

GENERATIONS THEORY AND THE CHURCH

The Rev. Karl Travis

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The "GI" Generation ¹

Generation type: Civic.

Who are they? Born between 1901 and 1924, currently 90 years and older. Those born in the generation's early years were the century's new children, favored above those born at the end of the 19th century. The youngest GIs were just old enough to fight at Normandy. This generation – Tom Brokaw's "greatest" – has the eternal credential of surviving the Depression and fighting World War II. This generation stresses the group over the individual, tradition over innovation, loyalty and commitment over values and self expression.

What shaped them? The Depression, W.W.I and W.W.II, post W.W.II economic boom, McCarthyism, Kennedy era confidence, Cold War, inventions: radio, household appliances, airplane, automobile

What are they like?

- ◆ GIs tend to see other generations as "ineffectual facsimiles of [their] own", believing theirs to be the quintessential generational example. They also tend to believe that experiences are uniform and universal.
- ◆ Believers in "public harmony and cooperative social discipline": team players, all for one and one for all. "Regular guy" is a compliment for someone in this generation.
- ◆ Believes that history moves in an orderly, straight line, and that things progressively improve – the "can do" generation.

What have their lives been like?

- ◆ the best organized generation in American history. Beginning with the foundation of the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the Campfire Girls, this generation has been amazingly *group* oriented. Its Association of American Retired Persons was by 1990 the largest and wealthiest advocacy organization in the country's history.
- ◆ the most affluent elders of the 20th century. In 1960, the elderly had the highest poverty rate of any age bracket. Today they have the lowest. 6 out of 7 GIs report "having fared better financially than their parents, the highest proportion ever recorded."
- ◆ held the presidency longer than any generation in American history (Johnson, Reagan, Nixon, Ford, Kennedy, Carter, Bush = 32 years)
- ◆ have won 99 Nobel Prizes, roughly 2/3 of all the Nobels ever awarded to Americans.
- ◆ have won all of American's fourteen Nobel prizes in economics.
- ◆ held majorities in Congress for an unprecedented 20 years (1955-1975).
- ◆ largest jump in educational achievement in American history. In one generation, average length of schooling went from 9th grade to 12th; college attendance tripled. At same time, pre-W.W.I peak of 83% of high schoolers studying a foreign language fell to W.W.II era low of 21%.
- ◆ have created, maintained, and benefited from large federal government. Beginning with CCC, WPA, and other depression era government projects, to the GI Bill and on, GIs have overseen

¹ The following information is taken primarily from *Generations: The History of American's Future, 1584 to 2069*, William Strauss and Neil Howe, New York: Quill, 1991.

the creation of and benefited from large government programs. In 1929, government consumed less than 3% of nation's economic product. In 1989, 22%. In 50s and 60s, federal benefits per elderly person "rose less rapidly than the average wage." But from 1965 to 1989, "federal benefits per elderly person have risen fifteen times more rapidly than wages." (1989 = total federal benefits average over \$14,000 per elderly household.) 1990 deficit reduction law "imposed a 1991 maximum of \$41 in extra Medicare charges per [elderly] beneficiary, and up to \$2,137 in extra Medicare taxes per younger worker." By the 1990s, a 30 year old male with wife at home and one child, making \$30,000 per year, paid 5 times the amount of federal taxes as a 70 year old couple with the same income.

The Silent Generation

Generation type: Adaptive.

Who are they? Born between 1925-1942. Currently 70-89 years old.

What shaped them? *Childhood:* born during the Depression, too young to fight in W.W.II. *Young adulthood:* Korean War (war memorial was not built until just recently, well after the Viet Nam Memorial), Civil Rights Movement (Silents were the leaders). *Mid-life:* Sexual Revolution, rising divorce rates, the Feminist Movement, the Summer of Love, Viet Nam, Watergate.

What are they like?

- ◆ “They are interested in the system rather than individual enterprise,” (*Fortune* magazine) “a generation with strongly middle-aged values.” They are facilitators and technocrats, mediators and moderators. They were the referees of the 60’s “Generation Gap.” A generation of presidential advisors, but not presidents.

