

Four Generation Cycle

Four Generation Cycle

"There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers.

There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth.

There are those—how lofty are their eyes, how high their eyelids lift!

There are those whose teeth are swords, whose fangs are knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, the needy from among mankind." – Proverbs 30:11-14

"And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." – Genesis 15:16

"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ...who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

– Exodus 34:6-7

1. The Four Generation Cycle - Proverbs 30:11-14 – (More details beginning on page 78 of the online .pdf of the book "Hope for America's Last Generation" 2007 - http://www.generationword.com/hope_for_america.pdf)

- a. **"There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers; those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth; those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful; those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men."** (NIV)

- i. We need to look also at the King James Version. Notice the different method of translation and notice the italics in the King James The italicized words in the KJ text are words that are not in the original language but added in the English translations to make reading easier:

"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men."

- ii. Without the inserted italicized words the King James would read like this:

"A generation curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

A generation pure in their own eyes, and is not washed from their filthiness.

A generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.

A generation, whose teeth swords, and their jaw teeth knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from men."

- iii. In 1872 Joseph Bryant Rotherham captured the essence of these verses in his translation which reads:

"A generation! Its father it revileth, And its mother it doth not bless.

A generation! Pure in its own eyes, Yet from its filth hath it not been bathed.

**A generation! How lofty are its eyes, And its eyelashes uplifted
A generation! Swords are its teeth, And knives its incisors, To devour the humbled out of the earth, And the needy from among men."**

b. Exodus 20:4 - The Second Commandment's warning:

i. **"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything** in heaven, above or on the earth, beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for **I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation** of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Ex. 20:4)

a. The word "punishing" is the Hebrew word *paqad* (paw-kad') which means "to visit with friendly or hostile intent."

i. The word indicates that God is "overseeing, caring for, looking after, inspecting or examining."

ii. So God is overseeing, inspecting, and examining "the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

iii. Why does he stop at the fourth generation? Why not go on to the fifth and sixth? We will see that by the fifth generation a father's sin has been dealt with in one of two ways. Either the society of the third and fourth generations have:

1. made the necessary corrections, as mentioned in Ezekiel 18:14-17, or

2. God has punished and destroyed the third and fourth generations because they followed in their father's sin.

b. There would therefore be no fifth generation in this culture. This fourth generation would be the last.

c. This is a principle of divine judgment—it is called the four generation cycle.

i. It is used by God to control history by judging specific cultures that have become corrupt and sinful.

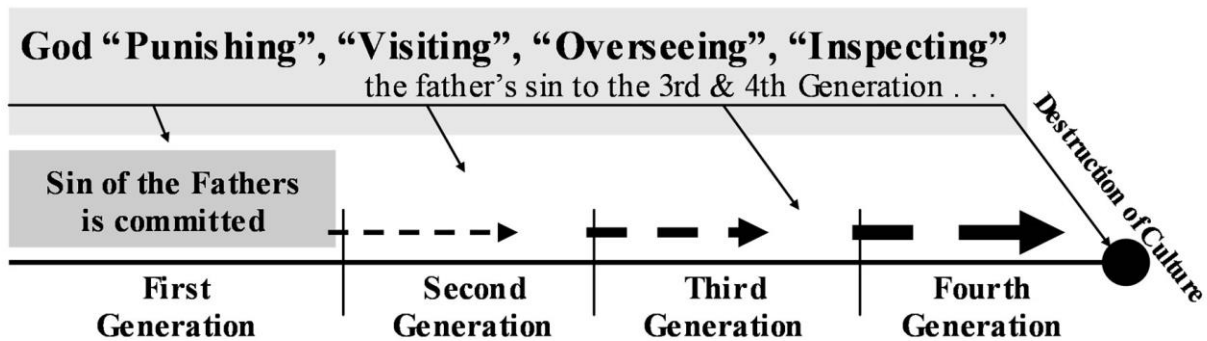
ii. He no longer has to:

1. Destroy the whole world as he did in Noah's day or

2. Disperse the world population as he did in Nimrod's day in order to preserve his plan in the earth.

3. Instead he can discipline the cultures that become so sinful they might hinder the plan of God on earth.

The Four Generation Cycle



2. Five Cycles of Discipline for each of the generations. God sends each rebellious nation through five distinct cycles of discipline. Leviticus 26:14-33 describes these cycles as God promises to take Israel through them if they continue to rebel against him.

a. Leviticus 26:14-33: “But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you.”

i. Cycle Number One Comes to the First Generation (the first 40 years):

“I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you. If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over...”

