

# Inquiring Minds Topic – 11 October 2019

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## The Millennials' Impact on the Future of the USA

### Background:

Three friends in their eighties, recently exchanged e-mails about the Millennial generation. They approved my sharing their views but did not want to be identified. Their comments were quick responses , not prepared speeches , not edited. I thought their very different views would provide us with thought provoking material for a discussion on Millennials ...ages 22 to 37.

### DISCUSSION THOUGHTS:

1. Are we old folks just always critical of “The Younger Generation”?
2. Are our generational differences in the US today greater than past generational differences ?
3. Are the diverse views of these three men, each who had very successful careers, typical of our mature generation ?
4. What are the greatest influences on the views of Millennials today ?
5. If Millennials do not attend organized religious services, where do they get guidance on goodness, inclusiveness , selflessness, and compromise for the greater good ?
6. Should we “cancel God out of the equation” of the discussion of the future of the USA ?

Mr. “A” ...a former CEO of a large world-wide company.

Mr. “B”...a former well known CEO of a very large company with world-wide operations.

Mr. “C” ...an intellectual U.S. Rabbi.

Mr. A. :

“ Why the concern and why write about Millennials? Well, I love them and obviously they are the future leaders of our country. I also love our country, so I want a great future for them.

A new NBC and Wall Street Journal poll has just added to my concern. That poll showed that this generation places much less value on patriotism, God and having babies than previous generations . Since these values are fundamental to the preservation and improvement of our country, ( and if this poll is an accurate portrait of that generation), this may be an indication of future problems.

Another shocking report about this generation came from “USA Today” 7/8/19. It quoted Pentagon data that stated “. 71 percent of Americans age “17 to 24 are ineligible to join the military because of obesity, lack of a high school diploma or they have a criminal record.”

Another troubling indication is some of this generation’s most outspoken members continue to have a huge internet following while exhibiting a very disappointing lack of knowledge of history and the benefits of a capitalistic system.

They advocate socialistic programs and systems without even understanding what they are asking for. And these juniors are now being joined by some senior politicians Who are also

promoting the notion that a big brother ,socialistic government that provides free everything is the answer to all our problems.

For a most recent example of ignorance and hubris, a Congresswoman just said that her Millennial generation is better informed than their predecessors ( so their views should carry more weight?)

These Millennials seem to believe they have all the answers and are having a surprisingly large impact on both their political party and their internet followers.

Obviously these observations and concerns do not apply to all Millennials. Hopefully, there are enough among the Millennial Generation who have positive attitudes towards patriotism, God, having babies and with common sense , knowledge of national and international history , civic responsibility and morality to off set the ones who took that recent poll. “

Mr. “B” :

“. Both you and I want to see our country prosper and our children and grandchildren succeed. Since I think your apparent prescriptions will make an already bad situation worse, I will respond briefly to your note.

First, note that the country is secular, not religious. God is anything but essential to our success; religion has caused many deaths and vast destruction over many centuries. So let’s cancel God out of the equation of success while praising the common core of virtue promoted by every religion.

I see little virtue in urging my grandchildren to give up continuing educational activities and budding careers in order to have children. If they want to have kids, they should , but many people do not want children and the country doesn’t need to “grow its own”. There are large numbers of people in other countries who are anxious to immigrate to the US. Immigrants built this country and can certainly sustain and build it further given a chance.

As to the physical condition of many young people, we have only ourselves to thank. When we abandoned mandatory military service , which I would restore immediately, we abandoned the opportunity to whip into shape those unable to serve. Moreover, we abandoned the opportunity to provide every young person a set of shared experiences that would help each of them better understand their fellow citizens and make them more likely to unite in support of the common good.

Our problem has nothing to do with which economic system we use . The US is and will remain capitalist. Unhappily, our political system has caused the fruits of the capitalist system to be distributed so unequally that income and wealth inequality now threaten the continued existence of participative self-governance.

You like to claim that progressive democrats advocate something you refer to as Socialism. In fact , few if any Americans favor Socialism , which is a system in which the state owns the means of production. a la China. Any Socialist state will likely be very dictatorial since large scale industrial planning would be required to replace the multiple inputs which characterize a capitalist economy. Few want a Dictatorship.

Progressives do favor various ways to reduce income and wealth inequality including more spending on education at every level, inclusive systems for providing health care to everyone, wide spread unionization , substantially higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy commitment to

better climate control, etc.

It seems to me you are advocating more of the same. I very much hope that you -and your peers in the older generation who seem intent on resisting change- will wake up, recognize that major is needed and get with the program.

Mr. "A" . :

One thing we agree on is the value of and need for universal military service. Our military teaches young recruits and requires them to practice individual responsibility, accountability, self discipline, leadership, teamwork and patriotism better than any other organization or institution. These are incredibly important life skills that can only make our country better.