What have their lives been like?

- ◆ a generation in-between. The oldest of them are too young to have been war heroes, and the oldest were just “in time to encounter a powerful national consensus -- against which young rebels, like James Dean, found themselves without a cause.” When no one over 30 could be trusted, they were thirty something. The Silent generation is sandwiched between two generations with very distinct personalities: the get-it-done GIs and the self-absorbed Boomers. “The Silents have spent a lifetime plumbing inner wellsprings older GIs seldom felt while maintaining a sense of social obligation Boomers haven’t shared.”
- ◆ faced the turbulent movements of the 60s – feminism, the Civil Rights movement, the sexual revolution – in their forties and early fifties. “Through the 1970s, the Silents completed the shift from an elder-focused rising adulthood to a youth-focused mid-life – feeling, as in the Bob Dylan lyric, “Ah, but I was so much older then/I’m younger than that now.”
- ◆ were “good kids.” have century’s lowest rates for almost every social pathology of youth (crime, suicide, illegitimate births, and teen unemployment).
- ◆ are relatively small as a generation, and have faced less competition in the workplace than either their seniors or their juniors. They are America’s only generation to have “fewer members per cohort than both the generations born just before and just after.”
- ◆ a wonderfully empathetic generation, able to see all sides of an argument, to mediate between others. Silents made the profoundest contribution to the Civil Rights movement, and have produced the greatest generation of comedians, psychiatrists, and songwriters.
- ◆ economically, went from cashless childhood to affluent elderhood. From 20 to 40, “Silent households showed [the 20th century’s] steepest rise in real per capita income and per-household wealth.”
- ◆ earliest-marrying and earliest-babying in American history. (Men = 23, women = 20) Women born between 1931-35 are the most fertile in American history. This is the only generation whose college-educated women are more fertile than those who didn’t finish secondary school.
- ◆ Silent men outpaced GI men in educational achievement. Silent women did not.

- ◆ “divorce epidemic” has notably reshaped Silents. In the middle of their middle age years, number of states with “no fault” divorce laws jumped from 0 to 45 (1969-75).
- ◆ Silent professionals account for the 60s surge in the helping professions and the 70s explosion of public interest advocacy groups.
- ◆ a generation of bureaucratizers. -- compared to 60s Congress, the mid-80s Congress convened twice as many hearings, debated for twice as many hours, hired four times as many staff, mailed six times as many letters to constituents, etc.
- ◆ vote for presidential underdogs: Stevenson over Eisenhower, Nixon over Kennedy, Humphrey over Nixon, Ford over Carter.
- ◆ likely to turn out to be the only generation in American history never to elect one of their own as president.
- ◆ more than any other generation questioned, more Silents would prefer to be in another age bracket. “Silents entering mid-life have fueled a booming market in dietary aids, exercise classes, cosmetic surgery, hair replacements, and psychiatric treatments.”

Perhaps Quiet Would be Better Than Silent

We were not silent then
We are not silent now.
We internalized events
and
ruminated on them
until
we were formed and ready to act.
We were fortunate to be left alone
in our formation.
The media were too busy with the war.
We were neither written about
nor analyzed.

We lived through the depression
but were too young
to know
that there was another way to live.

We saw and internalized
hobos going from door to door asking for food.
the mill supervisor who was now
the milkman.
And our parents said:
"Learn all you can
and it will not happen to you."

We lived through World War II
but we were too young
to fight and share the gore and the glory.

We saw and internalized
the slaughter of the Jews
the internment of the Japanese
the lists of the boys we had known
who were
wounded, captured, or dead.
And our elders said:
"Do you part here."
And we learned
first aid
shapes of German planes
how to garden
and we volunteered
at The Red Cross, the day care center,
and the hospital.

We were almost formed when
the A-Bomb fell,
but we were old enough to know
the world would never be the same.

We heard and internalized
"My God what have we done?"
or
"Hooray, the war is won!"
And our elders said:
"It is up to you to make a better world"
(with our direction).

