

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CHAPLAIN MINISTRY TO THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

by

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) R. Michael Coffey
United States Army

Chaplain (Colonel) Daniel Nagle
Project Adviser

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ABSTRACT

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This research project will study the military force of the future, the Millennial generation. Already teenagers, this generation displays distinctive values and characteristics which distinguish it from previous generations. This study will identify the values and characteristics which make this generation unique. Additionally, this research will examine strategic, future implications for recruiting, manning and ministering religiously to this future military force.

CHAPLAIN MINISTRY TO THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

The United States Armed Forces are all volunteer forces. Even though all branches of the military will miss recruiting goals for 2005, there are no plans to change from an all volunteer force. Therefore, the military of the future is today's teenagers, middle school and elementary school students and pre-schoolers. This generation of young people has been labeled by sociologists as "Millennials," "Generation Y," "Generation Tech," or "Echo Boomers" primarily, with each title revealing distinct characteristics of the group.¹ The inevitable passing of the baton by the current military leadership to this upcoming generation creates a need for further study of this potential military force in order to better recruit and train them. For the military chaplaincy, it is imperative to begin now to understand them in order to minister to them effectively. This paper will focus primarily on the characteristics of this generational group, and the ways the Army chaplaincy in particular might maximize ministry opportunities, based on those generational characteristics.

Who are these "millennial" young men, women and children? What are their main characteristics as a generation? What are their values, outlooks and expectations? What ideals, rules and expectations have been communicated to them by the preceding generations? Are they capable of replacing the current military force or will the military be forced to change not only its recruiting techniques, but also its training, to ensure the future of the all volunteer force and its ability to protect the interests of the United States?

The good news for the military and the nation seems to be that this upcoming generation is very different from the two preceding generations. If the average American is pessimistic about this future generation, it is because they assume that each subsequent generation blindly follows the life pattern choices blazed by preceding generations.² Those paths point to narcissism, selfishness versus public civic mindedness, increased profanity, crime, violence and risky behavior, and political apathy.³ Consider the following:

- The birth rates of millennial children is the highest in decades;
- As a generation, millennial children are optimistic about themselves, others and the future;
- Millennials are cooperative and team oriented;
- Millennials are accepting of authorities and follow rules;
- They are the most watched over (or supervised) generation in history;
- Their aptitudes test scores are increasing and they want to be viewed as intelligent;

- Millennials believe in the future and plan to be part of technological solutions to problems.⁴

The generation of young people known as Millennials is challenging predictions about youth trends. Data from a wide variety of sources indicates that the current generation of children will not seek to tear down institutions, but instead will attempt to restore, repair, rebuild, replace and renovate institutions or invent new institutions that will promote the common good.⁵

Generational Theory

About every twenty years, societies seem to recognize the distinctive characteristics of a new generation group. Previous generations are usually surprised that each new generation is different from those who came before.⁶ Two of the more quoted researchers on this topic of generational theory are Neil Howe and William Strauss. Their input has been sought by the United States military recruiting commands, both the Democratic and Republican parties, and various corporations. Their premise is that people's lives are experienced in various stages, from birth to death. These phases of life are approximately 20-25 years in length and each is associated with a specialized social role: Childhood, age 0 to 20; Young Adulthood, age 21 to 41; Midlife, age 42 to 62; and Elderhood, age 63 to 83.⁷

As major life events occur (e.g. wars, depressions, periods of great prosperity), generations of people are shaped dependent upon which life phase they occupy at the time of the event. Their unique moment in history, distinctive and shared beliefs or behaviors help generation members to perceive unifying affiliation with one another, in contrast with other generations. The 20-22 year timeframe is used since members of a generational group share the same life phase.⁸

Strauss and Howe argue that each life phase is continually being vacated by a previous or older generation and results in a younger generation replacing it. As a result, basic attitudes and behaviors change with differing generations. These shifts in generational aging, and subsequent leadership responsibilities result in new society moods, eras, actions and outlooks which last throughout the generational change.⁹

