

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS OF BABY BOOMERS, GENERATION X, AND THE  
MILLENNIALS: ARE THERE STILL GENDER DIFFERENCES?

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The literature describes how changing demographics and cultural factors in recent generations may be contributing to gender differences regarding religion. The present exploratory study uses cross-sectional survey data from the 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey to examine the gender differences in religiosity for Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. The findings show significant gender and demographic results for attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer, belief in the Bible as the word of God, and belief in life after death for all three generations. Baby Boomer and Millennial women attend religious services more than men, but there is no gender difference for Generation X. However, Women from all generations pray more than men. For belief in the Bible as the word of God, only Baby Boomer women believe more than men. Finally, Millennial women and Generation X women believe in life after death more than men, whereas there is no gender difference in belief for Baby Boomers. Implications of the findings are discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The longstanding trend demonstrated in the Literature regarding gender and religion in America is that women are more religious than men (Anderson and Young, 2004; Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). Since the 1800's, women have consistently had stronger religious beliefs than men and participated in religious activities more than men as well (Putnam and Campbell, 2012; Roberts and Yamane, 2012). Regarding affiliation, the aspect of religiosity that marks identification with a particular religious tradition (see Ellison, Gay, and Glass, 1989), women identify as Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, and Mainline Protestants in higher numbers than men (Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). This is significant because this list comprises the three primary religious traditions in in the United States (Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). In terms of numbers, women make up 55% of the Mainline and Evangelical polity and 54% of Catholics (Pew Research Center, 2015). Nevertheless, religious affiliation is criticized in the literature as a less than perfect measure of personal identification and more of a measure of family or ethnic background (Trzebiatowska, 2012). Disparities between attendance numbers and affiliation underscore this issue (Trzebiatowska, 2012).

Rather than look at affiliation per se, recent studies on religiosity are increasingly examining religious changes through the context of behaviors and beliefs (Meselko and Kubzansky, 2006; Schwadel, 2011; Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013). Examining the gender difference through these specific parameters of religiosity—behavior and beliefs—shows that women still

have higher numbers than men in both areas (Pew Research Center, 2008). Specifically concerning beliefs, 77% of women ages 18 and older are more likely to say that they are certain about the existence of God or a universal spirit compared to 65% of men (Pew Research Center, 2008). Additionally, women are more likely to pray daily compared to men, 66% compared to 49%, respectively (Pew Research Center, 2008). Regarding importance of religion, 63% of women feel that religion is important to their lives compared to 49% of men (Pew Research Center, 2008). Finally, attendance at religious services is also considerably higher for women. The research shows that 44% of women attend religious services compared to 34% of men (Pew Research Center, 2008).

Importantly, Becker and Hofmeister (2001) demonstrated that for women, increased religious involvement is tied to how salient religion is for them, their beliefs, and then involvement in the religious subculture rather than simply for family formation and the birth of children. For men on the other hand, structural factors such as full-time employment and family formation are more directly related to increases in religious participation, rather than salience of religious beliefs per se due to a likely association of religious participation with maturity (Becker and Hofmeister, 2001).

Although Hertel (1995) used General Social Survey data from 1972 to 1990 to demonstrate that full-time employment for married women corresponded to a decrease in religious involvement for them and their spouses, the study by Becker and Hofmeister (2001) controlled for additional variables that eliminated this result. Instead, Becker and Hofmeister

(2001) found some support for the negative effect of modern attitudes on religious participation. As men and women develop more egalitarian views of gender, there is a tendency to develop more individualistic orientations toward institutions such as family and religion (Wuthnow, 1988; Ammerman and Roof, 1995). More specifically, the relevance of religious authority becomes salient to the decision to attend religious services and this effect is stronger for women than men (Becker and Hofmeister, 2001). However, Becker and Hofmeister (2001) point out that despite the fact that some studies point to a direct causal relationship between individualism and decreased religious participation, others argue that socialization is a key factor. Sherkat (1998) argues that individuals raised in strict religious contexts maybe be socialized against the individualism that would cause them to question the salience of religion, whereas the same can be said of the individuals who are raised to reject religion—they may not have any inclination to bring their children to church on the basis that their socialization never instilled that desire. Socialization does not occur in a vacuum. Specifically, Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004) emphasize that the effects of popular culture ideology mitigate the influence of socialization on attitudes toward gender equality. They specifically look at how gender attitudes shift over the life course and posit that while childhood socialization does play a role, it is by no means deterministic of the attitudes that individuals have in later life (Brooks and Bolzendahl, 2004). This point regarding salience of religion is relevant to the study conducted by Becker and Hofmeister (2001), who specifically address that attitudes toward religious salience vary through the life course. This lends weight

to the need to expand the literature by examining how religious beliefs and participation vary for different cohorts in various points in the life course, which is part of the aim of my study.

In addition to this, the salience of examining gender difference among cohorts is also critical because of the changing ideological culture concerning gender equality. The Baby Boomers were heavily influenced by the gender revolution and the entry of women into the workforce, which has resulted in lasting effects on religion (Roof, 1999). Most notably, religious attitudes and behavioral differences between men and women were beginning to be reduced, particularly regarding women who were employed full-time outside the home (Roof, 1999). For Generation X, progress toward gender equality was still something to be embraced and explored (Flory and Miller, 2000). They exhibited a similar pattern as the Baby Boomers, where increasing numbers of women in the workforce coupled with increasing divorce rates had a strong impact on this generation (Flory and Miller, 2000). Generation X'ers became more individualistic, less religious, and more accepting of the culture of gender equality (Pew Research Center (Flory and Miller, 2000). The children of the Baby Boomers, the Millennials, are the generation that has grown up with the idea that gender equality is normal (Twenge, 2011). Additionally, recent research shows that both male and female Millennials are highly supportive of women in the workforce and favor an egalitarian partnership in the household (Gerson, 2010; Twenge, 2011). The purpose of this research is to examine the gender difference among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials regarding religious beliefs and behaviors.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Generations

The concept of generations most influentially traces back to Karl Mannheim ([1928] 1952). Mannheim (1952) describes generations as social constructs that are created when period effects, or key historical occurrences and events, are experienced by a cohort of similar age. The impact of period effects on attitudes and behaviors as well as the awareness associated with having experienced history in a social way is key to the demarcation of a particular cohort or generation (Mannheim, 1952). As such, when pivotal events do not occur or when social change is slow, Mannheim acknowledges that distinct generations may not be distinguishable (1952).

According to Mannheim (1952) a key period of time for the social construction of the unique character of a cohort or generation is between 17 and 25 years old. The cohort is marked by particular attitudes and behaviors that distinguish it from other generations (Mannheim, 1952). More specifically, late adolescence and early adulthood—also known as emerging adulthood (see Arnett, 2000)—are the pivotal times of developing distinct outlooks on political and social matters (Mannheim, 1952). Differences of attitude and behavior toward gender issues and religion based on generation are common examples in the literature (Pew Research Center, 2008; 2015; Taylor, 2014). These differences are important because attitudes and behaviors developed in young adulthood are believed to be highly influential of life decisions and attitudes later in the life course (Mannheim, 1952). In other words, generations

are believed to base many of their decisions in later adulthood based on views and opinions they formed early in life, based on the unique historical experiences of their cohort.

On the other hand, more recent research indicates that changes in cultural ideology can have a profound impact on individuals that is stronger than generational shifts (Twenge, Campbell, and Gentile, 2012; Twenge and Campbell, 2013). Specifically, changes in culture including increased individualism, changes in worldviews, and parenting and educational shifts are cited as being more influential than period events on generations. Markus and Kitayama (2010) posit that individuals influence culture reflexively—culture shapes individuals and individuals, in turn, shape culture in such a way that cultural level changes are stronger in some cases than generational shifts (Morling and Lamoreaux, 2008). That being said, researchers also acknowledge that generational and cultural changes happen slowly and linearly over time (Twenge and Campbell, 2013).

For the sake of this research, I will use the generational operationalizations that are most common in the literature. I will also be using the terms “generation” and “cohort” interchangeably, even though in both instances I am specifically referring to birth cohort as designated by the literature. Accordingly, the Baby Boom generation consists of those born between 1946 and 1964, which means that these individuals are currently between 51 and 69 years old (Twenge and Campbell, 2013; Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013). Additionally, Generation X is considered to include everyone born between 1965 and either 1979 (Twenge and Campbell, 2013) or 1980 (Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013; Fry, 2015). As such, Generation X’ers are currently

between 35 and 50 years old. Since, the Pew Research Center uses the 1965 to 1980 designation, this is the operationalization that I will use as well (Fry, 2015). Finally, the Millennials are the generation born between 1997 and 1981 according to the latest publications by the Pew Research Center (Fry, 2015). This makes the current ages of Millennials between 18 and 34 years old.

### Baby Boomers

The relationship between each of the generations and religion is unique, yet there is a common thread that ties them together. That unifying element involves the significant cultural shifts that occurred in the 1960's and are still impacting religion today. It is important to understand these key historical events in order to both understand the factors that are currently impacting religious practices and beliefs and to understand what the future of American religion might look like.

America was in the midst of social, religious, and political upheaval during the time when the Baby Boomers were reaching young adulthood (Roof and McKinney, 1987). However, prior to the tumultuous changes of the 1960's, the big three—Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism—were the dominant cultural and religious force in United States (Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). Religious uniformity and homogeneity were the trend in the 1950's and even identity as an American coincided with religious self-identification as a Protestant, Catholic or Jew (Roof and McKinney, 1987). However, significant changes were to occur in the next decade that would change the face of American religion.

A watershed moment occurred in 1960 when John F. Kennedy was elected to the presidency. The election of a Catholic president was a signal that the time of Protestant domination was over (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Then, in 1962, school prayer was deemed unconstitutional signaling that the tides of traditional American religion were crashing and something new was taking shape—a desire for pluralism and diversity both socially and in terms of religion (Roof and McKinney, 1987). The evidence lay in the changes occurring in the membership of the mainline faiths. The “big three” traditional religious affiliations lost members in significant numbers during the 1960’s (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Baby boomers who had been reared in one of the mainline faiths were defecting in their early twenties, and it was becoming increasingly difficult for religious bodies to attract new members (Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). Additionally, many young Americans were exploring alternative religious movements and a large number were becoming religiously unaffiliated (Perrin 1989; Roof, 1993; Roof and McKinney, 1987; Wuthnow, 1976).