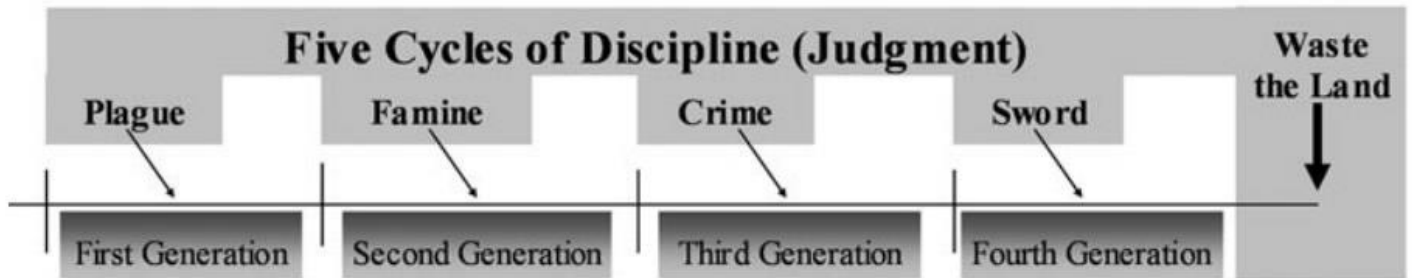
ii. Cycle Number Two Comes to the Second Generation (years 41-80): “I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of the land yield their fruit. If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve.”

iii. Cycle Number Comes to the Third Generation (years 81-120): “I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted. If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over.”

iv. Cycle Number Four Comes to the Fourth Generation (years 121-160): “And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied. If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over.”

v. Cycle Number Five Comes at the End of the Fourth Generation (and it completely destroys that society): “You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your

daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ru



Cycle of Judgment	Generation it Strikes	Characteristics Described in Leviticus 26
1 Leviticus 26:16-17	First Generation 1-40 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sudden terror b. Wasting diseases c. Fever destroys sight d. Drain away life e. Plant seed in vain f. Enemies eat produce g. Defeated by enemies h. Ruled by those who hate you i. Flee when no one pursues you.
2 Leviticus 26:19-20	Second Generation 41-80 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Break down stubborn pride b. Sky like iron (no rain) c. Ground like bronze (famine) d. Strength spent in vain e. No crops from soil f. No fruit from trees
3 Leviticus 26:22	Third Generation 81-120 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Send wild animals (crime) b. Robbed of children c. Destroy cattle d. Reduce population e. Deserted roads
4 Leviticus 26:25-26	Fourth Generation 121-160 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sword upon you (war comes to your land) b. Seek shelter from attacks c. Plagues d. Given into enemies hands e. Cut of supply of food f. Poor living conditions g. Food rationed h. Hunger

<p>5</p> <p>Leviticus 26:29-39</p>	<p>No Fifth Generation And The End of Society</p>	<p>a. Eat flesh of sons & daughters b. Destroy high places, altars, sanctuaries c. Pile dead bodies on idols d. Ruin cities e. Lay waste sanctuaries f. Not listen to your prayers g. Lay waste the land h. Disperse the citizens among nations</p>
		<p><i>. . .But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers . . .then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember. . . (Leviticus 26:40)</i></p>

- 3. Four Generation Cycle included Jesus Ministry in 30 AD (90 BC-70 AD) – see “Chapter 13: Jesus, a Prophet to His Generation” in “Hope for America’s Last Generation” pages 107-118.**
- a. John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah at the beginning of the fourth generation in Israel in 30 AD.
 - b. Jesus came as a prophet to Jerusalem in 30 AD like Jeremiah did in 626 BC in King Josiah’s day:
 - i. Jerusalem fell 70 AD, 40 years after Jesus’ ministry ended in 30 AD
 - ii. Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, 40 years after Jeremiah began in 626 BC
 - c. Luke 13:6-9 – “A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”
 - i. “three years” is three seasons for a tree, but three generations for a culture or 120 years (90 BC-30 AD)
 - ii. “leave it alone for one more year” is one more season for a tree, but one more generation for a culture, or 40 more years (30-70 AD)
 - d. In Luke’s account of Palm Sunday, he records Jesus’ words and emotions as he approached the city crowds and the angry religious leaders. Luke writes in Luke 19:41-44:

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace— but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.’” - Luke 19:41-44

- i. Six days later, Jesus was on his way to the cross after enduring a sleepless night on trial. He'd been beaten by Herod's guards and had received a flesh-tearing scourging from the Romans. Now he was collapsing from the weight of the cross beam he was forced to carry. Crowds lined the streets to watch. In his horrible physical condition on the way to the cross, Jesus' message was the same. He had not given up on his generation, and he wanted them to know what they would face if the fifth cycle of judgment was released. One final time Jesus warns his "wicked generation" to reconsider their ways and repent.

