

THE TRADITIONALIST GENERATION

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Traditionalists

The Traditionalist Generation(1900-1945) is the one which today is often found longing for that simpler life in the past with moral values, a work ethic and social stability. Many people in the early 1920's were rural without the liberal influences of city life. But then came the radio with its influences. Writers and artists, like Freud and Picasso, were challenging traditional ways. Darwin's Theory of Evolution and the liberal theological view of Form Criticism challenged the veracity of Scripture. The Great Depression made Traditionalists cautious and thrifty. Raising a family took sacrifice, hard work and frugality. World War II united the country and instilled the values of loyalty, sacrifice and patience. A post war exodus took place from the farm to the city - from outhouses to indoor plumbing in prefab houses. Atheistic ideologies gained ground in universities. The seeds were sown for the radicalism of the upcoming generations: Baby Boomers (1946-64) & Generation X (1965-80).

Some Strengths

Traditionalists tended to give, cooperate and serve with lower expectations.

- > **Giving** - Traditionalists approached money differently than future generations. They not only were diligent savers but also generous givers. They sacrificed to finance their children's college education. They enabled the construction of beautiful churches and supported charities.
- > **Cooperation** - Life on the farm, extended families and World War II produced a strong sense of cooperation. War bonds were purchased.

The rationing of food, gasoline, luxuries and other material things was readily accepted.

- > **Lower Expectations** - Traditionalists were comfortable in smaller, less elaborate homes. They were content with less if more was not available. They were faithful workers, grateful for the ability and privilege to work. They believed in "an honest day's work for an honest day's pay."

Some Current Weaknesses

- > **Clinging to the Past** - Some Traditionalists (in their 70's and 80's today) have a tendency to remember the past as better than it was, regard the present as worse and the future insecure. They long for "the good old days", forgetting the wisdom of the Scriptures: *"Do not say: 'Why were the old days better than these?' For it is not wise to ask such questions."* (Eccl. 7:10)

- > **Grumblers** - Traditionalists were brought up to "be seen and not heard". Along came the Millennials (15 to 35 year olds today) who readily express their opinions and expect to openly participate in decisions. Critical, grumbling, lecturing Traditionalists turn them off. Millennials actually want to talk to Traditionalists but they want them to talk "*with*" them, not "*to*" them.
- > **Purposeless Retirement** - Retirement is not found in the Bible, probably because people couldn't retire. Pensions and Social Security changed things. A term now frequently used for those 65 and older is "Second Adulthood", a time to be active, productive, perhaps engaging a second career. Some retire to the boredom of too much leisure and not enough purpose, missing out on the joy, satisfaction and delight of accomplishment.

Traditionalists & the Church

A properly functioning congregation cares about the elderly, not only in providing for their spiritual nurture and at times physical needs, but most importantly in providing avenues for fellowship and volunteer service opportunities. Retirees can be of great service to the Church, enriching the lives of others as well as their own.

RESOURCES

"Generational IQ" by Haydn Shaw
"Assets of the Elderly"

www.selc.lcms.org - Personal Stewardship