As a group, the Baby Boomers were developing a highly individualistic identity and worldview (Roof and McKinney, 1987). They were less interested in the faiths they knew from their youth and more interested in self-focused introspection and “enlightenment” (Johnson 1985; Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). Rather than homogeneity and cultural conformity, the collective mindset of the youth involved cultural and moral relativism and the embrace of the non-traditional in all things including social and religious issues (Hoge 1974; Johnson 1985; Perrin 1989; Roof and McKinney 1987). Due in no small way to changes in higher education and availability of new technologies like the birth control pill, Baby Boomers were able to make

much more calculated decisions about the trajectory of their lives than previous generations (Roof, 1993; Roof and McKinney, 1987). They were choosing when they would get married, start families, begin careers, and participate in religion (Hoge, Benton, and Luidens 1993; Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). Additionally, many middle class, college-educated Baby Boomers embraced the liberal movements of the time including issues of gender and racial equality, gay rights, antiwar protests, environmental concerns, and new religions (Hoge 1974; Johnson 1985; Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987; Wilhelm, Rooney, and Tempel 2007). This combination of pluralism and secular humanism resulted in the Baby Boomers adopting more permissive sexual behaviors, challenging gender roles, and delaying marriage (Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). This generation was rejecting many of the common values that Americans were believed to hold concerning social issues, including traditional views of gender, chastity prior to marriage, and low divorce rates (Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987).

Though the counterculture movement had an impact on many young Baby Boomers, a large majority of young adults were not involved in the protests, the drugs, and the other more esoteric elements of the “age of Aquarius” (Wuthnow, 1976). Nevertheless, the Baby Boomers as a whole were highly influenced by the general cultural Zeitgeist of tolerance and individualism that flourished in the 1960’s (Roof and McKinney, 1987). The combination of pluralism and individualism directly impacted the way that Baby Boomers would participate in faith institutions and develop their religious beliefs (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Social scientists refer to this highly private and individualized approach to religious faith as the “new voluntarism” (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Essentially Americans’ conception of relativism

expanded to include religious matters, and they increasingly began to view religion as a personal preference (Roof and McKinney, 1987). This affected membership with churches because religion became more focused with the private, personal search for religion separate from external religious authority. Additionally, this affected traditional dogmatic belief because the traditional locus of religious authority shifted from the clergy of the religious institution to the individual—meaning suddenly everyone could be his or her own religious authority. As such, one’s religious beliefs became emotionally and experientially grounded amalgamations of various religious traditions that were privately acquired, interpreted, and held without the official oversight of traditional religious overseers.

In the literature, this development is called “Sheilism” and it is fundamental not only to the religious faith structure of Baby Boomers, but also continues to influence the belief development of Generation X and the Millennials (Roof and McKinney, 1987; Flory and Miller, 2000; Arnett and Jensen, 2002). To elaborate on the terminology, Robert Bellah et al. (1985) interviewed a woman named “Sheila” who described her religious beliefs in terms of something she called “Sheilism.” This was her personal, individualized perception of God and her relationship to Him; “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It’s Sheilism. Just my own little voice” (Bellah et al., 1985). A key component of “Sheilism” is the lack of need to attend religious services or be members of a religious congregation (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Faith is personal and private—it does not depend on community with other believers or oversight by religious authorities (Roof and McKinney, 1987). It is the individuals “own little voice.”

For the Baby Boomers, the ideological embrace of individualism, moral relativism, and pluralism can be traced back to the strong sense of disillusionment they were experiencing with traditional authority figures in various spheres of society (Hoge 1974; Johnson 1985; Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). In one decade, this generation faced a morally suspect war in Vietnam, political assassinations, the Watergate scandal, the push for civil rights and gender equality, riots, religious contradictions, etc. (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Rather than embrace the religious leaders, especially the liberal ones, Baby Boomers were largely avoiding them (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Ironically, the religious centers that were hurting the most for members during this time were the mainline institutions with liberal religious views and attitudes that should have been more palatable to Baby Boomers (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Interestingly, it was actually the conservative Protestant congregations that were doing well during this time, particularly the experiential variety that included the Pentecostal and evangelical sects (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Though conservative, these were distinctive faiths that focused on the spiritual experience of the believer—a highly attractive element to the experientially oriented Baby Boomers (Roof and McKinney, 1987). Nevertheless, a growing segment of the population also included those exploring alternative faiths as well as those who did not claim any religious affiliation at all—a strongly secular group (Roof and McKinney, 1987). This trend toward non-affiliation, or “nones” would continue to grow steadily for the next few decades and is now a significant mark of the Millennial generation (Pew Research Center, 2010). Overall, the Baby Boomers’ relationship with religion continues to be fundamental to understanding the shifts in American religion for the last fifty years.

## Generation X

Generation X is the familiar designation used for the 65 million Americans born between 1965 and 1980 (Taylor and Gao, 2014). Douglas Coupland (1991) originally coined the term “Generation X” in his well-known book by the same title about three seemingly aimless young adults who were finding it difficult to make the transition to adulthood, and the term has cemented itself in our collective culture. However, to understand Generation X fully, it is necessary to understand them in context of the two super-cohorts they find themselves sandwiched between. Compared to their predecessors, the Baby Boomers, who number 77 million and the Millennials, who comprise a staggering 83 million members, Generation X’s modest size has led to them being described as the “overlooked” or “marginalized” generation (Coupland, 1991; Mitchel, 1995; Taylor, 2014; Taylor and Gao, 2014).

In important ways, being overshadowed by both the Baby Boomers contributed greatly to the unique identity and character of this generation (Coupland, 1991; Flory and Miller, 2000; Taylor, 2014). The profile sketch of Generation X developed by Paul Taylor (2014: 33) describes them as “savvy, entrepreneurial loners” that are “distrustful of institutions, especially government.” More conservative initially than the Baby Boomers and Millennials, Generation X has otherwise been the linear ideological bridge between the two massive generations on either side of it (Taylor, 2014). Flory and Miller (2000) explained that high parental divorce rates and constant family relocation resulted in a sense of being disenfranchised among Gen X’ers. Additionally, due to shrinking economic opportunities and competition with Baby Boomers, Generation X had considerably fewer career chances (Flory and Miller, 2000). They

were over-educated and underpaid with many Generation X'ers working "McJobs" or jobs in the service sector that were distinguished by "low-pay, low-prestige, low-dignity, low benefit, and no future" (Coupland, 1991: 5).

As the first generation to live by the laws established for civil rights and gender equality, Generation X'ers considered themselves to be more multicultural than the Baby Boomers, and they were more likely to favor social diversity than the Boomers (Flory and Miller, 2000; Taylor, 2014). Technologically, Generation X became the first technologically literate generation, and they have remained very comfortable with it ever since (Taylor, 2014; Flory and Miller, 2000). Because Baby Boomer advertisers tended to market to themselves and ignore Generation X, the X'ers indulged themselves with self-referential pop culture (Rushkoff and Coupland, 1994).

Generation X is somewhat difficult to categorize in terms of religious belief. For religious believers, Generation X'ers tend to favor experiential faith and communion with God that is achieved through activities such as dancing and yoga (Bengsten et al., 2013; Flory and Miller, 2000). Additionally, Flory and Miller (2000) remarked about the tendency among X'ers to merge lifestyle interests with religious expression in a kind of blurring of the sacred and the profane that is foreign to the Baby Boomers. For example, the incorporation of religious themes in tattoo art among religious tattoo artists or the use of Hip Hop in religious self-expression, etc. (Flory and Miller, 2000). Although the everyday life demands make it difficult for practical expression, a full 75% of Generation X'ers state that religion is highly salient to their lives (Bengston et al., 2013). Additionally, Gen X'ers tend to believe that religion has use

for instilling moral values in their children (Bengston et al., 2013). Generation X believers also feel that they are independent thinkers such that they are willing to take breaks from religion in order to negotiate difficult doctrinal challenges (Bengston et al., 2013). Religious Generation X'ers are also more likely to believe in free will compared to other generations (Bengston et al., 2013).

On the other hand, Generation X's secular counterparts also claim to be independent thinkers, but for them that translates to religious nonbelief (Bengston et al., 2013). Additionally, nonbelieving Gen X'ers tend to have skeptical views of believers and supernatural faith over what can be empirically determined through science (Bengston et al., 2013). This generation also is noted for an increasingly hostile view of religion among nonbelievers. Specifically, nonbelievers in Generation X are more likely to view religion as illogical and non-beneficial to society compared to the Baby Boomers (Bengston et al., 2013).

Additionally, a debate currently exists concerning the role of generations or cohorts in determining aspects of religious affiliation. A recent study by Philip Schwadel (2010) uses the General Social Survey to compare religious affiliation probabilities for Baby Boomers and Generation X. Schwadel (2010) discovered that Generation X'ers are less likely than Baby Boomers to have a religious preference. However, Schwadel (2010) also found higher rates of disaffiliation from religion for Baby Boomers than Generation X'ers, despite the fact that Generation X has more members that do not affiliate with a religion than the Baby Boom cohort. The explanation that Schwadel (2010) offers for this finding is that more Baby Boomers

were likely raised with a religious affiliation than Generation X'ers, making the switch to non-affiliation more conspicuous among Baby Boomers. In essence, there are far more Generation X'ers that grew up without religion than Baby Boomers (Schwadel, 2010).

### Millennials

Neil Howe and William Strauss (1991) coined the term "Millennial" when they first sought out to describe the children of the Baby Boomers and older Gen X'ers. It is appropriately the term used to describe the generation that has come of age in the early 2000's and according to the Pew Research Center (2015) the Millennial cohort consists of those born between the years 1981 and 1997. As such, the Millennials are currently between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

The size of this cohort has made them the focus of research and much popular literature as of late. Like their Baby Boomer counterparts, the Millennials are an extremely large group. In fact, according to the latest projections by the Pew Research Center (2015) the Millennials are expected to exceed the total number of Baby Boomers in 2036, when they are expected to total a little over 81 million. Currently to date they make up about 75.3 million members in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Religiously, the Millennials are following traditional trends that started with the Baby Boomers and continued with Generation X, but with some significant distinctions. The biggest example is probably the growth of the "nones" or those that do not identify with a religious tradition (Lipka, 2015). Compared to the Baby Boomers and Generation X, Millennials have the

highest percentage of religiously non-affiliated people of any previous generation in recent American history (Lipka, 2015). According to the findings, about 36% of Millennials do not identify with a particular religious faith, while roughly 55% identify with some form of Christianity (Lipka, 2015). Comparatively, 70% of Generation X identified with some Christian faith and only 23% identified as religiously non-affiliated (Lipka, 2015). For the Baby Boomers, 78% identified with a Christian faith and only 17% constituted the non-affiliated category (Lipka, 2015). These numbers indicate not only an increase in religious non-affiliation, but a strong decline in self-identifying as a Christian—at least in the United States. Nonetheless, as I have mentioned previously, affiliation can be criticized as a weak indicator of personal religiosity (see Trzebiatowska, 2012). Still, other research makes the case that a large percentage of Millennials are falling into a non-religious state (see Smith, 2009) while at the same time others are simply being reared without a solid religious background—making them “nones” from childhood, similar to many in Generation X (Sherkat, 2014).

