



A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gap in your Church

By Bob Whitesel

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Generational differences are nothing new in church. There have always been groups and subgroups within a congregation, divided according to age. Yet with the possible exception of their educational programs, congregations have generally practiced a "one-size-fits-all" approach to ministry and worship. Whichever group is dominant--generally the older members, although it can be the younger--sets the tone for musical styles, preaching emphases, and outreach focus. Frequently the non-dominant groups grow restless and dissatisfied, leaving the church to find better opportunities of service and worship elsewhere. The result is often stagnation and decline. Bob Whitesel and Kent R. Hunter wrote this book to provide congregations with a clear understanding of the problems caused by generation gaps as well as to offer ideas for transforming the church into a healthy, growing, tri-generational structure.

Key Features: Author recognition; Addresses a very timely issue in a creative way; Offers a specific strategy for implementation in local churches

Key Benefits: Readers will gain an understanding of the major differences between the three major age/generational groups in most congregations; Readers will be offered a specific and practical seven step strategy for developing a healthy tri-generational church; Readers will find ways to not only live in peace within the household of faith, but to minister more effectively to community and world

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

C. Peter Wagner, author of 30+ books on church leadership & dean of the Church Growth Movement calls this book "one of the most substantial church growth books we have seen in years. It plugs classical principles into contemporary practice in a way that will help your church impact your community as never before!"

And Walt Kallestad, Senior Minister of Community Church of Joy in Glendale, Arizona states this is, "A dynamic 'AHA!' book. It's a must read for anyone serious about effective twenty-first century ministry in local congregations."

"The good news is that the revolutionary 'Tri-Gen. Strategy' presented in "A House Divided" will give you answers to the multi-generational challenge" according to Gary L. McIntosh, president of The McIntosh Church Growth Network. "(It is) a workable solution which significant numbers of pastors and church leadership will find very helpful."

Charles Arn, President of Church Growth Inc. in Monrovia, California suggests that this book is "excellent coaching material for handing the baton to the next generation."

And Elmer Towns, well known author and Dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia writes, "While there are several books written to help churches bridge the generation gap, this book is the only one I have seen that approaches the challenge from 'cross cultural evangelism.' I appreciate the strong church growth emphasis."

From the Author

"Eighty-five percent of the churches in America are dying, and until now there has been little churches could do," states Whitesel, the book's primary author. "Most churches tend to be made up of one dominant generation. Then as that generation ages, the church ages too, failing to attract younger people. Eventually a church dies from old age" he cautions.

Nineteen years of research and field testing have led to the development of a revolutionary strategy where churches serve three generations at the same time. "We even had to coin a term, we call it the Tri-Gen. church." continues Whitesel. "To help my clients, and for churches who just wanted more information, I brought together in this book a wealth of research from secular management scholars, anthropologists, and experts in the field of church leadership to present a clear 7-step plan that will allow almost any church to regain a youthful influx of attendees. As a result, this book seems to have struck a cord with many of the 85% of the churches in America that are dying due to an aging congregation."

"However, I did not want to alienate, nor lose, the church's older members," states Whitesel. "That is why the Tri-Gen. Strategy takes into account the needs of older generations, while at the same time reaching out to younger, and largely unchurched people. In fact, the Tri-Gen. Strategy is usually the only option for the survival of an aging church."

About the Author

Dr. Bob Whitesel serves as Senior Editor and columnist of "Strategies for Today's Leader" magazine and as an adjunct instructor for Indiana Wesleyan University teaching courses on Strategic Planning, Management,

and Organizational Behavior. In addition, he has penned over 140 published articles on church leadership and management. His current column in "Strategies for Today's Leader" titled "From Research to Reality" offers an overview of the very best and brightest research of secular management scholars, provides references for further study, and then suggests concrete ideas for church leaders to translate this research into "reality in action" Dr. Whitesel holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in church growth as well as an M. Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is also the founder of C3 International (Creative Church Consulting, International) in Winona Lake, Indiana.

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