Luke writes in Luke 23:26-31:

"As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed! Then they will say to the mountains, fall on us! And to the hills, cover us! For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?'" -

Luke 23:26-31

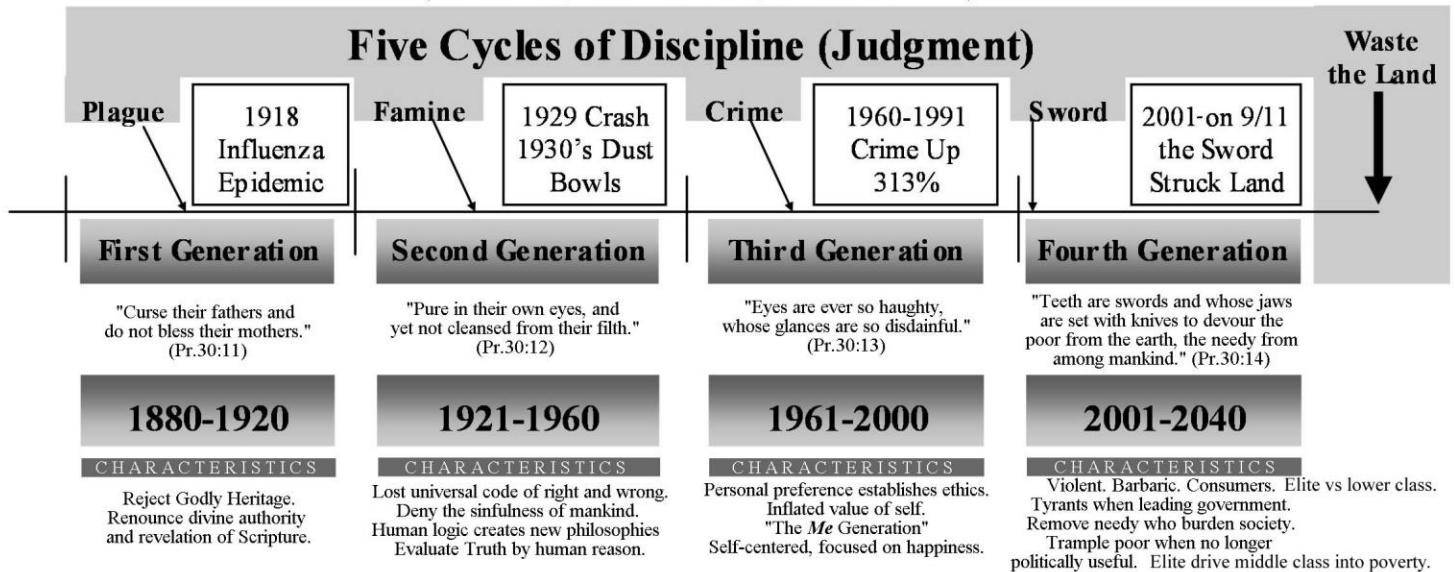
1. Even in his broken, bloody condition, Jesus tells the women to cry for themselves and their children because they will have to live through the fifth cycle of judgment.
2. In 70 AD, it will be better for these women and their children to die than to face the famine, crime, fires, foreign armies, slavery, and crucifixion they will face at the hands of the Romans.
3. Jesus then asks a question that connects back to his parable of the fig tree in the vineyard. After three seasons (or generations) the fig tree was given one final season to produce fruit. Jesus was about to be crucified, but because his death was part of this final season, the nation of Israel still had hope. The tree was still in the vineyard.
4. The day would come, however, forty years in the future, when that same tree would be cut down and removed from God's plan. The dead, dry tree would be taken from the vineyard and cast aside.
5. Jesus was hinting to these women that if they found his crucifixion horrifying, they wouldn't want to see what was in store for them after 70 AD when they would be hauled out of the vineyard.
6. The young mothers Jesus spoke to at this time were about 18-30 years old. They would have children ranging from infants to 12-year-olds. When Jerusalem fell to Rome under the fifth cycle of judgment, these same mothers would be 58-70, and their children would be 40-52. These women and children are the same people Josephus writes about in his eye witness account of Jerusalem's fall.

Generation	Years	Events	Cycle of Judgment
1 st	90-50 BC	63 BC Pompey invades Israel and Israel becomes a client kingdom of Rome	1 st – “Those who hate you will rule over you.” Leviticus 26:17
2 nd	50-10 BC	25 BC a famine strikes and Herod saves the Jewish people by selling his possessions and buying grain from Egypt	2 nd – “Make the sky...like iron and the ground...like bronze...” Leviticus 26:19
3 rd	10 BC-30AD	29 AD John the Baptist preaches to the nation in the spirit of Elijah (Luke 1:17)	3 rd – “Wild animals... rob you of your children...destroy cattle...so few in numbers that your roads will be deserted.” Leviticus 26:22
4 th	30-70 AD	46 AD a famine strikes (as predicted by Agabus in Acts 12:28 and recorded by Josephus) 66 AD Roman General Titus lays siege to Judea/ Jerusalem	4 th – Leviticus 26:25-26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Sword upon the land + Seek shelter + Cut off supply of food + Food rationed
The End	70 AD	70 AD Romans burn Jerusalem and the temple	5 th – Leviticus 26:29-33 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Destroy altars, sanctuaries + Pile up the dead bodies + Ruin cities/lay waste land + Dispersed among nations

