

God Moments, by Jeremy Langford

reviewed by [Joseph B. W. Smith](#) in the [March 8, 2003](#) issue

Theology-on-Tap" is a young-adult ministry that originated in the Archdiocese of Chicago over 20 years ago. On various evenings throughout July, God-talk, friends and beer or other beverages come together as a means of building Christian community. Over 60 Roman Catholic parishes serve as home base for about 3,000 20- and 30-somethings who gather to hear speakers engage them in conversation. This outreach ministry has been the model for many others in cities across the United States.

Jeremy Langford takes a Theology-on-Tap approach to theological discourse: get friends together, share stories, share a beer and reflect on the "God moments" in one's life. Reading the book was like engaging in a theological conversation with Langford. I found myself vehemently disagreeing with him on many points, and wholeheartedly affirming many others. When I finished the book I wanted the conversation to continue.

Langford's theology involves a shift in my experience with theology. Langford does not look at God through a telescope or peer through a knothole in a fence. Rather, he places people in the midst of God's action in the world. Those times when people are aware of their part in God's action are what Langford calls "God moments."

Langford specifically addresses Generation X, made up of those born between 1961 and '81. But will Generation X read this book? My fellow GenXers do not make theology texts fly off the shelves. At first glance, a dangerous ring of exclusivity seems to mark Langford's work. He uses the first-person plural, "we Catholics" and "our generation." To make these distinctions is to walk a tightrope, since we GenXers are often leery about being identified with a mainstream trend. But Langford carefully wins his audience through personal stories and faithful scholarship. His authenticity in formulating a theology interwoven with his own experience of God will appeal to GenXers.

Langford accompanies his personal stories with scholarly treatments of generational cohorts, biblical theology and philosophy. He gives young adults a group with which

to identify, taking cues from pop culture and common life circumstances such as divorce, frequent job changes and the search for meaning. Langford then uses this group formation to create a parallel with historical movements in the Christian tradition.

The Christian faith is a life path that invites seekers, and Langford refers to a wide range of seekers that includes Jesus, Bonhoeffer, St. Ignatius, Luther, St. Francis, Tillich, Nietzsche and Cardinal Bernardin. Pulling all of these examples together with some gripping personal stories, Langford invites his fellow GenXers to live a life of faith in Christ through seeking, seeing and acting. Good theology is on tap in this book.