

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

Bringing Millennials back to Church

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries

by

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Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Bringing Millennials back to Church

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020

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This study is focused on the millennial age group at Mechanicsville Baptist Church in Gordonsville, Virginia. The overall purpose of this study is to increase the attendance of the millennial age group at MBC. If the church gains a better understanding of the dropout problem, increases communication, and improves discipleship, then it should increase millennials at MBC by 20% over four weeks. There were several events planned, along with increased communication, in the hope of meeting this goal. Some of these events had to be modified or cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic limits for any gatherings in Virginia. The unforeseen event was one of the reasons why the study's goal was not met. Another reason for falling short is that the study group was too small, causing the outreach work to be limited. COVID-19 pandemic also disrupted communication with the community because of the changes and restrictions in being able to meet. Lastly, it became apparent that this type of study is not something that can be done over a short time or a particular period, as it is about ongoing seasonal events and programs for improving communication and leadership to increase the number of MBC millennials actively.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There are several parts discussed in this introductory chapter for the thesis project. In this introduction, a ministry context explains the direct connection between the thesis project and ministry. In the following section, the problem and the purpose statement are given. The third part is the assumptions, and then the definitions, delimitations, and limitations are addressed. Lastly, the thesis statement is presented.

Ministry Context

Mechanicsville Baptist Church¹ in Gordonsville, Virginia, has had an issue with few students (24-39 years old) participating in church activities/services regularly, and the numbers have continued to decrease over the past decade. According to a website, “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far,” by Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik, who state the millennial generation as age 24-39 years old in the year 2020.² According to a website, “Understanding the Generation Z Culture,” by Axis stated how millennial age is defined as those born from 1981-1996, which means the age range is between 24-39 years for this specific generation.³ An online article by Axis described the defining traits for the millennial generation. “Understanding the Generation Z Culture” by Axis stated how they

¹ Mechanicsville Baptist Church will be abbreviated as MBC from this point.

² “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far,” Pew Research Center, Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik, accessed July 26, 2020, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

³ “Understanding the Generation Z Culture,” Axis, accessed July 26, 2020, https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=Cj0KCQjw9b_4BRCMARIsADMUIyq4ezuwKkUZYXiN-rJDENxhtWk6BHif6uVHBjI35018epEHBsOdwaIaAo0jEALw_wcB.

are a massive group, unmarried, not a part of politics, not religiously affiliated, living at home, and parents are a large part of their lives.⁴

This is a rural church in Gordonsville located away from the main highway. Being the Youth and Children Pastor at MBC for over a year, this writer has seen fewer students attend, and it has been an issue MBC and the staff have been trying to resolve. The church has tried different approaches to fix this problem: new methods of staying in contact with students who move away or go to college, a few events with other churches, and recently a college-aged Sunday school class, as there had not been one. MBC has kept up with who has moved into the community and made an effort to reach out to them. In short, new ideas and methods were being used to help resolve this ongoing issue.

Various rituals are the most predictable and central to the culture of the congregation. The first one is the two services, which are contemporary and traditional. The second ritual is the children's church every Sunday for each of the services. The third ritual at MBC is someone reading the Scripture for both services. Another tradition each week is Sunday school for all ages and weekly Bible studies. The church is cleaned, and new flowers are put in the sanctuary each Sunday. Communion is every quarter of the year, which is a ritual. The deacons always pray over the offering in each service and lead the corporate prayer. The children have choir practice on Sunday mornings and sing for the traditional service. Wednesday night is choir practice and music/art camp with the children. On Thursday night, there are youth/children's meetings, both rituals. Another ritual is a combined service on select Sundays. There is usually an integrated service for special events like revivals, homecomings, holidays, and guest speakers.

⁴ "Understanding the Generation Z Culture," Axis, accessed July 26, 2020, https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=Cj0KCQjw9b_4BRCMARIsADMUIyq4ezuwKkUZyXiN-rJDENxhtWk6BHif6uVHBjI35018epEHBsOdwaIaAo0jEALw_wcB.

Another predictable ritual and central to the congregation's culture is helping the community through the local food bank as a location twice a month every month. The church is also involved with a variety of members helping out at church every month. Church members get the opportunity to help those in need that are in the community who may not attend MBC. There are other outreach efforts throughout the year. The harvest festival is one of these outreach activities that bring people to MBC. It is a Fall event in October for kids and families. There are generally over a hundred kids from the community who come, and it is an opportunity to reach out to them.

Another yearly ritual is packing boxes for *Operation Christmas Child*. The entire church is involved with packing shoeboxes. MBC typically prepares about ninety shoeboxes each November. The youth and children have a packing party. During the *Operation Christmas Child* packing party, the youth and children learn about this ministry, and then they help fill the boxes with toys and essential items. *Operation Christmas Child* has become a popular tradition for MBC. Everyone gets involved in helping out, including adults and young people. The kids and youth bring in items for the *Operation Christmas Child* shoeboxes weeks prior. There are call-outs made several times a week to announce events that happened, and any church schedule changes. This ritual helps remind people of events going on in the church. It keeps members aware of the events and their interests. There are church calls made to everyone to encourage people to stay organized and focused on what events are happening that week.

Other activities are instrumental in shaping people who participate in influencing what MBC millennials think of themselves. The first activity is the new Sunday school classes, as it has helped directly connect with these millennials. The leaders and pastors personally reach out

to each student through a phone call and invitation. These activities impact all the people who participate; it gives them a strong reason to be at church.

An activity that critically impacts people at MBC is the children's and youth meetings each week. This activity influences the kids and youth of all ages as well as the teachers, helpers, and other adults who assist with this activity. Each week, the people who help with this activity are in the millennial age group.

There are many attestations to this group's activities throughout the church. They are incredibly creative. This age group enjoys any activity or event that involves using creativity. They enjoy helping out with setting up Vacation Bible School (VBS) and painting canvases for one of the church's events. At the Harvest Festival this year, the youth helped out with face painting, which allowed them to use their imagination. They enjoy the contemporary service on Sunday mornings, which encourages them to be active and involved. They find new ways of helping the community and those who are around them in need. They are expressive and find new ways to use their talents/abilities to help those who are lost and need help.

Merritt mentions how Christians should make a point to share their faith with their neighbors.⁵ This group enjoys helping the community and those in need. Mission trips like *Impact Mission Camps* and any mission events (local or global) were considered a top priority for this group. They also find a sense of purpose and opportunities when they share their faith with lost people. They are willing to set aside their time to help those in need. Young people in the church feel drawn to help the community, and those young people not in the church feel the

⁵ Jonathan Merritt, *Learning to Speak God From Scratch: Why Sacred Words are Vanishing and How We Can Revive Them*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2018), 158.

same way. Skeldon and Waller mention this need for young people to help the community and go beyond the church walls.⁶

The number of people in MBC of this age group may be small, but they are very passionate about Christ. While some of these people did not grow up in the church, most of them did grow up attending church. They enjoy sharing their faith with those around them. They are helping with activities that may give them opportunities where they share their faith. They bring their friends to activities and church events weekly. A term that describes this young age group would be “busy.” This age group has a habit of trying new things, traveling, switching jobs, visiting friends, etc. This age group is on the go and embraces the lifestyle of service.

There are various routine practices and relationships that best capture what this congregation at MBC values most. The first standard practice at MBC is sharing the gospel. MBC has made and continues to make a daily effort to stay in contact with those who moved into the community and help the community in new ways. MBC remains connected with other churches to see how all the churches can work together to put together events for the community. Often MBC puts up posters and flyers with information of events and activities on bulletin boards in buildings in the community.

Earley and Wheeler emphasize how necessary it is to evangelize even if it makes Christians uncomfortable and to be directly “involved with the world.”⁷ MBC was one of the locations for the local food bank twice a month to distribute food to those in serious need of food. The leaders and church members make a strong effort daily. They invite and share information about MBC. The church members and leaders try to stay connected with other

⁶ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 192.

⁷ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism is...How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic Publishing Group, 2010), 49.

churches and the community through the church newsletter and *The Goshen News*. MBC continues to look and find new opportunities to share the gospel. The members share the gospel, and they bring the lost to Christ, especially the millennial age group.

There are beliefs and ideas which best describe what MBC believes a practicing member ought to be. An active member is learning how to share the gospel with the community and the world successfully. A member should be helping the community and the church as much as possible. MBC expects a member to have a strong understanding of God's plan of salvation for each person, the importance of the local church, and what their ministry gift(s) are. MBC thinks a member should understand what it means to be a Baptist, know what a Christian living is, minister to the church, pray, and tithe. MBC believes in unity and what is in the best interests of the church as a whole. The critical concept of unity is fundamental when it comes to decisions that will affect the whole church. The idea of unity makes people learn that everyone will not always agree, but decisions can still be made even when an disagreement exists.

There are several social characteristics exhibited by the church. For about a decade, MBC has had two services every Sunday. One service is contemporary, and the other one is traditional. It is one congregation, technically. However, most people are stuck with one of the services, so it sometimes feels like two congregations. There are younger people/families attending the contemporary service, and more people, in general, attend this service. The older couples seem to come to the traditional service, and it appears to be a smaller crowd. There have been combined services to help the members from both services to interact with each other. There have also been activities and events to help the two congregations interact more.

There is geographical, historical, and demographical information that helps describe the church. MBC is an old Baptist church, established in 1828. It is located on Louisa Road and is in

a very rural area. MBC is affiliated with the Goshen Baptist Association. MBC believes that educating youth and children about the Bible is the top priority. Despite being small, MBC is well known for doing work not just with the community, but statewide. MBC is one of the oldest Baptist churches in Gordonsville, and even though it is small, it is well known by the community and those who attend.

The relationship between the MBC Children and Youth Pastor and the Millennials group is growing and changing. There are currently new activities/opportunities added to involve this group. The goal is to stay in constant weekly contact with this age group. While staying in continuous touch with this age group can change, three methods currently are phone calls, email, and social media. There is often a conversation between the MBC Children and Youth Pastor and this age group about what could improve the contact or what method of contact would be easier for them. Another goal is to have the communication open between the parents, this age group, and the MBC Children and Youth Pastor. Communication is critical with this age group as things are always changing in their lives.

This group is being encouraged to bring friends to events and to come as often as possible. No matter how strong the relationship between a pastor and the age group, there is always room for improvement and change if necessary. The relationship between MBC Children and Youth Pastor and this age group changed as more millennial age people came to events and weekly activities. One goal is to further grow communication, especially with those who have never attended church regularly. Communication has varied from person to person.

Some young adults are unsure how to tell their friends about the youth group or are afraid of what their friends might think. Peer pressure is a common issue for this age group as well as any age group. Earley and Wheeler explain how Christians do not have to be afraid, because the

Holy Spirit is with them when they share the gospel.⁸ There are the church leaders' efforts in reaching out to the millennial age group in the community who move into the area and reaching out in any way the church can. The relationship between MBC Children and Youth Pastor and this group is growing, and it will continue to be a learning and ongoing process. Over time, the MBC Children and Youth Pastor hope to continue to reach out to this group to help grow and strengthen the relationship with this specific group of millennial age group.

There are regular yearly events that are associated with this particular age group. They participate in the VBS as helpers. They have an essential role in helping the teacher and run other events at VBS. Another traditional event this group helps with is the harvest festival. At this year's harvest festival, this particular group helped out with some of the stations. A few helped with the cakewalk and others with face painting, as well as other activities. These activities gave this age group something to look forward to and participate in. They will help with the children's Christmas program. The youth and the college-aged kids will help sing, lead, and help with the children's Christmas program. These activities connect directly to this research on the role of millennials at MBC.

The Sunday school classes are also connected to this research because the older youth and this age group were asked to bring friends to church during specific weeks of this study. Both church services, traditional and contemporary, will be connected to this study as they were in my announcements and connect with all of the church congregation as well as this age group. The youth meetings each week were connected to the research as the group interacts with that age group. There was a monthly meeting with the MBC children and youth committee during the

⁸ Earley and Wheeler, *Evangelism is...How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*, 176.

study that discussed the events going on. There was a staff meeting weekly to discuss the events that were linked with the investigation.

There were church resources in terms of finances, people, time, an influence made available to the MBC Children and Youth Pastor. There have been church members who have given books and resources that are beneficial for research. MBC Children and Youth Pastor had obtained sources from various libraries to help learn about increasing the numbers of the millennial age group in the church and getting new people involved in regular church activities. MBC Children and Youth Pastor had conversations with leaders and staff from the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) ideas on how to grow this 24-39-year-old age group and about their experience in the matter.

MBC Children and Youth Pastor had conversations with other pastors and leaders about how important this topic is. This problem is not only a problem at MBC but many other churches as well, regardless of size and location. The ideas and learnings from this process were shared with the senior pastor and his staff. Much latitude was given to the project to attract those in the age group; this author was allowed to add activities and events to the MBC schedule, which connected with millennials in the community.

MBC adults had been very open in listening and responding to the MBC Children and Youth Pastor's ideas. They realized that there is a lack of millennials, and they wanted to discover new ways to fix the problem. They were optimistic about the ideas and offered to help in any way they could. They understood that this study could benefit the church and the community as a whole. MBC Children and Youth Pastor started a leadership team of older adults to connect and provide leadership to the older teens and young adults. The church and staff gave MBC Children and Youth Pastor the time and flexibility to develop new methods and ideas for

growing the young adult group. The church recognized the lack of millennials regularly attending church and has made available to the MBC Children and Youth Pastor resources like connections to other people experienced in this issue and advice from their own experience to help fix it.

During this process, MBC learned and discovered that they wanted to improve the numbers of millennials, and the recovery will take time. The problem cannot be fixed without people taking action, and this action must include a specialized plan and strategy that is most effective. David Platt mentions how crucial it is to go from “belief” to action and how Christians must impact culture to bring people to Christ.⁹

Problem Presented

The problem is that Mechanicsville Baptist Church, in Gordonsville, Virginia, has a decreasing number of MBC millennials each year.

There are conditions present and conditions missing. This problematic attendance condition has been current for more than a decade. There has been a need for millennial age group to increase, but there has not been a set method/process to fix the problem. The condition missing is the method and action to resolve the issue.

Another condition missing is maintaining contact with millennials who leave or are not regularly attending church. Also, finding ways for them to participate and help with church activities is absent. Furthermore, MBC does not have a regular group of millennials helping in church services or events. The opportunity and the ability to fix the problem is the condition that is not there. A situation that is lacking is that people do not bring many friends and neighbors, especially young adults, to regular church activities. Merritt explains how each new generation

⁹ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017), 23.

has to tackle contemporary issues, learn from others' mistakes, and find new ways of solving new and old problems.¹⁰ A decision was made to measure the effectiveness of new resources and events in this ministry setting and determine the positive or negative change in this ministry's environment. The MBC Children and Youth Pastor, the writer for this study, was tasked with the mission to increase the number of Millennials at MBC.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to increase millennial age group (24-39 years old) attendance by 20% over four weeks to resolve the issue of the decreasing number of Millennials at MBC each year.

The MBC Children and Youth Pastor became a researcher to apply research methods to solve the church's practical problem. This research project will provide important answers and ways of improving the numbers of this group of millennials at MBC. The church must focus on this problem because it is one of the most significant issues in their church that needed to be dealt with.

Since there had been no method or process set to fix the problem, the researcher believed that it is the reason the issue has not been successfully resolved in the past. It is also thought that the problem can be determined over time with the help of the church. The church's future depends on the children and the youth of MBC, making the issue that much more crucial to be solved. There were various benefits for MBC, particularly for the pastors and the leaders there. One of the advantages is that solving the problem will help increase the number of millennials in the church, which will, in turn, draw more in over time. Another benefit is that it will give the younger children a group from whom to learn. The practical methods and ideas that worked can

¹⁰ Jonathan Merritt, *A Faith of Our Own: Following Jesus Beyond the Culture Wars* (New York, NY: FaithWords, 2012), 177.

be used and shared with other churches dealing with the same issue. A benefit is it will give people an incentive to be aware of other problems in the church. It also shows how necessary it is to have methods to solve issues.

