

Mending the Walls and Bridging the Generation Gap

In the past fifty years we have heard much about the “*Generation Gap*”. This phrase was popularized by the Baby Boomer generation, born between 1946-1964. When the Baby Boomers began to enter society as young adults in the mid 1960’s part of the pop psychology of their era told them that their parents were “*out of touch*” and for many of this emerging generation, they readily believed it. During the 1960’s and 1970’s, the chasm between the generations widened further when a new piece of “wisdom” arose, which cautioned Baby Boomers “*Don’t trust anyone over thirty*”. For many parents, these were difficult days. With this generation gap came a communication gap. When it came to the elders passing their wisdom down the generational stream, what had once traditionally been a river, dwindled to a trickling stream. Such were the signs of the times.

Of course, these mottos of pop psychology began to change as the Baby Boomers themselves began to enter their thirties. How could they not trust themselves? As they started to have children, some of the Baby Boomers began to return to their elders for child rearing advice. But not all of them. By that time, the communication breakdown between the generations had become all but unbridgeable for many, as serious damage had been done to the walls that had once protected the cohesiveness of the extended family. The gaps in the walls became known as the “*Generation Gap*” and they represent how a large portion of the ninety-three million Baby Boomers abandoned their parents experience and wisdom in their attempts to redefine society by “*doing their own thing*”. Scripture warns that what we sow, we reap and this has certainly been the case with the Baby Boomers. Decades later, the “*Generation Gap*” has widened yet further, but this time it’s the Baby Boomers themselves who have lost the connection with their children, who are taking their place as the next emerging generation of young adults. Now it’s the Baby Boomers who are wondering “*Why can’t we seem to connect with our young adult children?*”

There are a few roots to this problem...

It used to be that when young men and young women entered adulthood, they sought the wisdom and experience of their parents and grandparents to help them weather the storms they encountered as they embarked on their journey in young adult life. Life experiences were shared around kitchen tables and in the living rooms, where families typically congregated. Then television came onto the scene in the 1950’s. As the influence of television increased, parental influence decreased. There was a time that television wasn’t so bad. Programs such as “*Father Knows Best*” and “*Leave it to Beaver*” and “*My Three Sons*” all spoke of the time-proven wisdom of seeking parental advice. A more recent long standing successful television show “*Little House on the Prairie*” hearkened back to a time when there was no generation gap, there was simply the traditional “flow” of wisdom passing on, from one generation to next.

Today, there is more competition for parental influence within the media. Besides television, our teenagers and young adults look to the Internet as a source of influence, causing greater erosion of parents’ and grandparents’ opportunities to influence the next generations. One of the greatest tragedies of this shift in influence is that the younger generation has been less likely to receive the power of Biblical wisdom and the passing on of Godly life principles. Studies show that today’s young adults don’t see the Bible as being applicable or relevant in their lives. The problem is, they haven’t embraced the opportunity to listen to the testimonies of their elders who can witness to the power of the Word of God, when it is read, learned and applied in their lives. In a proverbial nutshell, the younger generation has not had “ears to hear” from the wisdom that the elder generations can pass on.

To solve this problem, two things need to happen...

Firstly, parents and grandparents need to be willing to become more diligent in offering to pass on wisdom gained from their life experiences, sharing their victories, but especially sharing their struggles. This means that the elder generations must be willing to be more open and humble about how they may have made mistakes. When they can point out areas where they have made mistakes, they can help their children and their grandchildren sidestep these same problem areas and avoid repeating these same mistakes.

Secondly, the younger generations need to be shown that there is immeasurable value in their being willing to listen to their elders. In many ways, those of you who are grandparents may actually have a better chance to reach your grandchildren than their parents do, as the “*Generation Gap*” is usually significantly wider between parent and child than it is between the grandparents and grandchild.

The only question is – how do you do it?

The Prayer Canada Board of Directors has been asked to review a book that provides answers to this question called “**What’s Your ROI?**” It’s an engaging story about how a group of ten young adults become mentored and discipled by a business leader, Eli, who counsels them to “*seek the wisdom of your elders*” so they can learn from the experience that comes with age. In it’s timeless lessons, the book examines both problems and solutions dealing with the bondage of consumer debt, miscommunication leading to damaged relationships and even interpersonal conflict resulting in bitterness and estrangement.

Considering how this current downturn in the world economy points back to the days of Depression, this book is a very timely message for members of the younger generations who, now more than ever, need counsel and training from their elders. Any young adult who reads this story will walk away having been shown a deeper understanding of Biblical life principles of wise financial management, achieving greater job security by learning how to exhibit a stronger work ethic so they can be a shining light that stands out in a sea of mediocrity (*especially relevant with the sudden spikes of numbers of unemployed in recent months*), tips on how to advance in their careers, learning how to be a peacemaker who will be sought for their ability to resolve on-the-job conflict, plus they will learn how they can improve their communication skills and how they can avoid the problems that arise from miscommunication, as well as learning the kinds of leadership traits today's employers are so eagerly searching for when they consider which young people to promote within their business.

