

# *NEXT* **MENTORING THE GENERATION**

A Strategy for Connecting  
the Generations

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A STRATEGY FOR CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS  
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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to two men who mentored me in ministry:

Pastor Roger Mills, my senior pastor when I began my ministry as a youth pastor; and

Dr. Gordon Shipp, my “boss” when I started my college teaching ministry.

Both of these men are in Glory now, so they will never know how much I appreciate the impact they had in my life and how much they taught me. I know their heavenly reward will be great.

# Preface

REMEMBER WHEN you were a kid? Did someone make a significant impact on your life? You know the person I'm talking about—the adult in your church or school who took the time to encourage you. He may have been a coach or band teacher. Or she may have been a youth worker or Sunday School teacher. He may have been the parent of a friend, your pastor, or youth pastor. Or she may have been another caring adult who took the time to notice you and support you in the things of the Lord. Many of us were fortunate enough to have an adult who took the time to encourage us by the little things he or she did with us and for us.

Back then we didn't have a name for these people, but today we call them "mentors." *They are the trusted adults who take the initiative to develop growing, personal relationships with students and encourage their spiritual and personal maturity.* These mentors are adults who care enough to notice and to support the teenagers in their churches.

As I look back on my days as a teenager, I fondly remember the caring, godly encouragement of older

people in my church. They were not necessarily the “official” church youth workers, although those people greatly influenced my life too. I am talking about the adults who took the time to say an encouraging word to me, send me notes, or call me on the phone. (Yes, we had phones back then!) I still remember those adults who prayed with me when I was struggling with something or who came to my high school basketball games. Some provided spiritual encouragement; others encouraged me just by taking an interest in my activities and my walk with the Lord.

We live in a busy world. Yet I believe that many adults could have a ministry in the lives of the teenagers in their churches. They just don’t know what they can do. These people may not have a lot of time, but they are willing to do what they can to encourage students. Perhaps mentoring is a trend whose time has come in youth ministry. Today’s students need all the encouragement they can get.

Timothy Smith quoted this statement, which was based on a 2000 Gallup survey, in his book titled *The Seven Cries of Today’s Teens*: “We live in a society [where], despite widespread concerns about children and teenagers, the vast majority of adults are not actively involved in the lives of young people outside of their families. . . . Without the attentions of many adults in all parts of their lives and community, young people are deprived of important sources of guidance, nurture, care, and socialization.”<sup>1</sup>

There is a simple but effective way for adults to interact with and encourage teenagers: It’s called mentoring. This book, *Mentoring the Next Generation*, contains simple suggestions for the adults in our churches who would like to be involved in some way in the lives of teenagers.