Basic Assumptions

The writer's necessary commitments and presuppositions informed the analysis and outline of the project's problem and purpose in several ways. First, the number of millennial age group can be easily increased by 20%. This percentage is a real number. If each of the older teens and college-aged students brought one new friend to church regularly, it would quickly increase by 20%. It is a practical goal.

Second, it will take time for the numbers to increase, and it may take more than four weeks. The writer has not done a study like this before, so she is unsure how much time it could take. The results could happen in less time than expected or more. It is crucial to remember that understanding the dropout problem, increasing communication, and improving discipleship, will take time.

Third, other factors may contribute to the overall results. Some young adults may decide not to participate or bring friends to church. Others may choose to move out of the area, which could change the overall results. There will be new factors that the writer is not currently aware of, and will learn about them as time progresses through the study.

Another assumption is that with a smaller church, the percentage increase of young adults will be easier to analyze. The writer believes that since this church is small and it is a small community, it will be easier to interpret. Unlike larger congregations, where this study could be more challenging to carry out and analyze, the writer believes that she will see changes from month to month if the percentage increases or decreases.

Limitations

There will be several limitations to this study. All of the other topics have been rejected, and one has been chosen, which is one of the main limitations. There has been a convenient sample chosen; it is the 24-39-year-old age group at MBC. A random selection was not selected, which would have been much more difficult to find and control. There was the option to pick a group from another church or elsewhere; however, it would be harder to learn about the situation, numbers, and crucial information. Thus, this study will focus on the 24-39-year-old group at the church and in Gordonsville, Virginia, in exclusion of the other age groups.

For this study, there will be an analysis of data, which had its known limitations and was self-reported. During this study and data analysis, there could have been an error in the process or some omission. There could have been a limitation in some of the documents needed for this study.

There is a limited amount of time for this study each week, as the group meets on Thursdays and Sundays. That limits the amount of time when this group is taught. A young adult may choose to drop out and not participate in activities or move away. Also, during this study, people's reaction cannot be controlled, and their willingness to participate might change.

Delimitations

There will be several delimitations for this study. The amount of communication that gets out to the community and the church can be controlled. The church can also be informed about the dropout problem of millennials and how crucial it is to bring millennials back to church. The planning part of starting a leadership group and arranging this leadership team's activities to help with the 24-39-year-old group can be controlled.

Another delimitation for this study is that the writer can help others recognize the necessity of regularly bringing friends and neighbors to church. A delimitation for this study would be methods on how to improve discipleship in the church. Help and ideas for the survey can be inquired from other leaders inside and outside of the church. Another delimitation is what books to research for this thesis project and what books may not be relevant to the topic. For this study, the quotes and information used from scholarly sources can be controlled. However, there may be delimitations that may not be present now that may be present during the study.

Thesis Statement

If the church gains a better understanding of the dropout problem, increases communication, and improves discipleship, then it should increase the student body ratio by 20% over four weeks.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Christ and the Church

Skeldon and Waller talked about the connection between “Christ and the church” and declared how crucial it is for churches to comprehend God's role/connection and the church working together to have a lasting impact.¹¹ Platt presented the same idea and explained the relationship between God and the church with using the vision of marriage.

The Gospel and Ethnicity

Platt disclosed the link between “the gospel and ethnicity.” Platt demonstrated and identified the necessity of the connection between ethnicity and sharing the gospel.¹² Peter Scazzero explained how the most disadvantaged groups are in multi-ethnic groups and explained the study done in Queens in New York City.¹³ Scazzero has given plenty of information on “the gospel and ethnicity”; however, the application could have been expanded.¹⁴ Scazzero explained the study and reported it, but the application could have been added.¹⁵ There could have been more examples given to show the importance of the link between ethnicity and the gospel.¹⁶ Scazzero was demonstrating the importance of reaching out to lost people through that specific

¹¹ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 92.

¹² Ibid., 189.

¹³ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 13.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 13.

opportunity.¹⁷ Scazzero explained the learning process in ministry when sharing the gospel and connecting “ethnicity and the gospel.”¹⁸

Skeldon and Waller referred to the connection between passion, calling, and worship and how those three elements are linked to sharing the gospel and how one needs to choose it over being complacency.¹⁹ Platt is another author who takes this tension head-on in “comfort or the cross.” Platt emphasized how it is our responsibility to share God’s Word with the lost. Platt explained the importance of sharing the gospel and the concept of “comfort or the cross,” however, there is a disconnect between the information and its practice.²⁰ There could have been more specific ideas on how to get millennials back into churches and examples of how to carry the cross over comfort.²¹ Platt focused more on the problems, and the application part could be more focused on the solutions. If Platt had given more specific examples and explained some answers, there would be no gap between the information and the application parts.²²

Kinnaman and Lyons point the disconnection between Christians and the rest of the world and how Christians have to bridge that gap.²³ However, there was no in-depth discussion on the possible reasons and examples of why there is a disconnection between Christians and the

¹⁷ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 13.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials.*, 54-55.

²⁰ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 263.

²¹ Ibid., 265.

²² Ibid.

²³ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 102.

world where more examples of how it happens, the steps needed to improve and support the ideas suggested fixing the issue.²⁴ Particularly as pertains to the Millennials.

Mirror of God

The idea of the “mirror of God” is mentioned various times in several books and sources. Platt is one author who writes on this same theme. He explained how a Christian’s character should be a reflection of God’s character.²⁵ Platt mentioned how the world lacks God’s character and how a Christian’s actions should reflect their beliefs.²⁶ The “mirror of God” should include compassion for people, especially those who need help, which is what Platt referred to in his writing.²⁷ Platt showed Christians how being followers of Christ means seizing opportunities to share the gospel.²⁸

Issler explained the link between Jesus’s ministry and the ministry of a Christian.²⁹ He emphasized how Christians play a crucial role in reaching the entire world with the gospel.³⁰ This author showed how Christians could witness through the power of the Holy Spirit.³¹ He stated how Christians should be actively working together to share the gospel and be Christian examples who are strong in their Christian beliefs.³² Issler could have had more information on being a mirror of God and how the Holy Spirit has an essential role in guiding Christians and

²⁴ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 102.

²⁵ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 93.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 94.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: the Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: 2012), 108.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: the Formation of Christian Character*, 108.

³² Ibid.

leaders in the church.³³ Issler had a short application part in this chapter about the Holy Spirit and how Christians are strong examples. However, Issler did emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit to a Christian's life and influence in the world.³⁴ If Issler had further examples and information on the link between the Holy Spirit, Christians, and the impact on the millennial age group, then it would have increased support and relevance to this study.³⁵

Gutierrez postulated how every Christian should have the characteristic of self-discipline.³⁶ He delineated full dependence on God and expressed how self-discipline makes Christians grow spiritually closer to God.³⁷ Additionally, Wilson explained how Christians are supposed to be 'balanced' people and morally good examples to others.³⁸ The author states, "Because they've received the whole Christ, not a part of him, they bear his whole image. They're not lopsided, but well-rounded, morally and spiritually proportional."³⁹

Redeemed and Restored

Platt communicated the idea of restoration by God, who forgives sins and saves through forgiveness and redemption.⁴⁰ Platt further stated how those saved from their sins and are to share that with others. This author emphasizes how God is in control and can change a bad situation.⁴¹ The Millenials are directly impacted, as they are not as involved in church activities.

³³ Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: the Formation of Christian Character*, 108.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ben Gutierrez, *The Call: Know Personally. Live Passionately* (Virginia Beach, VA: Academx Publishing Services, 2011), 94.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 115.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 75.

⁴¹ Ibid.

They are distracted and involved in other things and need to be redirected into church life. Some Millennials do not prioritize church activities as the rest of the world in the Anti-Christian age may not consider it a priority. Platt demonstrated how being restored gives all people hope and understanding of who God is.⁴²

Kinnaman and Hawkins have spoken of how Christ died for everyone, including Christians and the community, and restored them.⁴³ These authors examined how one's sin is what separates them from God.⁴⁴ However, they mentioned how Christians live in a fractured world, and there is hope in Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ Kinnaman and Hawkins show that the gospel gives Christians guidance and hope for the future.⁴⁶

Whitney indicated how Christ restores Christians inside and out.⁴⁷ This author showed how Christ restores Christians physically and spiritually.⁴⁸ Whitney further spoke about how this restoration is necessary for all Christians and gives the disciples' example.⁴⁹ In the story, Whitney explained how Jesus encouraged them to restore themselves through sleep.⁵⁰ There was a gap between information and the application of a Christian being physically restored. The focus of the author was on spiritual restoration.⁵¹ There were some examples of what millennial-

⁴² David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 75.

⁴³ David Kinnaman, and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 114.

⁴⁴ Kinnaman, and Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... and Rethinking Faith*, 114.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014), 232.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 232-248.

⁵¹ Ibid.

aged people could do to be restored spiritually and physically. However, if there were more examples added, it would strengthen the relevance and connection to this study.⁵²

Earley and Wheeler have spoken of how the world has needed to learn who Christ is and have their lives restored.⁵³ These authors stated how crucial restoration is in the life of a Christian and how it is beneficial.⁵⁴ Earley and Wheeler declared how millennials need to give their lives over to Christ and be restored.⁵⁵

The Generation Gap

Skeldon and Waller explained how to fix the generation gap by each person who disciplined another person in other generations, and the pattern continues.⁵⁶ Earley and Wheeler indicated how this generation has ‘different beliefs’ than other generations and the need to connect them.⁵⁷ Skeldon and Waller had spoken about how the problem is not the generation but a discipleship issue.⁵⁸ Jonathan Merritt further communicated how discipleship is necessary for getting the millennial age group back into the church.⁵⁹

⁵² Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 232-248.

⁵³ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism is...How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic Publishing Group, 2010), 27.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 21.

⁵⁷ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism is...How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*, 27.

⁵⁸ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 61.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Merritt, *Learning to Speak God From Scratch: Why Sacred Words are Vanishing and How We Can Revive Them*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2018), 55.

Lack of Discipleship

Skeldon and Waller emphasized how and why Christians are missing a piece of Christianity and who God is because of a lack of discipleship.⁶⁰ Jonathan Merritt revealed how Christians and the church should have a positive outlook on this generation and focus on bringing people to Christ.⁶¹ Todd Wilson declared how discipleship is accomplished at a personal level and not by a ‘system.’⁶² Wilson provided the information but did not state how to complete discipleship at a personal level.⁶³ The author, Wilson, could have mentioned an exact method or several examples of how discipleship is achieved personally.⁶⁴ If there were examples and details stated, then it would have added a new level of practicality.⁶⁵ Also, Scazzero, Earley, Wheeler, MacArthur, and Horner spoke about why discipleship is not happening in churches and how to improve it.

Skeldon and Waller explained how impactful discipleship is inside the church and outside in the community. Merritt propounded how discipleship is the best method, especially for our human nature.⁶⁶ There were no further details about the connection between human nature and discipleship.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 125.

⁶¹ Jonathan Merritt, *Jesus is Better Than You Imagined* (New York, NY: FaithWords, 2014), 119.

⁶² Todd Wilson, *Real Christian: Bearing the Marks of Authentic Faith*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 114.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 150.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

David Horner uttered how Jesus's vision and the character of a Christian are linked and equally crucial.⁶⁸ Wilson, Issler, Whitney, MacArthur, Early, and Wheeler also discussed the importance of improving discipleship in the church and its impact.

Developing and Growing Leadership

The concept of increasing leadership is stated in several books and sources. Platt revealed how it is crucial to share God's word with the church and the culture as it should be the focus.⁶⁹ Issler indicated that to improve leadership, leaders need to become more 'faithful.'⁷⁰ Gutierrez emphasized how, for a Christian leader to be impactful in their ministry, they must remember how they became saved by grace.⁷¹ The authors Skeldon and Wheeler, Kinnaman and Lyons, Scazzero, and Horner, gave their input on this idea.

Comfort or the Cross

It is crucial to remember that God wants Christians to go out into the communities and the world. God does not expect or want Christians to be comfortable. Sometimes being a Christian requires them to be uncomfortable to get the message of Christ out into the world to change lives. Christians may have to give up the worldly and human feelings of being comfortable. It is critical to remember that being comfortable is not essential in ministry, but Christ will comfort His people.

Skeldon and Waller talked about the importance of not being comfortable in ministry. Skeldon and Waller stated, "Passion turns careers into callings. Callings turn work into

⁶⁸ David Horner, *A Practical Guide for Life and Ministry: Overcoming 7 Challenges Pastors Face* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 67.

⁶⁹ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 173-174.

⁷⁰ Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: the Formation of Christian Character*, 69.

⁷¹ Ben Gutierrez, *The Call: Know Personally. Live Passionately*, 94.

worship.”⁷² The authors showed how being comfortable is not part of the ministry and how Christians must be zealous for sharing the gospel with those who are lost.⁷³ If Christians and leaders are passionate about Christ and share the gospel, they will not be focused on or worried about being comfortable.⁷⁴ The authors explained how passion is directly linked to worship.⁷⁵

Platt explained how Christians have to give up things, like being comfortable in life to follow Christ and to tell others about Jesus.⁷⁶ Platt states, “But the gospel compels us to counter-culture regardless of the cost to risk our lives, our families, our future, our plans, and our possessions for the sake of one reward: the proclamation of the greatest news in order to meet people's greatest need.”⁷⁷ Platt further mentioned how being comfortable is only one of the things Christians will have to give up.⁷⁸ The author stated how it is more crucial to share the gospel than anything else we may think we need.⁷⁹ Platt clarified it might not be easy to give up being comfortable, and it may be something Christians have to work on.⁸⁰

Kinnaman and Lyons mentioned some thoughts on the importance of sharing the gospel and giving up comfort to follow Christ. Kinnaman and Lyons stated, “We are closed off from the world. Even if we wanted to reach out to non-Christians, we don't have time, and we don't know how. The only way we know how to reach out is to invite people to join in our Christian

⁷² Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 54-55.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 263.

⁷⁷ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 263.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

society.”⁸¹ Kinnamon and Lyons described how Christians needed to go outside their comfort zones to make a difference in the world.⁸² The authors explained how Christians must go beyond the church walls to change lives with the gospel effectively.⁸³ Kinnamon and Lyons pointed at the idea that action needed to take place by all Christians, no matter the size, location, etc.⁸⁴ The authors showed that it must be a church effort and the church leaders needed to be leading this effort.⁸⁵ They highlighted the concept that Christ commands us to go out and share the word of God, as it will lead others to Him.⁸⁶ The authors explained that Christians should be actively seeking new ways and methods to share their faith and not hiding from the rest of the world in fear.⁸⁷ According to Kinnamon and Lyons, ministry leaders needed to lead by example on sharing the gospel effectively with those around them.⁸⁸

Obedience

Obedience is crucial in ministry. Skeldon and Waller stated, “It seems that the older we get, the safer we live. But safe faith isn't compelling to young adults.”⁸⁹ The authors noted that the future generation would not know how to evangelize effectively if adults do not show them

⁸¹ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters*, 102.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters*, 102.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters*,

⁸⁹ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 240.

how.⁹⁰ Skeldon and Waller described how there must be an immediate change in how Christians tell about their faith.⁹¹ Kinnaman and Lyons add, “There is nothing more powerful than the Christian life lived out in obedience; there is nothing worse than a flat, self-righteous form of faith that parades around in Christian clothes.”⁹² The authors showed how necessary it is to be obedient in sharing the gospel as it is the most critical job of a Christian.⁹³ Kinnaman and Lyons mentioned how Christians have to be active in reaching out daily to the community and finding new opportunities.⁹⁴

In conclusion, this literature review shows some of the reoccurring themes/ideas. Some of these themes/ideas are Christ and the church, the gospel, ethnicity, mirror of God, redeemed and restored, the generation gap, lack of discipleship, and developing and growing leadership.

