



ENABLING GENERATIONAL TRANSFERENCE OF MINISTRY LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH PART 1 of 2

Preface: This is the first of two sermons treating the topic of “generational transference.” This sermon focuses on God’s PLAN, the PROBLEM in our churches, and the PRAXIS of generational transference. Next week, the sermon will focus on the PRINCIPLES that churches should pursue and how to overcome the OBSTACLES that get in the way. The following notes are an outline of the material being presented during the morning services at Brentview Baptist Church on June 13, 2010. The material stems from Ken Castor’s doctoral dissertation completed earlier in the year through ACTS Seminaries at Trinity Western University. The dissertation was entitled “Enabling Generational Transference of Ministry Leadership in the Local Church.” For further information on this topic, visit <http://kencastor.com>.

Acknowledgements: Many people from Brentview Baptist helped make this dissertation project a reality. Gratitude is given to Dr. Dave Spate and Pastor Adam Monkman for participating in the data research portion of the project; Dan Leffelaar, Kelsey Doherty and many others within the Hub community for serving as guinea pigs ☺; Jeremy Lee and Pastor Adam Monkman (again) for accompanying me on travel around the continent to gather data research; Barry and Lois Uptigrove for supportive encouragement; to Brentview’s NAB family (esp. Dr. Rob McClelland; Norm Poehlke; Jeremy Erb; Phil Yntema and the Regional Ministers and Pastors who participated in the data research) through whom I discovered a renewed optimism for the role of networking churches and leaders; and especially to the Pastors, Elders and congregation for partnering in ministry by creating an environment where generational transference can be successfully practiced. Thank you, Brentview! I care very deeply for you. – Ken Castor



Introduction: “Generational Transference of Ministry Leadership” is the process of one generation passing on the directional responsibility of the missional practice and corporate identity of a congregation. What this simply means is that every person who follows God should overflow with a godly life and share that with others, primarily with the generations to come. It’s this idea that when you follow Jesus you are given a deep purpose within you to live for God and to help others live for God. That’s why the vision statement

of Brentview is “to know Jesus and touch the world.” We are to love God and to love others. That is the basis of why we were created and how we are to live. Now inherent within that understanding is the notion that we aren’t to be shortsighted in our faith. God works through time and through the generations to make Himself known to the world. So, when one generation knows Jesus, it is their created purpose to share Jesus with others. A generation that knows Jesus would never dare to keep Jesus to themselves.

Jesus is too amazing to keep contained in one period of history. Jesus is to be shared throughout all eternity. So it only makes sense that one generation shared faith with you and raised you up so that you could share your faith with others. It is the pattern of God to give you faith and then raise you up in ministry in order to pass on the faith and to raise up younger generations to know Jesus and touch the world.

THE PLAN: Generational Transference is God's plan for accomplishing His mission.

- **Generational Transference is a recurring theme throughout Scripture. E.g. Psalm 145:1-4.**
- **Moses and Joshua; Samuel and David; Elijah and Elisha; Jesus and the disciples; the Early Church, etc.**
- **Look at Barnabas and Paul...**



Ken Castor - Brentview Baptist - June 13, 2010

THE PLAN: The Bible makes it clear that Generation Transference is God's plan for sharing God's mission. Throughout the Bible the foundational concept of generational transference is evident in principle and practice. It is the means by which God has worked throughout history. God has accomplished and is accomplishing his overall plan of proclaiming His truth and His love to His creatures. It is the means by which God works to reconcile humanity to Himself. It is evident throughout every section of the Bible that generational transference is the way that God enacts His long range plan to restore all things to Himself. Consider these Biblical examples:

- Psalm 145:4 - "Let each generation tell its children of Your mighty acts." The idea is that there should never be a generation that does not share with the next generation all about what God has done and what God is doing.
- Another example in Deuteronomy 6 records the Lord's proclamation upon his people to pass down his commands to their children and grandchildren so that they can then continue to lead the future generations similarly.¹
- This sort of thinking is a central theme throughout the New Testaments as well. The apostle Paul, for instance, models a lifestyle of transferring leadership on to people like Timothy and Titus. And he is not alone. Barnabas, Peter, John, and others actively engaged in the practice of generational transference. Older men and women are to be sources of mentoring and encouragement to younger men

¹ Deuteronomy 6:1-9; 20-25; 32:7

and women as they practice living wisely together in the midst of their challenging culture.²

