

Why doesn't anyone care about Generation X?

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I've been in a number of conversations where people in my beloved generation (I'm an Xer) are frustrated by all the recent buzz around [Millennials and the church](#). Many in Gen X are annoyed that we've spent a lifetime living under the looming Boomer shadow, and now we're getting swallowed up by Millennials.

Churches worry about the fact that the 20-somethings are missing. And we should be concerned. In the denominational church, we have been closing a stunning number of congregations every month. About 75-80% of our ministers will be retiring in the next ten years. This keeps me up at night. Not just because I care about our churches (I do), but also because I care about people. I've prayed about it, [written about it](#), and spoken on it for the last eight years.

And now that Gen X is no longer in the 20-something cohort (we're [31-51](#)), I'm still concerned. Why?

•**We believe that faith extends from generation to generation.** I don't want to respond to the notion that no one cared about us while we were in our 20s, by resenting the Millennials.

I cannot tell you how many times Baby Boomers come up to me at conferences, where I am invited to talk about ministry to and with a new generation and say, "You left me out! How come you didn't talk about *my* struggles? How come you didn't talk about how the church has treated *my* generation?"

Of course, I didn't talk about Boomers, because I wasn't invited to speak on Boomers. Boomers already have plenty of people speaking.

I don't want to be that person—resenting emerging voices, always feeling neglected. I want to be continually nurturing leadership, voices, and faith in a new generation.

•**We're survivors.** There were many things that Gen X had to go through and we know better now. I became a latchkey kid in 6th grade. It was common. There is *no*

way I would let my kid babysit herself for hours every single day. You can call me a helicopter parent, but I would rather make sure that there are after-school programs, sports, and clubs for my daughter than look forward to another generation of record-high teen pregnancies.

We can look at so many things that our generation has had to survive—endless wars, ballooning student loan debt, roller-coaster housing costs, short-term work, horrifying environmental damage, and the gouging of pension and medical benefits. But we've always found strength when we looked to make things better for the future. Can't we keep doing that in the church?

•We're old enough to claim community--even with all of our alienation.

Generation X would have a thunderous voice in the church overnight if we all started to tithe. We would have a huge voice in politics if we showed up at the polls. I know that we're in debt and most of us have felt alienated from institutions. But, at age 51, we can't always be victims. We can't blame others for our detachment. We will need to join in common action--whether it's within existing structures or with movements that we create.

Though I've spent most of this post talking about generational cohorts, I want to end by saying that even though I use them, it makes me frustrated that we're divided by them. Why should we start resenting younger generations just because they wear a different label? Why can't we all keep working for this movement of mercy, love and justice at any age?