Several specific ways or lessons have come out of the literature reviews into the project. First, it is important to recognize the problem, which is a lack of millennials at MBC, to fix it. These ideas/themes show that some multiple reasons and factors that cause a lack of millennials in churches, such as culture, lack of events involving millennials, and how to connect effectively with millennials' lack of discipleship/leadership in the churches, and lack of communication with the community. Each of the sources is contributing to the research and understanding of the topic. This review of the literature demonstrates how there are different viewpoints and ideas on how to resolve the problem statement addressed previously

⁹⁰ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 240.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters*, 66.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Theological Foundations

There are biblical principles that serve as the underpinning or foundation of this thesis. In the commentary *Evangelical Commentary of the Bible*, Walter A. Elwell, states, “Jesus’ association with sinners is justified because God is like a shepherd who searches diligently for any lost sheep (Luke 15:3–7).”⁹⁵ He shows how God wants Christians to be searching for the world and community for those who are lost. Elwell writes, “The retrieval of the lost sheep brings joy to God (“heaven” [v. 7] is another way of referring to God; cf. Matt. 18:14).” Elwell’s statement demonstrated the joy from God when lost people come to Christ and how it should bring Christians joy as well.⁹⁶ Matthew 28:19 emphasizes the criticality and the Christian’s responsibility to share the gospel with those in the community. It gives purpose and a duty to all Christians. It is essential to improve leadership and discipleship in the church, and it will equip Christians to share the gospel with those around them. The Holy Spirit will work through Christians and be with them as they tell others about their faith.

In *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Matthew Henry refers to Matthew 28:19.⁹⁷ Henry mentions that the Great Commission is about God giving his son Jesus the power of “authority.” He also describes how God tells Christians to go out and share the gospel with motivation instead of an order given. Christians must be self-driven in wanting to share the gospel with the communities and the world. The author also states that the Great Commission is a timeless

⁹⁵ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 826.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

statement to remember and to follow. The author explained how it is not a simple task, as it will require work.⁹⁸

Henry described how it is the responsibility of Christians to share the gospel throughout the world. He declares how every nation is a part of God's kingdom, which hints that all countries and communities need to work together to tell the gospel all people. He also shows that there is a guide on how to carry out the commission. He mentioned they had to be baptized and in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

In *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, John Muddiman and John Barton, referred to the passage of Matthew 28:19.¹⁰⁰ They mentioned how the commission given to the disciples does not change, as it is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The authors stated how it is the tradition and the responsibility as Christians to share the gospel. The authors explained how Jesus told the disciples to share the gospel and how God would be with them.¹⁰¹

Muddiman and Barton described how God commissioned many people, like Moses and Joshua. They further explained Muddiman and Barton how the commission is less of a "command" and more like encouragement given to Christians. The authors stated how Christ commands Christians to "make disciples" and gives the concept of instructing the word of God. The authors mentioned the criticalness of baptism for new believers.¹⁰² Muddiman and Barton

⁹⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Matthew 28:19.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ John Muddiman and John Barton, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007), 885-886.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

expressed how this verse has an “open-ended ending.” Muddiman and Barton clarified that there is no limit to the great commission's impact on the world.¹⁰³

The authors from these commentaries showed how urgent it is to share the gospel with the communities and the world. It helped support the thesis project as it identified the importance of reaching out with the gospel in the nearby communities and never underestimating its impact. MBC has learned more about what it means to share their faith and evangelize in their communities by identifying how crucial this Bible verse is. This biblical passage has given people at the church another reason and the understanding to evangelize, especially millennials. The mandate has led MBC to seize those opportunities to share the gospel with those who do not know God.

In the *Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: New Testament*, Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger added their viewpoint on Matthew 18:14.¹⁰⁴ These authors mentioned how Jesus does not want His people to be wandering without him. Barker and Kohlenberger stated that people should not be taken away from God, and Christians should help encourage others to make good decisions. The authors emphasized how crucial each person is to Christ and how essential each person is to the entire Christian body. They showed how significant each person is to Christ and hinted at how Christians need to view others in that same way.¹⁰⁵

In the commentary *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, the author, R.T. France, mentioned how crucial it is for Christians to share the gospel, stating, “Baptizing and ‘teaching’

¹⁰³ John Muddiman and John Barton, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 885-886.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger, “The Glory and the Shadow: Progressive Polarization (13:54-19:2).” *Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 2017).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

are participles dependent on the main verb, *make disciples*; they further specify what is involved in discipleship.”¹⁰⁶ France emphasized how it is our responsibility to improve discipleship in the church. These commentaries highlighted the significance of discipleship and sharing the gospel with the lost in our communities; this generally consists of millennials.

First Peter 5:2-4 is about the importance of leadership and how Christians were guided by their leaders in the church. In this passage, a leader is defined as a model or guide of how a Christ-centered person should live and act daily.¹⁰⁷ It also shows that a leader should be living by the gospel in every aspect. This passage provides a reminder and a clear image of what a leader in the church should be.

In *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, John Muddiman and John Barton, referred to the biblical passage of 1 Peter 5:2-4 as they explained how Christian leaders and Christians both need to be different from the rest of the world.¹⁰⁸ In the commentary *In Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: New Testament*, Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger turned to 1 Peter 5:2-4 to explain how the leaders in the church play an important role of leading and guiding other Christians and those who are lost and need the gospel.¹⁰⁹ The authors mentioned how church leaders are called to lead with God's love and care.¹¹⁰ The authors explained how this is an enormous and crucial duty that Peter commands in this passage.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 420.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Pet. 5:2-4. NIV.

¹⁰⁸ John Muddiman and John Barton, “Submit to One Another,” *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1269.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth L. Barker, and John R. Kohlenberger, “The Suffering and Persecution of Christians (3:13-5:11),” *Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 1994), 1058.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Barker and Kohlenberger further stated how leaders in the church must be prepared to lead and guide others in the church.¹¹² In order to fix a problem, there needs to be a plan set in place. Church leaders need to be ready, and being prepared requires a detailed plan. This thesis project is a method of leading and guiding MBC to fix the issue of a lack of millennial age group in the church.

They also mentioned how God would use these leaders to impact the lives of people who are lost and Christians in the church.¹¹³ The authors described how these leaders (referring to elders in the passage) should want to serve the church and God.¹¹⁴ They stated how these leaders will be rewarded for leading God's people, but how this should not be the main reason why those would lead.¹¹⁵ The authors pointed to the idea that leaders play a critical and necessary role in the church and how it will help bring the lost to Christ. The authors described how without leaders in the church, it would be extremely difficult to teach others how to evangelize in their communities.¹¹⁶

A Bible verse about the characteristics of a church leader in the church is found in Exodus 18:21. It states that church leaders are "men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain."¹¹⁷ In *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*, the authors Charles Gore, Henry Leighton Goudge, and Alfred Guillaume mentioned the significance of Exodus 18:21. They stated how this laid down the characteristics of all leaders

¹¹² Kenneth L. Barker, and John R. Kohlenberger, "Suffering and Persecution" *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1058.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Exod. 18:21. NIV.

“ethically” and “morally.”¹¹⁸ These authors showed the biblical history and how it set the foundation of the characteristics for Christian leaders.¹¹⁹ Gore, Goudge, and Guillaume showed the historical aspect and viewpoint of this biblical passage to highlight the importance and origin of these characteristics.¹²⁰

In the commentary *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, R. Alan Cole, stated how Exodus 18:21 emphasizes how essential the characteristics are of leaders in the church.¹²¹ Cole explained how it is necessary to find “able men.”¹²² Cole pointed out how it is more important to find a leader who is righteous rather than a person who is smart.¹²³ He further mentioned how these characteristics are linked to all Christians and not just leaders in the church. This is a very key point for everyone to keep in mind. Cole explained how all Christians should have these characteristics or have these as their goals.¹²⁴

Barker and Kohlenberger also stated how Exodus 18:21 highlighted these necessary characteristics of a Christian leader.¹²⁵ Barker and Kohlenberger described these traits were for “capable men,” “men who fear God,” “men of truth,” and men who hate all “dishonest gain.”¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ Charles Gore, Henry Leighton Goudge, and Alfred Guillaume, eds. *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942).

¹¹⁹ Gore, et al., eds. *New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 2. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger, and Verlyn Verbrugge. “Journey to Sinai (15:22-18:27).” In *Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 2017).

¹²⁶ Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger, and Verlyn Verbrugge. “Journey to Sinai (15:22-18:27).” In *Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition: Old Testament*.

These men who were stated in this biblical passage were designated as fellow workers for Moses. These same characteristics are crucial in church leaders today.¹²⁷

It can be difficult to reach out to the lost in the community if the leaders and Christians do not have these qualities. If leaders do not have these qualities, then it can hurt their ministry and the ability to impact the community as well. There is always a need for church leaders with these traits as they help lead others to Christ and into ministry.

Christian leaders who have these qualities have been very impactful in reaching those in the community who may not know Christ. These traits will continue to help grow strong Christian leaders and have helped support new efforts such as this thesis project. Matthew 28:19 and Exodus 18:21 are two important biblical passages as they help firmly support and strengthen the significance of this thesis project. Both of these passages have helped identify the need for the thesis project. Both of these passages helped MBC learn the importance of these leadership traits and how they influence the church and community.

The research project's purpose was to make people aware of the dropout problem of the 24-39 year-old age group and to fix the problem by making a plan to help increase the number of millennials at MBC. Christian teaching informed the presuppositions and operating principles of the project in several ways. First, it showed how crucial and necessary the project is to the community and the church. Also, it showed the biblical support of why the thesis project needed to be carried out. Next, it served as a guideline for understanding, and it will make people prioritize what needs to be done. Christian teaching informed the presuppositions and operating principles of the project by giving credibility and clarification.

¹²⁷ Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger, and Verlyn Verbrugge. "Journey to Sinai (15:22-18:27)."

Theoretical Foundations

This topic has been previously researched. There have been scholarly sources found on the topic of getting more millennials back into the church. Several reasons were discovered why the dropout rate of millennials is so high in some churches. This lack of discipleship has led to a decreasing number of millennials over the past decade at MBC.¹²⁸

Another theory that has been discovered by Kinnaman and Hawkins is the lack of being informed about the dropout rate, and reasons for disconnection have led to decreasing numbers of millennials.¹²⁹ A theory that has been uncovered by Early and Wheeler is how the generation gap has been a factor in the lack of millennials in the church, and fixing the generation gap by informing and finding new ways to connect with millennials will remedy the problem.¹³⁰ A theory that has not been unproven by Kinnaman and Hawkins is the connection between being restored physically/spiritually through Christ and improving leadership will lead to Christians who are actively involved in the community and activities for young people.¹³¹

Several theories remain unexplored. A theory that has not been fully investigated is whether the lack of young people in the church is a specific problem that is unique to this generation. Another theory that has not been looked further into is if there is more communication with the community about the issue through bulletin boards at popular places, newsletters, and events, will that help increase millennials in the church? A theory that has not been explored yet is, if a leadership team and events for the millennials are created, then will

¹²⁸ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 61.

¹²⁹ Kinnaman, and Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... and Rethinking Faith*, 67.

¹³⁰ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism is...How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*, 27.

¹³¹ Kinnaman, and Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... and Rethinking Faith*, 67.

MBC members and the millennials respond? The theory of adding a leadership team to help improve leadership and discipleship was given by Kim Eskridge from the BGAV. A theory is that if there are more events for millennials to lead and join, then it will help increase the millennial group at MBC.

Some practices and models exist to provide justification for the research being conducted. There is a lack of millennials participating in church activities and church services, so there are new activities added to the church calendar, along with leadership opportunities for millennials to help resolve this issue. There has been a decreasing number of the millennial age group at MBC for several years, even with some practices and models existing. There are currently weekly activities/practices with this age group. There is a Sunday school class that is specifically for this age group that was started a few months ago. This Sunday school class gives this group of millennials a class to be at every Sunday to learn about scripture.

Millennials have been invited as helpers in certain church activities with the community, like the harvest festival and VBS, for example. However, this practice of inviting millennials to help could be expanded and have more opportunities for them to be involved in church life. There will be more activities/opportunities added monthly or even weekly to help encourage them to be a part of the church. These events will be shown on the church website and through local places with bulletin boards for young people to learn of these church events.

There has been a need to increase discipleship and leadership with this millennial age group. This will be accomplished by developing a leadership team of millennials. It will be important to find at least 4-5 adults who are willing to be a part of this leadership team. These people will need to be committed to being a part of this leadership team to help get this age group involved with more church activities.

This leadership team will help get those millennials involved with church activities as well as bringing/inviting others from the community. This leadership team will be created to help the church and the community to recognize how critical it is to get the millennial age group back in church. The leadership team will build communication with this age group and be there to guide them in making decisions and be there for support.

As time progresses, this leadership team should grow into a larger number of people as the church will see the direct impact it will make on millennials at MBC and the community. This leadership team will increase communication between the church and this millennial age group, which can only be beneficial. These young people will learn how to be helpers. They will also learn from the leadership team how to share the gospel with those around them.

The lack of communication between this millennial age group and the church can be improved by having a weekly communication between this group and the church. There can be an increase of communication through conversation in person, phone calls, texts, letters, and emails. These are a few easy ways to help increase communication with this age group who have never attended church and those who have stopped coming to church.

Recently, there has been an attempt to increase communication between older adults and this millennials at MBC. This missed connection is common in some churches and is missing at MBC. There was a planned church activity that purposely included older adults and millennials. It was a bingo night, and it gave an opportunity for the millennials and the older adults to communicate and have conversations with each other. There was a large turnout, and it was very successful.

The writer, as the MBC Children and Youth Pastor, hopes to have more events similar to this event to bridge the communication between the older and younger people. There will be

more bingo nights throughout the year and other similar events. The events like bingo night should help others see the importance of connecting with the millennial age group at MBC and the community. Older adults in MBC will be encouraged to be a part of these activities as they can help grow the church and impact the community directly.

Millennials at MBC have always been encouraged to bring their friends, family, and other young people to church. However, it has been a challenge to getting the millennials to come to church regularly. There has been a steady decrease in young people coming to MBC for years. The writer hopes to solve this problem with a slightly different approach.

There will be a month where the millennial age group will be encouraged to bring a friend to church each Sunday, and there will be prizes or something similar for the person who brings the most people to church. The purpose is to get the millennial age group more comfortable to bring friends and family to church from the community. This will help them realize how simple and impactful it can be to share the gospel and invite friends to church. There are millennials in the community who do not attend church or dropped out of going to church regularly for specific reasons. MBC's mission is to teach the members how to share the gospel and to reach out to this demographic. The church's primary mission supports this thesis project.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Intervention Design

The type of data that will be collected is qualitative. The activity that will be measured for change is how the leadership team is developing and if there is an increase of millennial age group each week. The purpose of the project's plan is to inform MBC on the lack of millennials, increase communication with the community/MBC, improve discipleship and leadership. The objective is to increase the number of the millennial age group (24-39 years old) at MBC by 20% in four weeks.

The people involved will be MBC, more specifically, senior adults, the children and youth pastor, the senior pastor, parents, youth to the 24-39-year-old age group, and any adults who want to be involved. All the activities will take place at MBC, and notes will be taken during each activity. There are various tasks listed below with steps and explanations of how the tasks strongly support the purpose and the objective.

