

Christianity Isn't Dying,
Millennials Aren't the Problem,
And the Future Is Bright

Generational

IQ



Author of the bestselling corporate workshop
LEADING ACROSS GENERATIONS™

HAYDN SHAW

with Ginger Kolbaba

Praise for *Generational IQ*

People of faith need solutions for the increasing complexities four generations create for their homes, friendships, workplaces, and churches. Haydn Shaw provides thoughtful answers about the different ways the generations can seek not only Christ but each other. Highly recommended.

JOHN TOWNSEND

New York Times bestselling author, leadership consultant, and psychologist

Generational IQ is one of the most thought-provoking, engaging, and genuinely useful books I have ever read on a topic that has never been more necessary than in this moment in time. With clear descriptions of each generation, Haydn sheds light on why our generational standing affects the way we experience God and relate to others. While I would have thought I had a good understanding of this material to begin with, I realized I had used broad strokes to create caricatures of people in different generations and that many of them had missed the mark. Over and over again, I found myself nodding and whispering, “Ahhh . . . now that behavior makes sense.” This is a profound book that I daresay should be necessary reading for all believers. It has truly changed the way I will approach my ministry, and I’m honored to share my praise for this spectacular book.

ANGIE SMITH

Author of *I Will Carry You*

This is a really important book. Our culture and, more important, our churches, need to continue to figure out not only how to live in a multigenerational climate, but how to thrive in it. Haydn’s book will help us understand each other better so that we can work together better. *Generational IQ* will not only give you the information you need to know how to relate to multiple generations, but it will also give you the tools you need to do it in real life. I’m confident this book will be helpful to individuals and to churches as we seek to build a truly multigenerational approach to ministry, outreach, and following Jesus together.

KYLE IDLEMAN

Bestselling author of *Not a Fan*

It is said that for a pastor to minister successfully, he or she must correctly exegete both Scripture and the culture. Haydn Shaw's thoroughly researched and imminently practical new book, *Generational IQ*, places in pastors' hands an invaluable tool for interpreting the world in which we minister. No one else has offered what he explains in this encyclopedic survey of our society, particularly the critical implications that generational differences have upon ministry. The Church of God has benefited immeasurably from hearing Haydn speak at our largest gathering of pastors and church leaders, and we enthusiastically welcome this newest contribution to the work of church and Kingdom. In 2015 and beyond, any pastor who has this book close at hand will do a better job!

MARK L. WILLIAMS

Presiding bishop/general overseer, Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee

I'm not smart enough to handle all the crazy stuff a church leader in the twenty-first century needs to know. I'm only smart enough to *find* smart people and ask them. Haydn is my *smart people*. He's been both a part of our congregation and a consultant with us through every stage a church can go through. In the past few years he's dedicated his life to helping the world understand the vast differences between the generations. The generational divide is quite possibly as deep as many ethnic and racial chasms have been in the past. I hardly have a conversation with another leader about "the church" without it coming up. This book is not only timely and important, but it's a great read. You'd expect me to feel obligated to give Haydn an endorsement, knowing *I've asked him to come* to a Saturday night service *and* critique *my sermon* every week. But I'm just honestly telling you—you need this *generational intelligence*. No matter how old you are.

TIM HARLOW

Author of *Life on Mission* and pastor of Parkview Christian Church

Haydn Shaw has combined outstanding research and practical application so we can understand how the various generations, spirituality, and the church all fit together. In his outstanding new book, *Generational IQ*, Shaw gives us a crystal clear picture of how

different generation can work together for greater spiritual impact and more loving families.

DAVE FERGUSON

Lead pastor of Community Christian Church, lead visionary of NewThing, and author of *Finding Your Way Back to God*

Generational “rift” is felt everywhere in our homes and our churches, and it undergirds some of the most important conversations taking place in our culture today. *Generational IQ* is sorely needed. Haydn Shaw answers the big questions people of faith are asking. His book is as insightful as it is liberating. An important read.