In contrast, researchers have noted that conservatives and black Protestants are exceptions to the trend overall and that they are able to retain more of their members than their mainline counterparts (Twenge, 2006). Still, Smith (2009) found that both conservatives and black Protestants have been endured considerable losses compared to the mainline denominations—Millennials are dropping out of the former denominations by about 3% compared to only 0.5% in the mainline denominations.

Regarding investigation into the beliefs systems of Millennials, the most useful study to date has been the work contributed by Psychologist Jeffrey Arnett (2002). Arnett (2002) describes the beliefs of young adults as part of his framework for documenting the changing nature of the early portion of the life course that he has termed “emerging adulthood.” As part of this framework, Arnett (2002) describes how certain adult responsibilities are delayed due to the increase of time young adults spend in school and self-exploration in their twenties. Delayed responsibilities include marriage, having children, etc. (see Arnett, 2002)—all of which have been demonstrated to have an impact on religiosity in the literature (Wuthnow, 2007). As described in his study on the religious beliefs of emerging adults, Arnett (2002) notes that they are very individualistic and are prone to creating very customized religious beliefs that fit their particular tastes and interests. Additionally, they pull their beliefs from various different religious “toolboxes” in order to construct these religious beliefs and identities (Arnett, 2002). Additionally, the findings from this research show that only about 23% of these young adults have very conservative beliefs, whereas the remaining 77% are some combination of liberal believers who have certain doubts about their religious beliefs, deists, or agnostics/atheists (Arnett, 2002).

As stated previously, there are several demographic variables besides gender that are relevant to religiosity in the literature. Among these is education, income, marriage, having children, race, and work status (Wuthnow, 2007; Twenge, 2006; Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Putnam and Campbell, 2010). Although education has had different effects on religiosity over time, the current effect seems to be that education is correlated to higher religiosity and more

middle class people are present in the pews than were there previously (Putnam and Campbell, 2010). Income is also an important factor in the literature, showing that poorer people tend to be congregated in Fundamentalist religious traditions such as Pentecostals and Baptists and the wealthier people are located in more mainline traditions (Roberts and Yamane, 2012).

Additionally, marriage and children tend to have a positive relationship with religiosity in the literature (Wuthnow, 2007; Roberts and Yamane, 2012). The logic follows that when people get married, settle down and have children they are more likely to seek out a religious environment to raise their kids in for the sake of socializing morality into their children. Race is also an important factor as well. Black Americans tend to participate more in religious affairs than white Americans (Roberts and Yamane, 2012). Also work-status, such as participation in the work force, has had interesting effects on religiosity. Putnam and Campbell (2012) have demonstrated that because of the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960's and the subsequent increase of women in the workforce, certain traditional attitudes have been impacted in a progressive direction concerning issues of gender equality. Also, Mueller and Johnson (1975) linked increase participation in the work force with increased participation in religious organizations. Even so, Becker and Hofmeister (2001) concluded that there wasn't a strong connection between employment in the work force and religiosity—at least for women. Instead, they stressed the salience of beliefs, which is precisely what I focus on in this paper.

### Gender Trends and Generations

The 1960's were a pivotal time of progress for American women in terms of employment, education, and a general cultural shift toward egalitarianism (Wuthnow, 1989; Roof, 1999). As a result of the gender equality movements of second wave feminism, many American women were entering the workforce in greater numbers than ever before (Wuthnow, 1989; Roof, 1999). By the 1970's over half of the female population had a job outside the home. This increase of women in the workforce coincided with a decrease in religious involvement that eventually plateaued around the mid 1970's (Wuthnow, 1989). Attendance at religious services once a week went from 49% in 1958 to around 40% in the 1970's (Wuthnow, 1989).

Education was the other major source of change for Baby Boomers in the 1960's (Wuthnow, 1989). A huge ideological shift occurred alongside the influx of young adults entering higher education (Wuthnow, 1989). Specifically regarding women, support for gender equality in the workplace, family, and other spheres of society was increasing significantly (Wuthnow, 1989). Willingness to elect a woman president increased from one third of the population to two thirds by the mid 1970's (Wuthnow, 1989). This growing trend toward egalitarianism also included more permissive attitudes toward sexuality and divorce (Wuthnow, 1989). It was even argued that these Baby Boomers were a "new class" that was distinct from the public at large, a proposition that was supported by the fact that this group held 20% more tolerant views toward homosexuality, gender equality, and legalized abortion than the general public (Wuthnow, 1989).

The effect of education and changing ideological attitudes on religion for the Baby Boomers was strong (Wuthnow, 1989). Attendance was down for many Baby Boomers who were breaking from the religions of their parents in droves, particularly among the well educated (Wuthnow, 1989). The percentage of Baby Boomers who felt that religion was having an increasing influence in society had declined to only 14%, whereas it had previously been at 69% in the 1950's (Wuthnow, 1989). Religious beliefs took a hit as well, with less than half of respondents claiming certain belief in God compared to 68% in the previous decade (Wuthnow, 1989). College educated Baby Boomers were more likely to experience a decline in their religious beliefs compared to those without a college education (Wuthnow, 1989). However, traditional predictors of increased religious involvement for married individuals with children still applied to the Baby Boomers (Wuthnow, 1989).

The second wave feminist movement of the 1960's had an enduring impact on Generation X and the Millennials (Wuthnow, 2007; Gerson, 2010). Whereas the Baby Boomers had worked hard to fight for gender equality, Generation X celebrated their predecessors' victories and embraced the benefits of more equality between the genders (Flory and Miller, 2000; Flory and Miller, 2008). These changes have been reflected in women's education levels as well as their involvement in the workforce, family life, and religion (Wuthnow, 2007; Gerson, 2010).

Regarding education, substantially more Generation X women attended and graduated from college than Baby Boomer women (Wuthnow, 2007). Women between the ages of 21 to

45 graduated from college at a rate that was 10% to 18% higher in the year 2000 compared to women in 1970 (Wuthnow, 2007). Also, Baby Boomer women with only grade school education had higher levels of religious service attendance than Generation X women (Wuthnow, 2007). On the other hand, the numbers for college graduates and those with a graduate degree were similar to the Baby Boomer numbers (Wuthnow, 2007). Nonetheless, Generation X women who earned a graduate degree are significantly less likely to attend religious services than those with their Bachelor's degree (Wuthnow, 2007). Also, there is hardly any difference between Generation X men and women who have earned graduate degrees in terms of religious attendance (Wuthnow, 2007).

A similarly large increase in the number of women entering the work force is also apparent (Wuthnow, 2007). Generation X women increased their participation in the work force in the year 2000 at a rate that was between 17% and 22% higher than their Baby Boom counterparts in 1970 (Wuthnow, 2007). Additionally, the economy adapted to the changing influx of workers, making it more needful to have dual earners than at earlier points in history (Wuthnow, 2007). In turn, the Millennials, both male and female, would naturally view women working outside the home as a perfectly natural and often preferable option to being a homemaker (Gerson, 2010). Additionally, women's employment has been associated with sharp decreases in religious attendance for Generation X compared to Baby Boomers (Wuthnow, 2007). Full time workers attend religious services the least, followed by part time workers (Wuthnow, 2007). Generation X women in both categories attend religious services less than Baby Boomer women at the same age (Wuthnow, 2007). On the other hand, female

homemakers are much more likely to attend religious services and their numbers closely resemble Baby Boomers (Wuthnow, 2007).

Regarding traditional predictors of religious involvement, Generation X has been shown to be consistent with previous trends (Wuthnow, 2007). In terms of marriage, married Generation X women are more likely to attend religious services than unmarried women and the married Gen X'ers resemble the numbers of Baby Boomers very closely (Wuthnow, 2007). The biggest contrast is with the unmarried women; unmarried Gen X women are much less likely to attend religious services than their Baby Boomer counterparts (Wuthnow, 2007). (Wuthnow, 2007). The same pattern exists for men, although Generation X men attend religious services at a fraction of the rate that women do (Wuthnow, 2007).

Because women have been influenced to participate in religion based on their traditionally designation as caretakers of the family and home, it is worth mentioning how children and married life has affected attendance at religious services (Wuthnow, 2007). A consistent predictor in the literature of religious service attendance is the number of children one has, where more children correlate to higher attendance (Wuthnow, 2007). However, for Generation X, couples with no children attend religious services at a lower rate than the Baby Boomers in a similar circumstance (Wuthnow, 2007). Interestingly, women with two or more children are less likely than Baby Boomers to attend religious services (Wuthnow, 2007). As more Generation X'ers delayed married and having children compared to the Baby Boomers, the group that is traditionally associated with higher religious attendance—married couples

with children—is far less represented in this cohort and the group that is traditionally linked with the lowest religious attendance—singles without children—have a bigger representation (Wuthnow, 2007).

The Millennials are continuing the trend of tolerance and acceptance of diversity that began as a movement with the Baby Boomers (Twenge, 2006; Roof, 1993). The main difference is that the Millennials have grown up with diversity from their earliest years—a vast difference from the Generation X'ers who were introduced to the concept heavily in the 1990's and the Baby Boomers who fought for it to even exist (Twenge, 2006; Roof, 1993).

The literature shows that with each successive generation, the attitudes toward gender equality are becoming increasingly liberal, though there is still remains a significant gap between religious and secular individuals (Putnam and Campbell, 2012). Nonetheless, women in the Millennial generation are being raised in a more egalitarian culture than any previous generation, despite the fact that gender inequalities are still strong and persistent in many ways today (Putname and Campbell, 2012; Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Twenge, 2006). As a whole, Millennials feel that diversity and tolerance of people with various attributes and orientations are normative concepts and that they should be celebrated (Twenge, 2006). More so than any generation before them, they are more liberal on many different social issues including, for example, the right to marry for gays and lesbians (Pew Research Center, 2010). Because of this shift, I want to examine more closely the gender differences that exist for Millennials in contrast to the Baby Boomers and Generation X in regards to other measures of religiosity

besides just affiliation. I examine specifically the belief differences by gender and the religious behavior differences that exist for them.