Original Schedule/Timeline

It will start on February 9, 2020. During week one, the dates of the events will be arranged on the church calendar, and handout sheets will be given out for adults to sign up to be a part of the leadership team. This leadership team will be put in place to help improve leadership and discipleship in MBC. All of the supplies needed for the study will be purchased. Some of the supplies include pens and notebooks (to take notes for each activity) and informed consent forms for participants (does not need to be returned).

An announcement will be made of an upcoming meeting at both Sunday morning services about the signup sheet for the leadership team and the meeting for the study on increasing millennials at MBC. This task will keep MBC informed on how to be a part of the leadership team. The number of regular young adults, 24-39 years old, going to regular activities (worship service, events, and Sunday school) will be documented. The emails will be sent out about MBC activities to *The Goshen News*, information put on the MBC website, and other local places for people to read about the new MBC activities going on. This task will help increase communication with the community.

On week one, the supplies for the Bingo night (food, bingo sets, prizes, and decorations) will be purchased and brought to MBC. Also, any extra supplies and items that are needed for the *Operation Christmas Child* (OCC) boxes will be purchased. The children, youth, and young adults will be instructed to bring supplies for weeks previous for the OCC boxes.

During week one, there will be an announcement of “bring a friend to Sunday school” on those Sundays and see if the young adult group bring friends for the next three Sundays. There will be notes taken to see if that helped increase numbers over time. Taking notes will help discover if there is an increase in numbers. It will help establish if there is progress in reaching the objective. There will be visits and communication with people in this millennial age group through calls and emails. Doing so will help increase communication with the community.

A meeting will take place immediately after church (noon on February 16, 2020) about the study and how this study will help improve the millennials (24-39 years old). February 16, 2020, is the beginning of week two. Everyone will be at a table. Next, they will be asked if they have noticed a decrease in the millennial age group at MBC. Then, they will be asked why they think this is happening and if there is anything they think of that could fix it.

A handout will be given to inform everyone about the low number of millennials and with reasons of why it happened as well as ways to fix or lessen the problem. Information forms will be handed out for people to be a part of the study, and they do not need to be returned. The new activities and ideas will be announced in the hope of increasing discipleship and leadership through the new leadership team. Next, they will be asked to support these new activities and events. Lastly, they will be asked if they have any questions. The supplies for the Winter Festival will be purchased and brought to MBC. During week two, there will be the *Operation Christmas Child* packing party on February 18, 2020, from 6-7 pm for kids, older teens, and young adults to be a part of. The leadership team will also help with this event. There will be notes taken during this event.

During week three, there will be bingo on February 23, 2019, from 3-5 pm, and it will be another event that week for the youth and young adults to be a part of. This task of these activities will show how the leadership team is and the impact it has. There will be weekly activities, and they will be checked to see if the numbers are increasing, and there will be a continuation of making notes. This task will help to see if there is progress in reaching the objective.

This millennial group will be visited and communicated with through calls, emails, etc. There will be emails sent out about MBC activities to *The Goshen News*, new information will be put on the MBC website, and other local places for people to read about the new MBC activities going on. These tasks will help increase communication with the community.

During week four, there will be the Winter Festival on March 3, 2020, from 6-7 pm. This event, the leadership team will be a part of and so will this young people group in planning and leading each of the activities. The activities for the winter are face painting, cakewalk, winter

crafts, and games. An adult from the leadership team will be assigned to each activity. Notes will be taken during this event. This task will improve discipleship and leadership, as well as increase the number of the millennial age group (24-39 years old) at MBC.

At the end of week four, there will be a collection of all the numbers from Sunday school classes, worship services, and other planned events. All notes taken throughout the four-week study will be collected and reviewed. In the end, it will be determined how much the percentage of millennial age group (24-39 years old) increased over the study. During the whole study, there will be personal notes taken. The data will be collected from the study and will be analyzed by charts to determine results.

There were various age groups to pick for this study. There are various reasons why this age group was chosen. First, the researcher is a part of this age group and noticed there are few members who attend who are her age. Second, she also served as the MBC Children and Youth Pastor who noticed the lack of 24-39 years old in the three churches she has worked at and has noticed a recurring pattern with a lack of willingness to fix this issue. Third, this lack of millennial age group is the same issue in many churches, despite the size of the churches or location.

Also, the researcher wanted to learn more about why the millennial group was not attending to understand the problem better and to find new practical solutions. This age group was chosen in the hope of increasing awareness concerning the lack of this age group to those who may not be familiar with it. The millennial age group was picked for this study because she recognizes the significance of that demographic for the future of the church and how beneficial it would be to get this age group involved with regular church activities.

The researcher believed that this age group could be unintentionally overlooked in many churches, and the connection could be improved. Also, this age group has families and friends, who can be a part of church activities and give an opportunity to connect with new friends and the community. The millennial group was chosen for this study because they could bring more millennials to church and increase their voice and helpful ideas within the church that would be useful for everyone.

There are numerous reasons why these specific activities were selected for this study. There are general reasons and more particular reasons why these activities were chosen. One public reason for these activities is that they were practical and workable activities that can be carried out with little to few issues.

Another general reason these specific activities were picked is they were similar activities to what the researcher has done previously and knew how to plan them out ahead of time. A further general reason why these specific activities were chosen is they were planned and designed with little known issues or confusion by the participants. Another reason these activities were selected is they would show the participation, and it would not be difficult to journal to record how each event went. A final general reason why these activities were picked is that they were manageable and not complicated.

However, there are more specific reasons why each activity was chosen for this study. The *Operation Christmas Child* packing party was selected for several reasons. First, MBC Children and Youth Pastor grew up with packing boxes each year with her family and church since she was a child and understood this ministry's importance. Second, has been famous for participation at MBC for all ages, from young children to adults. Third, it was planned during the year when the church would start collecting items for OCC.

The OCC packing party was selected as one of the activities for this study because children learn how important it is to be a part of it, giving to those in need and sharing the gospel with those who do not know God. This activity was picked because the kids and youth look forward to packing the boxes each year. The kids, youth, and even adults get their families and friends involved with purchasing and packing the boxes. Each year, this activity has been an opportunity to get everyone involved and those who may not be regular attendees.

This activity has allowed those to lead the activity and those to be leaders in helping/guiding. The leadership team was supposed to help with this activity and would have given the millennial age group a crucial opportunity. It does not require experience or knowledge to be a part of the leadership team, but a willingness to help and be involved with it.

This specific activity was picked because the millennial age group is very familiar with *Operation Christmas Child*. Many grew up shopping with their family members for the items and packing the boxes with their family and friends. This activity has been very successful in the past and the present, so it was assumed that it would be successful in being one of the activities for this study. Last year for vacation Bible school, MBC raised money for OCC, and many of the parents and helpers who did not know about OCC became aware of what OCC is and the impact it makes throughout the world.

The next activity that was chosen for this study was the Winter Festival. This activity was selected for multiple reasons. Each October, MBC has the Harvest Festival, and it is always very successful. It is successful because of the large turnout and the community being a part of the festival. The Harvest Festival is a popular and influential event, and having another celebration could have the same result.

This activity was picked because it is a kind of fun activity for all ages and often brings in those people outside of the church or those who may be members but do not attend regularly. The Winter Festival was selected as one of the activities for this study because it allows pastors and church members to reach out to new people in a casual and fun setting. This activity was picked because the millennial group would be willing to help and be assigned to specific activities because they knew their children, families, and friends would come.

The setting for this activity would be ideal for inviting friends, as it may be a first step in getting them to be a part of church activities and services. During the winter, especially after the holidays, there may not be a lot for people to do; therefore, this activity would not conflict or compete with other activities. A festival during that time would be ideal. This activity was picked because the millennial age group enjoys going to festivals and similar types of activities. The researcher has enjoyed going to festivals and was aware that the millennial age group's friends and family would enjoy going to festivals as well.

The third activity that was chosen for this study was Bingo Night. This activity was selected for several reasons. This activity was picked because it has been successful at MBC. There was a large turnout, and several people stated they wanted to have another bingo night soon. This activity was chosen because people generally know how to play bingo, and it is a simple game. This activity was picked because bingo typically included food and prizes, which attracted people to play bingo.

This activity provided an opportunity to invite and bring those who do not regularly attend and those who have not attended church. Bingo was also a flexible activity because the time it is played can be shortened or lengthened depending on the number of people attending, the prizes, and the willingness to play. Bingo was also well-liked by all ages, not just a specific

age group. Bingo was available online, and it was an ideal activity that was easy to play over Skype during the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

The study's fourth activity was bringing a friend to Sunday school every Sunday for the 4-week study. This activity was picked for numerous reasons. The researcher has been a firm believer that Sunday school is crucial for learning about the gospel and God. Many people decide to follow Christ during Sunday school, which is one of the reasons it is essential. This activity has been an opportunity for the millennial age group to bring a friend to church, and it is easy to encourage them.

The 4-week activity was chosen for this study because it provided four opportunities for this millennial age group to bring friends. It would be different from the other activities planned for one day and for about one hour, where this activity has been scheduled for one hour for four consecutive Sundays. The activity has been designed to show this millennial age group that there are endless opportunities to bring friends to church and be aware of the impact they can make. This activity was designed to show that their choices matter and make a difference in another person's life by bringing them to church.

The fifth activity for the study was to be a part of the leadership team. This activity was chosen because it would give this millennial age group a vital role and reason to be apart of church activities and services. The leadership team would benefit the members of the team, the church, and the community. This activity would provide helpers for other activities, and it will give the millennial age group a reason to be deeply involved in regular church activities. The activity was chosen for this study due to its crucial role in developing young church leaders for the future. This would also allow millennials to guide and give ideas and their input for other activities.

There are reasons why a questionnaire was chosen. The first reason is it should allow MBC Children and Youth Pastor to ask specific questions on what she needs information. The second reason is it should leave the answer open for them to state what they think instead of picking a solution. A questionnaire was chosen because their opinion and answers are valued and considered to be very important.

A short questionnaire was designed to obtain information for this study. A questionnaire is usually not difficult to analyze and easy to understand. It should take a minimal amount of time for the participants to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous; therefore, the participants should feel safe and secure about filling the questionnaire to fill out the questionnaire. The participants are more likely to be honest, because names are not requested on the questionnaire. The researcher is a part of this age group and is curious about learning what other millennials think about the dwindling or low numbers of millennials in MBC. A questionnaire would reveal the participants' opinions on the matter.

The five questions in the questionnaire began with the awareness of the problem MBC was facing. The first question was, "Do you notice a lack of millennials (ages 24-39) at MBC?" The researcher wanted to see if they noticed the lack of millennials at MBC or that they may not be aware.

The second question was open-ended, "What previous efforts have you seen to increase millennials at MBC?" The problem may produce various answers, or there may be similar answers, but the researcher also hopes to find out about previous activities before she started working at MBC. There may be different opinions and thoughts on how and last actions, along with some indication of those activities' efficacy.

The third question was, “Why do you believe some millennials are not in church?” There may be various answers, or there may be similar to the reasons found in numerous books throughout the reading and the research process. The participants' truthful opinions will be beneficial since they are part of this age group. This millennial group may have new reasons why other 24-39-year-olds are not going to church. This question may be one of the most important questions because it may reveal reasons and thoughts that the researcher may not be aware of. The participants may mention some fixable and unfixable reasons for the decline, so the next question is designed to address that concern.

The fourth question was, “What are your ideas on how to fix this problem of lack of millennials at MBC?” This question was left open in the hope that they may have new ideas or valuable inputs. They may share examples or explain situations. This specific question was asked because it highlights the importance of getting the millennial group back into the church. They may have new ideas that were not written in the books.

The fifth question was, “Would you like to be part of a leadership team to help resolve this issue of lack of millennials at MBC?” There may be some people who want to be involved and others who may not. There may be a question or two about joining this team. This question was asked to see who is willing to recognize the issue and be part of the resolution. This question was chosen to see if this leadership team is something people would be interested in or not.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

There are specific ways of how the observation will be done. There will be the writer's observation, an outsider's observation, and the insider's observation. Each one of these observations will give a view of the comment for this study. The outside expert will be Reggie

Weems, DMin (Pastoral Leadership and Church Management, and, Ph.D. (Historical Theology).

The inside experts will be the participants from the study.

The questionnaire will be given to all seven participants for them to fill out and will be returned. There may be common answers by participants, and these will be called themes.

However, there may be different answers, and these will be called slippage. There may or may not be a reality known by the writer that the participants do not cover.

The processes of this study will be discussed in detail. There is qualitative data, which is age, ethnic background, gender, and years of experience. The age group that this study is focused on is the millennial age group of 24-39-year-olds. This age was chosen because this age group has a low number of regular church services and activities. The researcher is a part of this age group. This age group has a low number compared to other age groups at MBC and has not increased over time. The millennial age group was chosen to understand better why there is a lack of them in churches. The researcher wants to learn how to fix the issue.

The ethnic background of MBC is White, African American, and Hispanic. However, the ethnic background of this millennial age group of 24-39-year-olds is White. There are only seven people who are a part of this millennial age group. The number is a factor of why the ethnic background of this age group is not diverse. If it were a larger number of people, then the ethnic background of this particular group would most likely vary.

For this study, both genders took part. This millennial group consists of 4 females and three males. It is a small group of people; however, it is about half of each. If the study were to be bigger, the number of each gender could vary. The number of males or females could have impacted the study results and the amount of participation in each event/activity for this study.

Modified Intervention

The intervention was well designed with details of the activities and what each week of the study entailed. Every week of the survey covered all of the details of the activities, and each activity was initially planned out to measure the amount of participation and growth. One of the issues with this study was it was planned for a time before the COVID-19 pandemic, which was very different in many aspects. The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted daily life as well as church life. This study was designed for a standard time when the effects of the virus did not exist.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a considerable influence on the entire study, from how the intervention design was carried out to the study results. There are a few things that could have been done differently. One of the things that could have been done differently was to add more activities to the study. If more activities were added, it could have helped with participation and increased numbers for the task. The study results could have been different if there were more activities added, or they could have been the same. If the study had more activities, there could have been more opportunities to influence and communicate with this age group.

One other thing that could have been done differently is that the activities could have been held at different times or days. The selected day and time were factors determining the participants in the activities. There could have been participants who had to work during that specific time frame of the event or had something else going on. An unexpected event or circumstance could have been the result of a lack of participation.

The event called Bingo Night was close to Memorial Day, which could have been why the lack of turnout for this specific event. This millennial age group enjoys spending time with friends and family during the holiday. Also, the participants may have been on vacation during

this time of the event or had other responsibilities that may have resulted in them not participating in the activities. This millennial group may have simply forgotten even with reminders each week. The starting date of the study could not be changed for the task. However, This would have given more flexible options for activities ahead of time, instead of altering the original exercises.

If there were two intervention designs planned out ahead of time, it would given opportunity and add in extra activities that would work better in specific situations. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic was not predictable, and the likelihood of this kind of situation happening was unknown. During each week of the study, the rules and conditions could have changed even during the COVID-19 pandemic, and even if a plan B could be made for the intervention design, it is unknown what the regulations and laws could be ahead of time. It was difficult to plan activities and a study with all potential situations and new variables in mind.

One of the outcomes from implementing the intervention design is that it was inconclusive and cannot be carried out as effectively during a COVID-19 pandemic. It was inconclusive for several specific reasons. First, there could be more research done. It could have been more beneficial to get a more significant study sample. If there were a bigger study sample, there could be increased participation, leading to more results and more information for the study to analyze.

If someone else or the MBC Children and Youth Pastor were to carry out this study again, there could be new methods of getting a larger group of participants. There could be different ways of recruiting people to participate. There could be flyers put around the church, a presentation given during a meeting or a service, or special announcements to get more people

interested in participating in the study. Also, there could be rewards like gift cards to get people interested in participating in the study.