While the empirical evidence of Strauss and Howe's research may eventually be questioned by some, they are not the first writers to observe periodic shifts in culture or politics. Marketers, political analysts, pollsters and sociologists have used generational labels such as "conformist" fifties, "radical" sixties and seventies, narcissistic or "me generation" eighties to label previous generations and have adapted their message or marketing techniques to appeal to different groups of people.¹⁰ Of particular importance to the military force of the future is the

fact that recruiting commands, such as the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) have utilized Strauss and Howe's research to develop a recruiting strategy to reach this upcoming generation. USAREC marketing and recruiting techniques have changed in the past (from "Be all that you can be" to "An Army of One") based upon perceived generational beliefs and attitudes. Additionally, American businesses and college campuses repeatedly base their marketing and recruiting methodologies on generational data and studies. The military chaplaincy could increase its spiritual effectiveness by better understanding this new generation and then attracting and teaching them with a methodology designed to best benefit them as a generational group. In order to do that, it is necessary to explore this group's distinctive characteristics, attitudes and beliefs.

Demography

Annual birth rates in the United States have risen since the 1980s (the first tier of the Millennial generation). In fact, according to the 2000 United States Census, the Millennial generation made up over 35% of the entire United States population.¹¹ What made this birth rate increase so distinctive was the fact that an attitude shift had occurred and young adults seemed eager to have children again. Not only did these new parents have more children, there was also a shift in attitude to spend more disposable income upon this generation of children (by both parents and their grandparents). Current demographic trends prove that not only is the Millennial generation large, but that the total number of members, including immigrants, may eventually exceed 100 million – over a third more than the Baby Boomer generation (the previously largest generational group).¹² "Simply put, adult Americans fell in love with babies again... people committed themselves to having, caring for and celebrating children... Millennial kids became the largest, healthiest, and most cared-for child generation in American history."¹³

Equally important, this Millennial group is the largest "second generation" of immigrant parents in eighty years.¹⁴ Since 1990, over 20 percent of this entire generation are children of immigrants. Not since the early 20th century has there been such a large percentage of U.S. children whose parents were immigrants.¹⁵ As a generational group, these children reflect the assimilation patterns of second generation immigrants: they desire to trade their parents' language and culture for U.S. elements and language; half of them do not speak English at home, but demonstrate the ability to rapidly assimilate languages.¹⁶ The Millennial generation has become the most ethnically and racially diverse group in American history.¹⁷ No matter what their skin color or ethnic background, demographic data indicates that the Millennial

generation is possibly the largest, most provided for and most watched over generation in American history. This becomes obvious when one considers their impact on the political world and economy.

Politics, World and Economy (Kinderpolitics)

Millennial children have been raised in an environment in which local public leaders were mobilized to be attentive to the needs of and dangers to small children. In fact a new term, “kinderpolitics”, was coined to describe the groundswell of voter determinism demanding aggressive public policies to help this generation by protecting them from health dangers, criminal acts, while promoting their educational opportunities, which, in theory, would help to ensure that they grew up safely and with the best potentiality.¹⁸ In this same period, it should be noted that until the 9-11 attacks, the Millennial generation had witnessed virtual unchecked economic expansion. This economic expansion resulted in Millennials sensing workaholicism as a normal condition of the adult world, which they note, has introduced wealth, purchasable items and stressed parents into their lives.¹⁹

How else do Millennials see the adult world they will someday inherit? Answer: They see a segmented world. As an example, they see lifestyle segmentation. They have never known a world without cable TV, or computers, or cell phones or choice, choice and more choice. They see politicians as arguers, talking heads or posturers; they recognize that media audiences are continually harangued by special interest groups for market share through special interest magazines, websites and cable stations. They watch as professional sports demonstrate that the individual “star” players are more important than the teams for whom they currently play (and that free agent status represents power and money). They learn that fashions and opinions are only important if niche groups self authenticate and validate them, and that this validation is usually segmented by race, sex, religion, ideology, occupation or hobby/interest.²⁰