4. Four Generation Cycle in United States

The Four Generation Cycle in the United States from 1880-2040

(Exodus 20:4; Genesis 15:13-16; Leviticus 26:14-33)



The Four Generation's of today's Laodicean Church Age

1880-1920	1921-1960	1961-2000	2001-2040
Systematic Growth Methodology Emotionalism	Showmanship Materialism Theology of Success	Charismatic Movement Individual Interpretation Personal Revelation Mysticism	Market Driven Church combined with the contemporary culture and pop theology

- **1880-1920 – REJECT TRUTH -**
 - **Robert Ingersoll**, "the great agnostic", between 1865-1899 he packed out the largest theaters that big cities could provide. People paid \$1 to hear him speak for up to 3-4 hours on the "Mistakes of Moses". He challenged his generation to reject the religious superstition of their parents and accept the fact that Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible. Ingersoll asked, "Has a man the right to examine, to investigate the religion of his own country – the religion of his father and mother?" Ingersoll said, "The foundation of Christianity has crumbled, has disappeared, and the entire fabric must fall."
 - **Charles Darwin** (1809-1882) – the founder of the theory of evolution. By the time he died, his teachings had already captured the academic world.
 - **Julius Wellhausen** (1844-1918) claimed the Old Testament evolved and was not invented or written down until after the Jews returned from Babylonian exile in 536 BC. He said, "According to the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, the priestly legislation of the middle books of the Pentateuch was unknown in pre-exilic time, and this legislation must, therefore, be a late development." Many of today's church denominations and religious universities still hold to Wellhausen's theory that the Bible was created by a group of people who eventually became the nation of Israel.

- **Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)** - Freud called religion a pointless delusion and said that all phenomenon of religious experience could be explained. He believed society would be much more productive and pleasant if Christianity was abandoned completely and, in its place, his own theories embraced.
- **1921-1960 – REPLACE TRUTH -**
 - 1925 State of Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes – Darrow vs Bryan;
 - Secular Humanism in 1933 signed by 34 people including John Dewey. In 1933 the May/June issue of “The New Humanist” printed the original Humanist Manifesto. It began like this:
“The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism. In order that religious humanism may be better understood, we, the undersigned, desire to make certain affirmations which we believe the facts of our contemporary life demonstrate.”
 ...and...
“There is great danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word religion with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of human living in the Twentieth Century...Today man’s larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and his deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion...To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon this generation.”

The Humanist Manifesto then went on to list fifteen articles (or affirmations). Here are a few of those articles:

1. #1-*“Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.”*
2. #3-*“Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.”*
3. #8-*“Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man’s life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist’s social passion.”*
4. #9-*“In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer, the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.”*
5. #11-*“Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability...We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.”*

Number eleven hints at a core belief for all secular humanists: man’s problem is not a sin nature but simply a lack of knowledge. The application of number eleven has resulted in our society emphasizing the attainment of knowledge above all else. Everyone who’s been influenced by secular humanist thinking believes that, to some degree, their “salvation” will be found in the area of education. By gaining more information, a person will be able to better solve life’s problems, thereby creating his own destiny and controlling his universe.

- **John Dewey**, one of the original signers of the 1933 Humanist Manifesto said, “The educational system must move one way or another, either backward to the intellectual and moral standards of a pre-scientific age or forward to ever greater utilization of scientific method in the development of the possibilities of growing, expanding experience.”
- **1961-2000 – REMOVE TRUTH -**
 - 1962 Engel v. Vitale removed school prayer;
 - 1963 Abington Township School District v. Schempp removed the reading of the Lord’s Prayer;
 - 1980 Stone v. Graham made the posted Ten Commandments illegal with the court claiming that they “had no educational function”;
 - 1987 end Edwards v. Aguillard ended the teaching of creationism in public schools;
 - 1989 Allegheny County v. Greater Pittsburgh ACLU ruled Nativity scenes in public place as unconstitutional. Later it was adjusted to allow Nativity scenes with other fictional holiday personalities like Rudolph and Frosty the Snowman.
- **2001-2040 – REPRESS TRUTH - “HAMAS”** – which is social violence and oppression
 - The generation who devours the poor from the earth and the needy from among mankind.
 - This generation was in high school when the school shootings started.
 - They are still in their 20’s (**written in 2007**) and do not yet have a grip on our society. Now, in 2021 they are 34-43 years old. For example:
 1. Mark Zuckerberg is 36 (born 1984)
 2. Jack Dorsey is 44 (born in 1976)
 3. AOC is 31 (born in 1989)
 4. Ilham Omar is 38 (born 1982)
 5. Rashida Tlaib is 44 (born 1976)

