

## **APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

## For each question in this section, please mark the box that most closely describes your

experience.

- 1. What is your role within your church?
  - Senior Pastor
  - Youth/Young Adult Minister
  - Other Ministerial Staff Member
  - Other\_
- 2. To what denomination does your church belong?
  - American Baptist
  - Evangelical Lutheran
  - □ North American Baptist
  - $\Box$  Reformed Church in America
  - United Methodist
- 3. What is the current average weekly worship attendance of your church?
  - $\Box$  Less than 150
  - □ 150-400
  - □ 401-750
  - $\Box$  More than 750
- 4. During which of the following periods were you born?
  - □ Before 1945
  - □ Between 1945 and 1964
  - □ Between 1965 and 1981
  - □ After 1981
- 5. Which music styles currently are being employed in your worship services?
  - □ Mostly traditional music
  - □ Mostly contemporary music
  - A blend of traditional and contemporary music
  - □ Two or more services with distinct music styles

- 6. What percentage of your congregation is composed of people who are 62 years of age or older? (provide your best estimate)
  - □ More than 75%
  - □ Between 50 and 75%
  - □ Between 25 and 50%
  - $\Box$  Less than 25%
- What percentage of your congregation is composed of people between 42 and 61 years of age? (provide your best estimate)
  - $\Box$  More than 75%
  - □ Between 50 and 75%
  - $\Box$  Between 25 and 50%
  - □ Less than 25%
- 8. What percentage of your congregation is composed of Gen Xers (adults between 25 and 41 years old)? (provide your best estimate)
  - □ More than 75%
  - □ Between 50 and 75%
  - $\Box$  Between 25 and 50%
  - □ Less than 25%
- 9. Which of the following would most accurately describe your congregation?
  - □ Age demographics similar to those of the community in which it is located.
  - □ The percentage composed of Gen Xers (adults 25-41 years old) is noticeably higher than in the community at large.
  - □ The percentage composed of Gen Xers is noticeably lower than in the community at large.
- 10. During which of the following periods was your church established?
  - □ Before 1965
  - □ Between 1965 and 1990
  - □ After 1990

(Please note: This survey continues on the back of this sheet)



- 11. Which of the following most accurately describes the number of Gen Xers attending your church over the last three years?
  - $\Box$  The number of Gen Xers has decreased.
  - □ The number of Gen Xers in our church has remained essentially the same.
  - □ The number of Gen Xers in our church has increased slightly.
  - □ The number of Gen Xers in our church has increased significantly.
- 12. Which of the following most accurately describes the sense of mission within your congregation?
  - Our congregation is guided by a clearly articulated, shared sense of mission.
  - Our congregation presently is engaged in a process of clarifying its mission.
  - □ At the present time, neither of the two above answers is true of our congregation.

	To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (for each question, check one answer only)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagre e	Disagre	Don't Know
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Some of the efforts our church has made to reach younger generations have resulted in tension.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
2	Our congregation finds it difficult to help people of different ages relate to one another meaningfully.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
3	Established members of our congregation seem to feel that changes within our society have impacted the effectiveness of our church's ministry.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
4	Our congregation is actively exploring how we can participate in God's mission within our community.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
5	I have confidence in the present effectiveness of our church in passing the faith to Gen Xers (adults 25-41 years old).	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
6	Our congregation finds it difficult to provide ways for people of all ages to participate equally in our church's life.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
7	The Gen Xers with which our church has interacted (whether in the past or presently) seem to reflect a concern for relational issues (e.g., trust, belonging, love).	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
8	Older members of our congregation respond negatively to the suggestion that our church has a need for change.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
9	The Gen Xers with which our church has interacted (whether in the past or presently) seem to desire to make a meaningful contribution within the church.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
10	The Gen Xers with which our church has interacted (whether in the past or presently) seem sensitive to issues of fairness.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
11	Older members of our church express a desire to reach the younger generations.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
12	It often seems that our church is more concerned with a commitment to mission than with maintaining established patterns of ministry.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK

(Please note: This survey continues on the next page)



	To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (for each question, check one answer only)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagre e	Disagre	Don't Know
		1	2	3	4	5	6
13	Our congregation is searching actively for ways to minister to younger generations of people.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
14	Resistance to change on the part of older church members has hindered our ability to minister effectively to younger adults.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
15	Our congregation seems optimistic about its ability to respond effectively to changes within the larger culture.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
16	Our congregation is working to promote the equal involvement of people of all ages.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
17	Our congregation desires to find more effective ways to help people of different ages relate well with one another.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
18	Our congregation is seeking a way to reach young adults without alienating older, established members.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
19	Our congregation is engaged actively in efforts to influence our community for the sake of God's kingdom.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
20	People of different generations within our congregation seem to enjoy healthy relationships with one another.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
21	Generally speaking, people of different generations within our congregation seem to be able to work together in a way that affirms the value of all age groups.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
22	It seems that our congregation has implemented effective measures to include younger adults fully in its life.	SA	А	N	D	SD	DK
23	Our congregation seems to be proving effective at ministering among Gen Xers.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
24	Gen Xers within our congregation are encouraged to assume positions of leadership.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK
25	Gen Xers within our congregation have assumed positions of leadership.	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	DK



