

## Here come the Futuristics

We've often talked about the generations in this country, describing their different orientations and how that might affect churches. The next generation is being born right now, and showing up in your church's nursery, if you have one. Let's review some of the differences:

- Generation X: (born 1965-1981) This group has become known as anti-institutional who are eager to take risks professionally, but not when it comes to relationships. They reject authority and do not want to repeat the mistakes their parents made, since Gen X were often latchkey kids.
- Millennials: (born 1982-2002) This is the most cherished generation since the heroes of the GI generation, and they represent a major shift in society's opinion of children. They're more protected, prosperous, higher-achieving and technology-savvy than any other generation in American history. They hold high moral and civic standards and feel it's their duty to set the world right. They reject the negative image of Gen Xers. A team-centered worldview will shape their future ability to handle conflict. Experts predict that as parents, this group will be driven by a desire for community, and will lean toward overprotection and conformity.
- Both of these generations tend to feel their Boomer parents were too permissive, and will be more conservative.
- Futuristics: (born 2003 on) The generation born post 9/11 may never know what the world looked like before, and they are born into a world of technology that sounds to many of us like science fiction. Everything in the world is now at their fingertips, as many are online by age 3. Kids need protection by building their own inner compass, so character-building, stability, community and relationships will be important to them and their parents. Intentional relationship building is one way churches can serve this group. They are expected to be interested in absolute truth, and reject the relativism of our postmodern age.
- The advice for working with these groups is always the same: we must be able to understand them, be willing to do what it takes to reach them, and be willing to change the delivery system we prefer in order to be a transformational force in their world. Ministry leaders must know that technology is here to stay, and the sooner they learn to use it, the better able they will be to reach more young people.
- It will become more and more critical to reach beyond the walls of the church through community events or service. It is no longer enough to invite people in—they are no longer inclined to seek out church, so will need to see how the church is operating in the community.

Of course, changing children's lives is more about adults caring and building relationships with them than anything else. This issue summarizes an article from [www.childrensministry.com](http://www.childrensministry.com), by managing editor Jennifer Hooks. Our Thriving in Unity programs can help with reaching out and making changes in the ministry. See [www.thrivinginunity.org](http://www.thrivinginunity.org).