If this study were to be carried out by another person, there would be a recommendation of not having it during the COVID-19 pandemic. It could be delayed until a later date. It would be advised to avoid starting the study during an outbreak due to the unknown issues that may rise during the process. A reason for not studying during an pandemic is that certain activities would have to be either altered to fit the situation or cancelled due to the activity being impossible to do.

There was a specific issue of being able to see weekly changes in numbers in participation. Since there were fewer activities for the study, there were fewer chances of participation. There were several activities planned for the intervention design that could not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these activities were the recruitment meeting, bringing a friend to Sunday school, Winter Festival, and the OCC packing party in person. If these activities were not cancelled, they would have had a more influential impact and even increased the participation in the study.

If this study were to be carried out again, it would be recommended to pick two age groups or widen the age group to increase the probability of participating in the study. There was a lack of participation due to uncontrolled factors. In the new study, it would be advisable to pick a different setting or carry out this study in two churches simultaneously. It is a possibility that this study may be more comfortable to be done in specific settings than others. Also, the location may play a large role. For example, a church in a largely populated area and with a larger church population may impact the amount of participation and processes.

The time of the year may have also played a role in the lack of participation in the activities. In the spring, most people are outside and willing to participate in activities, but the COVID-19 pandemic kept people from participating. There was also an issue of communication from the participants, which was likely from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people were afraid to go outside and be around other people. The participants asked to be a part of the study may not have viewed it as vital as it should be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on lives and jobs.

The main issue of the study was not being able to use the original intervention design. It had to be modified to function during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic made certain activities impossible; therefore, the activities had to be cancelled. If the intervention design were used, then the study would have had a different outcome and results.

There were various questions designed for the questionnaire during this study by the researcher. There were no similarities, and there were no differences in the answers to the questionnaires from the questionnaires since none returned. The questionnaires' purpose is to see if they noticed the millennial age group's lack of MBC and get their opinions. The researcher also wanted to know if people were interested in starting a leadership team, even beginning with a few people. The participants' views and responses to the questions would be extremely beneficial as they would show the importance of getting more of the millennial age group back in church. The researcher expected to see similar answers in why millennials were not in churches when the questionnaires were filled out.

There were seven questionnaires mailed out due to the COVID-19 pandemic and they were to be mailed or emailed back. Unfortunately, no questionnaires were returned. This pandemic has changed many things about this study. The questionnaires were initially supposed

to be filled out in person and given back to the researcher. The questionnaires went from being given out in person to being mailed to participants. The issue with the questionnaire being sent is that it is less motivating than it would be in person to complete. The participants could get busy, lose it, or forget to turn it in, even if they are reminded. It is easier to fill them out in person, but not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership Training for the Team

There are concepts discussed in the review of the literature section. The ideas are viewed similarly and differently between the leadership (MBC Children and Youth Pastor) and the followership (participants). There are concepts that the administration and followership consider the same, which are the gospel and ethnicity, the mirror of God, redeemed and restored comfort or the cross, and obedience. Leadership and followership have the same view of these concepts. Both view these concepts as necessary and crucial to being a Christian.

However, some concepts are viewed quite differently by the leaders and followers. The first concept they view differently is a lack of discipleship; leadership may be quick to notice this. However, followers may not. The second concept they view differently was Christ and the church. This was because followers learn about what it means and the importance and the leaders has to teach it and show the connection. The third concept they view differently was the generation gap because the followers has to see it and want to be part of the solution. The leaders had to address it and find practical solutions to the issue.

The fourth concept they view differently is developing and growing leadership because leadership has to strategize the process of achieving growth in direction. The followers had to learn about leadership and be a part of the process. There was a connection between the leaders

and the followers, as both are necessary to the church's health, especially when resolving issues or improving situations.

A journal was provided specifically for this research project. The journal's purpose was a notebook for the writer to take notes and details/methodology of the study. There were notes taken during each of the week of the study. The writer also took notes after each specific activity to show the intervention design's importance and details. The intervention design was altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each week of the study and activities were modified to carry out as much of the original intervention design possible. The activities were adapted with the understanding that the alteration may negatively or positively impact the study. However, specific activities were not able to occur due to the COVID-19 pandemic like “bring your friend to Sunday school,” meetings, and the Winter Festival. The particular details of each week of the four-week study will be explained in detail.

Modified Schedule/Timeline

During the first week, all of the seven participants received all the information in the mail about the study and its relevance. Each participant received multiple letters, information about the study, a bingo card, and a questionnaire in each envelope. This information, letter, etc., were supposed to be given out during a meeting, but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this from occurring.

There were no activities held in the first week due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The “bring your friend to Sunday school” activity was not possible as churches could not have Sunday school and regular church services during the shutdown. There were no emails sent out to *The Goshen News* or anywhere else due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the first week. At

this point, there could not be any events or activities held during this time. Also, several of the activities had to be altered to function during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bingo night and *Operation Christmas Child* packing party had to be changed in this study.

Modified Activities and Instruments

Two activities required buying supplies, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the supplies were no longer necessary. No supplies were purchased for Bingo night or *Operation Christmas Child* packing party. During the first week, there were supposed to be visits and communication with people in this millennial group through calls, emails, etc. This task was intended to help increase communication with the community; however, there could not be any visits. There was only limited communication (only with participants, not the organization) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During week two, there was a box that had been set inside a drop off box for *Operation Christmas Child* items. There was also a text message reminder sent out to all of the participants at the beginning of the week about the OCC drop off box for items. However, no response from any of the study participants, and the Winter Festival supplies were not purchased because it was cancelled.

The leadership team was supposed to help with the OCC packing party but could not due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The activity called “bring your friend to Sunday school” was not able to occur due to churches not having Sunday school and regular church services. On Tuesday of week two, the writer checked the *Operation Christmas Child* drop-off box, and it had no items. At the end of the week, there were no items in the drop off box for the activity. There were possible reasons why this happened. The writer wrote some of the possible reasons why

this happened, among these are the COVID-19 pandemic and a small study sample or other unknown reasons. There were no questionnaires turned in during this week.

During week three, there were no emails sent out about MBC activities to *The Goshen News*; new information should have been put on the MBC website and other local places for people to read about the new MBC activities going on. These tasks were planned and intended to increase communication with the community; however, they could not be sent out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a text message reminder sent out to all of the participants about the Bingo night activity on Friday, May 29, 2020, at 7 pm online. There were no responses back from the participants, as noted. During week three, the “bring your friend to Sunday school” activity was cancelled as the churches were still not able to have Sunday school and regular church services.

The Bingo night activity occurred as scheduled, but none of the participants turned up for it. There were possible reasons why this happened. The researcher had noted that the non-attendance could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic disruption, the Memorial Day holiday, and the small size of the millennial team. Due to the loss of communication, there was no way to ascertain the actual reason, which may be a combination of all the above and some other undetermined reasons. There were no questionnaires sent out in week one that was turned in during this week.

During week four of the study, there were no activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were also no questionnaires mailed or returned to the office in the final week. There was no development of a leadership team as there was no known interest in the participants to be a part of this team. There was no communication from the participants during this week.

The researcher noted some of the possible reasons why this happened, which were the COVID-19 pandemic and a small study sample or other unknown reasons. The Winter Festival was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The leadership team was supposed to help with the Winter Festival but could not due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The activity called “bring your friend to Sunday school” was not able to occur due to churches not having Sunday school and regular church services.

There were no trained observers during this study. The journal had all of the observation notes throughout each week of the four-week study. There were specific reasons why there were no trained observers for this research project. The first reason there were no trained observers for this study is it was not essential. It was a tiny study sample for this study, and the writer could do observation.

It may be necessary to have trained observers in a different setting because of a larger study sample. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the activities had to be either altered or cancelled. One activity was the OCC drop off box for items, and the second activity was online. There could not have been a trained observer since the activities were not held in a single location at a specific time. The questionnaires were supposed to be filled out and sent in.

There were no themes identified during this study. The questionnaire was given to each participant during the study. The questionnaire was supposed to be filled out in person and given back to the writer. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaires had to be mailed out, and then the participants had to mail it back or return it. The writer was supposed to find themes from the answers given by the participants.

There were no themes able to be identified. There were various possible reasons as to why the questionnaires were not filled out. Some of these possibilities were the COVID-19 pandemic, the small sample study, the active participation, or other unknown reasons.

There was not any slippage from this research project to report. The questionnaire was supposed to be filled out in person and given back to the writer. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaires had to be mailed out, and then the participants had to mail it back or return it. The writer was supposed to find different answers, and then they could have been compared.

There were no slippage identified from the questionnaires, as they were not returned. There were various possible reasons as to why the questionnaires were not filled out. Some of these possible reasons were again the COVID-19 pandemic, small sample study, loss of the questionnaire, or other unknown reasons. Silence in the data could not be identified, as there were no answers to compare, as none of the questionnaires were returned to the writer. There was no recognized truth by the writer that the participants' responses do not cover. If the questionnaires were returned and filled out, then the themes, slippage, silence in data could be determined.

Chapter 4: Results

Delays

The researcher worked with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from November 2, 2019, to April 21, 2020. The proposed date for the study was supposed to be February 9, 2020. She was waiting on IRB approval to start the research and did not receive support until April 21, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and the delayed approval from IRB had dramatically altered the research and findings of this study in various ways. The study was delayed due to waiting for IRB approval and other administrative-related paperwork. The investigation began on May 11, 2020, and ended on June 7, 2020. Several planned activities were impossible and had to be cancelled; therefore, impacted the results and the response from those asked to participate in the study.

COVID-19 Pandemic Disruption

Next, there will be information about the COVID-19 pandemic and where it started. Also, it will be stated how it has affected participants' daily lives in this study and church life in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control website, the first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States was February 2020. According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) website, COVID pandemic began in Wuhan Province, China, in December 2019.¹³² The VDH explained how it is a respiratory disease, and there are no known treatments.¹³³ The VDH emphasized how contagious and recommended people to be six feet separated from each other.¹³⁴ The VDH mentioned how the virus could come through a person's

¹³² Origin," Virginia Department of Health, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://vdh.jebbit.com/txol4lp?L=Owned+Web&JC=Understanding+the+Disease>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ "How It Spreads," Virginia Department of Health, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://vdh.jebbit.com/xhocspow?L=Owned+Web&JC=Origin>.

mouth or nose and eventually go to the lungs.¹³⁵ There is additional fear or risk for those who are elderly, in nursing homes, with lower immune systems or other health issues having a high probability of getting COVID-19.¹³⁶

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia website for Governor Northam, March 31, 2020, schools were shut down for the rest of the school year with a “stay at home” order.¹³⁷ Governor Northam stated there could not be groups of more than ten people, colleges had to go online, and non-essential businesses, campgrounds, beaches, etc., were closed until June 10, 2020, to keep the numbers of COVID-19 down.¹³⁸ This “stay at home” order meant churches were no longer able to have church services unless they included fewer than 11 people.¹³⁹ Churches were forced to no longer have regular church activities or services due to the Virginia Governor's executive orders.¹⁴⁰

Churches had to have their Bible studies and worship services online. Churches had to become creative on how to communicate and connect with their congregations. They began looking for ideas and help on how to do this. However, certain activities became impossible to do in-person, and plans had to be postponed, cancelled, or changed. There were various activities for this study at MBC that would no longer be possible due to this virus and executive orders.

¹³⁵ “How It Spreads,” Virginia Department of Health, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://vdh.jebbit.com/xhocspow?L=Owned+Web&JC=Origin>.

¹³⁶ “Higher Risk of Severe Illness,” Virginia Department of Health, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://vdh.jebbit.com/ws92tq24?draft=true.72>

¹³⁷ “Governor Northam Issues Statewide Stay at Home Order,” A Commonwealth of Virginia Website, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/march/headline-855702-en.html>.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Project Outcomes

The first activity that had to be cancelled was the meeting at the beginning of the study to meet the study's possible participants. All of the paperwork, letters, questionnaires, and bingo cards had to be mailed to the participants' homes. The second activity that could not occur during the study was the "bringing a friend to church" day. During the four Sundays, there were no regular church services, so this activity was impossible to host.

The third activity that was not able to happen was the Winter Festival. It was not possible to have any gathering of over ten people. The festival would have been over that amount of people for those involved in helping and participating. Some activities were able to happen still but had to be altered due to the "stay at home" order. The OCC packing party was not able to happen in-person. There was an OCC drop off box for items during week two. It made it possible for participants to participate safely in the activity. There were 0 items.

The bingo night had to go from in-person to an event online through Skype on May 29, 2020. There were 0 participants as part of this activity. There were no emails and communication sent out due to the event being online and limited access. The contact with the participants was through the mail, email, Skype, or by phone, and in-person communication was not possible, which directly impacted the study.

During the first week, there were supposed to be visits and communication with people in this millennial group through calls, emails, etc. This task was intended to help increase communication with the community; however, there could not be any visits. There was only limited communication (only with participants, not the community) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During week two, there was a box that had been set inside a drop off box for OCC items. There was also a text message reminder sent out to all of the participants at the beginning of the week about the OCC drop off box for items. However, there was no response from any of the participants of the study. Due to the event being cancelled, the supplies for the Winter Festival was not purchased.

The leadership team was supposed to help with the OCC packing party but could not due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The activity called “bring your friend to Sunday school” was not able to occur due to churches not having Sunday school and regular church services. On Tuesday of week two, the writer checked the OCC drop-off box, and it had no items. At the end of the week, there were no items in the drop off box for the activity. There were possible reasons why this happened. The writer wrote some of the possible reasons why this happened, which were the COVID-19 pandemic and a small study sample or other unknown reasons. There were no questionnaires turned in during this week.

During week three, there were no emails sent out about MBC activities to *The Goshen News*; new information should have been put on the MBC website and other local places for people to read about the new MBC activities going on. These tasks were planned and intended to increase communication with the community; however, they could not be sent out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a text message reminder sent out to all of the participants about the online Bingo night activity on Friday, May 29, 2020, at 7 pm. There were no responses back from the participants, as noted. During week three, the “bring your friend to Sunday school” activity was cancelled as the churches were still not able to have Sunday school and regular church services.

The Bingo night activity occurred as scheduled, but none of the participants turned up for it. There were possible reasons why this happened. The researcher had noted that the non-attendance could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic disruption, the Memorial Day holiday, and the small size of the millennial team. Due to the loss of communication, there was no way to ascertain the actual reason, which may be a combination of all the above and some other undetermined reasons. There were no questionnaires sent out in week one that was turned in during this week.

During week four of the study, there were no activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were also no questionnaires mailed or returned to the office in the final week. There was no development of a leadership team as there was no known interest in the participants to be a part of this team. There was no communication from the participants during this week.

Analysis of Results

One of the results is the increase in awareness of a lack of millennials at MBC. The second result is a low amount of people's willingness to participate in the activities of the study due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no increase in the millennial age group (24-39 years old), which resulted from this study. Another result was not an increase/improvement of discipleship and leadership development of the new leadership team, which came from the lack of participation in the study's activities. There is continuous communication with the community.

The intervention plan did not yield the expected results. The expected results were that there should be an increase of millennials (24-39 years old) at MBC by 20% over four weeks. There was not an increase/improvement of discipleship and leadership. The unexpected results

were how little participation transpired and how the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted the study. This divergence was not a result of poor design.

Each week was planned out with activities and instructions step by step. If this study occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic, then the results would probably have been different. There were specific details and practical planning in place for the course, but the unexpected effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had negative and dramatic results. There were no large gatherings allowed, and some people were afraid to leave their houses.