Exodus 20:4	Leviticus 26:14-39	Psalms 14:1-4	Proverbs 30:11-14	SEQUENCE OF DECLINE	Jerusalem (70AD) Luke 13:6-9 Luke 23:26-31	USA Generation Cycle	USA Cycles of Discipline
1-No Idols; Father's Sin	1-Plague "wasting diseases, fever . . ."	14:1 – "fool says 'no God'"	1- Generation- "Curse Fathers Don't Bless Mothers"	REJECT TRUTH ↓ REPLACE TRUTH ↓ REMOVE TRUTH ↓ REPRESS TRUTH (RESULT: Hamas - social violence)	90-50 BC - Pompey invades in 69 BC. ("Those who hate you rule over you.")	1880-1920 R. Ingersoll C. Darwin Wellhausen S. Freud	1918 Influenza Epidemic- 28% infected
2	2-Famine/Economy "sky like iron, ground like bronze, soil not yield crops"	14:2 – none understand or seek God	2- Generation: "Pure in own eyes, yet not cleansed of their filth"		50-10 BC – Great Famines strike ("Make the sky like iron, ground like bronze.")	1921-1960 -1925 Scopes -1933 <i>Humanist Manifesto</i> -John Dewey	1929 Stock Market 1930 Dust Bowl
3	3-Crime "wild animals rob you, loss children, roads deserted"	14:3 – turned aside, together become corrupt	3- Generation: whose eyes are ever haughty, lances are disdainful"		10 BC-30 AD "For three years (seasons, generations) I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree, haven't found any. Cut it down!"	1961-2000 <u>1962</u> -prayer <u>1963</u> -LdPray <u>1980</u> -Ten Command. <u>1987</u> -Teach Creation <u>1989</u> - Nativity	1960-1991 Crime increases 313%
4 "Punish" sin of the fathers to the 3 rd & 4 th generation	4-Sword on Your Land "bring the sword upon you"	14:4 – devour my people as men eat bread	4- Generation: Teeth are swords Jaws are set w/ knives to devour the poor from the earth needy from among mankind"		30-70 AD - "Do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children" "If men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry "	2001-2040 Hamas- (violence oppression, injustice) in -Physical -Psychologi. -Judicial -Social	Sept. 11, 2001

5. Four Generation Cycle in the Western Church in the United States of America

(More details on pages 48-67 in "Titanic Faith or here <http://www.titanicfaith.org/section2.html#5>)

Laodicea
The Four Generation Cycle
that has led today's church into the
Laodicean Church Age

~~~~~

**1880-1920**  
Systematic Growth  
Methodology  
Emotionalism

**1921-1960**  
Showmanship  
Materialism  
Theology of Success

**1960-2000**  
Charismatic  
Individual/Personal Experience  
Mysticism

**2001-2040**  
Market Driven

~~~~~

"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'
But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and
naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you
can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your
shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."

- Revelation 3:17-18

a. 1880-1920 – Systematic Growth, Emotionalism

- i. Systematic, orchestrated, and methodical are words that can be used to describe church activity.
 1. **Revivals (1830)** - Revivalism moved from the US northeast (New England) to the south and west, reaching Tennessee and Kentucky on the western frontier. The revival became more and more emotional as it moved west, and thousands of people were converted in this region in the early 1800's. In 1801 an estimated ten thousand people were in the camp meeting revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky that was accompanied by people falling down, jerking, rolling,

dancing and barking like dogs (Christianity Through the Centuries, by Earle E. Cairnes, 429). Soon the preaching, showmanship and emotional appeal of revival meetings would backwash from the western frontier eastward into the established churches in America's New England states. The Presbyterian churches did not use the new camp meeting techniques, but the Methodists and Baptist churches did, and began to grow.