- At times, admittedly, generational transference of ministry leadership was haphazard at best. In the book of Judges, for instance, it seems a miracle that faith and Scripture was able to survive as one generation repeatedly failed to follow after God. And yet, at other times throughout the history of Scripture, generational transference of ministry leadership was an intentionally prioritized principle, such as in the example of Samuel and David or in the wisdom of Proverbs chapter two. The example of Jesus and the disciples as well as the epistles to Timothy, just to name a few, provide a treasure house of principles for generational transference of ministry. One only needs to give a cursory examination of Scripture to understand that no matter the geography, the cultural climate, or the leadership structures, generational transference of ministry is an essential aspect to God's purposes for the his people.
- In the Pentateuch we learn that a true leader is first measured by the CHARACTER of their heart for God (Dt 6; 17). We also learn that a leader will prepare other leaders for the future – best evidenced in the relationship between Moses and Joshua (Dt. 34:9; 1:38; 3:28; 31:4; 32:44). We also learn that the character of a leader and the ability for a leader to equip other leaders is best accomplished within an ENVIRONMENT whereby God's people are joined in community an aim to live out God's mission.

THE PROBLEM: A majority of churches struggle to transfer ministry leadership to the next generation.

“Every church struggles with the challenge of passing on the meaning of the faith to each succeeding generation.”

- Hunter, George. *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 79.

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This pattern continues through the rest of Scripture. In the Historical books like Joshua and 1 Samuel, the leader of faith seeks out next generation leaders intentionally. The Psalms are packed full of the idea, overtly calling over and over again for one generation to raise up the next to know God and proclaim God to others. You don't

² Titus 2:1-6

have to look long at Jesus to realize that he releases people to spread the Good News. He doesn't seize power to himself, but he relinquishes Himself in order to raise up others. He actually charges His followers to make disciples. He tells His followers to let the children come to Him... and if you get in the way He'll be very upset with you. And then there is also the example of the Early Church, which relied entirely on the idea that one generation was to proclaim to the next. Infact, they were so successful at this that they spread across the world within a few short years and soon grew too numerous and influential to ignore. Especially consider Titus 2:1-8. Etc. etc. etc.

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What do you think of these statements?

Why do those who *grow up* with us leave us?
Sawler, David. *Goodbye Generation: A Conversation About Why Youth and Young Adults Leave the Church* (Surrey, BC: Ponder Publishing, 2008).

Emerging generations are by and large “not being allowed, encouraged, or equipped [by their churches] to love or think like Christ.”
Kinnaman, David. *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity... And Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 82.

“Unless religious leaders take younger adults more seriously, the future of American religion is in doubt.”
Wuthnow, Robert. *After the Baby Boom: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 231.

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Churches are struggling to follow the biblical pattern whereby one generation transfers to another the responsibility of proclamation and mission to the next.

- “Young adults are less likely to participate in religious services than a generation ago.” - Wuthnow, Robert, *After the Baby Boom: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 214. Also see CNN article: “Study: Young Americans less religious than their parents.” <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/02/17/report.millennials.faith/index.html>

- **1%** - The percentage of our church growth that does not come from people “born into the faith.” - Sawler, David. *Goodbye Generation: A Conversation About Why Youth and Young Adults Leave the Church* (Surrey, BC: Ponder Publishing, 2008), 8.
- **30%** - the percentage of young churchgoers that continue going to a church after the age of 22. -Rainer, Thom S. and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 3.
- **90%** - the percentage of people who will leave the Church and / or faith by the age of 25. - Sawler, 7.

Addressing the Problem

- What is your experience?
- Is it a lost cause or could there be hope?
- Within God's plan does the potential exist to raise-up young people as leaders in the Church?
- What factors in a church ministry do you think make it possible to raise-up next generation leaders?
- What do you think churches are looking for in next generation leaders?

Ken Center - Brentview Baptist - June 13, 2010

So we have to ask some hard questions of ourselves and concerning God's Plan:

- *What is your experience? Or what is the experience within your own family?*
 - *Is church a lost cause for the next generation or could there be hope?*
 - *Within God's PLAN does the potential exist to raise-up young people as leaders in churches?*
- *What factors in a church ministry do you think make it possible to raise-up next generation leaders?*
 - *What must you as an individual and we as a congregation do in our own context?*

THE PRAXIS: There exists a common set of principles that if practiced will enable generational transference.

