

on

Or to turn toward religion, Matt Wright asserted.

"Church really isn't really a household thing anymore for families. People have different priorities," stated Matt, 16, from St. Mary's Church in Danville.

On the other hand, Theisen emphasized that church involvement can play a key role in providing Gen X-ers with stability during these times of uncertainty.

"There would be more and more of a religious revival in a sense of conservatism because they feel that conservatism, the tie that binds them together," Theisen said.

He added that the divorce rate, which hovers around 50 percent, further strains family and community ties even further.

Matt remarked that the loosening of such ties have made today's teens uncertain and cynical about their futures. This attitude, he said, influences school and life in general.

"Back in the 1970s and 1980s, people were happier. In the 1990s, they're dreamers," Matt said.

Matt added that the media has played a big part in feeding this attitude by emphasizing negative

stories.

"Pretty much news and news is good news," Matt said. "Everything you talk about, it's about murder and robberies. That's what's exposed to the public. There's not enough good news."

Lou likewise pointed out that media give Gen X-ers a bad rap, offering considerable coverage of drug usage and violence.

"There's too much negative (press). It's not really even that bad. People just think it is," Lou commented. "It's just once in a while, but people think all kids are like that."

Lou added that good deeds by teens often go unrecognized. For instance, he'd like to see media coverage of the teens with whom he has volunteered for clean-up projects in the city of Elmira.

The positive virtues of Gen X-ers certainly weren't emphasized in the 1996 book *Generation X Goes to College*, by Peter Sacks. According to a jacket blurb on the book, the author, who taught journalism at a community college, found his students "jaded, unachieving, highly demanding yet lacking any respect for standards of intelligence. These insouciant

(carefree) scholars wore bored looks, ample attitudes and reversed baseball caps. They expected to earn top grades by just showing up in class, which they interrupted with their portable TVs, cellular phones or personal pagers."

Guilty as charged? Not necessarily, Christine said. She pointed out that generalizations about generations are not really healthy.

"When you say Generation X, you think of grunge people walking down the street with boom boxes. But that's not all teens," Christine stated.

She much prefers the slogan

"Generation Next" currently being used by a leading soda company. Those words, she said, sound "more positive, more upbeat."

Christine concluded that teens who dislike the Generation X label must strive to prove they deserve a better reputation.

"What we can do is show the media, the government and the elderly that we're not all bad, we're not all the same," Christine said. "There's always hope."

However, she said there is a danger if previous generations continue to portray Gen X-ers in a negative light.

"They need to realize that we are the future. If they keep demeaning us, we're not going to care," Christine remarked. "So keep on doing it, if that's what you want."

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