2. **Emotionalism** – The intense emotional experiences of the great revivals became the expected response to religion and spiritual reality in the late 1800's and early 1900's. People commonly responded to an assumed "spiritual" experience with shouting, falling, dancing, and other forms of outwardly emotional expression. As textual criticism continued to undermine the authenticity of Scripture in the academic world in the late 1800's and modern science and technology seemed to provide logical challenges to the existence of God, the Church took refuge in emotionalism. Instead of seeking the truth of God in the text of Scripture or in creation, the Church quickly turned to finding truth and proving the validity of its faith in the personal experiences of its members. This personal approach to finding truth and experiencing God is most easily described using expressions about the heart: "know in my heart it is true", "finding God in my heart", "asking Jesus into my heart", "feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit", etc. Emotionalism in the Church made personal faith a highly subjective "reality" that could easily be overturned with any subjective change in personal emotions, cultural beliefs, or temporal circumstances. With this phase of emotionalism the Church that was to be the house built on the Rock, was shifted to a foundation of sand. Things could only get worse for the Church, down on the beach with society.
3. **Charles Finney** (1792-1875) studied law in New York and was admitted to the state bar. Since his study of legal books had led him to many biblical references, Finney began to study the Bible itself. He joined a church, studied for the ministry, and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1824. Finney began to travel on horseback to villages speaking to crowds in an articulate courtroom manner, as an educated attorney trying to persuade a jury of common folk to accept his legal position. Finney wrote the following in "On Revivals of Religion":
"Men being so reluctant to obey God, will not act until they are excited."
Based on this opinion, Finney pursued an emotional connection with his crowds by exciting his listeners. Finney believed that as he did his work of exciting the people, the Holy Spirit would do his work of convicting and converting them. By 1834 Finney had left the Presbyterian Church and their doctrinal stance of Calvinism. Finney took his emotionalism and revival meetings to the mainstream church, and the Broadway Tabernacle (a Congregational church) was built for Finney to lead. The crowds that followed were moved by excitement, and demonstrated their strong feelings through shouting and groaning. Although this method was criticized, the fact remained that the churches that followed Finney's model grew.

b. 1921-1960 – Showmanship, Materialism, Theology of Success

- i. **Billy Sunday** – took Finney’s “stand up to confess Christ” and Moody’s “walk to the counseling room” to stand up publicly to confess Christ and then walk to the front of the arena to meet with the counselors. Billy Sunday left his mark on America’s culture and the Western Church between the years of 1900-1935. Sunday gained attention as a former professional baseball player with spectacular mannerisms while preaching on stage and informal ministry style.
- ii. **Materialism** – By 1914 Christendom had experience population increase, territorial expansion into every part of the populated world and unprecedented increase in material prosperity and wealth. In the modern Western world the industrial revolution made the production of material goods abundant and attainable. With the high standard of material living possible and within reach of the average Western man, the average man’s daily focus was on attaining and maintaining this material wealth and high standard of living instead of spiritual truth, spiritual development and the advancement of his soul. Churches had to follow, and this is most obvious when we consider that these material men were leading the Western church. A standard of success in life was materialism, and thus a successful church must also be materialistically comfortable and a reflection of the good life that would indicate God’s blessing.
- iii. **Theology of Success** found its way into the Western culture and the Western church when an old idea received new momentum with Civil War captain and Baptist pastor Russell H. Conwell’s 1869 essay, 1882 message and, ultimately, 1890’s book all entitled “Acres of Diamonds”. The essay originated from an Arab guide who was leading Conwell’s camel down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers while he was traveling from Baghdad. Conwell’s guide told him a story of a man named Ali Hafed who owned a large farm with orchards, fields and gardens, but sold it to go in pursuit of diamonds. After years of fruitless wandering Ali Hafed died off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean Sea as a failure with no money and no diamonds. But, the man who bought Ali Hafed’s farm discovered diamonds on the very land Ali Hafed had abandoned to go search for diamonds. A portion of Conwell’s lecture and the point of his message can be found in the quote below:
 1. “I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich. How many of my pious brethren say to me, ‘Do you, a Christian minister, spend your time going up and down the country advising young people to get rich, to get money?’ ‘Yes, of course I do.’ They say, ‘Isn’t that awful! Why don’t you preach the gospel instead of preaching about man’s making money?’ ‘Because to make money honestly is to preach the gospel.’ That is the reason . . . ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men of America are honest. That is why they are rich. That is why they are trusted with money. That is why they carry on great enterprises and find plenty of people to work with them. It is because they are honest men. . . Some men say, ‘Don’t you sympathize with the poor people?’ Of course I do, or else I would not have been lecturing these years. I won’t give in but what I sympathize with the poor, but the number of poor who are to be sympathized with is very small. To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins, thus to help him when God would still continue a just punishment, is to do wrong, no doubt about it, and we do that more than we help those who are deserving. While we should sympathize with God’s poor-

that is, those who cannot help themselves-- let us remember there is not a poor person in the United States who was not made poor by his own shortcomings, or by the shortcomings of someone else. It is all wrong to be poor, anyhow . . . as Mr. Carnegie said, the great iron squeezers that laid the foundation of all the steel millions of the United States, 'we men' can invent anything under the stars!"

At the time of Conwell's death in 1925 he had presented this story as a lecture 6,152 times and had earned \$8,000,000. Pretty good for a Civil War captain. The original audio of Russell Conwell's presentation can still be heard on YouTube. Today the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary still carries his name after his Theology school in Philadelphia merged with Gordon Divinity School.