- We believe in God's PLAN...
- We know we have a PROBLEM...
- What factors of God's PLAN allow us to overcome the PROBLEM and enable generational transference in our churches?

Ken Center - Brentview Baptist - June 13, 2010

THE PRAXIS: “Praxis” is a fancy way of saying that we are going to put into practice what we believe in theory. In theory I believe that God's PLAN is true and that it is good. I believe that God's Plan is to proclaim his Gospel from one generation to the next. I believe that people who know Jesus are supposed to touch the world with God's love... to pass on the responsibility of knowing God and being transformed by God and being compelled to reach out to others with God's love. That is my theory... based on Scripture... and it is a good

theory that has been tested for several millennia. The Bible tells of story after story of people practicing generational transference. In fact, none of us would be here today thinking about God if it had not been for people passing on the faith through successive generations.

So, the praxis, I hypothesized, is that **there exists a common set of principles that if practiced will enable generational transference.** There must be a pattern by which followers of Jesus are able to effectively grasp faith from others and then pass it on to others. There must be a practical means by which God's plan is planned out. God creates with tremendous freedom, but also with tremendous depth of thought. So, I set out in my study to discover what practiced principles would help a church successfully raise-up next generations of followers of Jesus so that they could continue to raise-up even more generations after we are long gone.

With this conviction I set out in my doctoral studies to tackle this issue. Believing that I'd be able to find evidence of those factors which enable generational transference, I launched into a crazy project for my dissertation. The key question, my research question, I asked: "Within God's Plan for the Church, how can local churches enable generational transference of ministry leadership?"

Now Brentview is a part of a larger network of churches: NAB, or North American Baptist Conference of Churches. The NAB is made up of about 430 churches in Canada and the United States. For the last ten years the NAB has focused some good attention to the matter of raising-up emerging leaders within the denomination. In 2001 the NAB launched strategic Leadership Centers that have influenced hundreds of existing and upcoming leaders. These Leadership Centers soon discovered negatively that many churches struggled to focus their efforts on developing upcoming leaders in terms of forming their godly character and skills and church-wide systems approaches. But the Leadership Centers also discovered that there did exist some congregations that have demonstrated a perpetual pattern of raising-up younger generations of ministry leaders from within their congregations.

So to begin my study obtained permission from the NAB head office and received the blessing of Rob McClelland and Norm Poehlke. Next I contacted each NAB Regional Minister and received recommendations of churches within their regions that exhibited a strong track-record of generational transference. For varying reasons, only 37 out of the 430 churches were recommended. In other words, only 8.6% of the member churches within the NAB were recommended as being suitable candidates for research. Each of the Regional Ministers affirmed that this study was addressing a considerable problem among the regions. A few of the Regional Ministers shared a grieving burden that there weren't more qualified candidate churches available as healthy examples for this study.

