

Bishop Bart Pierce: Prepare for a Generational Shift in the Church

There are warning signs everywhere around us declaring the same thing: "Stop! There's danger ahead." I believe the most urgent warning concerns the 5-G shift. This story starts with Jeremiah 35. Jeremiah tells a great story about honoring elders. He tells how the sons of Jonadab, son of Rekab, honored the senior leadership of their family line. Each generation continued to keep their ancestors' commitments to God that had been passed down to them:

"I set before the sons of the house of the Rekabites pots full of wine and cups, and I said to them, 'Drink wine.' But they said, 'We will drink no wine. For Jonadab the son of Rekab our father commanded us, saying, "You shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons forever. You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor own one; but all your days you shall dwell in tents so that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn." Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rekab, our father, in all that he has charged us'" (Jer. 35:5-8a).

After hearing this, God told Jeremiah to tell the men of Judah, "The words of Jonadab the son of Rekab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed. For to this day they drink none, but they obey their father's commandment. However, I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you did not obey Me. I also have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, 'Return now every man from his evil way and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and you will dwell in the land that I have given to you and to your fathers.' But you have not inclined your ear nor obeyed Me.

Indeed, the sons of Jonadab the son of Rekab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me" (vv. 14-16).

Notice how this group of children honored the vows of their spiritual father, their ancestor, Jonadab, son of Rekab, throughout succeeding generations. Their obedience to their vows continued from their father's generation to the present one. Even God was impressed. This was a generational blessing.

Deuteronomy 5:9 says, "You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments."

God's blessings will only come, and the church and culture will only change, when fathers repent and say, "I'm sorry. I've been selfish. I've wanted to be blessed myself. I will turn now and bless the generations behind me: our sons and daughters in Christ."

I believe there are five generations on the earth at all times. The five generations break down based on age, and their description can be clearly seen in both the secular world and in the church world.

Generation 1, the "Blank Tape Generation," consists of those younger than 12. They are easily recorded on by the culture and the generations around them. Generation 2, the "No Identity Generation," includes 12- to 25-year-olds. They are the fatherless generation, and fathers give them identity.

Generation 3, the "Consumer Generation," are those ages 25-50. They're out to get everything they can, and enjoy the high and the excitement of the moment. Generation 4, the "Satisfied Generation," consists of 50 to 70-year olds. They have their career and their home, the kids are out, and they are just

comfortable in cruise mode.

Finally, Generation 5, the “Blessing Generation,” consists of those older than 70. They are just waiting and blessing all those around them. They’re the grandparents and great-grandparents.

I believe generations 3, 4 and 5 must turn their hearts and giftings back toward generations 1 and 2 now, or there won’t be a future church. Remember: Your future is not in front of you. It’s behind you.

We must take a hard look at our churches today and turn our hearts toward the youngest two generations now. If we don’t, there may not be a future church to carry the glory of God forward.

Bishop Bart Pierce *is the senior pastor of Rock City Church, Baltimore. His book, The 5-G Shift, is available at Amazon, Walgreens, Target and directly at Rock City Church ().*

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