parents and uncertainty for their kids. The Gen Xer's and

Millennials have largely been ignored by the mainline churches and provide not only our hope for survival, but also a reminder of the business we are in. Reaching them today will take as much effort as reaching a native in New Guinea did a generation ago.

So what shall we do with all these value clashes alive in the church? Shall we choose the American Government and Business Standard of “Majority Rules”, and vote on all church matters according to what the largest group represented in the church wants? What happens if that majority rapidly changes? Or shall we survey our landscape and decide to become all things to all people? What happens when resources are exhausted, both financial and personal? Or shall we simply just keep doing what we have been doing until natural attrition takes its inevitable toll and the church is dead, (hopefully after we are dead)? Or shall we become overwhelmed with the complexity of the issues and the size of the tasks and run to some other church where it seems more sensible and stable? These are all options, and some of our families have chosen one or another. But I would ask you to consider another, better way.

I believe our generational diversity is one of our greatest strengths. I love the fact that Frank, who is 100 years young, just moved to our community and has found his way to our church. I love the chaos of kids we see (and hear) most every Sunday morning around here. I love watching our youth falling in love with Jesus and learning how to worship, and I love seeing you boomers finding your gifts, and realizing there is more to life than making money, and ministry is for you, not just me. And I treasure our Builders who invested their lives and money, as hard as it was, to insure we would have this beautiful place to worship. And I love the fact that many of you Builders and Seniors, are graciously making provisions to insure that future generations will also find their home in our family, though possibly through an additional building.

So in conclusion, lets return to our text, and actually read 'the rest of the story', and find there in verse 9, the answer to the question: "What do we do when our values clash?"

*"So do not be swept off your course by all sorts of outlandish teachings; it is good that our souls should gain their strength from the grace of God and not from scruples about what we eat, which have never done any good to those who were governed by them."*  
Heb. 13: 9

When our values clash, then we must find our values somewhere other than the popular culture in which we live, somewhere other than in the traditions we have inherited, somewhere other than even the best our minds and common sense can decipher. If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generation, we must find our values, and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of God, His **Holiness** and His **Grace**.

If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generation, we must find our values and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of Jesus Christ, His **Death** and His **Resurrection**.

If we claim to be Christians, regardless of our generations, we must find our values and gain our strength, in the unchanging truth of the Holy Spirit; His **Power** and his Constant **Presence**.

Here we must base and build and live our lives; the grace of God, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Power and Presence of the Holy Spirit. Values determined anywhere else are always subject to the changes in culture, climate, even within generations themselves. But values based on the Unchanging God, are therefore what? Unchanging.

Joy, for the bulletin these are the things I know are happening

Baptism at 9:30

Bolivia Testimony (both)

Bolivia Team Commissioning (both)

Dance (both)

Beyond that I am not sure, hope that is helpful. You might Call Nycol at 1:15 (that would be 12:15 MST, and they should be in the dining room then) tomorrow if you want to double check with her, but you certainly don't have to. The number for Storm Mt is 605 343-4391 I think, check the Journal for sure. Thanks, K