DEBRA HIRSCH

Author of *Untamed* and *Redeeming Sex*

So much of life, faith, leadership, and ministry involves working with people, and generational intelligence offers countless insights to help us do this better. *Generational IQ* is a brilliant book based on significant research that can help us value and relate better with all generations.

JUD WILHITE

Senior pastor of Central Christian Church and author of *Pursued*

As a mom, there are so many things I worry about when it comes to my children. How can I help my children launch well? How will I pass on my faith, and how do I talk to them about their opinions that are so different than mine? Haydn Shaw covers these questions and more, putting to rest many of the fears and myths that we needlessly hang on to when it comes to our children. Filled with practical application, it moves us to an understanding of the Millennial generation that will not only inform our parenting but will help all of us to understand how they view God and the church.

SHERRY SURRATT

CEO and president of MOPS International

Haydn Shaw has blown off the roof with his new book about generational issues in churches. *Generational IQ* is witty, readable, and packed with observations and strategies that go way beyond a book for church leaders. It hits everyone—giving five generations a way to enrich their personal, work, and church lives. The content

is so rich you could amplify each chapter into a book so valuable as to become viral. As a church consultant, Haydn Shaw brings reality to strategy planning that moves leaders and lay members into new areas of application of their gifts and skills. *Generational IQ* screams to readers, “Pick me up!” Get unstuck from the ineffective, dry, despairing rigidity of “the way you’ve always done it.” Find the right questions—the ones that unlock the future. Transform your generation into facilitators for eternity. Packed with up-to-date and solid information, as well as brilliant options for releasing personal and organizational energy—Haydn Shaw’s second book on generational issues management sets a new standard of excellence. He has created new terminology that will become the grist for conversations about dealing with generational issues for decades to come.

CARL F. GEORGE

Church growth consultant and author of *Prepare Your Church for the Future*

Yep, Millennials are everywhere! And yes, they *are* a force you need to understand for the future of your family, ministry, or business. But as Haydn Shaw shows in this refreshing book, they are also *not* the godless heathens intent on destroying American culture that they are often painted to be. In fact, Shaw gives an excellent overview of every generation and what you most need to know—because it is often different from what you think. This is a must-read for any parent or leader who works with anyone of a generation other than their own.

SHAUNTI FELDHAHN

Social researcher and bestselling author of *For Women Only* and *The Good News about Marriage*

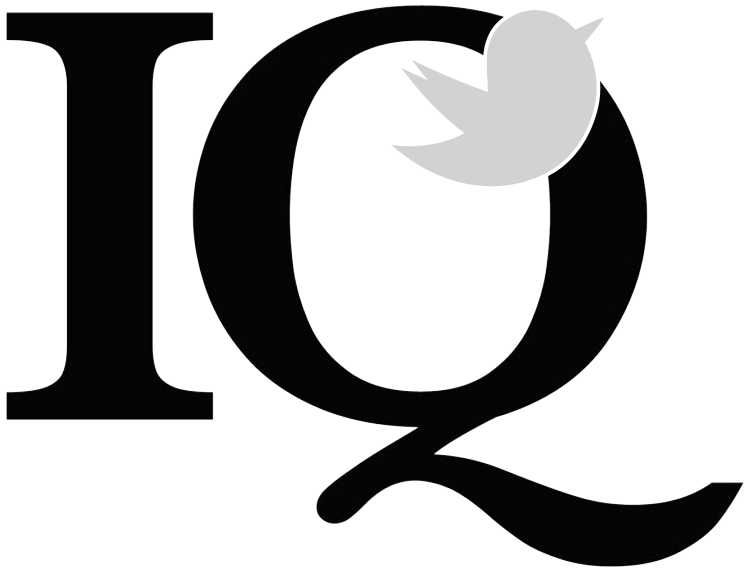
Christians are called to be salt and light, to engage the culture around them, which in this day and age is no easy task. In *Generational IQ*, Haydn Shaw and Ginger Kolbaba provide Christian ministers and laypersons alike the intellectual framework necessary to tackle the communication gap between the generations. It is a timely and tailor-made treatment of generational awareness.