Quietly
we rebelled.
We registered to vote without joining a party.
We voted for Adlai
not the Great Warrior DDE.
We
accepted people different from us
into our churches
into our homes
into our lives.

Quietly
we married first then had our children.
We told our sons:
"Manhood is not derived from killing in a war."
We told our daughters:
"You can choose whom you want to be."
We told them both:
"Learn as much as you can."
"Love all people."
"Live as people of God."

Quietly
we marched for Civil Rights.
We stood in peace vigils.
Both parents worked to pay college tuitions,
and
supported government aid so all could have a chance.
Again, we were fortunate.
When the tuitions were paid,
the mortgages finished,
we could still work
and
our money grew well.
Now our youngsters tell us:
"You are affluent. You are retired.
We will never have it so good."

Quietly,
we have cared for our elders.
We have put our lives in order
with
Living Wills,
Long Term Health Insurance,
Last Wills,
and,
quietly
we can dry up and fade away.
No one will even know we were here
planting the seeds
of
a plural society
resistance to war
and
new roles for male and female.

However,
we did not nurture these seeds
as we did those
in our Victory Gardens.

Resistance to war
became
violent confrontations
about
the draft in one war
without
building ways to live in peace.

The plural society
degenerated to
the externals of political correctness
without
the internal understanding
of
those different from oneself.

The new roles for male and female
became
greater opportunities and emancipation
for women and men
but
not without the strife of
more broken families
more teen-age pregnancies
more sexual accusations
and
more distressed children.

Living as people of God
became
for some, a denial of the world
for some, a choice to serve the world,
while
many chose to worship only themselves
and
the products of their culture.

DOMINUS NOBISCUM

Mabel Bennett

The Baby Boom Generation

- Generation type:** Idealist. The last American idealist generation included Thoreau.
- Who are they?** Born between 1943 and 1960. Currently 54-69 years old. Boomers have “metamorphosed from Beaver Cleaver to hippie to bran eater to yuppie to what some are calling “Neo-Puritan.”” Unlike Silents, they have no memory of W.W.II. *Started the Consciousness Revolution. More interested in values and concepts than in institutions or traditions.*
- What shaped them?** Television, McCarthyism, Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation Movements, Dr. Spock, Viet Nam (Kent State), Summer of Love, affluent 80s.
- What are they like?**

- ◆ Mother’s boys! “Most older Americans who studied young radicals in the late 60s were struck by their attachment to mothers and their ambivalence, oedipal rebellion, or attitude of parricide toward male authority.” Why? Perhaps because they were raised in home by their mothers in larger proportions than any other living generation. Only two percent of Boomer children were ever in institutional child care. A generation of Spock babies...
- ◆ Rebellious! Much of the distinctiveness of the Boomer generation stands in direct opposition to the GI generation: “spiritualism over science, gratification over patience, negativism over positivism, fractiousness over conformity, rage over friendliness, self over community.” Even in middle age they define themselves over against other people and things. They buy “nonfat, noncaffeine, non-aerosol, non-nitrate,” non this and non that to flaunt what they are *not* consuming.
- ◆ Non-conformists. They are “better preachers than builders, philosophers than scientists.” Careers which place people in large scale corporate structures have been shunned by Boomers in favor of more eclectic, creative, often home based industries. Boomers “exalt individual conscience over duty to community.” Joe Namath and Andy Messersmith, both Boomers, were among the first to proclaim “free agency” in professional sports.

What have their lives been like?

- ◆ Boomers did drugs, then religion. They are far more religious in some ways than the generations which preceded them, only they define religion in much more individual terms. They “flocked from drugs to religion, to Jesus movements, evangelicalism, New Age utopianism, and millennialist visions of all sorts. ... spawned most active era of church formation of the 20th century.”
- ◆ Boomers’ lives have been marked by an absolute belief in absolute values, and they have sought to infuse the culture with their values. Curiously, Boomers have produced an almost even split as to what those values are. Still, whether it’s Rush Limbaugh or Bill Clinton, Pat Buchanan or Al Gore, the disagreement isn’t primarily about institutions, or organization, or process -- it’s about values.
- ◆ Boomers’ life spans have seen a worsening in every single category of social pathology: drunk driving, suicide, illegitimate births, teen unemployment, and crime rates.
- ◆ Beginning 1946, Boomer SAT scores continually decreased to lowest point in 1963. The same time span saw the greatest grade inflation ever measured. 1969, 4% of college freshmen were straight A high school students. By 1978, that proportion had tripled to 11%.

