As previously discussed, ~~As has been commented upon in the previous two sections,~~ the Syrian Maronites who migrated to the United States of America ~~during~~ between 1891-1924 ~~experienced~~ faced many ~~challenges~~ hurdles ~~and tensions~~, both economically and culturally. Although the cultural ~~challenges~~ challenges remained problematic, many immigrants were able to overcome their economic struggles allowing them to assimilate into the cultural fabric of the United States. This @ section of chapter three reviews the ~~challenges~~ trials and tensions ~~that~~ facing the Syrian Maronite family and community in the United States ~~became confronted with~~ from 1968 to the present. These Maronites would be the members of the X, Millennial and Cyber generations.

There is little dispute ~~That~~ that the culture in the United States has been. drastically altered by the social movements of the mid to late twentieth century ~~is a fact~~. The laws ~~which have been~~ enacted as a result of the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the gay, lesbian and transgender movement, and the ecological movement have worked to guarantee the rights and ~~protection~~ protections of African Americans, women, ~~people who are gay~~ the LGBT community, ~~lesbian and transgender,~~ and the natural environment. Many would argue that the tolerance engendered by these movements has resulted in a society that is more understanding, open, and harmonious.

Globalization is another factor that has contributed to this new, more broad-minded, society. The world is much smaller in many ways. Religious plurality and multiculturalism permeates many if not all of the leading nations of the world. The United States is a leader in technological innovation which enables globalization at all levels of society. An elementary school child attending public school in the poorest sections of New York City ~~public school has~~ has the same reach globally as ~~the child of~~

~~the same grade level~~the one in an elite school of Beverly Hills, Technologies such as the Apple Watch Whether it is the ~~I phone watch~~Apple Watch that makes information immediately accessible with the utmost of convenience and connectivity, or Google ~~glasses~~Glass, which has the utmost multitasking and accessibility capabilities, and other devices such as these facilitate new and diverse ways of thinking about the current issues affecting our society such as matters of race, ethnicity, economics, politics, and religion. The way people receive, transmit, ~~collect~~ and understand information has evolved drastically with the advent of smartphones and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Yik Yak, Vine, and ~~and~~ Snapchat. Events such as the ~~understand information has been altered drastically with the smartphone and the~~ Arab Spring, the Russian invasion of Crimea, the death of Nelson Mandela ~~to become~~became a tangible and much more real experience for those worldwide who were "tapped in."

Although much good has come from these technological developments, they have also introduced contemporary challenges and tensions culturally, politically and religiously. People's attitudes, particularly those of the millennial generation and after, have been altered. The present, the here and now, has become much more meaningful. The Syrian Maronites of the United States have not been exempted efrom this, xcused from this worldly occurrence. In observation of this, the The Patriarchal Maronite Synod wrote that writes:

> Today, we live in a society characterized by a pluralism of cultures and concepts, by an easy access and communication with different life patterns and by a scientific progress at all levels. Moreover, we are witnessing an opening in man's and an early awareness that promotes responsible freedom among new generations (http://www.maronite-heritage.com/File2text10php) Section 4 # a33.

The Maronite Church leadership recognizes that people in contemporary society are acting more responsibly and sensitively towards their environment. This observation reflects the idealistic characteristic of Generation X (1960/65 – 1980/85). It is also true of the Millennial Generation (1980/83-2002), a group that tends to be more pragmatic, independent, and socially active at higher levels than previous generations. Viewed positively, this tendency of Maronite individuals to be open to diversity as a result of technology, telecommunications, social media, and creative advancements are the seeds of what John Caputo (2007) refers to as "a prayer for the impossible." Simply stated, through this "prayer for the impossible" Caputo argues for a peeling back of the layers of interpretation enveloping Jesus Christ's message about justice, forgiveness and hospitality (58). The goal is to harness this cultural attitude and focus its energy toward making the Kingdom of God present for all of God's creation.

In conjunction these new ways of approaching societal and life issues, there has also been a general movement away from a dependence on metanarratives (Horell 2003, 81). This is particularly true of large institutions- including the Church. As was described in the preceding section, people have become critically [1] minded as a result, more discerning. Commenting on this Horell (2007, 83) writes:

> Contemporary pluralism and multiculturalism, the rapid rate of change, and a growing awareness that large institutions often lag behind the pace of change all contribute to a sense that overarching and inclusive frameworks of meaning and value are less and less helpful in guiding our lives.

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[1] See above pp 2&41.

Practical theologian Friedrich L. Schweitzer draws a similar conclusion when referring to *ideal* or *ideals* about life (~~Schweitzer~~ 2004, 10). The overarching theme that once ~~dominated or~~ provided a ~~framework~~ guideline for life has been called into question and, in some case~~s, s~~ even rejected. In his discussion about contemporary young Catholics, Tom Beaudoin (1998) ~~further~~ observes that not only are they suspicious of institutions ~~which results in~~ resulting in an attitude of indifference, but ~~they are~~ they also place value on personal experience. He writes~~:~~. "This suspicion of institutions is fueled by the second characteristic of my generation, a widespread conviction about the importance of the experience" (12).

In what way does this mindset hold ~~implication~~ implications for how a person views and relates to the institutions of family and Church? How does the lack of a guiding ~~overarching~~ theme for life affect ~~one's~~ an individual's relationship to ~~one's~~ the religious community? It is with these aforementioned thoughts and questions that the following dimensions of Maronite life in the Unites States are viewed.

Family Cohesion

Like Maronite families of past generations, today's Maronites continue to be affected by the prevailing culture. ~~The Maronite families of today continue to be affected by the prevailing culture, as were the Maronite families of the past generations.~~ The process of democratization and independence that ~~had begun~~ began in the earlier generations has continued in different forms. The majority of families in the United States in the later part of the 20th century became much more mobile. Maronite families were not exempt from this. ~~As families in the United States were becoming more and more mobile, so were the Maronite families.~~ It was not uncommon for children to attend

university away from home, living in another city or even out of the country. ~~With parents living in one city of the United States, it was not uncommon for the children to attend a university in another city or country.~~ At the conclusion of their studies, many chose to reside permanently in these locations. ~~Many of these children remain living at a distance from their parents.~~ This distancing has ~~ushered~~ engendered a new, more independent form of Maronite family life and a resultant weakening of familial cohesion, ~~in a form of independence that has become a part of Maronite familial life. This adopted lifestyle of the family has weakened the cohesion of the initial immigrant family structure and form.~~ Although there are many new immigrants ~~that are feeding~~ to feed the growth of the Maronite Church in the United States, the guiding question of this research remains the same. That is, does the Maronite Church ~~of~~ in the United States ~~of America~~ make available the richest wisdom and heritage the tradition has to offer to its faithful membership? This applies to all Maronites, both ~~Native American born~~ American-born as well as ~~the~~ new immigrants.[2]

Mobility and accessibility characterize the modern individual. Most people are on the go and utilize technology such as cell phones, smartphones, and tablets in their everyday lives. ~~Physical mobility, alongside the mobile cell phone, is characteristic of today's person.~~ Families stay connected through these technologies. ~~Families are connected through available technologies.~~ Because of the assimilation into the Latin Church, many Maronite families are confronted ~~with similar challenges~~ with the same challenges facing Roman Catholic families concerning marriage, child rearing,

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[2] For more reading on the growth of the Maronite Church in the United States consult *Growth of The Maronite Church in the United States- Five necessary Components*. by Rev. Armando Elkhoury. pp 4-6. See bibliography.