Dear minister of Jesus,

Last month, I had the pleasure of leading the *GCI Intern Gathering* held in Raleigh, North Carolina. In attendance were several of our pastoral interns along with their pastor-trainers and coaches and a few of the denominational leaders who are helping shepherd our Pastoral Internship Program. The group gathered for shared learning and team building.

It's wonderful to see our seasoned pastors mentoring a younger generation of men and women who God is calling to GCI pastoral ministry. Pastor-trainer Paul David Kurts (at right in the picture) was there with his intern Dennis Elliott (at left). Not only is this program faithful to the biblical model (see 2 Timothy 2:2), it is vital given the aging of our current pastors.

Though working cross-generationally has always been a challenge, these days it's particularly challenging given our rapidly changing world where new communication technologies emerge at a breath-taking pace.

Other culture-shaping forces also are at work, leading to heightening of the typical "generation gap." In order to close the gap, and to help the younger generations step into leadership, it's vital that we not only understand, but also appreciate and proactively accommodate the differences between the generations.

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First, it's vital to realize that the generational differences are not necessarily about "right" vs. "wrong" or "best" vs. "worst." We tend, of course, to favor the familiar. And that is part of our challenge, for what those of us who are older grew up with is sometimes radically different from what those who are younger grew up with. We only need look at differences in teaching methods used in the 1950s and 60s compared with those being used today. Also, consider differences in communication technologies used in the 50s and 60s compared with those being used today (ones that, no doubt, will soon change!).

At the *Intern Gathering*, a group of our leaders, including Ted Johnston, facilitated a discussion about the four generations that we currently have working side-by-side in church leadership. Ted pointed out some of the differences and similarities between these generations. I thought you might appreciate a summary (see page two). One of the characteristics exhibited by Millennials is their preference for working (and thus doing ministry) in teams. We're learning more about this together as the "ministry of all believers" becomes an even greater reality for us.

May we all do our part in helping us progress toward GCnext by recruiting, mentoring and sending young leaders to serve established churches and start new ones. For more information about our internship program, see http://mindev.gci.org/internships.htm.

In Christ's service,
Greg Williams, associate director, GCI Church Administration and Development

Outfitting GCI churches and ministries for a mission-focused journey with Jesus.

Understanding generational differences

The chart below compares characteristics of the four generations currently in the ministry of GCI. Though this information is gleaned from extensive surveys, it is subjective and should be viewed as indicative of general trends, not as absolute measures. The goal in providing this information is to help us understand, value and accommodate the differences (and similarities) so that we can achieve greater levels of multi-generational leadership within the church.

	Traditionalists born 1919 to 1945	**Baby Boomers** born 1946 to 1964	**Generation X** born 1965 to 1980	**Millennials (Gen Y)** born 1981 to 2004
General characteristics	Loyal, patriotic, legacy minded, fiscally conservative	Strong work ethic, respect for hierarchy, goal-driven	Independent-minded, self-reliant, skeptical, pessimistic, informed, pragmatic, adaptable	Optimistic, confident, sociable, techno-savvy and connected, multi-tasking, family oriented
Defining moments	Great Depression, WWII, The New Deal, GI Bill, Korean War, Sputnik	Post-WWII economic boom, civil rights movement, Cold War, Vietnam War, feminism, JFK, MLK	Berlin Wall, Challenger disaster, corporate downsizing, video games, personal computers, AIDS, MTV, X-files	24-hour news cycle, "pocket" IT, self-esteem, social media, 9-11, Iraq War, global financial disaster (Great Recession)
Work ethic	Respect authority, work hard, age=seniority, company first	Personal gratification, desire for quality, question authority, workaholism	Eliminate the task, self-reliance, desire for structure and clear direction	What's next?, multitasking, tenacity, entrepreneurial
Work is…	…an obligation	…an adventure	…a contract	…a means to an end
Preferred leadership style	Directive, command and control	Emphasize quality	Everyone is the same, challenge others	[probably too early to say]
Communication preference	Formal memo or telephone call	In person or email	Direct and immediate (text message)	Text, video or voice messages (keep it short)
Preferred rewards and feedback	No news is good news, satisfaction in a job well done	Money and title recognition; challenge	"Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?", desire for flexibility	Instant (on demand) feedback, meaningful work, opportunities for growth
Motivated by…	Being respected	Being valued and needed	Freedom (few rules), fun, learning opportunities	Working with others, recognition, being part of something
How they balance work and life	Keep them separate	We "live to work"	We "work to live"	"Hey, it's 5:00pm and I've got another gig!"
For them, technology is…	The Hoover Dam	The microwave	What can be held in our hand (PDAs)	What is ethereal and intangible
When you say "jump!", they reply…	"How high?"	"Why?"	"Who's asking?"	"Who will jump with us?"
How they relate to authority…	Question nothing	Question everything	Question questions	Enough questions!