ED STETZER

Executive director of Lifeway Research

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CHAPTER I

Turning On the Lights



“HAYDN, I CAN’T see out of my right eye.”

My wife, Laurie, and I were traveling home from my company’s holiday party, and we were still an hour away.

“What do you mean you can’t see?” I asked, fighting the temptation to take my eyes off the road and stare at her.

“It wasn’t so noticeable at the party,” she said, “but now that we’re on the interstate, it seems like I’m peering through thick steam.”

“So it didn’t happen just now—it was bothering you at the party?” I confirmed, relieved that my forty-nine-year-old wife probably hadn’t had a stroke. “Why don’t you look it up on your phone and see what’s going on?”

“Haydn,” she said patiently, “I can’t see.”

I pulled over to the shoulder, put on the hazards, and spent

the next seven or eight minutes scrambling over the Internet on my phone so we could decide whether we needed to race to the nearest emergency room. Cancer stared at me from every website.

If you've ever looked up medical symptoms on the Internet, you know how the possibilities are a mix of the horrifying and the ordinary. I read the list to Laurie:

- > Stroke
- > Cancer
- > Brain tumor
- > Eye tumor
- > Macular degeneration (which had taken her mother's eyesight at sixty-two)
- > Retinal detachment
- > Ocular migraine
- > Allergies

I thought this was an ominous list, but to my surprise, she said, "I wonder if it's allergies."

"To what?"

"To this sweater. I just bought it today for the party, and I've never worn angora before."

She decided to go home, remove the sweater, and take some Benadryl to see if that helped. Ten minutes after doing this, she couldn't see any better, so we went to the emergency room. Often there's a long wait, but since she suddenly couldn't see out of one eye, they were worried about stroke and took her straight to a CAT scan.

By the time she got back from the CAT scan, her vision was almost completely clear.

Within an hour, the emergency room doctors concluded from

a clear CAT scan and dissipated symptoms that it *was* allergies and sent us home.

I'm happy to report that Laurie has had no other problems, because that was her first and only experience wearing an angora blend. With the emergency room cost added in, we joke that the angora sweater was the most expensive she'll ever wear. But we were happy to pay for the doctors and the test because we had no way of knowing which of the possible Internet diagnoses was right. We didn't have the information, the training, or the know-how to interpret all the frightening reports we found to tell us about Laurie's problem.

A Frightening Diagnosis

Many of us are in a similar situation with our families, friends, and churches. We see the United States and Canada becoming less Christian, and many of us long for the good old days. We hear that in three generations Christianity will all but disappear unless something radically changes. We hear that 88 percent of young people have sex before they marry and that the statistics for Christian young people aren't much different.¹ We see hundreds of news reports that for the first time, people who claim no religious affiliation, the "Nones," make up as much as 23 percent of our population. Even more frightening, we hear that the Millennial generation is the biggest part of the "Nones"; they are leaving church and aren't coming back.²

Like my wife and me with her vision loss, we recognize that there are problems. We may even panic about the problems, and then when we see books or news stories about them or do our own investigations on the Internet, we panic even more. We ask ourselves and our friends questions like these (if we bring them up at all):

GENERATIONAL IQ

- > Is Christianity really going to be dead in three generations?
- > Why is my twentysomething still living in the basement?
- > Is it even possible for young people to save sex for marriage when they don't marry until age twenty-eight?
- > How do I pass on my faith to my children when they don't respond to the things I find most meaningful about it?
- > What can I do now that my child is walking away from the faith?
- > What do I say to people who claim they're spiritual but not religious?
- > Why won't the younger generations come to our church?
- > How does our church keep both the youngest and the oldest generations happy?
- > How do I help my church figure out what to do with retirees like me who have real skills and want to do more than fold bulletins?