- iv. **World War I** - In spite of the growth and advancement of Christianity which was accompanied by the increase in wealth and material production the Christian countries (stronghold of Christendom from 900-1800 AD) erupted into World War between the years of 1914-1918 which resulted in the death of 9 million soldiers and 7 million civilians. Christendom in the midst of the Industrial Age had brought history's deadliest and most devastating conflicts.
- v. **Between 1926-1950 church membership in the United States increased 60%** while the population growth of the United States for the same period of time was merely 29%. Church membership in 1950 was 57% of the whole population of the United States. (A History of Christianity, vol. 2, by Kenneth Scott Latourette, page 1410) Note that in 1800 that number was 7%; in 1850 it was 15.5% and in 1900 it was 36%. Church membership of the entire population of the United States had gone from 36% to 57% in fifty years. That is a 21% membership increase in the modern Western church of the United States between the years 1900-1950. It is easy to see how the ideals and attitudes in the Church in those years had an impact on the United States and, likewise, how the Western World had an impact on the ideals and attitudes in the church.
- vi. 1950 the United States was the most powerful nation and its values and culture were being felt everywhere in the world.
- vii. **Radio** – Radio broadcasting became popular in the 1920's and by 1925 it could be printed in an opinion article that "one out of every fourteen broadcasting stations in the United States is today owned by a church and operated by a church." (Popular Radio, New York, March 1925) Charles E. Fuller began broadcasting "The Old-fashioned Revival hour" in 1925 and by 1942 claimed to have a world-wide audience ("A History of Christianity", vol. 2, Kenneth Scott Latourette, page 1419) Soon, Christian broadcasting became a big American business.
- viii. **Television** – With the upsurge of television beginning around 1939 entrepreneurial preachers realized their broadcasts required a ministry focused on entertainment, music, visual appeal, celebrity appearances and ministers with appealing personalities. By 1955 half of American homes had a TV set and by 1980 almost 50% of Americans watched weekly religious TV programming. This added to the drive of individual religion and personalization of the Christian experience and opinion.
- ix. **Individualism** – The value of the individual sprang out of nationalism which had its roots in Christianity's stance on the dignity and worth of each person's selfconsciousness

- x. **Norman Vincent Peale** (1898-1993) and preaching the Power of Positive Thinking instead of the Word of God – Peale was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1922, but in 1932 affiliated with the Reformed Church and took a 600 member church in Manhattan (New York City) to over 5,000 members. Peale began to use radio in 1935 and in 1952 wrote the book “The Power of Positive Thinking,” the same year he began his TV show. Peale’s teaching focused on the concept that our physical world could be controlled with our thoughts and a man could change his life, his health and his destiny by simply believing it. Below is one of my favorite, or actually least favorite, quotes of Peale’s. This quote seems to me to be a form of self-abandonment to fate that is combined with a denial of reality but sweetened with self-hypnosis:

“Tell yourself every morning as you go to work that you love your job. Think of it as interesting, even fascinating. By so doing you will ultimately get enthusiastic about your work — and you will undoubtedly do a better job.” (From “Power of the Plus Factor”, 1987, by Peale)

Concerning the personhood of God, Peale said this:

“Who is God? Some theological being? He is so much greater than theology. God is vitality. God is life. God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized!” (From “No More Stress or Tension” in the monthly periodical “Plus: The Magazine of Positive Thinking” in May 1986, p. 22)

In a 1984 interview with Phil Donahue Peale said:

“It’s not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine.”

Donahue countered Peale by saying,

“But you’re a Christian minister; you’re supposed to tell me that Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life, aren’t you?”

To this Peale gave the politically correct answer before political correctness was clique when he said, “Christ is ONE of the ways! God is everywhere.”

- xi. **Evangelism with music** – Gospel hymns had become popular and had a wide appeal at revival meetings and over the radio
 - xii. **Methods, practices and forms of worship spread from one denomination to another.** If a church found success and growth by implementing a particular style or outreach it was sure to imitated and initiated by a hundred other churches. This included the use of songs, children’s and youth ministries, summer assemblies/vacation Bible school
 - xiii. **Billy Graham** – began in 1949
- c. **1960-2000 – Charismatic, Individual/Personal, Mysticism, Success**
- i. **Charismatic Movement** – The charismatic movement was recognized in 1960 with Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett’s public announcement to his congregation in California on April 3, 1960 that he had received the power and filling of the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of the gift of speaking in unknown tongues. This incident may have slipped by public notice, although similar events were occurring around the nation, unless the event had not been reported to and covered by Newsweek (July 4, 1960) and Time (August 15, 1960). By 1963 most Protestant publications and journals had published articles concerning the charismatic movement and the phenomena of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. Every major protestant church had been influenced by these events and most accepted the movement with caution. This movement was seen as more than a prayer movement, but a renewal of the mission and development of the Church. Ultimately, the charismatic movement brought

people closer to accepting a personal encounter, a personal word, personal direction and personal revelation from deity. More focus was moved towards a personal encounter with God, than with a personal understanding of the revelation given in the Scripture.

