



## HELPING CHURCH LEADERS TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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### The Class of 2002

The young people who are starting college this fall for the first time were born in 1980. An e-mail (author unknown) has been surfacing on the Net that describes what the Class of 2002 knows and does not know about history and popular culture. The following are excerpts.

They have few meaningful recollections of the Reagan era. They were pre-pubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged. Black Monday, 1987, is as significant to them as the Great Depression. There has only been one Pope in their lifetime. They were 11 when the Soviet Union broke apart and do not remember the Cold War. They have only known one Germany. They were six when the Challenger space shuttle exploded and nine when the events of Tienanmen Square took place. The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as WWI or WWII.

Their lifetime has always included AIDS. They never had a polio shot and likely do not know what it is. Bottle caps have not only always been screw off, but have always been plastic. Atari pre-dates them, as do vinyl albums. The expression "you sound like a broken record" means nothing to them since they have never owned a record player. They have likely never played Pac Man nor heard of Pong. They may have heard of an 8 track tape, but chances are they probably have never actually seen or played one. The Compact Disc was introduced when they were one year old. Chicago and Alabama are places, not musical groups.

They have always had an answering machine. Most have never seen a TV set with only 13 channels, nor a black and white TV. They have always had cable and a VCR and cannot imagine life without a remote control. They were born the year that the Walkman was introduced and roller-skating means in-line. They have never seen Larry Bird play basketball, and the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar they know is a football player.

Now that you feel appropriately old...

For a more insightful analysis of the population that is 20 and younger, read the book, [Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation](#) by Don Tapscott (published by McGraw-Hill, 1998) or visit the website by the same name at [www.growingupdigital.com](http://www.growingupdigital.com)

Tapscott advises people wanting to reach Net-Gens to remember five keys: (1) options are a must...choice is one of their most deeply held values; (2) customize to meet their needs; (3) give them the option of changing their mind...they are growing up in a world where fixing a mistake takes a click of the mouse and they believe changing their minds should be equally as painless; (4) let them try before they buy...they are users and doers and reject expert opinions in favor of forming their own; and (5) never forget that they will choose function over form...they are not awed by new technology and care about what the technology will do, not the technology itself.

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