## METHODS

### Population and Data

For the analysis in this project, I used secondary data from the General Social Survey (hereafter GSS). The GSS is nationally conducted and is a nationally representative survey of individuals 18 years of age and older and consisting of English-speakers that live in non-institutional residences within the United States for the selected years of 2012 and 2014 (Smith, Marsden, Hout, and Kim 2013). I used this dataset because this survey contains questions that tap religiosity, as well as a variety of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics that are relevant to the nature of the study. Additionally, the GSS is considered a reliable source for investigating religious beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Sherkat, 2014). Moreover, using this dataset allowed me to analyze data for a relatively large sample of Millennials, Generation X'ers, and Baby Boomers in a manageable amount of time.

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the gender differences for several religious variables among three different cohorts, I will now briefly outline how I selected respondents for the study that fit in the appropriate generational categories of Millennials, Generation X'ers, and Baby Boomers. According to the latest reports, the Pew Research Center (2015) now identifies the Millennial generation as those individuals born between 1981 and 1997. This means that the youngest Millennials are 19 and the oldest are 34 years old. According to the literature, Generation X'ers consist of those born between 1965 and 1980, and Baby Boomers are the generation born between 1946 and 1964 (Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013). My

sample of Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers that meet these qualifications are from the years 2012 and 2014 of the GSS to keep the findings as current as possible. The number of Millennials sampled is 794, 966 for Generation X, and 1175 for the Baby Boomers.

### Analytic Strategy

I estimated OLS and binary logistic regressions to test the effect of gender on religious dependent variables using separate models for Millennials, Generation X'ers, and the Baby Boomers, and then discuss the differences between the three cohorts. I used four different dependent variables in my analysis that pertain to religious behavior and beliefs (see Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013; Schwadel, 2011): religious service attendance, frequency of prayer, belief in the afterlife, and biblical literalism. Belief in the afterlife taps a standard religious belief across religious traditions in the United States and biblical literalism is a measure of conservative Christian beliefs (Schwadel, 2011). Attendance at religious services and frequency of prayer are variables that tap actual religious participation (Gay and Lynxwiler, 2013; Schwadel, 2011). My main independent variable is gender. My control variables included religious affiliation as designated by Steensland (2000) and standard demographic variables including age, income, education, region of residence, race, ethnicity, work status, and marital status that have an established relationship with religious variables in the literature. The reason for using affiliation as a control is due to the fact that it is commonly used as a measure of religious identity in the literature and also because different faiths vary in how often they congregate, which makes affiliation relevant to attendance at religious services.

I performed the appropriate bivariate tests for gender and the dependent variables. I estimated t-tests for the two dependent variables that are continuous, prayer and attendance, and two chi-square goodness-of-fit tests for the two dichotomous variables, biblical literalism and belief in life after death. I then estimated OLS regressions for the continuous variables and binary logistic regressions for the dichotomous dependent variables, controlling for the other variables. For my regressions, I have two models for each table pertaining to the appropriate dependent variables. I have a total of twelve models for all three generations. I have checked my regressions for problems such as issues of multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, etc. The models are free from multicollinearity (VIF means  $< 2$ ) and other issues.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses are based on a two-tailed test at a 95% confidence interval.

H0: There is no gender difference between generations regarding attendance at religious services.

H1: There is a gender difference between generations regarding attendance at religious services.

H0: There is no gender difference between generations regarding frequency of prayer.

H1: There is a gender difference between generations regarding frequency of prayer.

H0: There is no gender difference between generations regarding belief in the afterlife.

H1: There is a gender difference between generations regarding belief in the afterlife.

H0: There is no gender difference between generations regarding biblical literalism.

H1: There is a gender difference between generations regarding biblical literalism.

### Dependent Variables

*Attendance at religious services.* Participation in religious services “attend” is a variable that measures public commitment to a religion and is a measure of religiosity. The GSS has a question about attendance at religious services that asks “How often do you attend religious services?” The optional responses are on a scale from 0 = never, 1 = less than once a year, 2 = once a year, 3 = several times a year, 4 = once a month, 5 = 2-3 times a month, 6 = nearly every week, 7 = every week, 8 = more than once a week, and 9 = don’t know/not applicable. I will only use the valid responses for all questions in this analysis.

*Prayer.* The variable “pray” is a continuous variable that measures frequency of prayer and is coded 1 “several times a day,” 2 “once a day,” 3 “several times a week,” 4 “once a week,” 5 “less than once a week,” and 6 “never.” I will recode this so that higher scores equate to more frequent prayer.

*Belief in the Afterlife.* The “postlife” variable is a categorical measure in the GSS that asks the question, “Do you believe in life after death?” I will recode the answers so that “yes” is coded 1 and “no” is coded 0.

*Belief in Biblical Literalism.* The “bible” variable is a categorical measure that asks the question, “Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?” The possible responses are: the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word; the Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word; the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men; and other. I will recode this into a dichotomous variable where “belief that the Bible is the actual word of God” is coded 1 and all other responses are coded 0 (Schwadel, 2011).

#### Independent Variables

*Females.* Gender is the main predictor variable in this analysis. I recoded the variable “sex” so that females are coded 1 and males are coded 0.

*Religious Affiliation (several variables).* A series of religious affiliation variables have been created based on the variable “reltrad” (see Streensland, Brian, Jerry Park, Mark Regnerus, Lynn Robinson, W. Bradford Wilcox, and Robert Woodberry 2000). This is a categorical variable where “Evangelical Protestant” is coded 1, “Mainline Protestant” is coded 2, “Black Protestant” is coded 3, “Catholic” is coded 4, “Other Faith” is coded 5, and “No Religion” is coded 6. I leave out “Jews” from the analysis because there are not enough of them to include for any of the generations. From the variable “reltrad” I created dummy variables for each of the affiliations and used Evangelical Protestants as the reference category.

I kept religious affiliation in the analysis as an independent variable to simply control for the different affiliations that respondents belong to.

### Control Variables

*Age, Respondent's Income, Bible Belt, Education, Work Status, Marital Status, children and Race.* The variable for "age" is a continuous variable that varies in range depending on the years of birth for each generation. The variable for respondent's income "income06" is measured on a 25-point scale where the lowest category is less than \$1000 and the highest category is \$150,000 or more. I imputed the mean for the missing data in this variable to increase the useable sample size.

Southern residence is taken into account because of the higher correlation of religious participation in the south (due to the Bible Belt). Therefore, a dummy variable was created from the variable "region" for the Bible Belt, such that living in this region is coded 1 and all others are coded 0. Education or "educ" is a variable based on the highest year of school completed by the respondents and is a 21-point scale, from 0 to 20.

Work Status variables are a series of dummy variables that I created from the variable "wrkstat." They are based on the coding strategy of Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004). "Wrkstat" is a categorical variable where "working full-time" = 1, "working part-time" = 2, "temporarily not working" = 3, "unemployed/laid off" = 4, "retired" = 5, "school" = 6, "keeping house" = 7, and "other" = 8. Dummy variables are constructed from these according to the availability of data for each category. The dummy variable "unemployed" contains the variables "unemployed/laid

off,” “retired,” and “temporarily not working.” All the other dummy variables contain only the data indicated by their original name. “Full time work” is the reference category.

Marital status or “marital” is divided into three dummy variables including “married or widowed,” “divorced or separated,” and “single.” Married or widowed people represent the reference category and are simply labeled “married.” Divorced or separated is similarly simplified to “divorced.” The number of children, “childs,” a respondent has is a continuous variable that has a variable range, depending on the generation. Dummy variables are created to distinguish non-Hispanic African American respondents, non-Hispanic white respondents, non-Hispanic other race respondents, and Hispanic respondents. “White” is the reference category. This is meant to address the correlation between race, ethnicity and religious attendance, where African Americans and Hispanic/Latino people typically correlate to higher religious attendance.

### Contributions

There are several main benefits that this research contributes to the overall literature. First, since there has been reason to believe that culture change and ideology shifts over time and can contribute to changes in religious beliefs and behaviors in addition to socialization during youth. My investigation contributes to our understanding of the changes that are occurring.

The most important aspect of this study is determining the gender difference across three generations regarding religious beliefs and behaviors—something that has not been

investigated previously. Understanding if gender differences still exist in this area is important because it speaks to a longstanding trend in the literature on religion and any shifts are liable to indicate salient societal changes that are worth examining.

Additionally, there is a need of further investigation into the study of the religious beliefs of the Millennials in general since they are due to be the biggest generation since the Baby Boomers and they are going to have a significant impact on the social stage for the next fifty years. The more that we know about them in general, the better we will be able to understand and predict the kind of impact they will have on social institutions like religion and social constructions of gender. Already this generation is demonstrating that they are continuing the trend established by the Baby Boomers toward religious individualism, attending religious services less, and become religious “nones.” Jeffrey Arnett’s (2002) work has contributed to our understanding of how Millennials construct their religious beliefs, which echoes the “Shielism” of the Baby Boomers (Bellah et al., 1985). This present study expands on that research by examining the relationship of religious beliefs and behaviors with gender.

Also, this study examines the current influence of gender in religion. Because religion has been a historically female dominated sphere of society in terms of membership, beliefs, and participation, significant changes are valuable indicators of possible cultural change. For example, some social scientists are indicating that Millennials and Generation X’ers have grown up in a more egalitarian culture, which may be affecting their religious participation, beliefs, and behaviors. Since growing up with the idea that equality and diversity is normative has

affected other spheres like the family (see Gerson, 2010), the same effect could be occurring with regard to religious institutions. And though this study is not specifically addressing what may or may not be different culturally—it is a needful assessment of whether or not the symptoms are there to indicate a cultural change is occurring and affecting these three generations at their current point in the life course.

Regarding the institution of religion in American society, big changes could be on the way as well and this research is a useful piece to gauge future trends. Besides simply looking at affiliation, which has been criticized as a measure of background socialization as mentioned earlier (see Trzebiatowska, 2012), and attendance, which only looks at physical presence at religious services—this study examines more personal aspects of religiosity, specifically, the beliefs of the individuals in these three cohorts actually have concerning issues of life after death, the Bible, and how much they pray. The importance of this approach has already been indicated for Millennials in the study conducted by Jeffrey Arnett (2002) when he discovered how Millennials were shying away from organized religion and heading in the direction of Baby Boomer “Sheilism” (see Bellah, 1985) where they are constructing their own personal religions. This study offers some additional clues to understanding the effects of gender and the determinants on these beliefs for all three groups.

