A Contemporary Christian Education Program for Boomers and Busters

ED 216 – Introduction to Christian Education

By

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In exploring Christian Education Program Wesley Black article, “Generational Perspectives: Ministering to Builders, Boomers, Busters and Bridger argues, while there are many ways to describe people, none has caught the attention of Christian Educators in recent years like the generational categories. Developmentalists, Sociologists, Psychologists, and even futuristic have all contributed to our efforts of understanding people and effective ways of teaching and ministering to them. Generational and theorists offer a fresh perspective in describing and understanding those who make up the audiences for Christian education. The concept of generations in biblical accounts is understood in two distinct ways. There is a larger, more general perspective and also a more narrowly defined approach.

Definition of Generations give insight by telling the story of Adam, the writer of Genesis says “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God Created man, He made him in the likeness of God” (Genesis 5:1 NASB). A generation can best be defined as a group of people born within a span of about twenty two years. This provides a stronger basis for generalizing about people other than by social categories such as gender, race, region or age. Their common treasure of memories and experiences flavor the entire body of values, beliefs, and attitudes of a generation of people. “A common age location in history throughout their lives, Since history affects people differently according to their age, a common age location is what gives each cohort-group a distinct biography and distinct life cycle.” *General Categories*, There have been many attempts over the years to Categorize generations. Some Sociologists differ on the twenty-year marker and therefore reduce the number to generation to twentieth century to four.

Strauss and Howe label the categories and corresponding years as follows:

G.I. Generation 1901-1924

Silent Generation	1925-1942
Boom Generation	1943-1960
Thirteenth Generation	1961-1981
Millennial Generation	1982-present

Hanks applies different labels to the generation and places them as follows:

Power Builders	1901-1925
Peace makers	1926-1944
Path Finders	1945-1963
Pace Setters	1964-1981

Rainer, who classifies generation periods by birth rate, places the generations categories in slightly different years.

Builders	1910-1946	Approx. 76 million births
Boomers	1946-1964	Approx. 77 million births
Busters	1965-1976	Approx. 44 million births
Bridger	1977-1994	Approx. 72 million births

Each is marked by different social circumstances and cohort life events, A brief description of each generation and a strategy for ministering to those within each generational category will follow.

“The transition of the United State becoming a world leader due to the fact that the population grew surpass seventy-six million. Its armies fought in World War I and World War II. During these conflicts, United States leaders urge the world’s people to fight for freedom against oppressive regimes, or governments, American factories produced tanks and airplanes, while

American soldiers helped win the wars. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union became the world's two major powers. They competed for world leadership in a rivalry known as the Cold War. This rivalry was called the Cold War because the conflict never became "hot," with actual combat between the two powers. Nevertheless, tensions remained high as the countries competed politically and economically."

"The Cold War ended with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. During this period, African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, and women became more active in seeking equal rights in the United States. Leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr.; Rosa Parks; and Cesar Chavez used peaceful methods that led to social changes for these groups." It is note worthy too recognize in the 1800 as the United States grew in population as well. High birthrates advances in public health, and the arrival of millions of European immigrants helped the population grow.(Glencoe P. 136/7). "The Baby Boom Generation, born immediately following World War II, known as the Boomer generation, gains its name from being the largest number of babies born in the century. The population of this generation is approximately seventy-six million."

"Raised by stay-at home mothers who were younger than later generation mothers, they lived through the Vietnam War and Woodstock. Growing up during the countercultural and antiauthoritarian days of the 1960s, they developed a self-centered and independent spirit. Boomers are characterized as idealists. Disillusioned by civil, state and federal corruption, they were going to secure world peace, purge the world of poverty and pollution, create a new utopian society and have it all accomplished by tomorrow. Also Boomers possess a strong work ethic and find satisfaction in their careers. They work long hours and are willing to sacrifice family for

their professional advancement. Their public voice has called for protection of children from dangers such as sexual abuse, violence, drugs, and so on."

The Buster Generation, following the Boomer generation during the years 1961-1981, there was a sharp decline, or "bust," in the number of births. This gave rise to one of the names for the next generation, the Busters.There are approximately forty-four million Busters. Busters have been called by several names, including Generation X, and it means they do not easily fall into categories. Busters relate best to experiences and stories. They may prefer their learning to come from real life biblical stories and characters rather than abstract theological principles. They are biblically illiterate compared to previous generations. Also they attend Bible study and small groups in order to find practical and relevant answers to real-life experiences.

"Tim Celek and Dieter Zander, two ministers with experience in teaching Busters, offer some insights into effective educational approaches for this generation. They contend that the gospel is attractive, relevant, and true since these are terms that catch the attention of the Buster generation and draw them into the learning experiences." They state, "The first thing we have to do is start with the attractiveness of what we're trying to communicate. We don't just start by saying, This is true because it's true. We start by saying, This is attractive. Wouldn't you like to take a closer look? We seek to draw their attention to the attractiveness of the message.

It is in the entest of Biblical Higher Education that bring cultures together for one cause in seeking a higher calling, learning is comprehending what's being taught. "The focus of the study is on evangelical schools belonging to the following organizations: Association for Biblical Higher Education (over 120 schools), Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (over 100 schools), and the Association of Theological Schools (approximately 160 Protestant or Nondenominational schools), as well as other schools in the Canadian context."(Ellyn p2). These organizations have good numbers in each of the resource centers. When these institutions open their doors welcoming new comers all should take advantage of it.

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