Millennials see a world of geographic, racial and ethnic segmentation. Since the 1980s, as more young parents moved closer to their work and renovated metropolitan housing areas, city planning meetings became the new debate grounds between generations. Parents with younger children argue for parks, sidewalks, police presence and other expectations while older residents, whose children have already moved out, resist many of the changes.²¹ In an address to the 1984 Democratic National Convention, Jesse Jackson called for America to embrace the Rainbow Coalition platform, arguing that America was a quilt of different, materials, colors and textures.²² As the Millennial children grew up, the goal of national assimilation was challenged by the rallying cry of multiculturalism.²³ In fact, the Millennials have less intentional integration

in their schools than the two preceding generations. Not only is this due to geographic mobility, but also to the lack of enthusiasm for continuing a national and more specifically, a local emphasis on integration.²⁴

Finally, Millennials see income fragmentation in the economic world. Although the total number of children living in severe poverty has decreased, Millennial children are aware of the ever widening gap between struggling and prospering families. The numbers of children schooled at home increased from 850,000 in 1999 to 1.1 million in 2003. Many of these children, especially from affluent suburbs, are initially schooled at home to ensure they receive a “quality” primary education, and then sent to private or academically rated schools (which often require both parents to work). Eventually these children become aware of the benefits and inequities of parental maneuvering to dodge state education equalization requirements.²⁵ The immigration and economic forces and policies which produced the “tale of two Millennial cities” is largely a contrast between families of origin: two-income, highly educated, stock market portfolio and aging gift-giving grandparents in contrast to one-income immigrant or single mother with less formal education and extended, aging family members here in the U.S. or abroad.²⁶

As Millennials listen to their parents they hear a mixed message of how good life was for the parents as kids, and how hard their parents work now, while protecting the Millennial children from dangers they, the parents, never had to face. This is usually explained as a way of ensuring a good future for this generation. Consider how the Consumer Products Safety Commission, Department of Labor, National Transportation Safety Board and Highway Safety Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Justice and other national assets have been recruited to ensure that the “kinderpolitics” of the new world are in place and that the Millennial generation has a bright future.²⁷

Family

Today's families face tough, complex issues just as previous generations have. However, the type of “family” has continued to change over the years. The families of the Millennials are not reverting back to the 1950 or 1960 norm and Millennial children are not reliving the existence of their parents. In fact, two of the more troubling issues facing Millennial children are the number of children living without two parents or the fact that both parents work so many hours, that it is necessary to fill their children's hours with other supervised activities.²⁸ In fact more Millennial children are growing up in single parent households than either of the two previous generations. Equally true, more Millennial children are growing up with both parents

working so many hours that the supervision of the children is relegated to third parties or activities supervised by third parties. Although these children could face an increased likelihood of arrest, drug use, school failure, suicide or pregnancy, much of the data seems to point to a more hopeful conclusion.²⁹ For instance, there has been a surge of single fathers (1.1 to 3.1 million since 1980), which demonstrates a willingness by fathers to seek custody of children, through the court system.³⁰ Unique to today's court system is the new emphasis on making the children feel wanted by both parents, no matter how bitter and resentful the custody fight might be behind the scenes. It is equally true that many family breakups are marked by concerted efforts for child-friendly mediation, thus allowing both parents more access in the custody process.³¹ Also, since the raising of these children often necessitates an involvement by third parties, a growing groundswell of grandparents, churches, fatherhood groups, women's movements and political leaders are joining efforts to slow divorces or at least ensure that the children suffer less than previous generations of children of divorce did.³²

If both parents are unable to care for the children as much as they would like, then they seek ways to ensure that their family does not suffer unnecessarily. Whether they choose to work more family friendly hours or even work at home; use other family members to keep the childcare within the extended family or work for a company or government agency that provides on-site daycare, lactation rooms, health clinic and even on-site schools, families are demanding more family friendly solutions to their dilemma.³³ As a result, Millennial children are more supervised; spending more time with their family (including extended members); or doing more things together with their family when the family does share time together.³⁴ As far as discipline is concerned, Millennial kids are often accused of being spoiled by parents with material goods. However, further study indicates that their parents are more lenient on issues such as clothes, shopping, indelicate language and chores, but much tougher on issues that are deemed more critical to character risk such as drinking, drugs, driving violations, late night tardiness and questionable friends.³⁵

