

I. *RoadVision: Inherit* *Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor* *February 22, 2009*

II. *Our vision is to be a church that empowers the next generation to lead*

III. *The Next Generation is the church of _____*

- A. The apostle Paul had a young protégé, Timothy. He actually writes two personal letters to encourage and mentor him as a leader.
- B. (1 Tim 1:2 NRSV) *To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- C. (1 Tim 1:3 NRSV) *I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine,*
- D. (1 Tim 1:18 NRSV) *I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight,*
- E. (Phil 2:19-24 NRSV) *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. {20} I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. {21} All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. {22} But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. {23} I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; {24} and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.*
- F. Paul writes an encouraging word to Timothy that should be embraced by the Christian Church.
- G. (1 Tim 4:12-16 NRSV) *Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. {13} Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. {14} Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. {15} Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. {16} Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.*
- H. (1 Tim 4:12 NASB) *Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*
- I. If you have been in the church for a long time, you may have heard or even said the statement, "Youth are the Church of the Tomorrow.
- J. Any church that buys into that statement is at risk of not being in existence in the next Generation.
- K. ***The Next Generation is the Church of Today!***

IV. ***Turning over the Keys!***

- A. The average age of people in the United Methodist Church in the U.S. is between 57 and 62.
- B. *Why Young Elders are Important* by Lovett H. Weems, Jr., professor of church leadership and director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.
1. There has been a dramatic drop in the number and percentage of United Methodist elders under the age of 35 in the last twenty years. The number of elders under 35 declined from 3,219 in 1985 to 850 in 2005. Young elders as a percentage of all elders dropped from 15.05% in 1985 to only 4.69% in 2005. For example, the annual conference with the highest percentage of young elders today has 10%, still five percent below where the *whole denomination* was just twenty years ago. This report documents the declining number of United Methodist elders under age of thirty-five over the past twenty years
 2. The average age of United Methodist clergy has increased from 45.8 in 1982 to 51.4 in 2005.
 3. Leander Keck (Dean of Yale School of Divinity) links the enlistment dilemma directly to the condition of the church itself. "The impression is abroad," he contends, "that the church does not welcome strength since it is more a place to find a support group than a channel for energy and talent, more a place where the bruised find solace than where the strong find companions and challenge." (*The Church Confident*, Abingdon, 93)

4. Reinhold Niebuhr reminds us of the difficulty of the task. “It is no easy task to build up the faith of one generation,” he wrote as a young Detroit pastor in 1921, “and not destroy the supports of the religion of the other.” Today’s clergy live in such a tension.

C.Niebuhr said it well. I see churches all the time moan and groan that their nurseries are empty, but when you go look at it the cribs are the same hand me down cribs where their grandchildren slept.

D.The message I delivered about Innovation, was also inspired by our Vision to be a church that would speak the language of the Next Generation, and be willing to sacrifice my own tastes and preferences to see that Generation alive and leading at CrossRoad.

E.The title slide of the message says a lot.

F.We have to be ready to turn the keys of the car over.

G.Giving Hannah the keys!

1. When she turned 16 I first started to have a little anxiety about her driving.
2. I witnessed something in her that surprised me.
3. She actually began to relate to us better.
4. For us to give her more responsibility built trust in our family.
5. After two years of driving, only one moving violation and the only fender bender that was her fault was in a friends driveway.
6. Don’t get overconfident.

H.Churches that don’t turn over the keys are fearful of dents, a few speeding tickets, loud music booming, new technology.

I.A Church that doesn’t turn over the keys won’t have to worry about anything, because that Next Generation will either check out or go some place that will.

V. I want you to hear from two of our Next Gen Leaders.

A.Joey Rodil and Kelsey Linduff.

VI. Age Group Stats!

A.Membership

1. Adults Professing Members 1157
2. Children 473
3. Total 1630

B.0 to 11 325

C.12 to 18 160

D.19 to 25 113

E.26 to 39 364

F.40 to 49 262

G.50 to 59 243

H.60 to 69 108

I.70 to 79 37

J.80 to 89 12

K.90 to 99 0

L.Six birthdays were undefined, some people don't want us to know their age.

M.Of the 1624, 1467 are under 60 90.3%

N.1224 are under 50 75.3 %

O.962 are under 40 59.2% over half our members are under 40.

P.598 are under 25 36.8%

Q.The reason our percentages are high is because we believe to be a Church with a future, you have to be a church that values the Next Generation today and are willing to invest in Nursery, Children's, Youth, and Youth Adult ministries.

R.It is why our Sunday service is designed to be a venue that looks like it has some connection with the 21st century.

S.It is why we invest in leaders like Alison Hunt, Wade Thigpen, Derrick Scott, Kelsey, and Joey, Amber Lipscomb, Scott Crawford.

T.There is a long list of others who have served on our staff that are in their late 20s and early 30s.

VII. Receiving the Keys

A.(1 Tim 4:12-16 NRSV) *Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

B.For the most part, when I hear this scripture quoted, it is never in its entirety.

C.Most people stop at the *Let no one despise your youth.* That part is memorized.

D.The second part is every bit as important: *but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

E."Keeping Your Church Young" by Dan Reiland Injoy Stewardship: The future is always young. But it's the wisdom of those who are not young that help navigate the future successfully. The new ideas of young leaders combined with the wisdom of veteran leaders is a powerful combination. My daughter will ask me for advice on dealing with new territory she's never traveled before. I offer the counsel, provide guidance if needed, but let her take her own steps. I love watching her invent her future and take part in the new culture around her.

F.Paul's advice to Timothy is that the best way to build credibility is by the example set by your speech and conduct.

G.Marcus Stouffer has risen to leadership in ACCESS.

H.I first noticed it when he would come to our house. He would always stay and clean up. Offer to help when the event was over.

I.Because of his leadership role, we are attending some of our denominational meetings together.

J.He will email and ask what is the appropriate dress. It is little things.

K.Even though I gave Hannah the keys to her car, it didn't come automatically. It came with a lot of coaching.

1. Sandy and I had both given her a lot of opportunities to drive with her learners permit.
2. I had coached on everything from her little tikes bike, to her Barbie Car, her Parents Golf Cart, and an ATV.
3. When she asked me to get her Barbie car out of the garage.

L.**Leadership Evidence: Speech and Conduct**

M.**Leadership Characteristics:**

1. Love

a. Bold, Unconditional, Unselfish

2. **Faith**

a. Loyalty to Christ and to the Vision of CrossRoad Church, that's why membership is important.

b. I have sown into a lot of young leaders at CrossRoad, and then find they are off the radar completely or go to a church that meets some personal needs. Usually, a singles ministry.

c. Support by Prayers, Presence, Service, Tithes and Offerings

3. **Purity**

a. Even though we welcome imperfect people, we like to wait until there is some evidence of moving towards the image of Jesus Christ, before we put people in leadership.

b. There needs to be evidence that a person is moving towards perfection, though we know none of us ever attain it.

VIII. Leadership Fuel

A. *{14} Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. {15} Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. {16} Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

B. *(2 Tim 1:6 NRSV) For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands;*

C. Paul encourages Timothy not to neglect the Gift of God that is the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

D. It needs to be stirred up, kindled to a white hot flame.

E. Every leader at CrossRoad needs to be surrendered to the Power of the Holy Spirit.

F. It is the Holy Spirit that brings life to a Church.

G. The Holy Spirit keeps leaders on their knees. It is what all generations need to be able to see the Church doing relevant ministry in this present age, to this present Generation.

A. Every leader at CrossRoad needs to be fueled by that Power.

B. It is our Inheritance, it is the Key to ministry.

IX. Invitation.