- ◆ Sexual revolution was more a women's than a men's movement. Boomer men reported only 3% increase in sexual activity over the Silents of like age. Boomer women increased premarital sexual activity from 41% to 81%.
- ◆ Dodging the Viet Nam draft was a more common and unifying experience than serving in the war itself. "Only one Boomer man in sixteen ever saw combat. Among all the rest, two-thirds attributed their avoidance to some deliberate dodge." However, the "only consensus lesson about Vietnam was that it was badly handled by GI leaders." Today 50% of Boomers say we should have stayed in Viet Nam and fought to win. In 1991, "Boomers were more inclined than any other generation to believe that sending American troops to the [Persian] Gulf was "the right thing" to do."
- ◆ Boomers have returned to church, but not to mainline churches. During the 80s, overall Boom church attendance rose nearly 30%. What's amazing is the diversity of the churches they chose to attend -- Pentecostal, Assemblies of God, and Southern Baptists are big Boomer choices on the conservative side, and at the other extreme are those Boomers who have headed for religious communities based in Eastern, New Age, or non-denominational streams. There are now more Moslems in the U.S. than Episcopalians.
- ◆ "Were it not for employed women (and dual-income households), Boomer family incomes would be well below what the Silent earned at like age. Married Boomer couples are doing slightly better than their next-elders did, single women much better. But the individual Boomer man is not. A 40 year old first waver earns about 15 percent more than his GI father did at like age, whereas a 30 year old last waver has fallen about 10 percent behind his Silent father. Between age 30 and 40, where the typical full-time GI worker enjoyed a 63 % inflation-adjusted rise in income, the first wave Boomer worker suffered a net 1 percent decline." "Only 5% of the Boomers match the demographic definition of the word YUPPIE."
- ◆ Now middle aged, Boomers seek to instill their values in the culture and its institutions. Hence, the politically correct movement, the move to ban obscene music, to promote "chastity," and "even support novel forms of corporal punishment and boot-camp incarceration that GI's would never have imagined, and that Boomers, two decades ago, would have considered fascist." Notice the Boomer fueled move to return public school children to uniforms.

A Baby Boomer's Reflection, then and now...

Then: Long Hair
Now: Longing for hair

Then: Being caught with Hustler magazine
Now: Being caught with Hustler magazine

Then: The perfect high.
Now: The perfect high yield mutual fund.

Then: Killer weed
Now: Weed killer

Then: Keg
Now: EKG

Then: Hoping for a BMW
Now: Hoping for a BM

Then: Acid Rock
Now: Acid Reflux

Then: The Grateful Dead
Now: Dr. Kevorkian

Then: Moving to California because it's cool
Now: Moving to California because it's warm

Then: Getting out to a new hip joint
Now: Getting a new hip joint

Then: Growing pot
Now: Growing pot belly

Then: Rolling Stones
Now: Kidney stones

Then: Watching John Glenn's historic flight with your parents
Now: Watching John Glenn's historic flight with your children

Then: Being called into the principal's office
Now: Calling the principal's office

Then: Trying to look like Marlon Brando or Elizabeth Taylor
Now: Trying NOT to look like Marlon Brando or Elizabeth Taylor

Then: Screw the system!
Now: Upgrade the system!

Then: Peace sign
Now: Mercedes logo

Then: Seeds and stems
Now: Roughage

Then: Parents begging you to get your hair cut
Now: Children begging you to get their head shaved.

Then: Popping pills, smoking joints
Now: Popping joints, aching joints

Then: Take acid
Now: Take antacid

Then: Our president's struggle with Fidel
Now: Our president's struggle with fidelity

Then: Passing the driver's test
Now: Passing the vision test

Then: Paar
Now: AARP

Then: "Whatever"
Now: "Depends"

How many do you remember...count 'em?