Changing the Future Through Education

Researchers Strauss and Howe state that each generation's schooling is shifted to repair perceived deficiencies seen in previous generations. These shifts in education are designed to create an opposite or corrective effect on the traits or characteristics observed in a previous generation. Consider the following:

- In the 1930s and 1940s, education was designed to create book-smart business careerists;

- In the 1950s and 1960s, education shifted to produce inner-driven, ideal-cultivating individualists;
- In the 1970s and 1980s, education helped to create street-smart, independent entrepreneurs from latch key and primarily unsupervised kids;
- In the 1990s, education began preparing Millennial students to be outward-driven, ideal following team players.³⁶

Members of the Millennial generation seem to feel differently than their parents did about school, and also seem to perform differently. By many accounts, the parents of this generation (Baby Boomers especially), enjoyed classes, but often battled with the values that school represented. Also, there was a direct, negative behavior correlation as school behavior rules relaxed. In contrast with their parents, Millennial students report to pollsters that they dislike school, but they agree with the values represented by the education institution. Additionally, they behave better as conduct rules continue to become more restrictive.³⁷ Baby Boomers wanted less structure; but Millennials excel better academically with increased structure. Baby Boomers disliked subjects that required accountability or exactness; Millennials prefer subjects where they and others can measure their academic progress.³⁸ Boomers' school performance worsened each academic year, accounting for well documented Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) declines in the 1970s; Millennials, through teacher surveys and other measurements, show initial signs of doing better each academic year.³⁹ Most of this change can be attributed to two words that have hovered over all Millennial academic experience: standards and structure. This generation has the most structured academic and personal life of any generation, and the cry for improved school standardization is a bugle call they have marched to their entire lives.

Pace and Quality of Millennial Life

Time is the new commodity in the Millennial world. Millennial children are active doers and their schedules reflect this. In the new millennium, people have more money, but less time. As with most things, scarcity increases the value of the object. Older generations, wrongly basing their assumptions on their own experience, may fear that teenagers and children are endangered by lurking media and societal forces, bent on corrupting this latest generation in the ways of sex, drugs, crimes and worldliness. This is based on older generations' remembrance of their own temptations and corruptions by these same forces. However, many Millennial children can demonstrate, through their fully loaded schedules, that they face less temptation than previous generations at the same age.⁴⁰ In fact, workaholic tendencies are being taught at very early ages to this new generation. Rather than coming home from school to play, today's

children are handed off like race batons from one adult supervised activity to another. Time to play, wasted time talking with friends, climbing trees, describing clouds, riding bikes or playing pickup ballgames is being replaced by team sports, music lessons, tutoring sessions and extended homework sessions. The Millennial generation lifestyle equals more activity, but less spontaneous fun. A National Institutes of Health survey demonstrates a difference in lifestyle:

Children's Weekly Time Use - 1981 and 1997* (In hours and minutes)			
Activity	1981	1997	Difference
School	21:22	29:22	+8:00
Playing	15:54	12:58	-2:56
TV viewing	15:12	13:09	-2:03
Eating	9:08	8:18	-0:50
Sports	2:20	5:17	+2:57
Studying	1:25	2:07	+0:42
Reading	0:57	1:16	+0:19
Household work	2:27	5:39	+3:12

*Children ages 3-11; selected activities.

Source: 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Child Development Supplement⁴¹

TABLE 1

These children are busy. Yet, what do they think about their lives? Remember the words used earlier to describe this generation: special, sheltered and confident. The Millennial generation has always felt the focus of family and public attention. They have seen their voting parents demand that politicians advocate for children issues and have learned to trust their parents and institutions to work on their behalf (special). They have sensed the protective security parents and adults have placed around them by changing laws, rules, web sites and schools (sheltered). As a result, they state in survey after survey that they are "usually happy" and "very positive" in their outlook for their future (confident).⁴² It's not that they do not see problems facing them in the future, but they feel confident that they will meet those challenges and even solve many of them.