Now to our disagreements. YOU really don't want to take on God. God and prayer have been invoked by almost every president since George Washington and in the last sixty or so years "God Bless the USA" has almost been a required part of every major presidential speech. "In God we trust" is on our currency and Biblical quotations have adorned many public buildings.

You are right that our government is called secular, but it is far from agnostic. And you bringing up religious atrocities from the past that had nothing to do with the recent history of most religions (with the exception of Islam) and does not indicate we should not embrace religion. Churches and Synagogues are very valuable parts of our culture and have contributed significantly and positively to our way of life in this country. You can't, as you say, "Cancel God out of the equation".

Also, you really don't want to be against having babies. Not having babies to pursue a career is a very self centered approach to life. If we don't have a big majority of our population that is raised within our culture and with our values (and if we continue to depend on uncontrolled immigration from third world countries) our country will change into something more resembling the third world. We love the third world people. but we wouldn't want to live there- and we wouldn't want our kids and grandchildren to live there.

Our government has contributed to the handicaps our Millennials face and to their slow maturing and frustrations. Student loans and over priced, coddling and under performing colleges have gotten completely out of hand. Too many students don't want to graduate and go out into a world where accountability, responsibility and maturity is required.

People who advocate for free most everything might be smart enough to know they can't go straight into Socialism. They cleverly deny that it is their intent or they don't understand that is where their socialistic path is taking them.

And I certainly don't advocate, as you say, "more of the same". We must get better and constantly seek to improve our situation .

Mr. "C" :

It is all too facile to deal in generalizations about generations, God and Godlessness. According to another NBC and Madrid poll the Millennials of which you speak is more spiritual than its' predecessors. I can only speculate that the reason is one of definition. This is a generation that does not believe in Organized Religion but wants desperately to believe in God. And who can blame them. To make my own generalization, I have found that Organized Religion has become rife with fakes and fanatics who have destroyed the very institutions they represent. The Establishments that represent the hierarchy of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism have obliterated trust by hiding pedophilia, supporting extremism, promoting self-serving deceit, racism, and

divisiveness in order to advance their own agenda. Could it be that world-wide church and synagogue attendance is at an all-time low while the need for belief is at record high because of institutional failure ?

On the other hand is the response to our friend and curmudgeon Mr. "B's" view of God's importance in the debate. For this reason I have attempted to find an objective, non-sectarian source as a starting point. In the spirit of his praise for "the common core of virtue promoted by every religion " we should define that core as God which should be the basic of Ethical Monotheism. Using the Encyclopedia Britannica's definition, Ethical Monotheism is : "...the source for one standard of morality who guides humanity through ethical principles ".

If I could be so bold as to put my spin on this it would be that God is a force in the universe that is the essence of Goodness (Ethical) , Depth of thought (Mono), and Love (Theism) . To demonstrate that belief- God is that which inspires us to be altruistic over our natural tendencies of self-interest ; to seek compromise for the common good over toxic tribalism.

As an ideal, religion is a method and a tool which makes goodness and depth have meaning in people's lives and the institution is supposed to be a delivery system for giving daily reminders, methods and meaning to God's presence in our lives. Based on the above definitions , to say that God is the causation of the Inquisition, the Dark Ages, Sunni-Shiite massacres , the Holocaust, the Twin Towers and all of the other religiously sponsored, politically motivated devastation and destruction is inane. Tribalism-absolutely. Racism-of course. Organized Religion based on contextual politics-you betcha. But God ?

And now to my friend Mr. "B's" thesis: "First, note that the country is secular, not religious . God is anything but essential to our success...". I think that the founding fathers beg to differ. Though true that the Constitution does not mention God, certainly the Declaration of Independence is rife with evidence that the struggle for independence and the very essence of the country is reliant upon Divine Providence. It would be difficult to find one of those founding fathers of ours who did not believe in Divine Presence. Yes, thank God the first amendment demands a separation between Church and state ( the operative word being Church or Institutional Religion ). Yet according to the Pew Research Center a reference to God is mentioned in each of the 50 state constitutions adding up to approximately 200 times. And May I remind all who are reading this that though quite secular, the lobbyist AIPAC is a huge influence re: the State of Israel, the Catholic Church is quite a game changer when it comes to abortion issues in this country. And if any one of you do not believe that the Baptist's and Protestant Lobbies do not play an overwhelmingly influential role in the American politic I want to know what you are smoking . May I remind you the Martin Luther King was a Minister who used his faith as the underpinning of the Civil Rights movement and that the President of the United States is sworn into office upon the Bible of his or her choice while every session of Congress begins with a prayer ( and usually ends with an investigation) to name just a few of the ways that religion is a factor in the policies of the United States.

Mr. "B" to the contrary of your observation, I believe with all my heart and all of my soul and all of my might that the definition that I have called God, which is more goodness, inclusiveness , selflessness and compromise for the greater good is "essential" to the success of our beloved county. With love and respect. 0