While each of these life skills is valuable in of itself, one of the greatest value in the book lies in how it can help bring families together, mending the walls by bridging the generation gaps and the communication gaps that exists in so many families in our nation. Within the story line, the young people learn to look in the mirror of their own responsibilities and take steps in addressing past hurts, so there can be healing, restoration as well as reconciliation, bringing the hearts of the children back to the hearts of the parents.

Most importantly, throughout God's Word we are commanded to pass on His principles to our children and grandchildren, as noted in Deuteronomy 4:9

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

If grandparents were willing to discuss this book with their grandchildren, it would provide them a natural opportunity to pass on a legacy of Biblical principles and the wisdom we've gained comes from our experiences.

The author of "**What's Your ROI ?**" is Dr. Kevin Orioux, the director of a marketplace ministry called ACTX, who has been a strong supporter of Prayer Canada for several years. Many of you will know Dr. Orioux from his guest speaking at our venues, have read about him from the pages of the *Courier*, or may have been involved with Prayer Canada as we have been holding his team up in prayer over the years as they have served the Lord in discipleship training programs for the younger generations, teaching them God's principles for how to be ambassadors for Christ in the marketplace. Some of your grandchildren have been trained through Dr. Orioux's ACTX conferences or even undertaken the ACTX six month discipleship program which builds up today's young adults to equip them to become tomorrow's leaders in both the marketplace and the churchplace.

In writing this book, Dr. Orioux draws on 25 years of experience as a youth pastor, business owner and consultant in the corporate world, teaching business leaders the time honored principles of responsibility and integrity. He shares from his experience from case studies of his clients about how, by living a life of responsibility, walking in accountability and integrity, we will inherit God's promises of many open doors of opportunity. This book provides a teaching every member of our future generation of leaders will benefit from learning.

"**What's Your ROI?**" will facilitate the desire of any grandparent or parent to reach out to the younger generation and provide them with a way to see just how applicable and timeless God's principles are, especially for such a time as this, with our current economic crisis and uncertainties with unemployment. This is exactly what our grandchildren need to hear.

The Prayer Canada Board of Directors recommends this book, as it is a wonderful means to both bridge the generation gap as well as to provide a natural vehicle for parents and grandparents to connect with both their children and grandchildren, as it encourages discussion about the pressures faced by young adults in both their work lives as well as their personal lives.

Prayer Canada Board of Directors

Editor's Note: The book will be released in the late spring, but our prayer partners can get an advanced copy directly through Prayer Canada by filling out the order form on page 10. When you purchase the book, Dr. Orioux is continuing his partnering efforts with us by contributing 40% of the purchase price to Prayer Canada's ministries. The cost of the book is \$34.95 and for our Prayer Canada partners, the shipping and handling is included.

I hope you will join with us as we desire to pass on wisdom to the younger generations, with a view to Malachi 4 to keep the connection strong between the hearts of the parents and the hearts of the children. This is how we will mend the breaks in the wall and bridge the generation gap.

COMMENDATIONS BY PRAYER CANADA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR

“WHAT'S YOUR ROI?”

“There are a number of very important life lessons in **“What's Your ROI?”** that will benefit our children and grandchildren at any time, but especially in the face of our current economic trials. Written as a novel, it is packed with valuable instruction about how a business leader is faithful in his attempts to mentor and disciple the lives of ten young adults under his charge. The story lines so well, making the wisdom from its pages much easier to digest, as well as making its timeless principles easier to apply for relationships at home and at work. I feel all grandparents as well as business owners should get a copy into the hands of young adults so they could benefit from reading this modern day parable. We have talked to some of our grandsons and they are anxious for us to send them a copy. We look forward to engaging them in discussion about the principles in this book.”

Kathie Bryan – Director, Prayer Canada

“As a grandfather, I can fully relate to the wisdom within the pages of this book. I hired my grandson to help me in the propeller shaft tunnel in our fish packer. It seems like every few minutes he's answering a call on his cell phone. He's supposed to be working, and I'm the only one who's paying him! This and many other problems in the workforce are skillfully addressed in the story line of **“What's Your ROI?”** My grandson is not unique; he is only a product of his generation. In North America there is a crying need for a fresh attitude and a new work ethic. In writing **“What's Your ROI?”** Dr. Orioux provides a teaching that addresses this crying need, doing a superb job conveying to the reader that in the face of tough economic times, unemployment and layoffs, the enemy is not the other guy but ourselves if we squander our time, energy and opportunities. The lessons are wonderfully written into an engaging story.

I especially enjoyed reading about the war veteran and his training about self-discipline and respecting authority, the sweet nurse Angela and her struggles in her college studies to overcome and reach success, and how the young lady Samantha gained victory over debt by following the wisdom her parents taught her. I found myself being drawn into the stories. This is a wonderful literary work. I enjoyed the story very much. Dr. Orioux has been given an amazing talent to express time honored principles in a manner that any grandchild could embrace and learn from.”

Leoran Anhorn – Director, Prayer Canada

“This book, although written in the style of a narrative, will bring conviction upon every employee or manager who reads it. This conviction will cause them to be more diligent in all their work and thereby increase the productivity of their company. Considering our economic uncertainty, I believe if this book were recommended to principled business leaders, they would make it required reading for all employees.”

Bert Lang – Director, Prayer Canada