Conduct - Zero Tolerance Style

Are these children perfect? Hardly. They are not as well behaved as previous generations in many ways, but one thing is very distinctive. Their conduct as a generation is improving, and no other post World War II youth group could make such a claim.⁴³ The expectation is for them to behave better than their parents did and to excel academically more than previous generations did. Such expectations, and the adult controls emplaced to achieve these expectations have resulted in declining incidences of premarital sex, drug use and crime. Look at the statistics:

- In 1997-1999 rates of drug abuse fell for 8th through 12th graders;

- An annual poll statistic “In my school, marijuana users are really popular” dropped from 20% to 10% in 1999;
- Approval of rap, rock or media stars making “drugs seem like an OK thing to do” dropped from 50% to 33% in 1999;
- Teenage use of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana continued to decrease since 1979;
- From 1993 to 1998, murder, rape, robbery, school violence, assault and violent crime committed by 12 to 17 year olds fell by 45 percent, the lowest rate since 1980;
- Between 1988 and 1995, the percentage of high school students with sexual experience fell from 54% to 48%;
- A 1999 poll of 10,000 twelve to sixteen year olds indicated that 51% of them felt sexual urges could “always be controlled” versus 4% who said sexual urges could “never” be controlled.⁴⁴

Much of this generational improvement can be directly linked to a philosophy the Millennials have grown up with: Zero Tolerance. The concept of zero tolerance developed when crime, drug use and sexual promiscuity rates created a national fear and reaction. Two cities, Cincinnati and New York successfully transformed their school districts through zero tolerance and national adoption quickly followed.⁴⁵ The bottom line of zero tolerance for Millennial kids and their parents is that one behavior mistake can immediately impact or eradicate any past successes, or future academic and social opportunities. Penalties became prescribed and automatic. This discipline methodology proved attractive to educators and legislators alike. No more worries about lawsuits or claims of racist policies. If you transgressed, you were suspended, expelled, punished or jailed. The system told you the rules; if you broke them the authorities had prescribed actions they had to take and that was the end of the issue. Zero tolerance worked, and that reinforced the adult demand for stricter controls. As a result, the Millennial generation is the most controlled generation in decades, and they seem to be excelling academically and behaviorally because of it.⁴⁶

To summarize this section, the Millennial generation has unique traits which could make its recruitment to military service easier than previous generations. Its stated values and beliefs, team cooperation, trust of authorities, academic success and behavior patterns bode well for this generation to be recruited as America's future military force. The next section will look at specific recruitment changes being developed by the military to effectively recruit and train this generation. The final section will consider military chaplain specific recommendations to effectively minister to and spiritually develop this generation as part of the future military force.

Recruitment Strategies for the Millennial Generation

Both the size and ethnic composition of this generational group could benefit future military recruitment efforts if the military devises and executes a recruitment strategy specifically designed to attract this population. In a very real sense, the massive size of the Millennial generation may make recruitment easier for the armed forces. There are predictions of colleges being overwhelmed with Millennial applications, and the military may benefit from the future need of this generation to be employed if they fail to enroll in college. The United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) is publishing a handbook for recruiters to use in recruiting Millennials called the Recruiting Millennials Handbook. This recruiting strategy fully acknowledges the traits and characteristics discussed in the first segment of this paper. The USAREC strategy will emphasize a core trait of this generational group and suggest specific recruitment techniques based on that core trait. The core traits emphasized by USAREC are listed below in parenthesis, followed by the specific, applicable recruitment techniques based on that core trait:

(Special) – From their birth, this generation has been given a sense that they are collectively vital to the nation and its future. As a result, recruiters are planning to:

- Reinforce a recruit's positive view of peers;
- Replace individualism with a link to future generational events of great significance;
- Emphasize the grand destiny of the Millennial generation;
- Emphasize a group mission, especially global missions;
- Link recruitment to the nation's and military's heritage;⁴⁷

(Confident) – Millennial teens are positive in their outlook and expect to succeed in any enterprise they undertake. As a result, recruiters will:

- Stress good outcomes from military service;
- Have all recruitment material and contact be upbeat, well-rounded and confident;
- Present positive images of military service helping others;
- Work to show that colleges and the military are partners, not competitors, in a young person's lifecycle plan; be upbeat but realistic that college entrance will continue to be more competitive in the coming years;
- Present a picture of the military as important in helping the "success of all;"⁴⁸

(Sheltered) – The Millennial generation has grown up with more youth protection laws and supervised practices than any generation in American history. As a result, recruiters must:

- Assume the recruits expect supervision and a safe, healthy training environment;
- Offer protection against corrupting influences;

- Promote generalized physical fitness and other healthy lifestyle patterns;
- Apply high-tech to the accountability and safety of the recruits;⁴⁹

(Team-Oriented) – This soccer team, school uniform, collective classroom generation has developed strong team instincts and tight peer bonds. As a result, recruiters should:

- Show recruits in groups, not solo;
- Demonstrate racial and ethnic diversity beyond simple black and white;
- Stress a single “fair” contracting process for all recruits;
- Stress interchangeable skills and broad participation among recruits;
- Emphasize the teaching of team skills;
- Emphasize group evaluation and group benefits which bring out the best in each other;⁵⁰

(Achieving) – Millennials support convention and many traditions, and are being labeled by authority figures as better educated and better behaved than previous generations. As a result, recruiters need to:

- Persuade parents and Millennials that the military, especially at its senior level, shares many of their values (loyalty, honor, thrift, duty, service);
- Assume that Millennials seek a work environment in which they can follow the rules;
- Emphasize the high-technology of the military;
- Remodel recruiting stations into modern facilities;
- Provide recruits and parents with detailed, factually correct information;
- Stress math and science achievement, and promise measurable progress for interested recruits;⁵¹

(Pressured) – Millennials have been taught to study hard, avoid risk and seize opportunities for advancement. Recruiters could capitalize on this emphasis “to succeed” by:

- Stressing the long-term rather than short-term benefits of the military;
- Demonstrating, in writing, a planned future that addresses recruits’ goals;
- Demonstrating, in writing, how recruits will be “keeping up with” their peers;
- Focusing on life balance – work, leisure, goals and personal time⁵²

If the United States Recruiting Command recognizes the unique characteristics of this Millennial generation, then today’s military Chaplaincy should begin now to evaluate ministry strategies and resources to recruit, spiritually train and lead them in worship.

Chaplain Strategies for the Millennial Generation

Some basic statistical data on the religious practices and beliefs of the Millennial generation are positive, but also reveal some potential concerns for the Army Chaplaincy:

- 96% believe in a god;
- 66% believe in the God of the Bible;
- 87% believe that Christ really lived;
- 44% believe in the Resurrection;
- 53% believe Christ committed sin during his life;
- 67% pray daily;
- 84% believe prayer changes things, but would seek help from others before God;
- 71% believe religious faith is relevant to their lives;
- 55% currently attend worship services;⁵³

Millennials express openness to combining faith practices and beliefs from different religions because many of them do not feel that truth is encapsulated in one religion.⁵⁴ Many Millennials attend worship services to get relief from the hectic pace of everyday life, escape pop culture, meet like-minded members of the opposite sex, or to participate in ministry or civic activities.⁵⁵ However, no matter what their motivation for attending, the majority decline to return if there is no substantive religious teaching or experience. As a generational group, they require “solid, personally applicable content.”⁵⁶ The Chaplaincy should immediately begin to consider the characteristics of this group, such as their group mindset, fondness for experiential learning, focus on relationships, respect for authorities and appreciation for traditions and institutions.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Chaplains of the future will be finding ways to increase the commitment level of the Millennial generation. Their track record proves that once they decide to commit, they will give generously of their time and energy. The problem may be that they say they are committed to spirituality, but the majority are not currently pursuing it. Members of the Millennial generation seem to miss the disconnection of what they say about spirituality and their commitment level. It is imperative for the Army Chaplaincy to begin now to convince this generation of the impossibility of spiritual growth without the faith community and a dedicated pursuit of spiritual growth through that faith community. If the Chaplaincy fails to provide effectual teaching, training and worship experience, then this generation will incorrectly assume that they must amalgamate their own faith journey... and they have the confidence to attempt such an amalgamation. If generational history does repeat cycles, the Millennial generation may be poised for greatness, but only if they receive effective spiritual and moral direction. With spiritual and moral direction, they may truly head for a rendezvous with destiny

in the future, and may prove to be one of the best generational hopes in recent history. With that possibility in mind, the next section will focus on creating relevant spiritual opportunities for the Millennial generation.