### Strengths and Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that I cannot directly address cultural change as part of the analysis, so I will be limited in the scope of the analysis to just the gender differences by cohort in terms of religious belief and behavior. I am also limited from using additional belief variables such as belief in hell, miracles, and the like because of the low response rate for some of these variables. Also, because I am using secondary data and statistical analysis to test my hypotheses, I cannot determine in any definitive way the explanation for the results of my findings. As such, I will be limited to the established knowledge gathered previously in the literature to make sense of the results. I am also limited by the fact that I am conducting a cross-sectional analysis, which limits my perspective of the changes I am investigating to a single point in time, whereas a longitudinal panel study could be more advantageous for understanding changes over time. Again, I am relying on what has been historically relevant for each cohort in the literature to assist in my analysis of the results.

Fortunately, I have a significantly large sample size since I pooled respondents from the years 2012 and 2014 for the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, which allows me to have generalizable results. Also, in using the General Social Survey I used a nationally representative survey that is used in many studies on religion and is respected by major journals in the field. This is also recent data, which is appropriate and useful in contributing to the overall literature. Finally, I have conducted a study that is examining timely and relevant issues in the area of cohort, period, and age effects, gender inequalities, and religion.

## RESULTS

All tables discussed in the results section below are listed in the Appendix at the end of this paper and a list of the available tables is presented at the beginning of this document. The basic descriptive information and results are described here, whereas a detailed comparison between the generations is made during the discussion and conclusions section.

### Millennials

#### *Descriptive Data Results*

Table one shows the means and percentages of the 794 Millennial men and women in the sample, as well as standard deviations and ranges of the various variables. In the first section displaying the information for the four dependent variables, the average attendance rate for Millennials is 2.976, which means that Millennials are attending religious services about several times a year on average. On the other hand, Millennials pray more than they attend religious services. The average amount that Millennials pray is 3.618 on the scale, indicating that Millennials pray somewhere between once and several times a week. Additionally, 71.54% of Millennials believe that the Bible is either the inspired or literal word of God and 77.71% believe in the existence of life after death.

Table one also shows information for the sociodemographic variables and religious identification variables included in the analysis. The average age of Millennials sampled is roughly 27 years old. The average income for these Millennials is 15.473, meaning the average total family income is between \$25,000 and \$34,999 a year. These Millennials report a 13.505

mean for education level, meaning that on average they have at little more than one year of college education. If these Millennials have children, they have close to one child only on average. Additionally, women comprise a little over half of the sample at 52.14%.

Regarding Christian religious identification, Evangelical Protestants make up 21.79% of the total sample, Black Protestants comprise 7.81%, Mainline Protestants represent 5.79%, and Catholics represent the largest category--24.56%. Millennials that claim affiliation with a religion other than Christianity comprise 8.69% of the sample. Finally, those that do not identify with any religious faith make up 31.36% of the sample.

Additionally, the percentage of Millennials living in the Bible Belt of the United States is 25.19. White Millennials comprise the majority of the sample at 55.04%, followed by Hispanic/Latino Millennials (regardless of race) at 22.04%, Black Millennials at 17.63%, and Millennials from other races at 5.29%.

The majority of Millennials in the sample are employed full-time (51.51%), which is unsurprising considering that the average age of Millennials sampled is about 27 years old and many of them would be out school completely by that time. Beyond these, 18.01% of the Millennials are working at least part time. Only 7.68% are temporarily not working, retired, or unemployed. Students make up 12.59% of the sample and full-time stay at home Millennials comprise 10.20% of the sample. Additionally, the data on marital status shows that 28.21% of Millennials are currently married, while 6.30% are divorce, and the majority--65.49%--are currently single.

### *Multiple Regression Results*

Table two displays the Ordinary Least Squares regression results for the variables' impact on attendance at religious services and frequency of prayer for Millennials. All models are statistically significant. The attendance at religious services model explains 35% of the variance ( $F = 22.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the frequency of prayer model explains 38.6% of the variance ( $F = 25.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for Millennials (adjusted R square). In an analysis not shown, the t-test results for both dependent variables and the main predictor variable "gender" were significant, indicating a significant difference in means by gender for both attendance at religious services ( $p < .01$ ) and prayer ( $p < .001$ ).

The regression for attendance at religious services shows significant results for gender, all religious affiliation variables, education, being African American, divorced, and single. First of all, when holding constant all the variables in the model, Millennial women attend religious services more than men. Black Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Millennials identifying with other faith all attend religious services less than Evangelical Protestants, holding constant the other factors. Not surprisingly, those without a religious identification are significantly less likely to attend religious services than Evangelical Protestants as well. For every year increase in education that Millennials receive, there is a corresponding .073 increase in attendance at religious services, controlling for the other variables. African Americans attend religious services more than whites do, controlling for the other variables. Marital status also matters. Millennials who are divorced or single are less likely to attend religious services compared to those who are married, controlling for the other variables.

The second model shows significant results for gender, being Black Protestant, Catholic, an “other” faith, no religious affiliation, living in the Bible Belt of the South, being Hispanic, and being African American on frequency of prayer. Females are significantly more likely to pray than males, controlling for the other factors in the model. Additionally, Black Protestants, Catholics, people with other faiths, and people not identifying with a religious tradition are all less likely to pray compared to Evangelical Protestants, net the effects of the other variables. Living in the Bible Belt South also has a significant positive relationship on prayer compared to those living in the other parts of the country, holding constant the other factors. Finally, black respondents and Hispanic or Latin respondents pray more than white respondents, net the effects of the control variables.

### *Logistic Regression Results*

Table 3 shows the Logistic Regression results for the variables impact on belief in the Bible as the word of God and belief in life after death for Millennials. Both models in the logistic regression table are significant. In an analysis not shown, the Chi square goodness-of-fit results are not significant for gender and belief in the Bible as the word of God, but are significant for belief in life after death ( $X^2 = 5.949$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

For belief in the Bible as the word of God, there are significant results for being Black Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, other religion or faith, no religious identification, living in the South, and being African American. According to Table 3, Black Protestants display a 2.905 lower log of the odds of belief in the Bible as the word of God compared to Evangelical

Protestants, net the effects of the other variables. The odds of Mainline Protestants believing in the Bible are .147 times less than the odds of Evangelical Protestants, controlling for the other variables in the model. Additionally, the odds for Catholics believing the Bible is the word of God are .046 less than the odds of Evangelical Protestants and this pattern holds for both those with no religious preference and those of different faiths, net the effects of the other variables. The odds of believing in the Bible are 2.064 higher than for Millennials living in the south compared to those living elsewhere in the country, net the effects of the control variables. Also being African American corresponds to a .725 higher log of the odds in belief in the Bible compared to white respondents, holding constant the other variables.

According to the model displaying the impact of the variables on belief in life after death, there are significant findings for gender, being Catholic, identifying with another faith other than Christianity, and having no religious preference. First of all, the odds of females believing in life after death are 1.609 times greater than those of males, net the effects of the controls. Catholics, other faith adherents, and respondents claiming no religious affiliation have a .745, 1.190, and 2.271 lower log of the odds (respectively) in belief in life after death compared to Evangelical Protestants, holding constant the other factors.

### Generation X

#### *Descriptive Data Results*

Table four shows the descriptive results for the 966 men and women of Generation X. The average attendance for Generation X'ers is 3.609, meaning that these men and women

attend religious services somewhere between several times a year and once a month.

Generation X participants pray on average somewhere between once a day and several times a week. The majority of them believe--80.02%--believe that the Bible is either the inspired or literal word of God and 79.40% believe in life after death.

The average age of those sample in Generation X is about 40 years old. The average income for Generation X men and women is 18.170, meaning they make between \$40,000 and \$49,999 a year on average. The education level for these respondents shows that the majority of them have at least two years of college education. The average number of children for Gen X'ers is two. Women comprise more than half the sample at 57.35%.

Regarding Christian religious identification, Generation X'ers make up 26.71% of Evangelical Protestants, 7.35% of Black Protestants, 11.28% of Mainline Protestants, and 27.12% of Catholics. The percentage of respondents that identified with a religion other than Christianity is 6.52. Additionally, those proclaiming no religious affiliation comprise 21.01% of the sample.

Gen X'ers living in the Bible Belt make up 26.92% of the sample. Racially, 59.73% of the respondents are white, 19.88 are Hispanic or Latino, 14.80 are black, and 5.59% self-report that they are of some other race. The majority of the sample, 67.08%, report that they are employed full time, while 10.25% say they are employed part time. Those that are unemployed, temporarily not working, or retired make up 7.56% of the sample. Finally, respondents that stay at home full-time comprise 15.11% of the sample. The marital status of

these individuals shows that the majority--57.56%--are married or widowed. Alternatively, 20.08% are divorced or separated, and 22.36% are single.

### *Multiple Regression Results*

Table five displays the Ordinary Least Squares regression results for the variables' impact on attendance at religious services and frequency of prayer for Generation X. Both models are significant. Model 1 explains 31.5% of the variance ( $F = 24.32, p < .001$ ) in attendance at religious services and Model 2 explains 30.5% of the variance ( $F = 23.30, p < .001$ ) in frequency of prayer (based on adjusted r-square). In an analysis not shown, the t-test results for attendance at religious services and the main predictor variable "gender" was not significant, but the results were significant for frequency of prayer and gender ( $p < .001$ ).

In model 1, there are significant results for Black Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, other faiths, no religious preference, education, being African American, divorced, and single. Regarding the impact of gender, interestingly, there is no difference between men and women for attendance at religious services, net the effect of the controls. Alternatively, every religious preference is correlated to a negative relationship with attendance at religious services compared to Evangelical Protestants. For every year increase in education there is a .082 increase in religious service attendance, controlling for the other factors. Blacks have a .986 higher attendance compared to whites, net the other factors. Being divorced corresponds to 1.025 more negative attendance rates compared to married people, controlling the other

variables. Similarly, single Gen X'ers attend religious services less than married ones, net the effects of the other variables.