1. Blackjack chewing gum
2. Wax coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water
3. Candy cigarettes
4. Soda pop machines that dispensed bottles
5. Coffee shops with tableside jukeboxes
6. Home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers
7. Party lines
8. Newsreels before the movies
9. P.F. Flyers
10. Butch wax
11. Telephone numbers with a prefix (Olive-6933)
12. Peashooters
13. Howdy Doody
14. 45 RPM records
15. S & H Green stamps
16. Hi-fi's

17. Metal ice trays with levers
18. Mimeograph paper
19. Blue flashbulbs
20. Beanie & Cecile
21. Rollerskate keys
22. Cork pop-guns
23. Drive-ins
24. Studebakers
25. Washtub wringers

If you remembered....

- 0-5...You're still young.
6-10...You're getting older.
11-15...Don't tell your age.
16-25...You're really old!

The "13er" Generation

Generation type: *Reactive.* "A reactive generation grows up as underprotected and criticized youths during a spiritual awakening; matures into risk-taking, alienated rising adults; mellows into pragmatic mid-life leaders during a secular crisis; and maintains respect (but less influence) as reclusive elders."

Who are they? Born between 1961-1981. Currently 33-53 years old. By 1990, "13ers" outnumbered Boomers by 10 million.

What shaped them? "Individuals born in 1962 were year-old infants when Jack Kennedy was assassinated; age 5 during the "long hot summer" of urban rioting; age 7 at the time of anti-Vietnam marches, the moon landing, Chappaquiddick, and a sudden leap in divorce rates; age 13 when the Watergate trials ended and the poverty rate for youths rose steeply (just when it was plummeting for the elderly); and age 17 when Americans parked in gas lines and saw angry Iranian mobs cursing America every evening on TV."

What are they like?

- ◆ "a lost generation, an army of aging Bart Simpsons, possible armed and dangerous." -- frenetic, physical, and slippery.
- ◆ survivors: people more interested in getting by and making things work than with values and concepts.
- ◆ asked to compare Boomer students with 13er students, a sampling of teachers gave Boomers higher marks in 38 of 42 categories. The four where 13ers scored higher? negotiating skills, consumer awareness, adult-interaction skills, and "defenses to prevent extreme dependency on parents or authorities."
- ◆ violent! 135,000 of them bring guns to school every day. 8% of urban 7th-12th graders miss at least one day of school per month because they are physically afraid to go.
- ◆ in jail! 13ers are already the most incarcerated generation in American history. In 1990, one in every four black men between 20 and 29 was in jail, on probation, or on parole.
- ◆ poor. One in four 13ers lived in poverty as children. In 1967, male wage earners in their early 20s made 74% as much as older males; by 1988, ratio fell to 54%. Between 1973 and 1988, median income of households headed by persons under age 25 fell by 18%. Between 1960 and 1980, proportion of household heads age 18 to 24 owning their own homes fell by one-third, steepest decline for any age bracket. 1990, ¾ of young men were still living at home, highest proportion since the Great Depression.
- ◆ suicidal! Through 80s, roughly 5,000 children under 18 committed suicide each year, the largest number and proportion every recorded for that age bracket.
- ◆ "Their elders don't yet see it, 13ers themselves only dimly sense it, but this street-wise generation does indeed bring a bag of savvy tricks their elders lack – skills that may come in handy the next time America gets into real trouble. More than anyone, they have developed a seasoned talent for getting the most out of a bad hand. Take note, Beaver Cleaver: Thirteeners may never have glimpsed Nirvana, but they know how to win."

What have their lives been like?

