

10 Ways Millennials Are Shaping the Local Church

They are the largest generation in history. In the United States alone, they number more than 78 million, even larger than the seemingly ubiquitous Boomers.

They are the millennials. They are changing our nation, our world and our churches.

For the purpose of this post, I want to focus on changes they are already bringing to our local churches. I have the benefit of a large research project on the millennials, plus the ongoing conversations I have with members of this generation. And I have spoken with countless leaders in churches about their experiences with millennials.

Keep in mind that the birth years of the millennials are from 1980 to 2000. So the oldest member of this generation is 34, while the youngest is only 14. But their impact is already noticeable, and it will be for years to come. Here are 10 ways they are shaping local congregations today:

1. More of them are attracted to smaller venues. They are thus one of the reasons for the incredible growth in the multi-venue model of churches and the growth of new churches. Leaders of smaller churches should be encouraged by this trend as well.

2. They see culture as something to influence, rather than an enemy to denounce. Many Millennials truly have a missionary mindset. They are turned off by those who constantly rail against people.

3. They like to cooperate with others. They do not view other churches and Christian organizations as competitors. They are attracted to congregations that are working with other

congregations.

4. They abhor worship wars. I have a previous post on this topic called "What Worship Style Attracts the Millennials?"

5. They love churches that love their communities. One of the first questions a Millennial will ask a church leader is, "What is the church doing to influence, impact and minister to the community?"

6. They are attracted to churches that emphasize groups. The millennials want to be a part of a congregation that has healthy small groups, Sunday school classes, home groups or other groups.

7. They want to be trained on their schedule. The millennials truly desire training. But they are accustomed to having that training available when they are able to hear it or view it. Such is the reason that many churches are going to video training while having "live" worship services and small groups.

8. They will question almost everything. This generation will want to know why a church does what it does. The most unacceptable answer is, "We have always done it this way."

9. They are slow to join and slow to leave. Church leaders are often frustrated that a Millennial takes so long to commit to a local congregation. But they are intentional and thorough. Once they commit to a church, they are less likely to leave, especially over petty issues.

10. They want to be involved. If a church does not have an intentional plan to get millennials involved in ministry quickly, they will not reach this key group.

I love this generation. I love their enthusiasm, their commitment, and even their questions. They are one of the reasons I remain an obnoxious optimist about the

revitalization of local congregations.

I would love to hear from some of you millennials. And I would love to hear from some of the older folks like me who are interacting with this generation. Your comments are always more valuable than my posts.

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