

L MESSAGE

Generation Y

I don't buy into a lot of the thought that is being done about the different generations and the values that are broadly ascribed to them. Including familiar groups, known as Baby Boomers, Gen X and now Generation Y. My gut reaction is that the classifications are blanket statements that exclude or falsely box the many who don't seem to fit the mould that is placed upon them.

Having said that however I have noticed something quite significant that has arisen out of such work, thought and research, which can greatly inform the way we lead, especially in light of this apparent emerging culture.

Experts will tell you that those who are part of this Generation Y (including myself – just) have no respect for positional leadership. They may well appreciate and respect the person in that position but it is not because of the position, it is because of the person in that position. This fits with the sentiment that I hear often from many senior people in our community who comment on the fact that "The youth of today have no respect for anyone in authority." It's true perhaps because the Gen Y's experience of those in authority has been that the person has abused that position and the power associated with it.

What this means for future leadership is huge! It means that in coming weeks, months and years you will not be followed because you are the Minister or the Youth Pastor or a Youth Leader or an elder or because you fulfill any other position of leadership in the Church (or business or social sector for that matter of fact). Teachers for example won't be followed just because they're a teacher. Boss' won't be followed and supported just because they're at the top of the tree. Police Officers won't be followed just because they're Police Officers. Politicians... well we're already aware that the status or even function of the position no longer guarantees one will be followed.

No, the way in which you lead and the type of leader you are will determine almost completely whether you are followed or not. Perhaps this isn't true for everyone, as I have stated in my first paragraph, but the way the culture is going means that positional leadership will not count for much except that there is now an expectation on you to lead with excellence. As people expect someone in a position of leadership to lead with excellence.

All this means that you and I have to be the best possible leaders that we can be in any situation that we find ourselves in if we expect or desire others to follow us. And excellent leadership begins with

CHALLENGE

Do you rely on the power that your position offers to influence others or are you leading them from a relational connection?

A long time ago there was an expectation that:

- Orders from authority figures were followed.
- Words from the minister were always right and never lacking.
- When the boss said 'jump', you responded with 'how high'.
- When a parent spoke the children would listen.

They were the unwritten rules which formed the fabric of our society. Now that fabric is slowly unraveling. This isn't cause for a cry of hopelessness, but a challenge that we need to rise to by offering leadership that is soaked in integrity. That kind of leadership can change the Church, your business and our communities for the better, as the need for it is greater than ever.

excellent character. And next week we'll begin to look at what it means to have and develop character that inspires and draws others to follow us.