- ◆ “Imagine coming to a beach at the very end of a long summer of big crowds and wild goings-on. The beach bunch is sunburned, the sand shopworn, hot, and full of debris -- no place for walking barefoot. You step on a bottle, and some cop cites you for littering.”
- ◆ the true “children of the 60s,” growing up with “self-immersed parents, disintegrating homes, schools with conflicting missions, confused leaders, a culture shifting from G to R ratings, new public-health dangers, and a “Me Decade” economy that tipped toward the organized old and away from the voiceless young.”
- ◆ “at each age through 24, this group has all of America’s lowest aptitude-test scores; the highest high school senior drug and alcohol abuse; all but one of America’s highest drunk-driving rates, and most of America’s highest rates for three violent crimes.”
- ◆ experienced the downside of all the Boomer trends, as “the symbolic meanings” – of sex, drugs, students rights, whatever -- had all faded. What they found, instead, were these trends - - the SAT decline, the youth crime, the substance abuse, the early sex – but 13ers have felt the full brunt of them and have born the ensuing adult criticism.
- ◆ the most aborted generation in American history.
- ◆ products of divorce. 13er child in the 1980s faced twice the risk of parental divorce as a Boomer child of the 1960s.
- ◆ raised themselves. The number of latchkey children doubled in the 1970s, and has increased steadily since.
- ◆ Boomer grade inflation came to abrupt end as 13ers hit high school. Kids born in 1961 received 10% fewer As and 10% more Cs than those born just a year earlier!
- ◆ voter indulgence also came to an end. Proposition 13 and other tax revolts put an end to large public expenditure on public education.
- ◆ generation on its way to being the first generation since the Gilded (1822-1842) to be less educated than its next-elders. (Boomer class of 1972 = 58% college educated. 13er class of 1980 = 37% college educated.) At the same time, inflation adjusted income for young high school graduates fell 42%.
- ◆ “During the 13er childhood era, America has substantially shifted the federal fiscal burden from the old to the young. Since 1972, older generations have deferred paying for some \$2 trillion in current consumption through additional U.S. Treasury debt - a policy five times more expensive (in lifetime interest costs) for the average 15-year-old than for the average 65-year-old. In 1990, a young 13er couple with one worker, a baby, and \$30,000 in wage income had to pay five times as much (\$5,055 in taxes) as the typical retired GI couple with the same income (\$1,073 taxes).

Whenever Kindness Fails

Robert Earl Keen

I crossed the desert on a dining car
In the spring of ninety-one
I met some people drinking at the bar
They were laughing having fun
I told 'em that I hadn't heard the joke
That was so hilarious
They said that I was just a dumb cowpoke
I didn't want to make a fuss

CHORUS:

So I shot 'em down/ One by one
Then I left 'em 'long the rails. I use my gun Whenever kindness fails

The moon was in the sign of Scorpio
The sun was at my back
I didn't know how far the train would go
Until the law would find my track
I saw the brakeman and the engineer
Drinking wine and eating brie
I asked 'em who would brake and who would steer
They started pointing back at me

CHORUS

I only have a moment to explain
Just a chance to let you know
When it's time for you to board the train
There are two ways you can go
You can ride the wheels into the sun
Feel the wind upon your face
Or you can laugh into a loaded gun
And you'll likely lose your place

CHORUS

When I use my gun
That lonesome whistle wails

Millennial Generation

Generation type: Civic (1983-2002)

Who are they? Born from 1982 to 2002: Between 12-32 year olds. By the end of 2005, Millennials comprised 80 million Americans, or 28% of the total US population.

What is shaping them?

