

“Being Lapped; And It’s Great!”

1st Corinthians 1:3-9

Rev. Robin Gilshire

Chilson Hills Church, Brighton, MI

Inspired by and dedicated to the youth of Chilson Hills who work in CHAT.

November 30, 2008

The generation gap.

Old news.

It means the “Builder” or WWII generation doesn’t understand their self-absorbed “Boomer” children.

It means that Boomers wonder what’s up with their “Generation Xer” offspring.

And, now, the Generation Xer’s who have children secretly worry about the “Millennial” kids’ fascination with cyberspace.

I mean, c’mon, one “old guy” to another...preschoolers today can wire a television, “TiVo,” and PlayStation, but struggle to tie their shoe laces.

When we were their age we could..., well..., play a mean game of Pac-Man.

Middle-schoolers can help their parents navigate any number of Windows updates, but , like, totally don’t know what to do when asked to *wash* dishes.

High-schoolers spend hours on the Internet, sending e-mail, hanging out in chat-rooms, texting, never more than a click away from sites selling anarchy or pornography.

This is the on-line world; where it’s easier to learn how to build bombs than build relationships.

While the oh-so-young hackers are peeking into the FBI, their parents are often trying to hack into their own computers.

Speaking as an official member of the “I can remember black-and-white TV” generation, I feel the technological generation gap that exists between parents and progeny.

Generation gap, indeed. Forget that, it’s a generation lap!

Members of the A.A.R.P., we’ve been lapped.

While we were sitting at our computers, slowly punching in our passwords, going on-line, checking our e-mail, the Millennial Munchkins were racing around the cyber-track...chatting with friends, researching a school paper, and downloading songs...*all at the same time!*

Better get used to it; we've been lapped.

You know, like in a NASCAR race when the slower cars gets passed by the faster ones.

Here's what happened: us old guys were overtaken by our more technologically-savvy offspring.

Those who live in what's been described as the

"Net Generation" have an innate, learned-from-diapers relationship with information technologies;

one that's a tad alien to those of us who wrote and *used stamps on* letters and, if you can believe it, *spoke* on the phone.

It is a real challenge for those folks who never grew up with computers to catch up with those who have.

But before you folks who feel that change, especially rapid, on-going change is depressing, consider this: getting lapped is good.

Indeed, it's very good.

In 1st Corinthians, Paul opens his written letter by recognizing the "grace of God" that lives in the church at Corinth; and he note that the people who are that church are not lacking in any "spiritual gift."

But not wanting those Corinthian folks to feel too satisfied or comfortable with their position and the track of life, Paul seems to encourage them to do some more laps.

He tells them that Jesus, ".will strengthen them all the way to the end, so that each of them will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This story in Paul's writings is a call for us to be spiritually savvy, maintaining and developing the fitness of our faith...not only for ourselves, but for our children.

While it's great to have a competitive position in life's road race of faithfulness, it's even greater for the youngest members of our human race to LAP US in our faith.

Don't you believe it's the goal of every generation to see it's children sprint into new levels of health, happiness, wisdom, and, by God, spirituality?

Lapping is never a sure thing.

That's why Paul devotes so much written time in his letters to spiritual growth, often using racing as his metaphor.

Some would argue that Baby Boomers not only failed to lap their parents in terms of spiritual faith and maturity, but actually fell behind.

My generation tended to stumble over ourselves in a false-start of "me-centered" spirituality.

If you have trouble believing that, simply ask the upper management of A.I.G.

Instead of racing away from “What’s in it for me?” and
racing ahead to new positions of faithful service,
we Boomers gravitated toward
“Magazine-reductionism.”

Sure we did.

We started with “Life” magazine; a big magazine all
about life.

We then moved to “People” magazine; not as big as life,
but still it was about people.

We wound up at a magazine called “Self!”
Need I say more?

But with each new generation there is hope, and,
if you’ve been keeping an eye on the younger generations
in this church, there’s solid evidence that the
newer generations on this planet are spiritually
out in front of us old guys.

Case in point, a high-school classmate of mine and educator
living near Cleveland, Ohio, Sue Shipman, stopped going
to church years ago. She also didn’t raise her now
18-year-old son, Eric, with any religion at all.

“I didn’t want to ram religion down his throat like my mom did
to me,” Sue said.

So today, while Sue is no doubt getting a jump on
holiday shopping, where will her son be?

In church; at worship. Not that long ago, Eric started
attending church with a friend; and now this
outrageously-young computer geek WALKS to worship
BY HIMSELF on Sunday mornings and enjoys
youth group on Thursday nights, where he’s learning
to mediate.

At home, while watching TV, Eric...

“Old Guys,” get ready for this one, he reads Bible stories
during commercials!

“What,” you may ask, “is going on here!?”

Eric tells me that Christ makes him feel “more fulfilled.”

His mother, while supportive, confesses that his behavior
is “really bizarre.”

Whatever our individual generational time-frame or
life experience, life would be far better off if we were all
tearing up the track.

I mean, really...who LIKES being lapped!?

Come on! You’re out for a run, working up a sweat,
starting to feel a little queasy, just about to toss your
cookies all over your brand new “UnderArmor” shirt,
when some younger guy sprints past you...effortlessly...
for the SECOND TIME!

How does that make you feel...hmmmm? Rriight!
You don't even like being passed on the freeway.

Paul does in fact argue that being lapped is good;
but we are at our best when we still try to up-tick the other
guy in acts of kindness and the pursuit of justice.
Being lapped by the next generation has begun, but we
do not have to stand on the track and eat dust.
If we remain spiritually savvy and supportive of our children
and their children in their distinctive practice of the faith,
then the Christian community will not become a
“virtual reality without adults.”

We can each run the race at our own pace and encourage
those who run on ahead, knowing that our Lord Christ
is strengthening every one of us to the end.
As the young members of the faith take off, we can be
thankful that they are lapping us in service to the Lord...
our Lord Jesus Christ, the One, who does a new thing
in every generation.