## APPENDIX B: THE CONTRIBUTION OF STRAUSS AND HOWE

The reader familiar with the contemporary literature examining generations may be aware of the widespread influence of William Strauss and Neil Howe upon this body of literature. To a certain extent, it is difficult to engage in a discussion of the contemporary generations apart from an acknowledgement of the recent influence of these two authors. At the heart of the contribution of these authors, articulated most systematically in two books, *Generations* (1992) and *The Fourth Turning* (1997), lies the concept that history (particularly that of the U.S., to which they limit their examination) involves a cyclical pattern of subsequently emerging cohort types that repeats every four generations. They support this claim with a fascinating survey of other thinkers from throughout history who have argued similarly regarding the existence of a four generation cycle within the movement of history (1992:450-453).

Specifically, Strauss and Howe (1992:74) argue that every generational cycle involves the sequential emergence of four distinct generational types according to the following pattern:

- A dominant, inner-fixated IDEALIST GENERATION grows up as increasingly indulged youths after a secular crisis; comes of age inspiring a spiritual awakening; fragments into narcissistic rising adults; cultivates principle as moralistic mid-lifers; and emerges as visionary elders guiding the next secular crisis.
- A recessive REACTIVE GENERATION grows up as under-protected and criticized youths during a spiritual awakening; matures into risk-taking, alienated rising adults; mellows into pragmatic midlife leaders during a secular crisis; and maintains respect (but less influence) as reclusive elders.
- 3. A dominant, outer-fixated CIVIC GENERATION grows up as increasingly protected youths after a spiritual awakening; comes of age overcoming a secular crisis; unites into a heroic and achieving cadre of rising adults; sustains that image while building institutions as powerful mid-lifers; and emerges as busy elders attacked by the next spiritual awakening.
- 4. A recessive ADAPTIVE GENERATION grows up as overprotected and suffocated youths during a secular crisis; matures into risk-averse, conformist rising adults; produces indecisive midlife arbitrator-leaders during a spiritual



awakening; and maintains influence (but less respect) as sensitive elders. In developing their argument, Strauss and Howe draw extensively upon evidence from throughout American history, reaching back to the earliest years of the Colonial era, in an effort to demonstrate the veracity of their system. What is problematic, however, is their insistence that this model can be used as a predictive framework to anticipate future "turnings" within our society.

As has already been indicated, the model proposed by Strauss and Howe has captured a very prominent position within contemporary generational studies. Particularly on a popular level, but also within many corners of academia, almost no recent author addressing issues of generational culture has attempted to do so without reference to their work. Among Christian writers, many have chosen to employ this cyclical framework rather uncritically, some even treating it as though it is an accurate description of reality and faithful predictor of the future (e.g., Regele 1995; Zimmerman 1995; Rendle 2002). Many of these authors choose to employ this theory at the heart of their proposals for the ministry and renewal of the church. At times, Strauss and Howe seem to have reached such canonical status that the subsequent writings of other authors offer little more than an unimaginative restatement or superficial sanctification of their claims.

In light of the prominence of these authors, one may be surprised to find that their theoretical framework is not being employed within the contours of the present research project. In explaining the reasons for this, it must be stated that, while presenting an intriguing conceptual structure for the study of generations, the model of Strauss and Howe is not without its detractors. Indeed, within the theological community, the limitations of this model have been effectively highlighted by Hilborn and Bird (2002:85-100). Furthermore, the unpublished Th.M. thesis of Lachman (1999) provides a fairly compelling theological, philosophical, and historical critique of Strauss and Howe, as well as an eye opening compilation of criticisms posed by reviewers from throughout a host of academic disciplines. Thus, in light of the weight of evidence and the thorough treatment afforded this issue elsewhere, the choice has been made not to adopt the overarching theoretical framework of Strauss and Howe as the guiding principle for this examination of generations, nor to devote a great deal of space to articulating or defending the reasons why. By this point, the numerous



citations employed throughout this study should make it clear that the voices of these authors have been fully welcomed within the dialogue advanced here. That being said, it must be pointed out that any material from Strauss and Howe included in this study has been measured critically.

Regardless of the conclusions one draws regarding the model proposed by Strauss and Howe, it must be acknowledged that the basic point they strive to make about the ebb and flow of generational culture does provide a significant qualification to anyone seeking to contemplate the future of intergenerational dynamics. As Howe and Strauss (2000:10) explain, "Americans habitually assume that the future will be a straight-line extension of the recent past. But that never occurs, either with societies or with generations." Thus, the legitimacy of the "cyclical" model of Strauss and Howe aside, we can draw from their contribution the vital observation that it is possible for future generations to depart from, even to lend correction to, a perceived trajectory of "decline". In response to the temptation to look upon the generational situation at any given point in history with thoughts of "doom and gloom," we can draw hope from the realization that tomorrow may be better than today. This should be an energizing and enervating prospect to the church as it struggles to negotiate its way through a complex generational context.



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