- ii. **Individualism** – Individual's making decisions to place faith in Christ and individual's receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues paved the way for individual's to form opinions about the nature of God, the interpretation of Scripture and the source of divine authority. Soon the common man was receiving personal directions, insights and revelation from his personal Lord by means of an inner voice in his heart or the "spirit" speaking to his heart.
- iii. **Mysticism** – Direct contact with and expression from the divine presence appeared to be much easier to attain to than the serious study of the Scriptures. Personal views, individual behavior and imaginary desires could easily be justified and pursued with the support of a mystical encounter with "god" or his "spirit." And, who could negatively judge one person's mystical encounter without themselves sounding unloving and not Christ-like? The need for church growth and church unity led the Church to abandoned accurate Bible teaching, and instead favor a more culturally relevant redefining of the character of God as tolerant and the nature of Jesus as loving and non-judgmental. This developmental direction allowed more tolerance of socially acceptable spiritual opinions.
- iv. **Bill Bright** (1921-2003) – 1952 wrote "Four Spiritual Laws"; 1979 produced the "Jesus Film"; 1951 founded Campus Crusade for Christ. Although great evangelistic tools with accurate biblical insight, this work flooded Christianity with multitudes of converted, but untransformed individuals. The Church was unprepared and unfocused on transforming these converts and preparing them for true spiritual service of work in the Church. Instead, like the converts of other successful evangelists, these new additions to the Church helped conform the Church into the image of culture instead of themselves being transformed into the image of Christ.
- v. **Robert Schuller** (1926-2015) – Began his television program "Hour of Power" in 1970
- vi. **Oral Roberts** (1918-2009) – Emphasized seed-faith giving; laid foundation for prosperity gospel and abundant life teaching ministries; 1947 began his radio broadcasting; 1954 began broadcasting revival meetings by television

d. 2001-2040 – Market Driven

- i. **Market driven church** – The market driven church is designed to create numerical growth (not conversion or spiritual growth). The New Testament message, purpose, growth process, success target and future goal is thrown under the bus. The foundational philosophy of the Church of this age is based on market-driven principles. The methodology is focused on marketing strategies, demographic studies and business techniques.
- ii. **The Market driven church seeks spiritual enlightenment for temporal benefits** – According to the American Demographics article "Choosing My Religion" from April 1999, today's religious person claims to be:

"...into spirituality, not religion...Behind this shift is the search for an experiential faith, a religion of the heart, not the head. It's a religious expression that downplays doctrine and dogma, and revels in direct experience of the divine – whether it's called the 'Holy Spirit' or 'cosmic consciousness' or the

'true self.' It is practical and personal, more about stress reduction than salvation, more therapeutic than theological. It's about feeling good, not being good. It's as much about the body as the soul...Some marketing gurus have begun calling it 'the experience industry.' "

- iii. **Spiritual Gift assessment** tests are a perfect example of the market driven church tapping into it's natural resources for organization purposes and effective management methods. This is the style of the in-house systematic approach the CEO (head pastor) and his support network (pastoral staff) use to turn a profit for their business (church)
- iv. **Manipulation of Customer** (church members) and advertisement strategies
- v. **Bible studies are led by a facilitator** who does not teach, but seeks to include everyone's opinion as the groups ignorance is pooled together.
- vi. **Product development** of the Market Driven Church is focused on "meeting people's needs."
- vii. **Originally Jesus sent his disciples out with the Great Commission,**
 1. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20) Notice, Jesus' commission was Jesus-centered – "All authority...given to ME"... "go and make disciples" to follow ME... "baptizing them in the name of" ME ... "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded"
 - a. Notice: Jesus' commission was not man-centered – "Go solve world problems"... "Go meet people's needs" ... "Go make people feel connected" ... "Go build relationships between people"
 - b. The Church is about Jesus. And, Jesus' people will follow when Jesus is glorified. When the Church is made to be all about man, then men will follow that church. So, if the Church is built on the Gospel of Jesus Christ men will be offended and think of it as foolishness, but if the Church is built on a marketable product such as solving social problems, meeting people's needs, or being tolerant, loving and not judgmental, then the world of men will pick that product up and use it like a tool to advance their own social agendas and philosophies.
 2. Yes, that's right. When the system of any local church is up and running full speed, the leadership of that church will have made one of two choices:
 - a. Be rejected by the world by preaching the Gospel, teaching the Word of God and glorifying Jesus Christ.
 - b. Be used like a tool by the world to solve world problems, social issues and meet people's needs without preaching the Truth, without teaching the Word and without glorifying the eternal Son of God, the soon coming king of God's kingdom, the man, Jesus Christ!
 3. The choice is between being the Church in Smyrna or the Church in Laodicea.
 - a. Smyrna was told: "I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer ... Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:8-11)

- b. Laodicea was told: "I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see." (Revelation 3:14-22)