Model 2 displays significant results for gender, Christian religious affiliations, no religious preference, Hispanic ethnicity, African American, Homemakers, Divorced people, and those with children. Females have .582 higher scores than males, meaning Generation X women pray more than their male counterparts, net the effects of the other variables. Black Protestants, Mainline Protestants, and Catholics all pray less than Evangelical Protestants, controlling for the other factors. Unsurprisingly, people with no religious preference also pray less than Evangelical Protestants. Alternatively, Hispanics and African Americans both pray more than whites, net the effects of the other variables. Interestingly, homemakers have .339 lower scores on the prayer scale than full time workers, controlling for the other variables. Divorced people also pray less than married people. Finally, for every additional child, there is a .077 increase in prayer, net the effects of the other factors.

### *Logistic Regression Results*

Table 6 displays the results for the impact of the determinants on belief in the Bible as the word of God and belief in life after death for Generation X. Both models in the table are significant. In an analysis not shown, the Chi square goodness-of-fit results are significant for gender and belief in the Bible as the word of God ( $X^2 = 6.513$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and for belief in life after death ( $X^2 = 17.662$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In model 1, Mainline, Catholic, other faith, no religious preference, income, education, and Hispanic ethnicity are all significant. The main predictor, gender is not significant. On the other hand, Mainline Protestants show a 1.479 lower log of the odds of belief in the Bible as the word of God compared to Evangelical Protestants, net the effects of the other variables. This negative relationship holds for Catholics, people with other faiths, and those with no religious preference compared to Evangelical Protestants, controlling for the other variables.

Alternatively, for every one-unit increase in income, the odds of believing the Bible is the word of God is higher by 1.020, controlling for the other factors. Interestingly, for every year increase in education, there is a .160 lower log of the odds of belief in the Bible as the word of God, net the effects of the other variables. Being Hispanic corresponds to a 1.547 times increase in the odds of believing in the Bible as the word of God compared to whites, net the effects of the controls.

### Baby Boomers

#### *Descriptive Data Results*

Table seven presents descriptive data for the 1,175 Baby Boomers in this study. On average, Baby Boomer men and women attend religious services somewhere between several times a year and once a month. On average they pray somewhere between several times a week and once a day. Roughly the same percentage of people believe that the Bible is the word of God that also believe there is life after death, 80.09% and 80.85%, respectively. The average age of the Baby Boomers in the sample is about 57 years old and the typical income for these respondents is between \$35,000 and \$49,000. The Baby Boomers also have an average

education level of 13.639, meaning they have an average of almost two years of college education completed. These individuals also have an average of two children. Females outnumber the males as well with females consisting of 52.51% of the sample.

In terms of religious identification, those identifying with Evangelical Protestantism comprise the biggest category with 28.68% of the sample. Black Protestants comprise 7.74%, Mainline Protestants comprise 16%, and Catholics make up 25.96% of Baby Boomer religious affiliations. Alternatively, those reporting identification with a non-Christian faith or religion make up the smallest category at 5.62%. Those claiming no religious affiliation whatsoever make up 16% of the total sample.

The percentage of Baby Boomers living in the southern Bible Belt is 28.94. A full 70.13% of the sample is white, 10.81% are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and 15.06% are black. Additionally, Baby Boomers of an "other" race make up only 4% of the sample. Baby Boomers who are full time workers make up 52.09% of the sample, while part time workers are only 9.87% of the sample. Those that are retired, not working temporarily, or unemployed comprise a significant aggregate--24.77 of the total respondents. Those that report they are students make up 7.83% of the sample and homemakers comprise 5.45% of the participants. Additionally, more than half, 58.98%, are married or widowed. Those that are divorced or separated make up 28.68% of the participants and 12.34% are currently single.

### *Multiple Regression Results*

Table 8 displays the Ordinary Least Squares regression results for the variables' impact on attendance at religious services and frequency of prayer for the 1175 Baby Boomers in this study. Both models are significant. Model 1 explains 32.8% of the variance ( $F = 28.21, p < .001$ ) in attendance at religious services and Model 2 explains 36.7% of the variance ( $F = 33.48, p < .001$ ) in frequency of prayer (based on adjusted r-square). In an analysis not shown, the t-test results for both dependent variables and the main predictor variable "gender" were significant, indicating a significant difference in means by gender for both attendance at religious services ( $p < .001$ ) and prayer ( $p < .001$ ).

In model 1 there are significant results for gender, all religious identification variables, education, southern residence, all race and ethnicity variables, divorced marital status, and having children. Regarding the main predictor, gender, females have .426 higher scores on the attendance at religious services scale than males, holding constant the other factors.

Evangelical Protestants attend religious services more than Black Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, those with non-Christian faiths, and those without religious affiliation, controlling for the other variables. For every year increase in education, there is a corresponding .099 increase in attendance at religious services for Baby Boomers, net the effects of the other variables. Additionally, Baby Boomers living in the South attend religious services more than their counterparts in the rest of the country, when controlling the other variables. After accounting for the other factors, Hispanics, African Americans, and people of other races all attend religious services at higher rates than white Baby Boomers. Divorced

people have .485 lower scores on the attendance at religious services scale than married people; net the effects of the other controls. Finally, for every child a Baby Boomer has, the likelihood of attending religious services increases by .191, net the effects of the other factors.

Model 2 displays significant effects for gender, all Christian religious affiliations, no religious affiliation, living in the Bible Belt, being African American, and having children. When controlling for the other factors, women pray more than men. Evangelical Protestants pray more than Black Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, people of other faiths, and those with no religious preference, holding constant the other factors. After accounting for the other variables, Baby Boomers living in the Bible Belt have .333 higher scores on the prayer scale than those living elsewhere in the United States. Additionally, African Americans pray more than whites, holding constant the other factors. Finally, for every additional child Baby Boomers have, there is a .082 increase in prayer, net the effects of the controls.

### *Logistic Regression Results*

Table 9 displays the results for the impact of the determinants on belief in the Bible as the word of God and belief in life after death for the Baby Boomers (N = 1175). Models 1 and 2 in the table are significant ( $X^2 = 290.12$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $X^2 = 159.08$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively). In an analysis not shown, the chi square goodness-of-fit results are significant for gender and belief in the Bible as the word of God ( $X^2 = 20.399$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and for belief in life after death ( $X^2 = 6.483$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In model 1, Mainline, Catholic, other religious faith, no religious preference, education and Hispanic ethnicity are all significant predictors of belief in the Bible as the word of God. The main predictor, gender is not significant. On the other hand, Mainline Protestants display .848 lower log odds of belief in the Bible as the word of God compared to Evangelical Protestants, net the effects of the other variables. Similarly, the odds of Catholics believing the Bible is the word of God are .309 times less than Evangelical Protestants, holding constant the other factors. Unsurprisingly, the odds of those with alternative religious faiths from Christianity and those with no religious preference believing the Bible is the Word of God are lower than for Evangelical Protestants, controlling for the other factors. Alternatively, when there is an increase in education, the odds of believing the Bible is the word of God is lower by .898, controlling for the other factors. Baby Boomers living in the South have .575 higher log of the odds of belief in the Bible is the word of God compared to those living elsewhere, controlling for the other factors.

Model 2 displays significant results for Mainline Protestants, Catholics, other religious faiths, no religious preference, and being Hispanic. The main predictor, gender is not significant. However, for Mainline Protestants the log of the odds of belief in life after death is .893 higher compared to Evangelical Protestants, net the effects of the other variables. Similarly, the log-odds of believing in life after death for Catholics is 1.099 lower than that of Evangelical Protestants, holding constant the other factors. For those with alternative religious faiths from Christianity and those with no religious preference, the odds of believing in life after death are lower than for Evangelical Protestants, controlling for the other factors. Lastly, there

is a .651 higher log of the odds of belief in life after death for Baby Boomers of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity compared to non-Hispanic whites, controlling for the other factors.

Regarding the findings, I reject the null that there is no gender difference between generations regarding attendance at religious services. However, I failed to reject the null that there is no gender difference between generations regarding frequency of prayer. On the other hand, I was able to reject the null that there is no gender difference between generations regarding belief in the afterlife. Similarly, I reject the null that there is no gender difference between generations regarding biblical literalism.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The descriptive tables reveal noteworthy differences in religious beliefs and behaviors between Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. Consistent with the literature, Millennials are marked by the least amount of average religious service attendance, followed by Generation X, and Baby Boomers. The dispersion about the mean also suggests that more Millennials are more tightly clustered around this average of only once a year to several times a year compared to either Generation X or Baby Boomers. Indeed, Baby Boomers have the largest amount of variation in this respect.

The same pattern follows with prayer, with Millennials being the least prayerful and Baby Boomers praying the most. Generation X is somewhere in between. However, in regard to prayer, dispersion about the mean is in reversed pattern from attendance at religious services. For Millennials there is greater variation, followed by Generation X, and the least amount of dispersion from the mean exists for Baby Boomers. This means that greater numbers of Baby Boomers follow the trend average amount of prayer and more Millennials deviate from the average.

For belief in the Bible as the word of God and belief in life after death, the greatest amount of difference exists for Millennials, whereas Generation X and Baby Boomers have similar levels of belief in favor of both. Millennials are the most skeptical—at least where the Bible is concerned. All of these findings are consistent with trends that show lower religiosity at younger ages due to a variety of factors including a decreased influence of religious authority

(Chaves, 1994), delayed adulthood rites of passage such as marriage and having children (Wuthnow, 1988; Arnett, 2000), and general patterns of life cycle trends (Firebaugh, 1991).

The present study does not test declining religious authority, emerging adulthood, or life cycle trends, but the descriptive information does hint at their effects. Regarding declining religious authority, support in the data comes from the religious affiliation numbers that show Millennials are the most likely to reject a religious affiliation of the three generations. At the same time, a higher percentage of Millennials belong to alternative faiths and non-Christian religions compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X. Amid a general trend of decline in the other Christian religious categories, the data suggests something more complex than declining religious authority. Perhaps instead there is declining Christian authority amid rising curiosity about alternative religious options.

The data also show that Millennials are delaying marriage and children to later ages, a main characteristic of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Specifically, the average age of the Millennials surveyed is about 27 years old and over 65% of these Millennials are single with less than one child on average. Only a little more than a quarter of them are married. A major reason given for this delaying of marriage and children is that recent generations of young adults are attending higher educational institutions like colleges and universities in greater numbers (Arnett, 2000; Arnett 2002). The data in this study support this premise, showing that the average educational level of the Millennials is some college with a standard deviation that suggests a significant number of the Millennials are well educated.