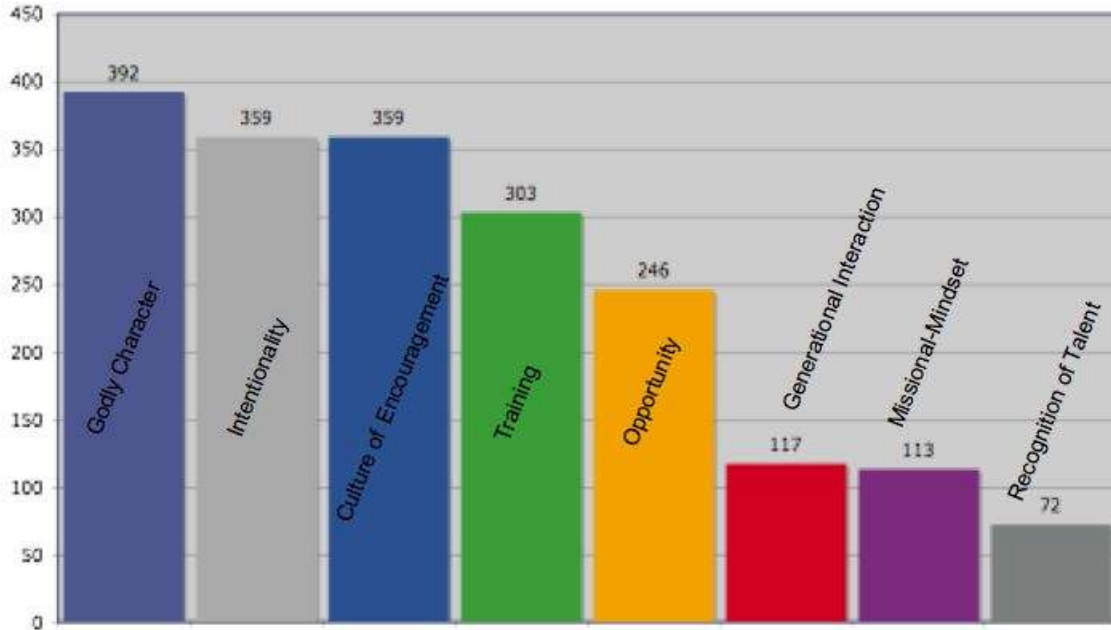


Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Fifteen Participating NAB Churches

Of the 37, I then proceeded to choose 15 churches to interview. From April 2 to July 17 last year I traveled to meet with leaders from each of these 15 churches. I conducted in-person interviews through a series of open-ended qualitative questions that were meant to draw out the principles that enabled these churches to perpetually transfer ministry leadership across the generations. Each of the interviews was subsequently transcribed and measured according to the number of lines in each transcription. The emerging common themes were then generated from the frequency of data measurement.

Note: *The churches interviewed had a wide diversity of leadership governments (some were staff led, some were Elder led, some with very little congregational some had multiple co-leaders) and sizes ranging from 180 to over-2500. Every respondent spoke of the intention behind their formal structures including the type of culture that those structures were intended to create. Every respondent indicated a high standard of Godly Character as a necessary component for successful transfer of leadership related to structure.*

This is what I discovered:



Generational Transference Principles (GTP):
000 - number of transcribed lines pertaining to specific themes

I don't have time today to discuss these principles... but I'll let you fill in the blanks now in order to prepare for the next part. Next week I will go through these discoveries and try to show why I believe there is tremendous hope both for Brentview and for churches in general. **Basically, the conclusion from my study is that everything about passing on faith and passing on the responsibility of faith ultimately boils down to the CHARACTER of the individual and the CULTURE of the church.** Next week I'll also go through the major obstacles that I observed in my study and how I think these obstacles can be obliterated. Finally, I also hope to give you some of my own observations and dreams for Brentview in terms of the next generation of ministry here... how we are building up the younger generations and the young adults already in this way, and why I believe God could greatly continue to use Brentview to help people know Jesus for years to come.

Generational Transference Principles (GTP)

- Primary GTP #1: **Godly Character**
- Primary GTP #2: **Intentionality**
- Primary GTP #3: **Culture of Encouragement**

Ben Gable - Brentview Pastor - June 15, 2015

Generational Transference Principles (GTP)

- Secondary GTP #1: **Training**
- Secondary GTP #2: **Opportunity**
- Tertiary GTP #1: **Generational Interaction**
- Tertiary GTP #2: **Missional-Mindset**
- Tertiary GTP #3: **Recognition of Talent**

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Generational Transference Obstacles (GTO)

- Major GTO #1: **Possessive Leadership**
- Major GTO #2: **Paradigmatic Challenges**
- Minor GTOs

Ben Gable - Brentview Pastor - June 15, 2015

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Generational Transference Obstacles (GTO):
Major GTO #1: **Possessive Leadership**
Major GTO #2: **Paradigmatic Challenges**
Minor GTOs

So there you go. Four years, 250 pages, thousands of miles, 15 interviews, thousands of dollars, and thousands of hours later, that's it. That's all to say I hope you are looking forward to next week! For now, as Jerry comes up to lead us in a closing song, I want us to be blessed today with Psalm 78:1-7:

- ¹ O my people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
- ² I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter hidden things, things from of old-
- ³ what we have heard and known,
what our fathers have told us.
- ⁴ We will not hide them from their children;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
- ⁵ He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our forefathers
to teach their children,
- ⁶ so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
- ⁷ Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

<p>For information about Brentview Baptist Church and its ministries, please contact the church office at: 3512 Charleswood Dr NW, Calgary, AB T2L 2C3 Phone: 403-284-4691 Fax: 403-284-0132 email: mail@brentviewbaptist.com Website: www.brentviewbaptist.com</p>
