

Générations Ellul: Soixante héritiers de la pensée de Jacques Ellul

by **Frédéric Rognon**

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Frédéric Rognon is a professor of philosophy of religion in the Protestant Faculty of Theology at the University of Strasbourg. He authored an earlier book about Ellul (*Jacques Ellul: Une pensée en dialogue* [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007]). In this new work, published during the anniversary year of Ellul's birth, Rognon has given voice to those he calls the "heirs" of Ellul's thought: intellectuals who have previously spoken of their debt to Ellul. Rognon asked the same question of each one: "How has Jacques Ellul's thought affected your own intellectual journey and any actions you may have undertaken?"

Rognon's sixty interviewees have widely different intellectual interests (theology, philosophy, history, economics) and professions (teaching, the pastorate, social activism, etc.) But were the criteria for choosing these "heirs" perhaps too limited or even arbitrary? Rather than avoiding this question, Rognon compares in his introduction the wide variety of responses he has assembled. These responses constitute testimonies that enable us to focus on a question that concerns all of us: how does one become an "Ellulian"? Herein lies, I believe, the originality of this book.

Each time the author offers a microphone to someone, it triggers the memory of a chance encounter, of something read, or something learned. Some interviewees' intellectual or professional journeys involved unexpected forks in the road. In some cases, agreement with Ellul's thought was instantaneous and long-lasting; in others, more gradual. After their initial acceptance, some subsequently distanced themselves from Ellul's ideas, and then found at a later time that they believed something different. Such dialectical thinking would surely have pleased Ellul. The frequent spontaneous association of Bernard Charbonneau's name with his would have given him additional pleasure.

Some of Rognon's interviewees' names will be readily recognized by *Ellul Forum* readers. Although most of the "heirs" (presented in alphabetical order) are French, the author has taken care to include North Americans and South Koreans, as well as "heirs" from other countries. Rognon has given a voice to men and women (only a few of these latter, however), both well-known and little-known, but all committed citizens, and all embodying in their own way the thought of Ellul. Their witness offers a concrete new perspective on the often unpredictable expansion of his work. In this way, Ellul's thought demonstrates its vitality and fecundity, as it comes to the surface in unexpected places.