All of these problems share one thing in common: they are rooted in generational differences. Yet we often don't know enough about the problem to know how big of a deal it is or what to do about it. We don't know whether, as with my wife's allergic reaction, the solution is as simple as returning a sweater or whether we will struggle with it for the rest of our lives. We need intelligence to help us sort fact from terrifying fiction.

That's where *Generational IQ* comes in.

Generational Intelligence

I've been providing generational intelligence reports to individuals, businesses, the government, churches, and other organizations for twenty years, helping them make sense of the

generations: Traditionalists (born before 1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964), Generation Xers (born 1965–1980), and Millennials (born 1981–2001).³ I’ve pored over countless studies and interviewed people from each generation, but I’ve learned the most from interacting with thousands of people in classes and speeches each year. That research allows me to advise my clients (and friends) which generational challenges are important and which ones are no big deal.

But it’s not only when I speak at churches that the questions I listed above come up. When I speak in the marketplace, people of faith come to me after the presentations with their worries. They realize after being introduced to generational research that it can help us understand and answer all of them, yet many of these people lack the tools or experience to wisely diagnose what’s happening in their relationships. We’re making these issues harder than they need to be because we don’t have the time to study all of the generational research and sort through the nuances of the data until we can draw balanced, thoughtful conclusions.

It’s like the employee who has been at your workplace almost six months and still gets overwhelmed looking at his e-mail. He doesn’t know whose e-mail matters and whose he can safely ignore. Or like medical researchers who must sort through millions of bits of data to find why some people can lose weight easily and others struggle for every half pound. Or like our country’s intelligence community sorting through the “noise” of thousands of rumors to find the one terror cell that plans to blow up a marathon. Finding the relevant information in a sea of data requires more than just facts. We are drowning in facts; what we need is intelligence.

Close to Home

In my previous book, *Sticking Points*, I tackled generational tensions in the workplace. I wrote *Generational IQ* so I could bring

people of faith the same help I've brought to businesses, because if we don't have generational intelligence, we overreact to the small things, ignore the big things, and do the wrong things, making our relationships worse. From what I've observed, people of faith overreact to generational differences even more than business-people do. And understandably so. The reason is that the people we worry about aren't just employees. They are our children, our friends, and our church members. Or we worry about our faith itself.

That's why we need generational intelligence, and we need it now. The questions I listed earlier (and others like them) keep Christians up at night because they hit us in the heart. The more we read about them in the news or online, the more frightened we get. It's like we're watching one of those scary movies where the girl heads into the dark basement, and we know the bad guy is there, and the ominous music reminds us that the bad guy is there, and we're yelling at the screen, "No! Don't go down there! Run away!" (I've always wondered why she never turns on a light.) It's as though we see our families and communities going down into that basement, and we feel just as helpless as we do watching the movie. We're left yelling, "No! Don't go down there! What's *wrong* with you?"

My aim in *Generational IQ* is to bring the best of generational research close to home, to help you find a way to dispel generational tensions in the relationships that are closest to you. I also want to shed light on the outright mistakes, hearsay, and distortions—as well as the actual facts—in the dismal reports I mentioned above. I'm worried about some of these same things—the future could be bleak—but right now, despite what you've heard, Christianity isn't dying, Millennials aren't the problem in your family or your church, and the future really is bright if people of faith start learning generational intelligence.

The best research, combined with understanding the big mental shifts over the last eighty years, will help everyday Christians get startlingly smarter in dealing with the things that scare them about their faith, family, friends, and church. If we don't get smarter in dealing with generational issues, I'm afraid. I'm very afraid.

Generational tensions and problems aren't going away anytime soon. We may be tempted to ask, "Why can't we go back to the way things were?" Like the young woman going forward into the dark basement, we *can't* go back. But we can turn on the lights.