- ◆ “Where Silent parents had brought 13er kids along to see R-rated moves made *about* them, Boomers take their Millennials to see G-rated movies made *for* them.” (338) Movies of the 70s were made about bad children: *The Omen*, etc. The year this began to shift was 1984, when *Firestarter* and *Children of the Corn* flopped at the box office. Think about the tenor of newer movies such as *Raising Arizona*, *Three Men and a Baby*, *Baby Boom*, *For Keeps*, *She’s Having a Baby*, *9 Months*. Consider just this summer’s fare: *Lilo and Stitch*, *Spy Kids 2*, *Ice Age*, etc. It’s cool to be a kid again!
- ◆ The public has decided to emphasize “traditional family values” and more disciplined child rearing techniques partially in response to the way the 13ers turned out. In the movie *Parenthood*, the 13ers are lazy, complaining thieves, confused kids who marry at 17 and get pregnant immediately. In contrast, the movie’s youngest children are being taught karate and prepared for life in private schools. View this movie for a wonderful demonstration of Generations Theory!
- ◆ Why? The reasoning goes something like this; we’ve lost the last generation (13ers), so let’s cut our losses and move on. Let’s get the next generation right! “In a 1990 *Atlantic* cover story, Boomer Karl Zinsmeister suggests “preventing young criminals from infecting a class of successors” by “putting the full weight of public protection on the side of babies and schoolchildren.” (337)
- ◆ This generation will return to uniforms! The same Boomers who as children stressed individuality are now clamoring for social systems which teach cooperation, equality, and community. Private schools are moving quickly to institute required uniforms again, just like the GI’s parents did at the turn of the 20th century.
- ◆ Millennials are born to smaller families, and they are more wanted. (Only 2% of kids under 18 live in families with more than 5 kids, just 1/4 the percentage of first wave 13ers.) Abortion rates leveled and declined in the early 80s, precisely as the Millennials began arriving.
- ◆ Unlike 13ers, Millennials’ parents *really* want them. Between 1986 and 1988, “the number of infertility related doctor visits quadrupled.” From 1981 – 2001, fertility rate for women ages 45-49 rose by 128%. during the same period, twin births rose 72%; triplets, 554%.
- ◆ “The poverty rate for children under six peaked in 1983 (at 24.6%) and thereafter has gradually declined. The U.S. divorce rate peaked in 1981; the homicide rate against children age 1-4 peaked in 1982.” (342)
- ◆ Since 1983, an increasing share of children below the poverty line have been made eligible for Medicaid assistance. In 1990, despite pressure to reduce federal spending, Congress expanded Medicaid to cover all poor children under age 18 by the year 2001 -- starting with everyone born after September 30, 1983, upon reaching 6 years of age. (No 13ers need apply.) (342)

- ◆ Statistically speaking, this generation is rejecting much of the 13ers sexual direction attitude. From 1991 to 1997, the percentage of teens who have had sexual intercourse dropped from 54% to 47%. Pregnancy and abortion rates have dropped in like percentages. (“The Naked Truth: What do young people really think about sex?,” *Newsweek*, May 8, 2000, pp. 58-59.)
- ◆ Religiously, this generation shows a two pronged tendency which at first seems contradictory, but turns out, at least for them, not to be: the twin movements toward fundamentalism and eclecticism. On the one hand, many teens are turning toward fundamental Christianity, Islam, or Judaism for the moral authority and clarity their parents failed to provide. On the other, a 1999 survey found that “more than half agreed with the statement ‘All religious faiths teach equally valid truths.’” (“Searching for a Holy Spirit,” *Newsweek*, May 8, 2000, pp. 61-63.)
- ◆ Millennials are also insisting that their religious deeds count at least as much, if not more, than their doctrinal convictions – or lack thereof. Statistically, this generation is more community service oriented than either of the two preceding generations.
- ◆ Demographically, Millennials are more racially and ethnically diverse than any other generation. 2000: nonwhites and Latinos accounted for nearly 36% of the 21 and unders. That is three times the percentage of the over 65 crowd which is non-white.
- ◆ Children’s Defense Fund reports that the number of kids living in poverty in the US increased by 13% from 2000-2004 with many of those children coming from racial/ethnic minority groups.
- ◆ If you want to understand the Millennials and the future of their church, start watching the emergent church movement. For more information on the emergent church (intentional Christianity, post modern style) Presbyterian style, see <http://presbymergent.org/>.

“Beloit College’s Mindset ® List for the Class of 2017”

For this generation of entering college students, born in 1995, Dean Martin, Mickey Mantle, and Jerry Garcia have always been dead.

