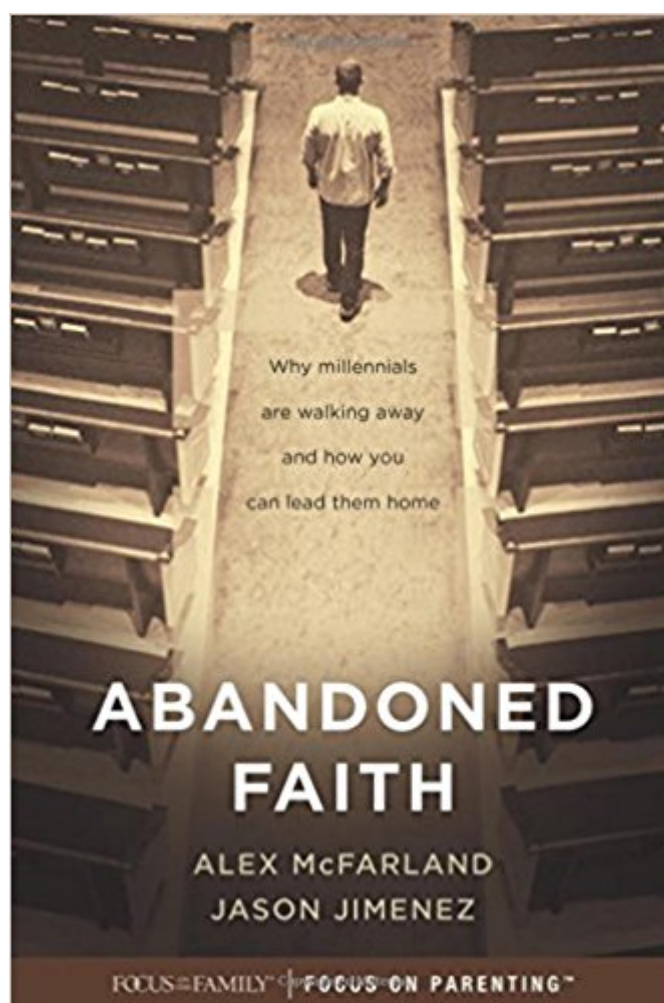


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# Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away And How You Can Lead Them Home



## Synopsis

Millennials (those born between 1980 and 2000) constitute a group of over 80 million individuals who are technologically astute, ethnically diverse, and culturally and vibrantly engaged. Yet they face high unemployment and massive debt, and they comprise the largest number of religiously unaffiliated individuals in American history. Concerned by these and other hard-hitting facts, experts Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez have created a book that interviews top Christian leaders who work with Millennials and families. Their research and conversations will shed new light on what Christian parents must do to reach their young adult children. This book offers a strong voice of hope for parents, church leaders, and others who serve the Millennial generation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Insightful...encouraging a must read for everyone.

Focus on the Family has long been known as a great source of parenting resources. In a new FOTF/Tyndale House book, Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez offer help for parents of adult children who have wandered from their faith. *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* examines trends among the young adult demographic and encourages parents in connecting with their millennial children. In a sense, *Abandoned Faith* is a "horse out of the barn" book. In spite of the authors' encouraging words to the contrary, I could see some parents reading this with regret and despair, wishing they had something differently. But

it's not too late. Just as parents' examples influence young children, so can they continue to do so: "When parents strive to model a pattern of Christianity to their millennial children, those children are far more likely to follow in their parents' footsteps. . . . There is nothing more compelling and persuasive than a parent living out his or her faith with great boldness and conviction." (xiv) The flip side, and what may discourage parents, is the obvious link between their own failures and their children's loss of faith. McFarland and Jimenez put it in sociological terms: "Prior to the mass exodus of millennials from the church, there was a mass exodus of fathers leaving their families. Before millennials stopped attending church, their fathers had already stopped making church a priority. Before the doubts took hold of millennials, fear and doubt were already embedded in their parents' lives." (35) If Mom and Dad aren't going to church, they should not be surprised when Junior opts out as well. What they want to see is faith that makes a difference in their parents' lives, actions and attitudes, reflecting their stated beliefs. "The compelling proof millennials truly seek is found in an authentic life." (60) One way that even committed parents can drive their children away is to try too hard and be too controlling. Some parents "think that by enabling their kids, they are doing them a favor. . . . Millennials raised by enabling parents are far more likely to rebel, abandon church, and hang with the wrong crowd." (17) We want to smooth the road for our kids, and sometimes try to do too much. McFarland and Jimenez's advice for the fixer-upper parent is to repeat this mantra: "When I interfere, my child will not persevere." (195) Abandoned Faith won't give distraught parents a magic bullet. I don't want to minimize the amount of research and sound guidance they offer, but the best takeaway from the book is simply to love much, be patient, and model grace. Jimenez gives an acrostic for "what every member of the family needs." L.O.V.E. Laugh. Open. Value. Encourage. If a house is full of laughter, if relationships are honest and open, if children feel valued, and if parents abound in encouragement for their children our homes will be much better places. It's hard not to read a book like this without regret. I'm about to send my oldest son to college, and can think of many ways I've failed him and opportunities missed. I would imagine every parent has similar feelings, whether sending their child to preschool, college, or anywhere in between. Abandoned Faith is descriptive, but also encouraging for those of us who have regrets. It offers good news and encouragement for moving forward. Love your kids more. Value and cherish them. Pray for them--this especially. I was moved and challenged. Thanks to the Tyndale Blog Network for the complimentary review copy!

Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home is written by Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez and published by Tyndale House Publishers in association

with Focus on the Family. This book is aimed at parents, both physical and spiritual who have had/are having their children "abandon" the Christian faith that they were raised in the nature and admonition of. The authors start with a heart wrenching series of accounts of parents who have had their child "leave" their faith, which sets up for an emotional appeal to the reader who is most likely in the same situation. As a minister to children, youth, and families this is sadly something I have personally seen again and again. A child is raised in a family who confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior, and tries their best to raise that child/children in a home that honors and glorifies the LORD, yet when the child leaves the home either for college or for the workforce they reject the faith that they claimed as a child. Abandoned Faith is a long letter to parents trying to comfort them and give them practical advice to try to recover their child's "abandoned" faith in Christ. While it is obvious that this work is well researched, and I expect nothing less from Focus On the Family, it seems as if the author is placing the weight of their child's lawlessness on the parents shoulders. While it is the duty of a parent to raise their child, and spiritually nurture them, parents cannot confer faith on their children. Faith is something that an individual must have given to them by God, not by their parent, regardless of their parent's spiritual relationship with God. What would have transformed this work from good to great would have been the focus on the sovereignty of God rather than the duty of Man. When we remember that it is God who gives us faith, and He is the one who keeps our faith; because of this if it seems that someone has "abandoned" their faith, as sad as it is, there might never have been true belief in the first place. There was one other concern about Abandoned Faith, which dealt with the practical application for Churches who want to bring back the "lost millennial" generation. While I am on the outside looking in to the millennial generation, the concessions that the authors ask the church to make to the millennial generation take away much of the foundation of the Church. While I readily admit that something must be done to bring the millennial generation back into the covenant community most of what is suggested might bring a few back, but it will have started to make the foundational pillars of the church crack and rot away. In the end, while I highly respect the two authors of Abandoned Faith, what they are attempting to do presents a compelling argument, albeit one based on emotion and may end up placing the blame of their children's rejection of Christianity on grieving parents, when they fulfilled their task given to them in Deuteronomy 6 when raising their children. This book was provided to me free of charge from Focus on the Family via Tyndale Publishing in exchange for an unbiased, honest review.

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