



EQUIPPER

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Happy New Year!

As we enter 2013, it is a good time to look back, then forward. Through eyes of faith, we see in both directions the superintending hand of our triune God.



Looking back, I see that we now are in the seventh year of publishing *Equipper* (formerly *GC2 Equipper*). My thanks to general editor Ted Johnston and copy editor Nancy Akers for their good work. *Equipper* is designed to outfit our pastors and ministry leaders for a mission-focused journey with Jesus. You may have noticed that we also post related articles under the *Church Development* heading in *GCI Weekly Update*, which is emailed each Wednesday to all GCI senior pastors and is available for anyone to read at <http://update.gci.org/>. Please share these publications with others in your congregation.

I am also grateful for what our pastors and ministry leaders have done to help people *see, embrace*, then *follow* Jesus. What a journey it was for us in 2012, and I am excited about where the Spirit will lead us in 2013! No doubt, the journey will have its twists and turns, and unforeseen obstacles. However, there will also be great opportunities! Through it all, may we hold close to Jesus, knowing that he holds us close to himself. As Augustine of Hippo once said: “God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.” And Paul, in Ephesians 4:6, told us of our “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Thank you Father!

In 2013, let us also hold close to each other. I am grateful for the friendships that we have enjoyed in 2012. I look forward to deepening them in 2013 while forging new friendships with young leaders that the Lord will add to our team. A great place for relationship-building is the *GCI International Conference* coming to Orlando, Florida in August. I encourage you to bring with you to the conference some young emerging leaders. For information about the conference, go to www.gci.org/event/gci-international-conference.

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Participating with Jesus in multiplying new leaders along with new disciples and new churches is a key focus for us in 2013. We are emphasizing this at the denominational level, and it is an important goal at all levels. We do not all have the same opportunities to contribute to this movement of multiplication, but we can all meaningfully take part. I pray that you and your congregation will do so.

Dan Rogers

Director, GCI Church Administration and Development, USA

Facilitating Intergenerational Ministry

by Ted Johnston, CAD ministry developer and GenMin leader

In 2013, as we focus on multiplying disciples, leaders and churches, a key strategy will be to facilitate *intergenerational ministry* as a source of leadership multiplication. Following are excerpts of key points from *Intergenerational Ministry, Beyond the Rhetoric*, an article from FYI (Fuller Youth Institute—read the full article at <http://alturl.com/v9uyz>). Not all of us have the same opportunities, but as Dan Rogers notes in his cover letter, “we can all meaningfully take part.” My prayer is that this article will give you helpful ideas. For more, see our GenMin website at <http://genmin.gci.org/>.

We at FYI often hear... from leaders who want to establish more cross-generational relationships but are unsure (and maybe a little uneasy) about how to get there. Amid the emerging strategies and experiments, researcher and Denver Seminary faculty member Brenda Snailum wondered: Are there common factors that contribute to churches' success or failure that can inform the ways leaders structure their approach to intergenerational ministry?... In a recent research project, Brenda asked four intergenerational ministry thought leaders to offer their expert advice... on factors they consider most critical when initiating intergenerational ministry in existing congregations....

- **Begin Where You Are**

- **Start by assessing the current conditions.** The leadership needs to prayerfully and honestly assess current ministry practices and motives, including examining how deeply age-stratified ministry is valued among the leadership and members of the congregation and how open the church will be to change.
- **Begin with existing structures.** Intergenerational ministry is context-specific and should be customized to fit a particular church's history, culture, location, staff, and vision – *it is not “one size fits all.”*

- **Establish Intergenerational Community as a Core Value**

Intergenerational is not something churches *do*—it's something they *become*.... Intergenerational is a way of life. Making such a shift requires overcoming the individualistic mindset that is so strong in our culture and developing a community mentality in which all generations and ministry departments are valued and involved with each other in significant ways throughout the church body.... “The vision of the church needs to include assimilating our children and youth into the church today, not someday.”

- **Keep Intergenerational Values in Balance with Age-Specific Ministry**

Establishing intergenerational community does not mean eradicating age-specific ministries. As important as it is to embrace intergenerational values at a core level, it's also important to keep that in balance with age-specific ministry.

- **Leadership Must Be Fully Vested**

Successfully transitioning to an intergenerational paradigm lives (or dies) with the leadership. In order to make such a culture shift, the senior leadership team must get on board with the vision early and all the way, and actively take the reins in leading the congregation through the transition

- **Be Intentional and Strategic**

...Start small and avoid big sweeping program changes, particularly before there is adequate ownership of the vision on the part of all stakeholders.

- **Build in accountability and support structures**

...Pass everything through an “intergenerational filter” and regularly ask... how... plans can be made... to keep the church moving toward being an authentic intergenerational community.

- **Experiment with Intergenerational Ministry Practices**

The main congregational worship service is one key area of opportunity to implement intergenerational strategies.... Intentionally involve teenagers and younger kids in corporate worship, and plan worship gatherings with every age in mind.