1. Eminem and LL Cool J could show up at parents’ weekend.
2. They are the sharing generation, having shown tendencies to share everything, including possessions, no matter how personal.
3. GM means food that is Genetically Modified.
4. As they started to crawl, so did the news across the bottom of the television screen.
5. “Dude” has never had a negative tone.
6. As their parents held them as infants, they may have wondered whether it was the baby or Windows 95 that had them more excited.
7. As kids they may well have seen Chicken Run but probably never got chicken pox.
8. Having a chat has seldom involved talking.
9. Gaga has never been baby talk.
10. They could always get rid of their outdated toys on eBay.
11. They have known only two presidents.
12. Their TV screens keep getting smaller as their parents’ screens grow ever larger.
13. PayPal has replaced a pen pal as a best friend on line.
14. Rites of passage have more to do with having their own cell phone and Skype accounts than with getting a driver’s license and car.
15. The U.S. has always been trying to figure out which side to back in Middle East conflicts.
16. A tablet is no longer something you take in the morning.
17. Threatening to shut down the government during Federal budget negotiations has always been an anticipated tactic.
18. Growing up with the family dog, one of them has worn an electronic collar, while the other has toted an electronic lifeline.
19. Plasma has never been just a bodily fluid.
20. The Pentagon and Congress have always been shocked, absolutely shocked, by reports of sexual harassment and assault in the military.
21. Spray paint has never been legally sold in Chicago.
22. Captain Janeway has always taken the USS Voyager where no woman or man has ever gone before.
23. While they've grown up with a World Trade Organization, they have never known an Interstate Commerce Commission.
24. Courts have always been ordering computer network wiretaps.
25. Planes have never landed at Stapleton Airport in Denver.
26. Jurassic Park has always had rides and snack bars, not free-range triceratops and velociraptors.
27. Thanks to Megan's Law and Amber Alerts, parents have always had community support in keeping children safe.
28. With GPS, they have never needed directions to get someplace, just an address.
29. Java has never been just a cup of coffee.
30. Americans and Russians have always cooperated better in orbit than on earth.
31. Olympic fever has always erupted every two years.
32. Their parents have always bemoaned the passing of precocious little Calvin and sarcastic stuffy Hobbes.
33. In their first 18 years, they have watched the rise and fall of Tiger Woods and Alex Rodriguez.
34. Yahoo has always been looking over its shoulder for the rise of “Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle.”
35. Congress has always been burdened by the requirement that they comply with the anti-discrimination and safety laws they passed for everybody else to follow.
36. The U.S. has always imposed economic sanctions against Iran.
37. The Celestine Prophecy has always been bringing forth a new age of spiritual insights.

38. Smokers in California have always been searching for their special areas, which have been harder to find each year.
39. They aren't surprised to learn that the position of Top Spook at the CIA is an equal opportunity post.
40. They have never attended a concert in a smoke-filled arena.
41. As they slept safely in their cribs, the Oklahoma City bomber and the Unabomber were doing their deadly work.
42. There has never been a national maximum speed on U.S.highways.
43. Don Shula has always been a fine steak house.
44. Their favorite feature films have always been largely, if not totally, computer generated.
45. They have never really needed to go to their friend's house so they could study together.
46. They have never seen the Bruins at Boston Garden, the Trailblazers at Memorial Coliseum, the Supersonics in Key Arena, or the Canucks at the Pacific Coliseum.
47. Dayton, Ohio, has always been critical to international peace accords.
48. Kevin Bacon has always maintained six degrees of separation in the cinematic universe.
49. They may have been introduced to video games with a new Sony PlayStation left in their cribs by their moms.
50. A Wiki has always been a cooperative web application rather than a shuttle bus in Hawaii.
51. The Canadian Football League Stallions have always sung Alouette in Montreal after bidding adieu to Baltimore.
52. They have always been able to plug into USB ports
53. Olestra has always had consumers worried about side effects.
54. Washington, D.C., tour buses have never been able to drive in front of the White House.
55. Being selected by Oprah's Book Club has always read "success."
56. There has never been a Barings Bank in England.
57. Their parents' car CD player is soooooo ancient and embarrassing.
58. New York's Times Square has always had a splash of the Magic Kingdom in it.
59. Bill Maher has always been politically incorrect.
60. They have always known that there are "five hundred, twenty five thousand, six hundred minutes" in a year.

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A Generations Bibliography

(with a stewardship twist, and some stuff on the new ecclesiology thrown in for the fun of it)

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