The Internet connection in Gordonsville sometimes does not work, impacting people getting on Skype for the bingo night. It was not a faulty implementation. There were outside circumstances that made the results different than expected. The study could not be carried out as it was designed with all the activities, thereby making it difficult or impossible to reach the 20% increase of millennials (24-39 years old) at MBC and the other expected results from the leadership development. The lack of in-person activities made it difficult to increase numbers because they could not bring friends to those activities.

There were only seven possible participants for this study at MBC. In the end, the number of participants that participated in the OCC drop off box was 0. The number of participants that participated in the Bingo night was 0. None of the participants filled out and returned/mailed the questionnaires back to the researcher. The participation was tracked by the number of items in the OCC drop off box, Bingo night, and the questionnaires returned.

It has been more challenging to determine the number of participants since it was not in-person as the study was designed. If all the activities had been carried out as the intervention design intended, the results could have differed. Also, the intervention design was to collect information about numbers and the consequences of each event. There were only two activities.

They were activities that had to be altered to have negatively impacted the number of participants in the activities for the study and the results.

There were results in addressing this problem. The response to the issue helped raise more awareness about how few millennial age group attend MBC regularly and urgently fix it. Another result from addressing this problem is that this is a universal problem with many churches, big and small. This problem was not a problem that would be solved overnight or fixed by a few activities. It could require months or even years of effort to see this age group grow significantly.

This issue is something churches should always be actively working on and keeping in mind. There should be regular activities and events to engage this age group. Addressing this problem made the MBC Children and Youth Pastor more aware of how there is always room for improvement and opportunities to get millennials involved with the church activities. The baseline was the number of participants that the study started with at the beginning. This research project's baseline is seven participants, the millennial age group between the age of 24-39 years old.

There was no leadership team developed during this study, and in the intervention design, the leadership team was supposed to help and lead the OCC packing party and the Winter Festival. There were no questionnaires returned or mailed back to the writer. There was no communication before from the participants, possibly because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a small study sample or other unknown reasons. There were seven participants at the beginning of the study, which ended with 0 participants.

There was constant communication on the writer's side throughout the study with the participants. However, there was not any communication from the seven participants to the

writer during this four-week study. They did not reach out to the writer before the research started or after it ended. There were no known reasons directly from participants about why they did not participate in this research project. The participants' lack of participation was likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it has had on daily life.

It possible the participants did not participate in this study for other unknown reasons. Other possible reasons why a participant may not have been able to participate is the lack of internet capabilities or fear of leaving their house due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They may have had simply forgotten about it or had vacation plans during one of the activities as one of the activities was close to the Memorial Day holiday. The participants may have had other activities planned during one of the activities. It could have been a combination of different reasons why the millennial age participants did not choose to participate in the activities for this study.

This study's lack of participation is mainly due to the inability to carry out the original intervention design. The reason as to why the intervention design could not be carried out was the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention design for this study was planned out several months before the COVID-19 pandemic had begun. The only way for the original design and the survey to be carried out successfully would be in a familiar world before or after the COVID-19 pandemic. Otherwise, there need to be two intervention designs.

One intervention design would be for an ordinary world without a pandemic. The second intervention design would have specific activities that would function well in a world during an outbreak, like online events that people would enjoy. If the intervention plan was carried out how it was initially designed, then the results could have been very different. There would have been more activities for the millennial age group to attend and would increase the participants' probability to participate in the activities for the study. However, this is an assumption based on

the results of this study. If there were activities every week as the intervention design was planned, there would be consistency and willingness to be involved in the research study activities. If the intervention plan were carried out how it was initially designed, there would be more of an ability to reach out to the community and increase the millennial age group at MBC.

The original intervention plan would have had the crucial face-to-face interaction. Face-to-face interaction plays an essential role in any study, regardless of size or location. The lack of personal commitment has played a significant role in the absence of participation. This millennial age group may require more face-to-face interaction than other age groups.

The personal interaction would have a more significant influence on people participating and bringing friends to the activities. The face-to-face interaction would have influence the participants to fill out the study questionnaire and turn it in. The personal interaction would only increase the chances of participating and reaching the 20% increase in the millennial age group at MBC. The original intervention plan would have allowed this millennial age group to help and lead the activities.

If the activities were in-person, the participants would have seen the opportunity and had the willingness to be a part of the leadership team. The study's interaction would have encouraged them to know the importance of growing this millennial age group of 24-39 years old at MBC. It is likely that if the original intervention design were carried out, then there would have been more participation, which would have led to an increase in numbers. The actual intervention design had consistency, and for a study to become successful, it requires consistency of activities. The main two reasons for this study's results are the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of face-to-face interaction for the activities. The combination of the two has resulted in a lack of participation.

Before the study began, there were specific limitations that were identified. Some of the regulations were broad, and others were very specific to this study. One of the known limitations were all of the other topics had been rejected, and one had been chosen. There has been a selected convenient sample; it will be the 24-39 year-old age group at MBC. A random selection was not selected, which would have been much more complicated and not convenient. There was the option to pick a group from another church or elsewhere; however, it would be harder to learn about the situation, numbers, and crucial information. This study has excluded all of the other ages.

There was an analysis of data, which had its known limitations and self-reporting. There could have been an error in the process during the data analysis, and outliers were omitted. There could have been a limitation in some of the documents needed for this study. However, the researcher saw this group of people certain times a week, so time was designed to be a limitation. The amount of time per week was seen as limited for this study as this group meets once during the week on Thursdays and Sundays. A millennial-aged person could have chosen to drop out and not participate in activities or move away. Also, during this study, people's reaction cannot be controlled nor their willingness to participate.

Analysis of Limitations

The limitations listed were some of the study's known limitations before the study began and before the COVID-19 pandemic. These were the potential limitations for this study and may have been the only limitations before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some of the research project's limitations have remained the same, but some restrictions have changed. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed some of the impediments to this study, which may have expanded the number of limitations.

Altered Limitations

The limitations that have changed during this study will be discussed first. A rule that has changed was the amount of time per week was seen as limited for this study as this group meets or interacts with each other once during the week on Thursdays and Sundays. This particular limitation has changed during this study due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This group went from meeting/face-to-face interacting twice a week at MBC to not at all during each week of this four-week study.

This changed limitation was due to the inability of churches to meet in groups, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. How this study ended and changed could not in any way, be predicted ahead of time. The limitations were known before the research and before the COVID-19 pandemic had even begun. This limitation was not accounted for, nor was it even likely that it would change in this way, delimiting the study and had a considerable influence on the final results. The face-to-face interaction has proven to be necessary for this particular study to reach the 20% increase of the MBC millennial age group, which did not happen.

This changed limitation has resulted in a lack of participation for the participants in the activities. If the restriction had not changed in this way, it might have caused different results. One of these results could have been the participation of the participants in the activities for this study. When this limitation changed, it had an unexpected impact on this study's results and may have been a determining factor of participation for the 24-39-year-old millennial age group.

New Limitations

There were new limitations that were apparently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these further limitations for this study was the amount and type of communication/face-to-face interaction between the participants and the writer and the participants' face-to-face interactions.

There could not be any activities for groups at MBC due to the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, the writer and the participants' communication changed.

The communication was limited among the participants because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The communication could no longer be in person, which meant no meetings, announcements, conversations in person, and no study activities in person. The communication was over text messages, and the rest of the contact had to be through the mail. There were letters, forms, bingo cards, and questionnaires mailed to this MBC millennial age group participants. The amount of face-to-face interaction between the participants and the researcher has changed as it was eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount of face-to-face interaction among the participants was also eliminated.

Another new limitation for this study was no longer having the activities in person. All of the activities were either modified or cancelled. The “bring your friend to Sunday school” and the Winter Festival events were cancelled. The *Operation Christmas Child* packing party was changed to using an OCC drop-off box for items. The questionnaire forms had gone from in-person to being mailed, and the Bingo night went from being in-person to online.

The new limitation of no longer having the study activities in person has added a new factor of difficulty in reaching the goal of a 20% increase of the MBC millennial age group over four weeks. There were no longer activities in person at all or during each week, which meant there could not be other friends and family attending this event in person. Also, this new limitation of not having the activities in person led to a lack of consistent motivation in being a part of the research project's activities. This further limitation could allow other issues to occur or impact the study that may not have been there before. This new limitation ended up being one

of the most significant rules for this study and caused a lack of participation by the participants; therefore, impacting the overall result significantly.

Another new limitation was the lack of connection with the community during this study. The lack of relationship with the community was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to have events or activities with large groups of people. There were no emails sent out about MBC activities to *The Goshen News*; new information should have been put on the MBC website and other local places to read about the new MBC activities. These tasks were planned and intended to increase communication with the community; however, they could not be sent out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of connection with the community was a factor in the absence of participation in the study as well as reaching the increase of the millennial age group by 20% in four weeks.

Unaltered Limitations

Next, the limitations that did not change for the study will be mentioned. A regulation that has not changed was all of the other topics had been rejected, and one had been chosen. This limitation could not be changed. A convenient sample was selected; it was the 24-39 year old age group at MBC. This particular limitation could not be changed as it was chosen as the age group for the study.

A random sample was not chosen, which would have been much more complicated and not convenient. There was the option to pick a group from another church or elsewhere; however, it would be harder to learn about the situation, numbers, and crucial information. This study has excluded all of the other ages. This limitation for this research study could not be changed or altered in any way.

For this study, there was an analysis of data, which had its known limitations and self-reporting. The restriction of self-reporting and analyzing data was a limitation for this study, and it could be for any survey. During this study and analyzing data, there could have been an error in the process where something could have been left out. There could have been a limitation in some of the documents needed for this study. Also, there could have been other helpful books and other resources to contribute or strengthen the research. A millennial-aged person could have chosen to drop out and not participate in activities or move away. This limitation remained to be one of the main limitations of this study.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a lack of participation and a lack of face-to-face interaction, which ultimately resulted in not reaching the 20% increase of the MBC millennial age group in four weeks. Also, during this study, people's reactions cannot be controlled, and their willingness to participate. In this study and any study, the participants' willingness and response in the survey cannot be influenced, but they can only be encouraged or reminded. There were many limitations to this study.

There were some limitations of the study that changed, while others remained the same. There were a few new limitations that were raised and explained in detail. There may be other limitations to this study that the participants may be aware of. Also, it is plausible that there may be limitations that the research is not aware of.

Analysis of COVID-19 Pandemic Disruption

There are various lessons learned from the disruption. The first lesson was to always to have a secondary intervention plan for emergencies for example, like a pandemic. The second lesson learned was that studies can be unpredictable, and so are the outcomes/results of them. The third lesson learned from the disruption was that there may be unexpected events, but some

may have more of a severe effect than others. The fourth lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, was that it was only part of the reason why this study was not successful in reaching the goal of increased millennial age group attendance by 20%.

The COVID-19 pandemic had directly impacted this study in various ways. It had affected the intervention design, the participants' participation, and the results of the investigation. There are many known and unknown ways the COVID-19 pandemic had influenced this study. There was not any research on how worldwide pandemic affect studies. The writer had difficulty planning and figuring out how to make this study work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was and is very little information on any studies during a pandemic. There were no ideas on investigating a pandemic and examples of how to alter it to make it work. It is known that outbreaks are rare, and there is not much to go on. Since pandemics are so occasional, there were few resources and situations of how a study would function in a 2020 society. This study has shown that it is improbable and even impossible to carry out successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The writer could not find information or a manual on how to alter a study to be successful and impactful during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention plan could not be carried out as planned as it was designed for everyday life without a pandemic. Therefore, the intervention plan had to be changed to function during the time of a pandemic. The writer has discovered that it may be beneficial for future research to be done with two plans in mind.

One intervention design would be created for normal circumstances, and the second intervention plan life and ministry during a pandemic. The first intervention plan could have normal in-person activities and events. The second intervention plan could have online activities

and other methods to make the study work during a pandemic. The writer could not find any information on which activities may be more successful than others.

There were very little in academic research on how to handle the new limitations and how or why they occur. After looking online, the writer has found no information on any kind of recommendation for a study during the COVID-19 pandemic. The writer could not find any guidance on what works and what would not work for a study during the COVID-19 pandemic. If there were other examples of studies, then it would be beneficial for future research. This author could not find any information about studies that have taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic and what the various factors might be with regard to such a scenario. If such studies did exist, they could be compared and contrasted with any ongoing study to analyze success and failure. These studies would be important, offering guidance and understanding for future projects undertaken during any circumstance like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of this study have shown that the pandemic had a large impact on this project. The lack of participation and face-to-face interaction had an influence on not reaching the 20% increase of the MBC millennial age group in four weeks. The results have led to known and unknown reasons for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is very little to understand since pandemics are rare; however, the writer would like to know how much does the COVID-19 pandemic influence participation. The questions raised from the results include the following: Does the COVID-19 pandemic effect part of the participants' participation or a majority of the participants' participation? Does it vary from study to study? How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced other studies? Were there studies that were successful or unsuccessful? Is there a pattern among those studies that were successful or unsuccessful?

Also, the results show that this study was not successful in reaching the 20% increase in the MBC millennial age group in four weeks. However, the writer would like to know if the time of the study during the pandemic affects the participation of the participants in this study. The writer believes that if it was done after the pandemic was over, then the intervention design could have been followed as planned. If the intervention design could have been followed as originally planned, then the participation would have most likely increased as expected. If there were participation of the participants in the events, then the results would have been very different. However, the writer does believe that there would be lower participation than if the study occurred before COVID-19. These are just predictions by the researcher of how the results would turn out if the research were done at different times, before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study results have shown this study cannot reach the 20% increase during the COVID-19 due to the virus and other related factors. The research has viewed the results from this study and raised the questions: Should studies be carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic? Should a review be delayed to a later date or continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic? The results have shown some insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic can impact a study.

There were many answers from this experience about how to carry out a study during the COVID-19 pandemic. There could be a secondary plan with workable options for activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, possibly events with minimal contact or no contact would work. After reflecting on how the study went and what did not work, there were multiple things that the researcher and writer would do differently. First, there would be more workable options for activities that would work during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The critical aspect is

finding and using effective ways of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. If the best forms of communication were discovered it should positively impact the study and the results. The support structure that would be put in place is effective communication and more activities in a COVID-19 pandemic environment.

This study has shown that it is difficult to during a COVID-19 pandemic. The results have also shown it is impossible to meet a 20% increase due to the lack of personal interaction and the virus. It is shown from these results that future research may require looking into other studies and resources to see if an investigation can be carried out successfully. Further studies may show it should be avoided entirely, while some may say it can be accomplished.

The results have raised more questions. The writer has seen the results and this led to the question, “What impact/role does the mental state of the participants influence the participation and the overall results of the study?” There is not any information on any studies and how the mental state of the participants during the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the results of the studies, positively or negatively. If there were more studies or information on the mental state of participants, then other studies could be compared to each other. The COVID-19 pandemic had directly impacted the participants’ mental state, as they may have not been as motivated to participate in the activities for this study. The COVID-19 pandemic could have contributed to mood changes and could have led to lack of motivation to participate in the activities for the study.

Monkey Survey for Participants

The researcher and writer of this study had become aware of the lack of participation and wanted to learn more of their thought/ideas as millennials. It was decided to introduce a monkey survey with various questions that would provide insight. The purpose of the monkey survey is

to gain a deeper understanding of the millennial generation and also how to improve religious or local church connection with this age group. This monkey survey consisted of a series of sixteen questions. These questions are designed specifically to learn more about the millennial age group and what they prefer. Seven surveys were sent and all of the seven of the surveys were returned back to the researcher. There were very detailed responses to the questions, and while few answers were not answered at all. The questions will be listed out one by one, with all of the answers listed after each question. Each of the surveys was randomly numbered, so it will show what each participant thought in an organized way.

