

The Last Pentecostals

Luke 18:8 Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Judges 2:7-12 ⁷ And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. ⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. ¹⁰ And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: ¹² And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

- It is interesting to study the generations of the last century, because each of them has a unique viewpoint of themselves and their world. Conflicts between individuals or groups from different generations are often the result if we fail to account for these differences.
- **Traditionalists (1925-1945)**
Traditionalists tend to see subsequent generations as disrespectful, and disdain their “warm and fuzzy” mindset. They are Foreign Missions oriented and very committed to their home, church and denomination. They enjoy Bible studies and worship in reverence, and they tend to minister from a perspective of duty. They “need to be needed,” and are generally loyal, dependable, hard workers who discipline themselves to save for a rainy day. They deal well with boredom, and are patriotic, respectful and stable.
- **Baby Boomers (1945 - 1965)**
The Baby Boomers perceive the older generation to be overly cautious, too conservative, and inflexible. An educated generation, they perceive a conflict between rights and rules, question authority and want everything now. They desire quality and want to lead a slower life style; therefore, they are not loyal to jobs, churches or institutions that prevent these goals. They will not attend church because of guilt, tradition or someone else’s expectations, but tend to choose a church based on its style of worship (they like contemporary music and sermons), its “excellence factor,” and the opportunity to build relationships.

- **Baby Busters (1965-1975)**

This generation was created during the era of the Pill, legalized abortion, liberalized divorce, and a stampede of women into the labor force. For these and other reasons, baby busters are competitively few in number, and have been called the disillusioned or the neglected generation. While they can be materialistic, they’re more likely to measure success in terms of achieving “peace of mind.” The Baby Busters view the Traditionalists as old, outdated and rigid, and the Baby Boomers as workaholics, unrealistic and idealistic. They are community-oriented and willing to work, but they tend to be oversensitive and lonely. They desire a practical education, freedom from structure and a faith that meets their needs. They are music-oriented and slow to marry, and are prone to a short attention span and feeling neglected. They like to break the rules, and refuse to “buy in” until they find out “What’s in it for me?”

- **Generation X (1975-1985)**

(From a Gen-Xer’s Website) It seems we have come to be called Xers simply because we represent something negative to our elders. Of course, they overlook the fact that we are their responsibility, or actually their fault. Our generation will be called upon to look after our parents knowing that they failed to look after us. Inter-generational justice failed somewhere along the way and it will be our task to either rectify it or make it worse. We are a group of individuals who grew up with no one at home after school. It appears we have little hope for the future. No jobs, no homes, and basically no money are almost expected of us. These bleak prospects, along with the fact that we will be forced to support the largest amount of senior citizens ever, do not provide much hope. Some believe that these blockades will be too much for us to handle and we will for the most part fail at life, but many see our individualism and resourcefulness that have been built up through our childhoods as our savior. We will soon discover who is right and who is wrong.

- Subsequent generations have been named the “Millennial Generation” or the “Net Generation,” and the time spans defining them keep getting shorter due to our rapidly changing world. **The one characteristic that seems to define the last few generations is “HOPELESSNESS.”**
- Notice that in the book of Judges there were **3 GENERATIONS** of Israelites. We could call them Joshua’s generation, the elders’ generation, and the generation who knew not the Lord. Note also that judgment fell on Israel because the third generation moved so far from an original experience with God.

THE FIRST GENERATION: JOSHUA

- They were dedicated to the **LORD** because they experienced the reality of God and saw His miracles firsthand.
- They set their values by the Word of the Lord that had been received by Moses. Their question was: **What's right in GOD'S eyes?**
- Their generation could be summed up by the word **COMMITMENT**.

THE SECOND GENERATION: ELDERS

- They were dedicated to the God of their **PARENTS** because they knew all the secondhand stories of His mighty works.
- They set their values by the word of others who knew God; as long as their leadership did well, they did well. Their question was: **What's right in YOUR eyes?**
- Their generation could be summed up by the word **COMPROMISE**.

THE THIRD GENERATION: KNEW NOT THE LORD

- They were dedicated to **SELF**, refusing to be dedicated to a God they had not experienced personally; they served false gods.
- They set their values by the world around them. Their question was: **What's right in MY eyes?**
- Their generation could be summed up by the word: **CONFLICT**.
- Because this cycle was allowed to take place, it would be hundreds of years before Israel as a whole served God again under King David. It would take another "man after God's own heart" with a FIRST GENERATION EXPERIENCE to turn the tide!

THIS CYCLE REPEATS ITSELF IN EVERY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT!

- The first generation of a movement refers to those who received a new revelation of truth or spiritual experience. They literally centered their lives around the things of God as a result. Because they were so dramatically saved from the world, they understood the importance of walking in a holy, set apart lifestyle. They also had an intense soul-winning zeal, because of their enthusiasm for God.
- The second generation of a movement refers to those who are dedicated to the religious experience taught to them by their parents. They were generally converted at an early age, and live the lifestyle in which they were raised, not deviating on surface from the parent's teaching. They adopt convictions without understanding the depth of experience in which they developed and, while they know about their faith, it doesn't shape their lifestyle. They have an indirect dedication to God simply because they respect their parents and want to maintain what cost the first generation so much.

COMPROMISE: The second generation is just like the tribes in Judges 1 who did not drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan! They live in the "promised land" but they have allowed the world to live there too!

- The third generation of a movement normally refers to the grandchildren of those who started the movement. They usually have a small amount of dedication to God, but not at the expense of their own convenience! They participate in church activities and go along with church beliefs and standards only if they do not interfere with personal plans and objectives. For the third generation, church becomes a social and pleasurable activity, with emphasis on how well the choir sings or the preacher preaches. If it doesn't entertain them, or if it is too much of a burden, the third generation tunes it out! This generation easily develops a theology that helps them justify their lack of evangelism and personal holiness (such as, "if I can feel God's presence emotionally, I must be saved"). You will often hear them say things like, "I personally see nothing wrong with ..."

THIS GENERATION IS THE LAST GENERATION OF A MOVEMENT!

- God subsequently must turn to other people who are open and hungry for a first generation experience!
- The only way to stop the cycle is for someone to get hungry for an ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE with God!

Joshua 24:13-15 ¹³And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. ¹⁴Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. ¹⁵And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Asuza Street Prophecy (1906-1909)

In the last days, three things will happen in the great Pentecostal movement: There will be an overemphasis on power, rather than on righteousness; there will be an overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit rather than on the lordship of Christ; there will be an overemphasis on praise to a God they no longer pray to.

WILL YOUR PENTECOSTAL HERITAGE DIE WITH YOU? OR WILL YOU PASS IT ON UNDIMINISHED TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW YOU?