Millennial Worship

Attempting to envision traditional and institutional changes is difficult at best. Religious traditions change slowly, and rarely resemble the initial vision for change. Most writings about the post-modern or emergent church seem to come from the Christian tradition and point to assemblies which:

- Emphasize the need for depth in teaching and community activities;
- Feel the need for creatively different traditional services;
- Are worship inspired with more active participation by all attendees;
- Focus on responding to the needs of the community, especially the poor;
- Are free to be culturally sensitive by *either* being multi-cultural *or* organized according to culture;
- Recognize the need for clear messages of integrity coupled with refusal to soften radical impact;
- Have intentional discipleship or mentoring – challenging people rather than building a larger crowd;
- Develop leadership structure that is more relational and less hierarchical – emphasis on everyone (all ages) having a place and ministry;
- Emphasize reproduction of smaller churches rather than mega-churches;
- Emphasize networking and technology to supplement church services;
- Hold periodic gatherings of smaller cell groups and churches for celebration and mission emphasis;
- Demonstrate compassionate service;
- Practice holistic spirituality - rejection of any dichotomy of spiritual and secular;
- Make renewed or more fully explained use of ritual and symbols;
- Have a convergence of musical styles and technology with traditional practices;
- Build facilities which have more spaces for groups, on-site childcare and teaching, and more spaces for quiet reflection and contemplation,⁵⁷

One could almost facetiously say this generation would prefer a cathedral with stain glass windows and internet connectivity, floor seating rather than pews, with incense, Scripture reading, strong sermons and lots of differing music including chants, before departing as a

group to help the poor or promote social justice in their immediate community. They are both attracted to and resistant to their parents' church and traditions. Military chaplains do not need to abandon faith traditions of the past, or soften dogma or doctrinal beliefs in order to effectively minister to this generational group. What is needed is a critical evaluation of methodology and public presentation. The Millennial generation will be attracted to strong leadership, vibrant worship which offers them choices in style and application, and effective teaching which utilizes both technology and tradition. Beginning no later than age thirteen, the age when most adolescents begin to emerge as individuals, there needs to be an active recruitment plan to involve this generation in services, project planning, budgeting and outreach planning and ministries. This is the vital first step.

Second, the military chaplaincy needs to review and alter any future plans for worship facilities and meeting places to better attract and minister to this generation. More and larger meeting rooms, larger congregational gathering spaces with more technology and musical outlets, and on-site child care and teaching are essentials. Any future buildings without these features may cause this generation to seek a civilian church in the community deemed more "my family's style." While the military chapel system is not in competition with civilian churches, chaplains need to ensure that the chapel services appeal to future military personnel and their families. If current chapel buildings cannot meet the key expectations of this group, then alternative meeting sites need to be found and utilized, while still maintaining traditional services in the decades old buildings currently being used. Today's Millennial teenagers and tomorrow's Millennial parents will demand such facilities, with on-site childcare that is professional, safe and accountable. If such facilities are not offered they may simply be too attracted by civilian churches and other non-military faith group facilities to attend military chapel services. The military chaplaincy should plan and work to provide the best worship opportunities it can to this future generation of military personnel and their families.

Teaching, doctrine, catechisms and training must be clear, applicable and infused with technological aids. Information about the military chapels and programs should shift to website and internet as the primary communication model. Services must be updated to include the evolving option of technology for worship and teaching. Chaplain military budgets must begin to change and emphasize such updates and building requirements.

Conclusion

The Millennial generation will lead both the Army and the faith assemblies of the future. Their group attributes, strengths and abilities, such as their strong values base, technological

aptitude, self-confidence and strong emphasis on relationships, are exactly the traits sought by both the military and the military chaplaincy. Early recruitment and attractive programs can ensure that they are drawn to both the military and the military chaplaincy. Recruiting and retaining the Millennial generation will only be successful if the military chaplaincy, like the military recruiting commands, recognizes this generation's unique characteristics and adapts programs, resources and funding to effectively attract, teach, lead and turn them into the powerful, military religious force they could be. Then they may truly prove to be the next greatest generation.

Endnotes

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