The first question on the monkey survey was, “Literature suggests that a community-focused and service-based mindset attracts millennials to the local church. Do you or do you not agree with that assessment and why?” Participant #1 responded to question #1 and wrote: “I agree, millennials are very different and hands-on and want to change everything.” Participant #2 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “Yes, gets them to participate.” Participant #3 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “I do not agree with this assessment because millennials, that I have seen anyway, don’t care as much about ‘service’ or ‘community’ as they do themselves.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #1 for the monkey survey.) Participant #4 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “Yes, involvement in the community and serving others gives purpose.” Participant #5 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “Yes, gets them involved.” Participant #6 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “I agree with that assessment because I think the more engaging activities that a church holds, the more involvement people and interaction it will have.” Participant #7 responded back to question #1 and wrote: “I agree that community focused and service based mindset attracts millennials to

local churches. This is simply because individuals in today's society want to feel apart of a group and that specific services are directed at the church community as a whole." This concludes all of the answers for question #1 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The second question on the monkey survey was "What specific experiences have you previously enjoyed in a local church? Participant #1 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "I have grown up in a small Baptist church. We don't have a lot of members but I enjoy the family feeling. I love knowing everyone and helping in any way." Participant #2 responded back to question #2 and wrote, "music." Participant #3 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "I have enjoyed worship time and baptisms." Participant #4 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "Fun day (carnivals), backpack giveaway youth fundays."

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #2 for the monkey survey.) Participant #5 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "fall festival." Participant #6 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "Being able to call a local church our family, and being able to count on them no matter what. There will always activities for children, men's groups, women's groups, youth, etc." Participant #7 responded back to question #2 and wrote: "Experiences such as a family environment and being involved in youth groups, men's meetings, etc." This concludes all of the answers for question #2 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The third question on the monkey survey was "What is attracting people of your age to various local churches?" Participant #1 responded back to question #3 and wrote: "I believe at my age and having small children, that children church activities attract people." Participant #2 responded back to question #3 and wrote: "a good sermon and music." Participant #3 responded back to question #3 and wrote: "I would say a youth group and modern worship songs attract people of my age to church." Participant #4 responded back to question #3 and wrote: "worship

(updated), relevant sermons, sermons that hold true to the word of God, not progressive.”

Participant #5 responded back to question #3 and wrote: “a good sermon and events for children.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #3 for the monkey survey.) Participant #6 responded back to question #3 and wrote: “The community of people who are of interest to them. So if it’s a church with all older generations than a younger generation individual may not feel like they fit in.” Participant #7 responded back to question #3 and wrote: “A large number of people within the same age group, so they feel welcomed and close to those other families within the church community.” This concludes all of the answers for question #3 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The fourth question on the monkey survey was “What ministries or experiences are being offered by local churches in your area?” Participant #1 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “Right now due to COVID things are very limited but usually this time of year churches offer fall festivals or fall related activities for children.” Participant #2 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “none.” Participant #3 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “There is youth groups, bible studies and weekly virtual ministries.”

Participant #4 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “Youth groups, young life groups, MOPS.” Participant #5 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “none due to COVID.” Participant #6 responded back to question #4 and wrote: “The youth going to convention or adults/youth going on mission trips.” Participant #7 responded to question #4 and reported: “mission trips, youth groups.” This concludes all of the answers for question #4 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The fifth question on the monkey survey was, “What specifically would draw you or has drawn you to membership and participating in a local church?” Participant #1 responded to question #5 and wrote: “I said above, children activities usually and family feeling.” Participant #2 responded ago to question #5 and wrote: “a good sermon that gets the point across.” Participant #3 responded to ask #5 and wrote: “evangelism.”

Participant #4 responded to question #5 and wrote: “holding to the biblical principles.” Participant #5 responded to ask #5 and wrote: “a short but good sermon.” Participant #6 responded to question #5 and reported: “having a church with a younger generation and not all older individuals.” Participant #7 responded to question #5 and wrote: “A welcoming family environment. An environment where people are genuinely caring about each other and God.” This section concludes all of the answers for question #5 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The sixth question on the monkey survey was, “What does your generation value in a local church?” Participant #1 responded to question #6 and wrote: “I feel like I’m a bit of an old soul, but I think people my age like the new music and concert-like feel of a church.” Participant #2 responded to question #6 and wrote: “a good sermon and helping each other.” Participant #3 responded to question #6 and wrote: “I don’t know for my generation as a whole, but I value leadership.” Participant #4 responded to question #6 and wrote: “I’d like to think my generation values a God-fearing pastor and leadership, a church that believes in the word of God and does not stray from it.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #6 for the monkey survey.) Participant #5 responded to question #6 and wrote: “a good sermon.” Participant #6 responded to question #6 and wrote: “The ability to speak to the younger generation in wording that fits their lifestyles.” Participant #7 responded to question #6 and wrote: “Our generation values being able to connect with God and a church group they connect with.” This concludes all of the answers for question #6 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The seventh question on the monkey survey was “What service projects would interest you in serving in a church?” Participant #1 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “I love helping, so anything related to helping the community, children activities, and food drives.” Participant #2 responded back to question #7 and wrote, “I help mow the grass.” Participant #3 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “Seeking out the lost with different ways of communicating with the community.” Participant #4 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “elder outreach, young children, outreach, food bank.” Participant #5 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “a good sermon.” Participant #6 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “Community outreach. Having different opportunities for the community to come see what the church is all about and giving them the opportunity to see that we are good people who come from a good heart and home.” Participant #7 responded back to question #7 and wrote: “Mission trips, working to get more numbers of people to church.” This concludes all of the answers for question #7 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The eighth question on the monkey survey was “What do you think is the largest obstacle to attracting and engaging your generation? Participant #1 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “The largest obstacle is getting them to see Sunday as a church day and something that will spark their interest.” Participant #2 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “nothing for

our age group.” Participant #3 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “The ability to connect with them on a personal level.” Participant #4 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “They are so consumed with themselves’ and always so ‘busy.’”

Participant #5 responded back to question #8 and wrote, “not having events for couples/our age group.” Participant #6 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “Physically getting the people into church. It’s hard getting people to really go.” Participant #7 responded back to question #8 and wrote: “Finding a time where families are not involved in sports or other activities that take time away from being physically present in church.” This concludes all of the answers for question #8 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The ninth question on the monkey survey was “Does the millennial generation bear any responsibility in joining and serving a local church? Participant #1 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “The millennial generation seems very selfish so if its not going to benefit or interest them then no.” Participant #2 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “Yes.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #9 for the monkey survey.) Participant #3 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “Yes.” Participant #4 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “Yes.” Participant #5 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “Yes.” Participant #6 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “I think it’s hard with the middle age generation to get people to church because they have other obligations which makes it hard to feel involved with church. You really have to get the generation engaged.” Participant #7 responded back to question #9 and wrote: “Younger generations are intimidated by the older generation in church.” This concludes all of the answers for question #9 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The tenth question on the monkey survey was “How is the local church disconnected from your life or from your generation?” Participant #1 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “The local church can’t be set in ways of keeping things the way they have always done things. They need different things to keep this generation entertained.” Participant #2 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “no events for our generation.” Participant #3 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “I feel like COVID-19 did more disconnecting my generation from church.” Participant #4 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “need to offer more groups to young married couples, young adults (18-25) that group gets lost in the shuffle.” Participant #5 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “no events for our generation.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #9 for the monkey survey.) Participant #6 responded back to question #10 and wrote: “Having more older generation individuals in the church, makes it harder for the younger ones to feel involved.” Participant #7 responded back to the question #10 and wrote: “The local church has been disconnected.” This concludes all of the answers for question #10 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The eleventh question on the monkey survey was “What social concerns do you think the local church should be interested in? Participant #1 responded back to the question #11 and wrote, “I don’t think they should completely change, but engage in new activities and try to attract younger generations.” Participant #2 responded back to the question #11 and wrote: “helping local families in need.” Participant #3 responded back to the question #11 and wrote: “trying to get people form my generation to actually come to church.”

Participant #4 did not answer back to the question #11. Participant #5 responded back to question #11 and wrote: “helping local families in need.” Participant #6 responded back to

question #11 and wrote: “making individuals feel involved and wanting them to come every Sunday and share their love for the church.” Participant #7 responded back to question #11 and wrote: “making those individuals feel involved and together as a church community.” This concludes all of the answers for question #11 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The twelfth question on the monkey survey was “What does the church speak about that encourages you?” Participant #1 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “I love hearing a message about things that are going on right now and that convict me.” Participant #2 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “wellness and answered prayers.” Participant #3 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “faith and loyalty during times of hardship.” Participant #4 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “redemption.” Participant #5 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “sermon that relates to everyday life and answered prayers.” Participant #6 responded back to question #12 and wrote: “The church speaks about aspects that are pertained to the younger generation lifestyle and helps them feel like they can relate to it.” Participant #7 did not respond back to question #12. This concludes all of the answers for question #12 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The thirteenth question on the monkey survey was “What does the church speak/do about that discourages you? Participant #1 responded back to question #13 and wrote: “As long as the message comes from the Lord’s word, it’s never discouraging, but if churches try to change things just because that’s what people want to hear that is discouraging.” Participant #2 responded back to question #13 and wrote, “politics.” Participant #3 responded back to question #13 and wrote: “the second coming (only because it scares me.)” Participant #4 responded back to the question #13 and wrote: “honestly, the state of the world.”

(These are the continued responses from the participants for question #13 for the monkey survey.) Participant #5 responded back to question #13 and wrote, “politics.” Participant #6 responded back to question #13 and wrote: “N/A.” Participant #7 responded back to question #13 and wrote: “N/A.” This concludes all of the answers for question #13 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The fourteenth question on the monkey survey was “What specific activities in the community that would you like to see the church have or be apart of?” Participant #1 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “I would like to see the church more for homeless and veterans.” Participant #2 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “events for children.” Participant #3 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “an outreach to bring in more people.”

Participant #4 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “more outreach, especially to lower income families.” Participant #5 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “activities/events for children.” Participant #6 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “I would like to see the church be more involved in community activities to promote themselves and get their name out to others and show them how special they are.” Participant #7 responded back to question #14 and wrote: “seeing churches get the word out so others can get involved.” This concludes all of the answers for question #14 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The fifteenth question on the monkey survey was “What is the preferred/best form of communication for you? Participant #1 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “text message/phone call.” Participant #2 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “email.” Participant #3 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “text.” Participant #4 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “text, email.” Participant #5 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “email.” Participant #6 responded back to question #15 and wrote: “email.” Participant #7

responded back to question #15 and wrote: “email.” This concludes all of the answers for question #15 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The sixteenth question on the monkey survey was “Do you bring other millennials to church services or other church related activities? Participant #1 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “I invite friends of my age but lots of them already have churches of their own they attend.” Participant #2 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “sometimes.”

Participant #3 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “I use to when I was in grade school. I try to now that I’m older.” Participant #4 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “I attempt to, but not persistent.” Participant #5 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “sometimes.” Participant #6 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “yes.” Participant #7 responded back to question #16 and wrote: “no.” This concludes all of the answers for question #16 for the monkey survey for 7 participants.

The researcher and writer of this study noticed that some of the monkey surveys' answers varied, while other responses were the same. There were similarities and differences. It was a mix, which was expected. First, similar solutions will be discussed. For question #1, almost everyone agreed with the statement of “Literature suggests that a community-focused and service-based mindset attracts millennials to the local church,” except participant #3. Participants #4, #6 and #7 had similar answers for question #2 and wrote: “youth groups/activities.” Participants #2, #4, and #5 had the same answers for question #3 and wrote: “sermons.” Participants #4, #5, #6, and #7 had the same answers for question #4 and wrote: “youth groups.”

Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #5 and wrote: “good sermons.” Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #6 and wrote: “good sermons.” All

participants except #2 had similar answers for question #7 and wrote: “mission, outreach and/or community.” Participants #2, #3, #4, #5 had the same answers for question #9 and wrote: “yes.” Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #10 and wrote: “no events.” Participants #3 and #7 had the same answers for question #10 and wrote: “disconnecting.” Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #11 and wrote: “helping families in need.” Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #13 and wrote: “politics.” Participants #6 and #7 had the same answers for question #13 and wrote: “N/A.”

Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #14 and wrote: “children.” Participants #3, #4, #6 and #7 had the same answers for question #14 and wrote: “outreach or community.” Participants #1, #3 and #4 had the same answers for question #15 and wrote: “text.” Participants #2, #4, #5, #6 and #7 had the same answers for question #15 and wrote: “email.” Participants #2 and #5 had the same answers for question #16. This concludes the similarities for the monkey surveys.

However, there were many differences in the answers from the monkey surveys. Participants #1, #2, #3, #5 different answers for question #2 for this survey. Participants #1, #3, #6, #7, had different answers for question #3. Participants #1, #2, #3, had different answers for question #4. Participants #1, #3, #4, #6, and #7 had different answers for question #5. Participants #1, #2, #3, #4, #6, and #7 had different answers for question #6. All participants had different answers for question #8. Participants #1 and #7 had different answers for question #9.

Participants #1, #4, and #6 had different answers for question #10. Participants #2 and #5 had different answers than participants #3 and #7. Participants #1, #3, #4, #6 and #7 had different answers for question #11. All participants had different answers for question #12. Participants #1, #3, #4, #6, and #7 had different answers for question #13. Participant #1 had different

answers from the other participants for question #14. Participants #2 and #5 had different answers from participant #3, #4, #6 and #7 for question #14. Participants #1, #3 and #4 had different answers than participants #2, #5, #6, and #7 had different answers for question #15. Participants #1, #3, #4, #6, and #7 had different answers for question #16.

Monkey Survey for Local Pastor

The researcher and writer of this study had also a monkey survey for a local pastor. This monkey survey for the local pastor had similar questions than the other monkey survey for participants. However, these questions were more concise and fewer. The purpose of this monkey survey for a local pastor was to better understand how they have handled the issue of lack of millennials and their insight on how to get millennials in church.

The interview of this local pastor was over a phone call. The phone call was about two hours. The questions and answers will be listed in detail. The first question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: “What events/activities have you found to be successful and not successful for millennial participation? Please give a description of what they are and the purpose of them. Also, please explain why the activities and events are successful or not successful.” The local pastor's response was,

“A problem is the church has come to is to be entertaining. Many millennials feel the need for a church to entertain—any event where there can be a great amount of participation. Churches should not give into entertainment as the focus. Churches need to be a place where is live and well. Lack of entertainment seems to keep them away. Millennials want to build a relationship with God and build that relationship in bits and pieces over time. If they are given short bursts of info, then they may participate if it is convenient. Like over weeks, not at once. The churches have become too involved with

programs as it only solves short-term problems instead of long term. Events need to be attractive to participate in. Yearly apple butter cooking in the parking lot on a Friday night was a successful activity with yard sale and games and rescue squad present, and hayrides were the largest activity where millennials were involved the most. They are more likely to come to entertainment activities than witnessing events. Christmas eve or new years celebration is not successful because of other events going on. VBS (vacation bible school) is a good ministry for the millennials kids to participate in. Parents' involvement and the recruitment of helpers have been challenging. Millennial parents are part of this. Church has in-person church services. Millennials come to church and church activities sporadically.”

The second question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: “What types of communication are most effective and least effective with the millennial age group?” The local pastor's response was, “Pre-virus most effective would not care about communication. They may respond through text messages. The church does not have internet, which plays a possible factor in the lack of communication. The phone calls can work at times. In-person visits are not found effective or interested in that kind of communication. The connection on their side is not there.”

The third question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: “Why do you believe the millennial age group is not attending churches? The local pastor's response was, “they don't make time for church, not high on their priority list. They will often pick other activities over going to church. They would not give up time or other activities to go to church. This pastor's church had an 8:30 AM service to let the millennials come to church before other activities start. Another part of it is the entertainment factor, as churches having to have events and activities that are entertaining.