In terms of other demographics, the Millennials have the least amount of total family income, followed by the Baby Boomers, and Generation X averages the most. This makes sense since many Baby Boomers have started retiring and many Millennials are just starting their careers. The data show that Baby Boomers have the greatest number of people not working compared to either the Millennials or Generation X with nearly 25%. This percentage dwarfs the approximate 8% of the Millennials and Generation X'ers not currently working.

The main predictor in this study, gender, shows that women in all three generations outnumber the men in the sample. Millennials have 52% that are women, Generation X has 57%, and the Baby Boomers have 53% that are women. Millennials are also the most racially diverse of the three cohorts, followed by Generation X and the Baby Boomers. However, whites make up over half of all three aggregates. Minorities are still in the minority.

Regarding attendance at religious services, there are some interesting differences between the three generations. Gender is not a significant predictor of religious service attendance only for Generation X when controlling for the other factors, which is an unusual finding since gender is typically always a predictor of religious service attendance. Beyond that, there are some other differences between the cohorts worth mentioning. Region is only a significant predictor for Baby Boomers, indicating that living in the Bible Belt is no longer a determinant of religious service attendance for either of the younger generations. This could be another symptom of declining Christian religious authority as described by Chaves (1994). Additionally, there are racial differences. For Baby Boomers, being Hispanic, African American,

and of another race all predict higher rates of religious participation compared to whites, but for Generation X, only being Hispanic and African American are significantly relevant. For Millennials, only African Americans positively predict significantly more religious service attendance than whites. The changing demographics of each generation—in this case the increase in minorities—could be playing a part in why this pattern of race is becoming less relevant in each successive generation. Marital status and children are also factors that mark clear differences between the generations. For both Millennials and Generation X, divorced and single people both attend religious services less than married people, but children make no difference. Since children are a classic reason in the literature for participation in religious institutions (see Wuthnow, 1988), this finding is surprising. Even though divorced people still negatively predict participation in religious services for Baby Boomers, having children does increase their likelihood of participating.

For frequency of prayer, women in all three cohorts pray more than men. However, there are differences with regard to the religious affiliation variables. Mainline Protestants have an effect on prayer compared to Evangelicals only for Generation X and Baby Boomers, but not for Millennials. On the other hand, people with other faiths have predictive effects only for Millennials. The nature of this finding is unclear and the reasons for it are somewhat vague; further investigation in the future is warranted to bring clarification. Southern residence displays another strange finding; it is predictive of higher levels of prayer for Millennials and Baby Boomers, but not for Generation X. Also being Hispanic and African American predict higher levels of prayer for both Millennials and Generation X, but being Hispanic has no effect

for Baby Boomers. Having children is another point of departure between the cohorts. For Baby Boomers and Generation X, having more children leads to more prayer. For Millennials, children have no effect on prayer at all. Additionally, only for Generation X does being divorced or a homemaker correspond with less prayer as compared to married people.

For belief in the Bible as the word of God, gender is not a predictive factor except for the Baby Boomers. Female Baby Boomers have higher odds of believing in the authority of the Bible compared to males. For both Millennials and Generation X, on the other hand, there is no gender difference. Additionally, for Millennials, Evangelical Protestants are more likely to believe in the Bible as the word of God compared to all other religious affiliations.

Alternatively, Baby Boomer and Generation X Black Protestants show no difference in belief from Evangelical Protestants, even though the difference holds for all the others. Additional differences exist in regards to income and education levels. For Millennials, neither education nor income has a relationship to belief in the Bible. For Generation X, higher income is associated positively with belief in the Bible and higher education is negatively associated with it. For Baby Boomers, only education is a determinant of unbelief regarding the Bible. Living in the Bible Belt is another distinguishing factor. For Millennials and the Baby Boomers, living in the South increases the odds of belief in the Bible, whereas it has no effect on Generation X. Race is also a differentiating factor. African American Millennials have greater odds of believing in the Bible than white Millennials, but that effect does not extend to Generation X or the Baby Boomers. For Generation X, on the other hand, being Hispanic increases the odds of believing in the Bible. For Baby Boomers there is no racial effect.

The last model displaying the results for belief in life after death shows additional differences. Women believe in life after death more than men for Generation X and Millennials, but not for Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers that are Evangelical Protestants are more likely to believe in life after death than Mainline Protestants, Catholics, people with other faiths, and people with no religion. However for Millennials, this pattern exists only for Catholics, people with other faiths, and those with no religion. The starkest contrast exists for Generation X, where the only significant result exists for those with no religious affiliation. Beyond the religious variables and gender, only being Hispanic is a significant predictor for both Baby Boomers and Generation X. Ethnicity makes no difference in belief in life after death for Millennials, however. Another unusual finding is that being a homemaker is a negative predictor of belief in life after death.

In conclusion, the models in this exploratory study do show distinctions between the generations with regards to gender and the other predictors, though maybe not all in predictive trends. It is clear that the demographics are changing for the newer generations and there are some indications that successive generations are becoming less involved in religious participation overall. Additionally, the finding of no gender effect on attendance at religious services for Generation X is unusual. Future studies could investigate the trend by which gender is becoming less of a factor in certain religious beliefs rather than in others. For example, where gender predicts belief in the word of God, but not life after death. As such, gender is becoming less of a differentiating factor for a Christian belief (belief in the Bible as the word of God) and more of a factor with regard to a belief that span across religious faiths (belief

in life after death). That being said, women seem to be strongly oriented toward prayer, regardless of generation. That finding lends support to the position of Jeffrey Arnett (2002) and Wade Roof (1993) that religion seems to be becoming more privatized. Thus the finding that successive generations are attending religious services less may only be an indication of less public support for organized religion and a greater personal, private commitment in the form of prayer, especially among women. Additional research is warranted to investigate these findings further.

In conclusion, this research shows that women still are more religious than men in all three generations. Regarding prayer specifically, women from all three cohorts pray more than men. Additionally, there are some religious categories where there is no gender difference. On the other hand, when there is a gender difference, women show greater religious tendencies than men and there are no instances where men are more religious than women. Future work could investigate the gender differences in religiosity further by examining additional religious beliefs and behaviors, as well as investigate differences related to the findings of this study.

## APPENDIX: TABLES

Table 1: Means/Proportions, Standard Deviations, and Range for Millennials; N= 794

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Attendance at Religious Services (9 point scale)	2.976	2.664
Frequency of Prayer (6 point scale)	3.618	1.863
Belief Bible is Word of God (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	71.54	--
Belief in Life After Death (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	77.71	--
Age (Year of Birth: 1981 - 1997)	26.976	4.071
Income (25 point scale)	15.473	6.048
Education (21 point scale)	13.505	2.576
Children (7 point scale)	.800	1.157
Sex (Female = 1, Male = 0)	52.14	--
Evangelical Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	21.79	--
Black Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.81	--
Mainline Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	5.79	--
Catholic (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	24.56	--
Other religion/faith (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	8.69	--
No religious affiliation (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	31.36	--
Southern Residence (1 = Bible Belt, 0 = all others)	25.19	--
White (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	55.04	--
Hispanic/Latino (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	22.04	--
Black (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	17.63	--
Other race (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	5.29	--
Full time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	51.51	--
Part time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	18.01	--
Unemployed or not working (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.68	--
Student (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	12.59	--
Homemaker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	10.20	--

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Married (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	28.21	--
Divorced (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	6.30	--
Single (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	65.49	--

Table 2: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Frequency of Attendance at Religious services and Prayer for Millennials (Multiple Regression)

Independent Variables	Attendance at Religious Services (Model 1)	Frequency of Prayer (Model 2)
Female	.420/.079 (.164)*	.498/.134 (.111)***
Black Protestant	-1.596/-.161 (.377)***	-.855/-.123 (.256)**
Mainline	-.827/-.073 (.362)*	-.178/-.022 (.246)
Catholic	-1.554/-.251 (.240)***	-.913/-.211 (.163)***
Other Religion/Faith	-1.166/-.123 (.322)***	-.472/-.071 (.010)*
No Religion	-3.823/-.664 (.222)***	-2.393/-.596 (.024)***
Age	-.005/-.008 (.024)	.017/.037 (.128)
Income	.019/.044 (.111)	-.011/-.036 (.151)
Education	.073/.071 (.256)*	.012/.016 (.017)
Southern Residence	.364/.059 (.246)	.420/.098 (.010)**
Hispanic	.334/.052 (.163)	.299/.067 (.139)*
African American	.854/.122 (.219)**	1.247/.255 (.177)***
Other Race	-.549/-.046 (.151)	.053/.006 (.249)
Works Part Time	.006/.001 (.016)	-.094/-.019 (.149)
Unemployed	.018/.002 (.010)	.093/.013 (.205)
Student	.082/.010 (.024)	-.108/-.019 (.177)
Homemaker	-.171/-.019 (.285)	.078/.013 (.194)
Divorced	-.982/-.090 (.349)**	-.123/-.016 (.237)
Single	-.628/-.112 (.208)**	-.266/-.068 (.141)
Children	.016/.007 (.083)	.049/.030 (.056)
Constant	3.641	3.206
N	794	794
F Ratio	22.34***	25.95***
R Square	.366	.402

Adjusted R Square

.350

.386

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Cell entries are given as unstandardized regression coefficients/standardized coefficients (Beta) with the standard errors in parentheses. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

Table 3: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Belief that the Bible is the Word of God and Belief in Life After Death for Millennials (Logistic Regression)

Independent Variables	Bible is Word of God (Model 1)	Life After Death (Model 2)
Female	.207/1.231 (.201)	.476/1.609 (.202)*
Black Protestant	-2.905/.055 (.874)**	.617/1.853 (.809)
Mainline	-1.919/.147 (.888)*	.260/1.297 (.666)
Catholic	-3.088/.046 (.741)***	-.745/.475 (.356)*
Other Religion/Faith	-3.875/.021 (.767)***	-1.190/.304 (.429)**
No Religion	-4.960/.007 (.730)***	-2.271/.103 (.321)***
Age	-.013/.987 (.030)	-.027/.974 (.029)
Income	-.022/.978 (.018)	-.002/.998 (.018)
Education	-.006/.994 (.043)	-.064/.938 (.043)
Southern Residence	.585/1.795 (.257)*	.080/1.083 (.245)
Hispanic	.368/1.445 (.252)	-.431/.650 (.241)
African American	.725/2.064 (.317)*	.220/1.247 (.317)
Other Race	.503/1.654 (.395)	.389/1.476 (.432)
Works Part Time	-.163/.850 (.268)	.015/1.015 (.268)
Unemployed	-.377/.686 (.371)	.671/1.955 (.436)
Student	-.188/.829 (.313)	-.120/.887 (.312)
Homemaker	.270/1.310 (.389)	-.124/.883 (.361)
Divorced	-.419/.657 (.465)	-.127/.881 (.433)
Single	.161/1.174 (.264)	.062/1.064 (.256)
Children	.033/1.034 (.108)	-.036/.965 (.104)
Constant	4.798	3.833
N	794	794
Chi-square	261.73	133.07
Pseudo R Square	.276	.158

Cell entries are given as logistic regression coefficients/odds ratios with the standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 4: Means/Proportions, Standard Deviations, and Range for Generation X; N= 966.

