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Teen Ministry vs State Religion

~ Iceland has a state religion – the Lutheran Church. It is deeply woven into society. When babies are born, they are baptized (infant baptism), and according to Lutheran doctrine, this is when God grants them faith. Then, at around 14 or 15 years old, these children go through Confirmation. This is when they are expected to affirm and place their trust in what was done for them (i.e., confirm what God did through their infant baptism). While some may argue this is not the same as trusting in their baptism itself, it functions that way in practice. Rather than trust Christ, people trust what they think God did through their baptism. Furthermore, Confirmation is deeply ingrained in Icelandic culture; it is almost universally expected. It is tied to the school system, and societal pressure is immense. Most teenagers go through with it, not necessarily because they believe in it, but because it is tradition. (There are also a lot of gifts involved.)



Tradition and Societal Expectation

~ Grandparents expect it. Families fear being seen as different if their children do not participate. This is often the first major test where societal pressure begins to shape a teenager's choices, and sadly, many begin to drift away from church soon after. However, by God's grace, one of our teenagers has made the bold decision to be baptized instead of confirmed! This is a significant step of faith, but the pressure is overwhelming. Please pray that this teenager stands strong in their decision and that their example will inspire others to truly follow Christ – not tradition.

Prayers

~ Would you stand with me? Please pray:

- 1) That our teenagers would resist societal and cultural pressure and instead choose to wholly follow Jesus.
- 2) That more would be convicted to pursue baptism as a public declaration of their faith rather than simply going through Confirmation out of obligation.

3) That even if some give in to Confirmation, they would not drift away from church or continue down the path of following societal expectations rather than God's calling.

~ Thank you. With God, all things are possible! I still believe that God can and will do amazing things in Iceland.



**Thank you for your
continued support
and prayers!**

**Yours in Christ,
William and Phyllis Weimer**