The focus of the activities and events is on entertaining only. Some millennials like contemporary, and some like traditional music. Children's Church- biblical-based teaching and activities. There is a lack of commitment to help with Children's Church. It became entertainment and less instruction. (Children's church) They have a lack of commitment. They don't see it as a priority and see it as not as important. They focus on other things going on."

The fourth question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: "What are some of the challenges to improving their engagement and participation? The local pastor's response was, "Across the board, many church attendees don't put a lot of priority on their spiritual health, and it causes the pastoral leaders to care more about their spiritual health. It is a challenge to understand that we see our physical and spiritual needs to be fed with knowledge for the scripture that will keep them healthy and rely on God. It is important to keep your spiritual health."

The fifth question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: "What service projects at your church have/will interest the millennial age group in serving?" The local pastor's response was, "People are sitting around and talking about service projects. I have found that young people want to do something and not talk about it. They visit the elderly in the community, minor home repairs and raking leaves in the fall, and shovel the snow. Some are exposed to mission projects in the community. They will present Christ to those who are lost. Hope for Appalachia is a mission project in Kentucky. It is focused on bringing the church into the schools is something the church has become involved in. They go two times a year, during spring and fall. They have assemblies where they would come and talk. They would have a meeting in small groups. They would have shoeboxes given out to each of the kids to take home like OCC Each box would have basic items with necessities. Many of these kids live out of cars,

etc. Last fall, 250 people went on this mission project. It builds the idea of servanthood and needs to be taught to everyone, including millennials. It gets the millennials involved in the actual activities, instead of sending someone else or just talking about it. The opportunities are always there, but the church has to show the desire and importance of going.”

The sixth question on the monkey survey for the local pastor was: “What is the largest obstacle to attract and engage this generation?” The local pastor's response was, “It seems to be always time. They need to be making time and priorities. The idea of focusing on the young people that churches have and teach them and then grow from there. The message needs to get to each person and into the world with whatever method and way that is needed. It is important always to encourage millennial age groups to be involved and get church members involved in helping with this goal.”

The answers from this monkey survey from a local pastor are very critical for various reasons. First, it has shown that the lack of millennial age people is an issue at not just MBC but also other churches. This survey has shown why there are reasons why millennials are in churches and why some are not in churches. These answers had reflected how there is hope and a learning process in getting millennials apart of church activities. This monkey survey has shown to be effective in the researcher learning that all churches could be improving on connecting with millennial age people and the community. Most importantly, this survey and the answers from a local pastor have shown that getting millennials back in the church is a consistent process of getting millennials back in church and not a one time fix.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Improvement Plans

There are many directions that the research regarding this problem should go from here. There was a lack of participation from the participants in this study, primarily due to the pandemic. In conclusion, it is impossible or improbable to carry out this study successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this study's main reasons were not successful was the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of face-to-face interaction for the activities. The thesis statement was: If the church gains a better understanding of the dropout problem, increases communication, and improves discipleship, then it should increase the student body ratio by 20% over four weeks. There was no 20% increase in the millennial age group at MBC as a goal of this study. This study has proven difficult or impossible to do during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a lack of participation in activities resulted in no increased growth of the MBC millennial age group.

This study's activities had to be either altered or cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a tremendous impact. In conclusion, there are two options for increasing the chances of this study working in a similar situation. This study, in theory, could be done during a different time after or before the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, this study could be carried out if there were two intervention designs. One of the methods could be for a regular world with no COVID-19 pandemic. The second intervention design could be during an outbreak with specific activities that would be possible to implement effectively. Each plan would need detailed activities weekly to be practical and straightforward.

This study has shown how an increase and growth of the millennial age group at MBC will take more than four weeks. This study has shown that it will take more than a few weeks or

even months to increase the millennial age group's amount. It could even take a year or longer to see continual growth. It will take constant communication with this age group as well as with the community. The research has shown that there is not an overnight fix to this problem. There will need to be continual activities throughout the year for this millennial age group to increase over time.

The leadership team has proven challenging to form during this study due to outside circumstances from the COVID-19 pandemic. The leadership team would have to be developed and connected to the church/community to grow and be effective. Concerning the lack of the millennial age group, fixing the problem will require a creative solution that may only be effective for that specific church. Every church is different and unique due to factors like size, location, etc., and may need a different plan to fix the lack of millennials (24-39 years old).

The research regarding this problem going forward suggests that it will be a continuous process to fix. It may take more weeks, months, or even years to see the millennial age group's growth or increase. There will need be continuous efforts to resolve this issue at MBC, and the study has raised more awareness of the lack of 24-39-year-olds in churches. Also, there will be new methods and ideas to be explored to help resolve this issue. New techniques and images will be used and applied as they may prove to be beneficial and practical. At this point, there can be more research done to help to resolve this issue.

Post project Literature Interaction

These research project results are compared to the information from other scholarly sources examined in the literature review. There are specific similarities and differences between the academic authorities and the results of this research project. The parallels between the two will be discussed first. One similarity between the scholarly sources and the research project

results is when Skeldon and Waller mention the link between passion, calling, and worship and how those three are bound together to share the gospel and how we need to choose it over being comfortable.¹⁴¹ Skeldon and Waller explained how choosing the cross may require a person to be uncomfortable at times; however, it is crucial to share the good news with those who are lost and bring people to know Christ.¹⁴²

A lack participants in the study from choosing comfort over the cross due to outside circumstances caused fear or uncertainty from the pandemic. The fear was different and new. In this case, fear kept people from participating in the study. The participants may have been afraid to leave their houses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and wanting to participate in the *Operation Christmas Child* drop-off box activity. It can be challenging in certain situations for people; however, it should be the goal and hope as Christians to choose the cross over being comfortable. There can be difficulties during a study or during a situation in life that can arise to get in the way of selecting the cross over being comfortable.

The next similarity between the scholarly sources and the research project results is when Skeldon and Waller described how truly effective discipleship is accomplished by people in the church instead of an individual.¹⁴³ This study was designed by one person and carried out by one person. Effective discipleship, as stated by Skeldon and Waller, will require many people, and to develop a leadership team will require many people as well.¹⁴⁴ The leadership team was not formed as designed as it may need others' help to build it. It may be necessary to get extra

¹⁴¹ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials.*, 54-55.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Grant Skeldon and Ryan Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 90-91.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

support and guidance from others who are familiar with building leadership teams. The results of this research project have shown that one person could not form a leadership team at MBC.

Another similarity between the scholarly sources and the research project results is when Platt explained how it is crucial to share God's word with the church and the culture as it should be the focus.¹⁴⁵ The products of the research project and this statement by Platt are similar because of the importance of connecting with the daily community and the massive impact. The results were a lack of participation, and it was primarily due to the change of activities and the limitations of what could be done due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There could not be a communication of events occurring because churches could not meet or have activities with crowds of people. If the research project were not carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, then there would have been a stronger connection and impact with the community.

Next, the differences between the scholarly sources and the results of this research project will be discussed. The difference between a literary reference and the results of this research project is when Kinnamon and Lyons expressed how the leaders needed to lead and show everyone else how to share the gospel effectively with those around them.¹⁴⁶ Kinnamon and Lyons were focused on the church's leaders, sharing the gospel, and being an example¹⁴⁷. The research project results have shown the need for the church and a leadership team to share the gospel. Christians must work together to bring the millennial age group back to church and work together to help fix the issue. The research project has shown that one person cannot resolve the problem, requiring additional help. The leadership has shown to be equally as important as the others who want to resolve the issue.

¹⁴⁵ David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, 173-174.

¹⁴⁶ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters*, 102.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Plans

There are many things that the writer learned implementing the project. The first thing that the writer learned implementing the project was that there could be circumstances and situations outside of the writer's control. The writer was well organized, and the intervention design was detailed. However, the pandemic changed much of the intervention design. There were several activities for the study that did not happen, and the other activities had to be altered in the process. The paperwork, questionnaires, letters, and bingo cards had to be mailed because there could not be a meeting at MBC due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The writer comprehended from implementing this project how it is challenging to communicate with people during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were new concerns, worries, and changes to everyday daily life, making communication and participation difficult. People had to take care of their kids since schools were closed, and some even lost their jobs. Some people were afraid even to leave their houses. The writer has learned how there are no perfect research projects, and problems will occur at a certain point.

The writer has learned from implementing this project that the results will vary and may be quite unpredictable. The writer has learned how difficult it is to work with a tiny study sample. There were only seven participants chosen for the project. It was going to be difficult in an ideal situation where there was not a pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic had led to a lack of participation and made it difficult to have the planned activities.

If this project were to be done again, it would be during a time not during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a worldwide pandemic is rare, it is crucial to have two intervention designs. One of the designs would be for regular life without the COVID-19 pandemic and the other design during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reason for having two intervention plans would be

as a backup plan for the project. If there were two intervention plans, then it would result in minimal issues for the project. If there were minimal issues, it could lead to more participation and improved overall project results.

The writer has learned from implementing this project how much planning and time goes into a project. Each detail and every step has been crucial as it impacted the results. The writer has learned how vital it is to have activities every week. The COVID-19 pandemic was the reason that several activities had to be cancelled. If the writer or someone else were to do this project, it would be recommended to add several more steps to each week.

If more activities were added to the intervention design, it would most likely result in more participants' involvement in each activity. The more activities offered would give more opportunities and options for the millennial age group to pick from. One essential information that the writer has learned is how necessary face-to-face or personal interaction is to a project. Personal interaction has an enormous impact on projects. It seems people are more motivated in person. Participants would have been more willing to fill out the questionnaire in person. If the meeting and activities were in person, the participant could have been more likely to come.

Face-to-face interaction is one of the critical parts of a project. If everything was normal and everything was face-to-face, then the results may have been entirely different. It is possible that there could have been a large percentage of the participants participating in the activities. The personal interaction would increase the participants to learn about the lack of people in the millennial age group at MBC. Personal interaction would have increased the likelihood of participants bringing millennial age people to church with them. Face-to-face interaction would encourage millennial age group people to become more active in church activities. Face-to-face

interaction would help develop relationships with those who are around them that are the same age.

The results apply similarly to other settings. It is believed that small rural churches would have the same lack of participation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results would be similar in the other similar size churches, as well during the COVID-19 pandemic. The more prominent churches would have more participants chosen to be a part of the project, but these participants' participation may be low in a disruptive crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic would most likely have a negative impact on projects, whether the churches have a small or large location.

If the project were in another location during the COVID-19 pandemic, then the results would be similar. The project results would most likely not be any different in other churches in the state or out of the state. If the project were carried out after or before the COVID-19 pandemic, then the results would greatly vary between location, population, etc. Any kind of project would have a low attendance or lack of turnout due to the pandemic and not having events/large gatherings.

Another setting could be at a community center with similar activities. It would be an excellent setting to get young people to be a part of these activities. A location would be at a local YMCA, a suitable environment for all ages, young and old. This particular setting would allow young people to become involved in the activities. It would be a good opportunity for exposure for young people to church life. A third set with the same results could be a nursing home or long-term facilities. This would be a significant population to see what adults are apart of church life and want to be more a part of church activities. This setting would have more participation and a larger population, as they would already be there.

The researcher had intended this process to go a certain way, and it could not go as planned. The intervention design did not go as planned. COVID-19 was an unexpected pandemic that happened right at the beginning of the project. There was not enough time to add extra activities or make necessary adjustments. The current activities had to be altered or cancelled. The COVID-19 pandemic made meetings and all in-person activities immediately cancelled. The virus made it impossible to meet face-to-face for anything, including seminars, questionnaires, and activities.

Future research needs to include information on the COVID-19 pandemic and how research projects were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. There needs to be information given to research in the future to know how to handle the investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic and carry out the studies ethically. There should be ethical guidelines on researching a pandemic that would show how to alter intervention designs and safely carry them out. This guide should include how to communicate effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was a lack of communication and a need to improve communication during the study between the researcher and the participants. During the study, there was a need for increased communication, and there could be suggestions given for future research for those in similar situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. There could be tools used for more communication; like Zoom meetings online weekly or Skype sessions. Also, there could be emails or text messages or voicemails each week to encourage the participants' participation in the study.

There was a lack of participation in this study, so future research could find new methods of getting participants, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There could be special incentives to get those to participate in future research. The researcher could read other studies

during the time of COVID-19, which could have ethical suggestions or insights on keeping the study honest and practical. Those who have carried out a research project will have tips and ideas on what works and what may not work. Also, those who are doing future research may read through other projects and see what was useful. Researchers could read other projects during the COVID-19 pandemic and learn about what they had learned at that time about research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Certain things emerged during the study that merits future research. If the age range was extended for future research, it might influence participation and the results. Also, there was a lack of involvement, and future research could change certain things about the study. For the course, they had to be MBC members to be a part of this study, and they had to be 24-39-years-old-age group.

Future research could have members and non-members as part of the research project. The MBC members and non-members could be a part of future research, and it would make more participants for the study. This millennial age group could bring friends and siblings in that age group to be a part of the study. Also, there could be contrast (similarities and differences) between the members and non-members. The same questionnaire could be given to both, and the answers could be compared. There could be patterns seen in the responses between the members and non-members.

Concluding Remarks

There was no participation in the activities for the study. However, there was full participation in the monkey surveys; seven were sent, and seven were returned. There was also a monkey survey given to a local pastor. The questions and answers from both types of surveys

proved useful and crucial for learning how to better grow the millennial age group at MBC and more about millennials in church. There was various information learned from the answers.

The monkey survey was very crucial. It showed possible reasons as to why young people may not be apart of church life. This survey also helped the researcher and writer learn the best and most effective way of communication for the millennial age group. It helped develop a deeper understanding of what social concerns millennials care about and what they want the church to be involved with. This survey identified service projects that the millennial age group would be interested in being apart of. It also allowed the researcher and writer to understand what will and what will not attract millennials to the church and church-related activities.

The survey answers helped narrow down which possible reasons may not be accurate as to why millennials are not apart of church activities. It was also learned that there is responsibility on the church and the millennial age group to be a part of church life and activities. This survey results showed that there were many similarities and differences in answers, which shows that millennials have varying thoughts, beliefs, and reasons, which is critical to keep in mind when engaging with them.

The monkey survey and the participants' answers had brought up new thoughts and viewpoints that the literature may not have covered. The monkey survey results have shown and proven to be critical as it identifies the uniqueness and difference the millennial generation is compared to other generations. This survey has shown that the researcher and writer, and other leaders have learned endless new information about millennials, but still much more to learn. It is proven to be an on-going process.

The monkey survey and the answers from a local pastor had proven to be very beneficial in learning about the millennial age group and its issues in another church setting. There is a lot

that has been learned from the answers and information from the local pastor. First, the monkey survey and the answers from a local pastor have shown that the lack of millennial aged people is a prevalent at many other churches. Also, this pastor's answers have shown how fixing the lack of millennials participation is an on-going process. His responses have proven that there is not some random permanent fix to the problem.

There are constant activities, events, communication, and effort to improve the lack of millennials. It is a lesson that all churches and leaders should always keep in mind when addressing and dealing with this issue of the lack of millennials in churches. This pastor highlights the importance of getting others involved in fixing this issue and is pointing at the idea that it has to a whole church effort and not just the measure of one person. This local pastor also has shown that communication and action are a two-way street and important to keep in mind and find new communication methods that genuinely work.

Some churches are still not open for in person services still. A church being open or not varies from denomination, even a year later. MBC is currently still helping local in need directly and are helping with the local food bank. Community based service projects are what churches need to keep in mind when trying to improve and grow their millennial age groups. It is critical to remember that if churches are going to survive and thrive for future generations, then it must be actively as well as continuously finding new methods of communication, and have a better understanding of connecting with future generations.

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