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Attendance at Religious Services (9 point scale)	3.609	2.797
Frequency of Prayer (6 point scale)	4.322	1.730
Belief Bible is Word of God (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	80.02	--
Belief in Life After Death (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	79.40	--
Age (Year of Birth: 1980 - 1965)	40.403	4.596
Income (25 point scale)	18.170	5.242
Education (21 point scale)	13.987	3.161
Children (9 point scale)	2.006	1.490
Sex (Female = 1, Male = 0)	57.35	--
Evangelical Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	26.71	--
Black Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.35	--
Mainline Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	11.28	--
Catholic (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	27.12	--
Other religion/faith (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	6.52	--
No religious affiliation (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	21.01	--
Southern Residence (1 = Bible Belt, 0 = all others)	26.92	--
White (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	59.73	--
Hispanic/Latino (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	19.88	--
Black (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	14.80	--
Other race (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	5.59	--
Full time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	67.08	--
Part time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	10.25	--
Unemployed or not working (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.56	--
Homemaker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	15.11	--
Married (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	57.56	--

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Divorced (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	20.08	--
Single (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	22.36	--

Table 5: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Frequency of Attendance at Religious services and Prayer for Generation X (Multiple Regression)

Independent Variables	Attendance at Religious Services (Model 1)	Frequency of Prayer (Model 2)
Female	.110/.019	.582/.167***
Black Protestant	-1.058/-.099**	-.741/-.112**
Mainline	-1.344/-.152***	-.517/-.095**
Catholic	-1.581/-.251***	-.813/-.209***
Other Religion/Faith	-1.174/-.104**	-.341/-.049
No Religion	-4.012/-.585***	-2.143/-.505***
Age	-.021/-.035	.008/.021
Income	-.001/-.003	-.018/-.053
Education	.082/.093**	.007/.013
Southern Residence	-.017/-.003	.194/.050
Hispanic	.572/.082*	.374/.086**
African American	.986/.125**	.905/.186***
Other Race	-.443/-.036	.147/.020
Works Part Time	.024/.002	-.234/-.041
Unemployed	-.548/-.052	-.361/-.055@
Homemaker	.028/.004	-.339/-.070*
Divorced	-1.025/-.147***	-.261/-.060*
Single	-.548/-.082*	-.028/-.007
Children	.099/.053	.077/.066*
Constant	4.773	4.436
N	966	966
F Ratio	24.32***	23.30***
R Square	.328	.319
Adjusted R Square	.315	.305

Cell entries are given as unstandardized regression coefficients/standardized coefficients (Beta) with the standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 6: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Belief that the Bible is the Word of God and Belief in Life After Death for Generation X (Logistic Regression)

Independent Variables	Bible is Word of God (Model 1)	Life After Death (Model 2)
Female	.375/1.455 (.221)	.557/1.745 (.328)**
Black Protestant	-1.031/.357 (1.197)	-.149/.861 (.491)
Mainline	-1.479/.228 (.561)**	.130/1.139 (.420)
Catholic	-2.046/.129 (.496)***	-.497/.608 (.156)
Other Religion/Faith	-2.829/.059 (.550)***	-.039/.961 (.426)
No Religion	-4.123/.016 (.482)***	-1.484/.227 (.057)***
Age	.044/1.045 (.023)	-.032/.968 (.019)
Income	.020/1.020 (.026)***	-.031/1.050 (.021)
Education	-.160/.852 (.040)*	.049/.876 (.032)
Southern Residence	.664/1.942 (.277)	-.132/.605 (.181)
Hispanic	.436/1.547 (.288)**	-.503/1.902 (.142)*
African American	1.451/4.268 (.513)	.643/1.234 (.746)
Other Race	.129/1.138 (.393)	.210/1.723 (.506)
Works Part Time	.060/1.062 (.369)	.544/1.258 (.598)
Unemployed	.043/1.044 (.382)	.229/.544 (.444)
Homemaker	-.621/.537 (.322)	-.609/.796 (.142)*
Divorced	-.385/.680 (.280)	-.228/.821 (.183)
Single	-.430/.651 (.299)	-.198/1.085 (.205)
Children	.105/1.111 (.080)	.082/1.085 (.071)
Constant	3.564	2.824
N	966	966
Chi-square	330.27***	107.70***
Pseudo R Square	.342	.110

Cell entries are given as logistic regression coefficients/odds ratios with the standard errors in parentheses. \*p <

.05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

Table 7: Means/Proportions, Standard Deviations, and Range for Baby Boomers, N= 1175

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Attendance at Religious Services (9 point scale)	3.743	2.825
Frequency of Prayer (6 point scale)	4.489	1.664
Belief Bible is Word of God (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	80.09	--
Belief in Life After Death (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	80.85	--
Age (Year of Birth: 1946 - 1964)	57.403	5.399
Income (25 point scale)	17.664	5.408
Education (21 point scale)	13.639	3.010
Children (9 point scale)	2.037	1.601
Sex (Female = 1, Male = 0)	52.51	--
Evangelical Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	28.68	--
Black Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.74	--
Mainline Protestant (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	16.00	--
Catholic (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	25.96	--
Other religion/faith (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	5.62	--
No religious affiliation (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	16.00	--
Southern Residence (1 = Bible Belt, 0 = all others)	28.94	--
White (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	70.13	--
Hispanic/Latino (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	10.81	--
Black (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	15.06	--
Other race (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	4.00	--
Full time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	52.09	--
Part time worker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	9.87	--
Unemployed or not working (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	24.77	--
Student (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	7.83	--
Homemaker (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	5.45	--

Variables	Mean/Proportion in %	Std. Deviation
Married (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	58.98	--
Divorced (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	28.68	--
Single (1 = yes, 0 = all others)	12.34	--

Table 8: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Frequency of Attendance at Religious services and Prayer for Baby Boomers (Multiple Regression)

Independent Variables	Attendance at Religious Services (Model 1)	Frequency of Prayer (Model 2)
Female	.426/.075 (.142)**	.547/.164 (.081)***
Black Protestant	-1.573/-.149 (.354)***	-.816/-.131 (.202)***
Mainline	-1.449/-.188 (.218)***	-1.024/-.226 (.125)***
Catholic	-1.298/-.201 (.193)***	-.615/-.162 (.110)***
Other Religion/Faith	-.893/-.073 (.322)**	-.314/-.044 (.184)
No Religion	-4.056/-.527 (.223)***	-2.417/-.533 (.127)***
Age	.009/.016 (.014)	.008/.026 (.008)
Income	.002/.003 (.016)	-.005/-.015 (.009)
Education	.099/.105 (.026)***	.004/.008 (.015)
Southern Residence	.467/.075 (.156)**	.333/.091 (.089)***
Hispanic	1.003/.110 (.238)***	.343/.064 (.136)
African American	1.650/.209 (.264)***	.802/.172 (.151)***
Other Race	1.077/.075 (.357)**	.022/.003 (.204)
Works Part Time	.062/.007 (.245)	.131/.023 (.140)
Unemployed	.012/.002 (.187)	-.133/-.035 (.107)
Homemaker	.003/.000 (.275)	-.127/-.020 (.157)
Other Work Status	-.362/-.029 (.318)	-.055/-.008 (.182)
Divorced	-.485/-.078 (.170)**	.030/.008 (.097)
Single	-.358/-.042 (.242)	-.162/-.032 (.138)
Children	.191/.108 (.047)***	.082/.079 (.027)**
Constant	2.313	4.187
N	1175	1175
F Ratio	28.21***	33.48***
R Square	.328	.367

Adjusted R Square

.317

.356

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Cell entries are given as unstandardized regression coefficients/standardized coefficients (Beta) with the standard errors in parentheses. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

Table 9: The Impact of Religious Identification and Sociodemographic Variables on the Belief that the Bible is the Word of God and Belief in Life After Death for Baby Boomers (Logistic Regression)

Independent Variables	Bible is Word of God (Model 1)	Life After Death (Model 2)
Female	.453/1.573 (.178)*	.077/1.080 (.180)
Black Protestant	-.294/.745 (.657)	-.871/.419 (.201)
Mainline	-.848/.428 (.340)*	-.893/.409 (.128)**
Catholic	-1.173/.309 (.300)***	-1.099/.333 (.091)***
Other Religion/Faith	-2.148/.117 (.374)***	-1.722/.179 (.066)***
No Religion	-3.162/.042 (.300)***	-2.588/.075 (.021)***
Age	-.002/.998 (.017)	.002/1.002 (.016)
Income	-.011/.989 (.021)	.009/1.009 (.020)
Education	-.107/.898 (.034)**	.070/1.073 (.033)
Southern Residence	.575/1.778 (.218)**	.058/1.060 (.203)
Hispanic	.154/1.167 (.287)	-.651/.521 (.130)**
African American	.355/1.426 (.363)	.186/1.204 (.394)
Other Race	.295/1.343 (.415)	.600/1.823 (.813)
Works Part Time	.411/1.509 (.347)	.414/1.512 (.469)
Unemployed	-.178/.837 (.230)	.098/1.103 (.241)
Homemaker	-.471/.624 (.348)	.332/1.394 (.467)
Other work status	-.466/.628 (.401)	.218/1.244 (.472)
Divorced	-.366/.694 (.212)	-.084/.919 (.183)
Single	-.127/.881 (.297)	-.060/.942 (.252)
Children	.099/1.105 (.064)	.079/1.082 (.063)
Constant	4.242	3.349
N	1175	1175
Chi-Square	290.12***	159.08***
Pseudo R Square	.2473	.1386

Cell entries are given as logistic regression coefficients/odds ratios with the standard errors in parentheses. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

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