



# The Federated Church of Hyannis

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**Reverend Derek L. White, Pastor**

## **Weekly Message from the Pastor and Sermon Notes for August 15, 2021**

The Church is looking for toys for a new ministry called the “Mom’s Group”. This ministry will provide a play area for young children during the cold weather months. Moms will be able to socialize as well. We are looking for good quality toys appropriate for ages 18 months to 5 years old. Please contact the church if you would like to donate such items.

Rev. Derek L. White

### **Sermon: Faith Through the Generations, Part II**

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

This week is Part Two of the series on Faith Through the Generations. Last week we discussed Paul’s relationship to Timothy and the challenges Timothy faced in ministry as the church changed from Paul planting it to Timothy leading it. Traditions will change, but the Gospel remains the same.

Last week’s message was also about Generation X and the churches in America during the 1980s. This week is about Millennials and the churches in America during the 1990s. One of the reasons for this series is to show how the churches in America have changed over the last several decades and the direction churches are going.

During the 1980s, many churches began to see a rapid drop in Sunday School attendance from the 1970s. There were other options on Sunday morning other than going to church as a family. The culture began to shift away from religious life in America. So in the 1990s many churches began offering new programs to attract young families and youth back to church. They started offering family services at a later time with more modern songs. They hired youth ministers that looked hip and cool with no seminary education as opposed to having Associate Ministers do young adult ministries. Churches tried marketing and branding to make the church look cool and fun. Christian Rock Bands became a thing and toured with the beginning of the Christian Music as a sub-genre of music. And witness-wear began to make Christian culture a market for the commercialization of faith. Witness-wear are clothing like T-shirts that have evangelistic messages on them.

But one of the most notable things about the 1990s and churches is the movement to a thing called Contemporary Worship. Because Christian Rock Music and Christian Concerts became so popular with young adults, lots of young people wanted church to be more like the Christian Rock Concerts they attended. This led to a new movement of Contemporary Worship with guitars, drums, keyboards, and screens in worship. These services were designed to appeal to young adults who had drifted away from the churches during the 1980s. Some churches did it well and they saw a lot of growth. Some churches didn't do it well and it didn't work, it divided churches. Some saw the Contemporary Worship service as a gimmick for entertainment value only, no substance. Others saw it as a way to make young people passionate about their faith again. The most significant change of the American Churches in the 1990s was Christian Music and the Contemporary Worship services.

To bring this back to Paul and Timothy from the Bible, Paul says to Timothy it is the **Message**, not the **Method** that matters. If the message is true, the method by which it is delivered can be changed. However, those who are imposters and would change the message will eventually be exposed even if they present it with an attractive method. The message has to be the substance from which faith is built. The music of the church will change, but the message of the Gospel remains the same. Music is just one method through which the Gospel can be heard. Both in traditional hymns and contemporary praise and worship songs, the Gospel is proclaimed. The best explanation I have heard in describing the difference between traditional hymns and contemporary praise and worship is the pronouns used for God. In traditional hymns God is often referred to in the third person. In contemporary praise and worship God is often referred to in the first person.

From generation to generation the faith remains the same because the Gospel remains the same. God is steadfast and true, but each generation has its own way of doing things. Millennials are different than Generation X. I have heard that they are the generation which is technology dependent. That does not mean they are technology savvy. They are a generation that has learned to heavily use technology in their daily life. And the method to reach this generation with the Gospel needs to be technology based. The one significant difference between the 1990s and now is we look at tiny screens opposed to big screens. Online worship is just a new method of sharing the Gospel which remains true from generation to generation.

Next week I will be gone on military orders. But I am delighted that Hugh Findlay will be preaching about his faith formation and one of the greatest generations in the history of the church.