

Life, Genericity and the Entitlement Culture

Presented to the 2013 Dayton Lifetech
Conference

by Fr. Larry Gearhart
Pastor, Champaign Co. Parishes

Entitlement Culture, Definitions, 1

- Entitlement subculture: a coherent sociological group united by purpose, predicament or passion and enlivened by a common sense of entitlement.
- Entitlement culture: the culture at or above the level of a single nation which was once united by a common language, culture and discipline, but which is now fractured into entitlement subcultures.

Entitlement Culture, Definitions, 2

- Entitlement fault line: The ethos or sets of presuppositions having to do with entitlement that clash between two subcultures.
- Entitlement metaculture: The common ethos and metaphysics of a society's elites in various domains which accounts for collaboration in aiding and abetting the exacerbation of conflict in entitlement subcultures.

Entitlement Fault Line Example 1

Class Entitlement

- The French Revolution of 1789
- National Constituent Assembly adopts a “Declaration of the Rights of Man.”
- It assumed a distinction between “active” and “passive” citizenship – a two-class system.
- The lower tier, however, recognized its inherent power since the Revolution was essentially a mob phenomenon.

Entitlement Fault Line Example 2

Sexual Entitlement

- Men or women in positions of power often exploit those underneath, especially the young.
- Sexual appetites of aging couples do not degrade at the same pace.
- Men and women in the hookup culture have opposing expectations.
 - “Nice guys of Ok Cupid” Laurie Penny in *The New Statesman*

Examples of Entitlement Meta-culture

- Happiness is defined in materialistic terms – pragmatism and utilitarianism.
- Technological advances make new levels of happiness possible, e.g. pain relief and sexual enhancement.
- The march of history and human choice can be understood in deterministic terms – inclination defines behavior.

Entitlement Degrades Performance

- NewsMax “Culture of entitlement threatens entrepreneurship.”
- “Political Calculations” Blog – “The real story behind U.S. income inequality”
- Fertility in western nations has dropped below replacement levels. Economic health demands increased immigration.

Short History of Sexual Entitlement

- 7th Lambeth Conference (1930): Anglican clerics permit limited use of contraception
- Alfred Kinsey founds (1947) Institute for Sex Research
- 9th Lambeth Conference (1958): Use of contraception no longer questioned.
- Robert Rimmer: *The Harrad Experiment*, 1962
- No fault divorce debuts in California, 1969
- “Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice” released in theatres, 1969

Impacts on Society

- Marriage and family are slowly collapsing as enduring institutions.
- Male and female expectations are increasingly incompatible with family.
- Both require sacrifice and a sense of vocational service – at opposite poles to the sense of entitlement.
- Elites increasingly view their role as tinkering.