

4 Things We Must Do for Millennials

Another teen. Another gun. Another school/mall/church/theater shooting that rocks the nation.

It's not that we're completely calloused and have forgotten how to mourn; our hearts still break for those directly affected by these massacres. But in 15 years America has mastered the art of moving on—so much so that we've become accustomed to the rising evil affecting our children and somehow forgotten our own guilt in the matter. Worse still, we're content to do nothing about it and carry on as if things will naturally fix themselves.

More than 2,700 years ago, Israel did the same thing as God sent prophet after prophet to warn them of His judgment, remind them of His mercy and call them to repent of their sins. The Jewish people shed countless tears for generations, yet their sorrow didn't change the situation one bit. Their unwillingness to repent led to God's protective hand being lifted, and entire generations suffered and were lost to increasing calamity.

America now stands in the same place, and our seeds of spiritual defiance are yielding bitter physical fruit. Violence and disorder in the land continue to escalate, and this is most apparent among millennials (also dubbed Gen Y), who have been called the new “lost generation.” Among older millennials (ages 25 to 29), nearly one in five is unemployed, one-third have moved back home with their parents, and the suicide rate among them is growing. In her book *Generation Me*, psychologist Jean Twenge analyzes our cultural self-centeredness now amplified among Gen Yers and concludes, “This is a time of soaring expectations and crushing realities.”

That harsh combination undoubtedly is a factor in school shootings, but more important is the spiritual dynamic. We can no longer ignore the sobering statistics: that almost a third of those under 30 have no religious affiliation or that a whopping 59 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds with a Christian background are no longer part of a church.

R. Loren Sandford, a Denver pastor and author who's seen teen violence repeatedly hit close to home, has sounded a prophetic warning for years. After the most recent Denver suburb school shooting, he lamented: "Nothing short of a strong move of national repentance can turn this around, but in convincing us that we're all victims and not sinners—that law and morality are relative to the feelings of the individual—our enemy has effectively eliminated repentance from the conceptual realm for those who have not been reached for Jesus, and even from the hearts of many who call themselves Christian."

So how do we, the church, combat the enemy's assault on this generation? As Jesus' living body on earth, we carry the solution. With that in mind, here are a few basic things we can do for millennials.

1) Recognize the heightened spiritual warfare over the next generation. Satan is bent on destroying our youth and has succeeded in doing so perhaps more than ever in our nation's history. But until we understand that the real fight is first spiritual—against principalities and spiritual powers (Eph. 6:12)—and respond with repentance as Sandford says, no change in gun control or school security laws will do a thing.

2) Intercede like never before. Our fight is first spiritual; so is our solution. Prayer is the only way we'll turn the tide and see a shift among the Millennial generation.

3) Disciple a young person. Most Gen Yers can multitask and mask their way to looking good on the outside, yet beneath the surface lies unresolved hurt, deep questions and gripping

fear. As the most biblically illiterate generation in years, they often lack an understanding of even the most foundational elements of their faith. Let's put our arms around them, dive into the Bible together and mentor them in the faith.

4) Open your home. This month's cover story is on adoption and foster care. While you may not officially take in an orphan, you can at least make your home a safe place for spiritually orphaned millennials to rest and wrestle with elements of their faith.

No politician or pop star can save America's "lost generation." Only Jesus can. As His living body, representing Him on earth, we can shape our nation's future by helping this generation find their way home.

Marcus Yoars *is the editor of Charisma. Check out his blog at or connect with him via Twitter at @marcusyoars or*