This is a guest post by Jacob Rutledge. Jacob is a fellow gospel preacher, a faithful servant of the Lord, and an exemplary father, husband, and teacher. Whenever you are around him, it is obvious that he loves the Lord and His church with every ounce of his being. I want to be like Jacob when I grow up. You should never miss a chance to listen to him or read his writings. Make sure to follow Jacob on twitter [here](https://twitter.com/jrulledge). -Ben

“A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever” (Ecc. 1:3).

One article reads, “What Can the Church do to Keep Millennials?”

Another writer cries, “We are losing Millennials left and right!”

Millennials! Millennials! We must pander to the Millennials!

*Listen, I’m a Millennial and I’m just about tired of hearing about Millennials.* Don’t
misunderstand me: I think my generation has a lot to offer the church. There is creativity, imagination, and compassion in the hearts of my generation that I genuinely believe can be used for the glory of God. We do a disservice to Millennials when we don’t recognize those talents and use them within their scriptural boundaries for the work of the church. At the same time there are major flaws that characterize my generation: extreme narcissism, an entitlement mentality, and a veracious appetite for materialism. Every generation has its strengths and weaknesses; the problem I believe with my generation is that we fail to recognize our weaknesses.

Allow me to paint with a broad brush: Because of our over inflated egos we want the culture to constantly focus on our needs. We believe that our ideas are the best ideas; that our plans are the best plans. We don’t take criticism well (especially from the older generations). And, generally, we have a high disregard for anything “old.” We are the Athenians on steroids: we sit around and wait for someone to tweet something new. I realize I’m speaking in generalities and not every Millennial fits into this category; I’m just testifying to what I have seen in myself, in others, and in the culture as a whole.

And I think it’s about time that we get over ourselves.

Really. I mean really guys. Do we really think we are the first ones to feel this way? Do we really think our generation is “the” generation that is going to fix everything? Do we really think that our generation is any better than previous generations? Do we not realize that many of the benefits we enjoy today are due to the ingenuity, courage, compassion and sacrifice of previous generations? Yes, we can offer our culture (and the future) many things, but a failure to recognize the victories of past generations and an over infatuation with our own leads only to darker—not brighter—days.

Sadly, this hyper sensitivity to the whims (and I mean WHIMS) of my generation has seeped into the church. There seems to be an entire blogosphere that is concerned only with the preservation and promotion of one particular generation; as if the progress of the kingdom is laid on the backs of Millennials instead of the hands of the Master.

Here are some concerns I have with the church’s current infatuation with Millennials:

A disregard for the competence and intelligence of
previous generations of godly men and women.

When Paul wrote to Timothy he commended and encouraged him for his faithful dedication to imitating the older apostle (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 3:10). He encouraged the Corinthians to follow a similar pattern (1 Cor. 11:1). Although there was a generation gap, Paul didn’t feel as if that kept his younger brother from following the aged apostle in his Christian walk. In fact, Paul is convicted that one of the most beneficial avenues of maturity for Timothy is through following him: an older, more seasoned Christian.

For some reason there seems to be a constant questioning of the competency of the previous generations of Christians—especially of preachers. I have fallen into the trap myself at various times. We look at the previous generation of gospel preachers and we see ourselves as superior. We view their sermons as too simplistic, their focus as too narrow, and their knowledge too limited. We look with disdain on the sermons about the beauty of New Testament Christianity, worship, and holy conduct as outdated and out of touch. We think we are the first ones to have really thought through the issues. We love to view ourselves as more balanced than the previous generation of ministers (because, of course, “balance is the principle thing”).

I realize that the previous generation wasn’t perfect, but neither is ours. We do a disservice to great men of faith when we reject their teaching simply because we view them as outdated. There is great danger in this mentality as well. An outright rejection of previous Christian thought opens the door wide open for apostasy. **When we begin with the foundation that these “forefathers of faith” were wrong, we can more easily reject the truth simply because we are deluded by our own self-adulation.** I’m not saying follow men at the expense of truth; I’m saying follow truth at the expense of whatever generation it might be found. Eyes that are wise in their own sight are often the scorn of scripture (Isa. 5:21; Rom. 12:16).

**An arrogant sense of superior spirituality.**

Not only do we question the competence of previous generations, we view their level of spirituality as inferior to our own. We assume that, since the church didn’t do certain things in the way we think they should be done, they aren’t as graceful, as loving, or as compassionate as we are. When you read the social media post of some of my fellow Millennials you would think that the church didn’t know how to love until they came along. Come on. Are you kidding me? Let’s get over ourselves Millennials.

**How arrogant can we be to assume that the church was filled with loveless**
hypocrites before we graced the stage? Does the church always have room to grow? Absolutely. Are there certain expedients we can change to help facilitate the work of the church in our generation? Sure. But let’s not assume that the previous generation’s love isn’t as genuine or their worship isn’t as fervent. In fact, the Lord has shown me time and time again how lacking this assumption truly is. More often than not it is the older generation that has shown sincere Christian love to me and my family. It is previous generations who have sacrificed time, money, and effort for the growth of the Kingdom. It is the previous generation which shows a great reverence and awe for the word and worship of God. There will always be those in every generation (including ours) that don’t show the genuine love and grace of Christ. So, let’s not assume that ours is the first to perfect these qualities.

A lack of focus on multi-generational churches.

Whenever we focus on one particular generation at the expense of another we fail to recognize the strength of a multi-generational faith in the church. Paul instructed Titus on the importance of the familial structure of the church (Titus 2:1-8). John also recognized the various strengths of differing generations (1 John 2:13-14). The culture of the Kingdom should never be dominated by the desires of any particular generation, but by the combined efforts of every generation to exalt their shared Savior. The church should be a place where every member is respected, honored and loved regardless of their age (1 Cor. 12: 12-ff; 1 Tim. 4:12). If we combine the moral strength and reverence for God’s authority of past generations with the ingenuity and creativity of the current generation then the church would be unstoppable! The gospel is a multi-generational affair. It addresses the shared needs of every community in every generation: the need for salvation, redemption, reconciliation, communion, and love. Let’s not assume that our generation is the only one that recognizes that need.

Conclusion

Again, don’t misunderstand me: I hope we continue to write blogs that help address the particular struggles and strengths of this current generation; yet, I also hope that we can create a more diverse concern for the multi-generational faithfulness of every age group.

I’m sure I’ll get some flack from my own generation for this article (remember we don’t take criticism well!) as well as from those who have built their blogs on the transient premise of “mono-generationalism.” Regardless, I feel it’s time for my generation to take a long look at ourselves in the mirror. It’s time to top focusing on the exclusive needs of our generation and begin exalting the holy generation of Christ (1 Pet. 2:9).
So, let’s get over ourselves Millennials!

https://plainsimplefaith.com/millennials-lets-get-over-ourselves/
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