

From the Editor: JAFE391

APOLOGETICS ACROSS THE GENERATIONS: Introducing “Postmodern Realities”

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“He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments.” (Ps. 78:6–7 ESV)

If you follow cultural trends, it seems like weighing in on the millennial generation is a popular and frequent topic of analysis. This buzzed-about generation numbers more than 80 million¹ and has been endlessly dissected. Millennials have been described as slackers, cause oriented, social-media obsessed, helicopter-parented, multicultural, narcissistic, and overconfident, embracing the LGBTQ community, and highly valuing authenticity.

It seems that the millennials are a popular punching bag for those bemoaning attrition in the evangelical church, saying they are leaving in droves and abandoning the faith. Studies show some of them are leaving religion behind as they age.²

But young people of every generation have been critiqued as being anti-institutional, self-absorbed pleasure seekers, not unlike the description of the hippie generation of many of our now-elder statesmen of evangelicalism who came of age in the sixties.³ Perhaps some of these adjectives best describe young people of any generation.

But what about the millennials who have not abandoned the church—the ones who stayed and desire to pursue Christ and live as His disciples? Some of them are the next generation of apologists, theologians, and thinkers who have been taught and faithfully disciplined by many of the authors you see in these pages through their

writings (books and via the Internet), radio broadcasts, sermons, lectures, and personally as their professors.

It's important for this next generation that has learned and studied to now have a voice. The apostle Paul instructed his spiritual son Timothy, "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" (1 Tim. 4:12–13 ESV). Older generations (Generation X, Baby Boomers, the Silent Generation) can learn from educated, gifted, and mature younger believers, and millennials have relatability with their peers to speak a prophetic word to them.

To give younger Christians a voice in our magazine, this issue we inaugurate a new column called Postmodern Realities, to be written by millennials primarily to millennials, but secondarily to all of us who face the challenge of living faithfully as Christians in our rapidly changing postmodern era. This column addresses Christian apologetics issues (both theological and cultural) as well as pop culture trends (including film, literature, and technology).

To find millennial authors, our first resort was to search online, where we found many qualified candidates, including James Hoskins, who launches the Postmodern Realities column with his article "Recovering the Lost Unity of Heart and Mind." James does not give his academic credentials in his byline, but he has a degree in philosophy and an MA in science and religion from Biola University.

An additional strategy we adopted was to hold a contest to find new writers who want to speak to their peers on apologetical issues. Many of the articles we received had merit, and you will see the runners-up in Postmodern Realities as well as Effective Evangelism and Viewpoint.

Our grand-prize winner from that contest (whose article you will see in a few issues) is Ryan Steinbach, who works for the Federal Aviation Administration and volunteers with the high school youth ministry at a church in Manassas, Virginia.

One of the beauties of the Christian church is that we are a multigenerational family. We want to reflect that truth in these pages not only through the subjects that are addressed but also in the ages and genders of the authors who write for us. You will see many new bylines here in 2016, and we hope you will be edified, as we have, by reading articles from writers that are new to the JOURNAL.

Many theologians and apologists have heeded the command of the Lord to tell of His excellent greatness to the next generation. The Holy Spirit has been at work in the lives of many millennials. These young men and women bring encouragement and hope to the hearts of older believers through their diligent efforts to follow and serve Christ in their lives, including through innovative contributions to apologetics and discernment ministry. —*Melanie Cogdill*

NOTES

1 Sam Tanenhaus, "Generation Nice: The Millennials Are Generation Nice," August 15, 2014,

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/fashion/the-millennials-are-generation-nice.html?_r=0.

- 2 Daniel Burke, "Millennials Leaving Church in Droves, Study Finds," May 14, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/12/living/pew-religion-study/index.html>.
- 3 Luke T. Harrington, "LOL Interwebz: I'd Think of a Title for This, but I'm a Lazy and Entitled Snake Person," June 11, 2015, <http://christandpopculture.com/lol-interwebz-id-think-of-a-title-for-this-but-im-a-lazy-and-entitled-snake-person/>.