

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Reconnecting Black Christian Methodist Millennials to the 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

Albritton L. Nelson

Lynchburg, Virginia

September 2021

Copyright © 2021 by Albritton L. Nelson

All Rights Reserved

Liberty University School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Mentor Name and Title

Reader Name and Title

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Albritton L. Nelson

Liberty University School of Divinity, 2021

Mentor: Dr. Dixon

Abstract

Like other denominations today, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME) is missing the millennial generation in attendance and activity. The elders of the church genuinely believe that the millennial generation will continue to decline to attend and decrease their membership and the numbers of the church. Some feel that tradition may be the blame because the church refuses to change its ways. Others believe that there's a lack of vision to understand where the church is going. No matter the reasons for the decline, changes are needed to ensure the health and resilience of the CME Church if it is to survive.

A qualitative analysis methodology was employed to examine the status of the CME Church and the declining church membership, particularly among the Millennial generation. The primary objective of this research was to gain insight into how Millennials perceive the church, their pastors, and church leadership, as well as insight into how pastors perceive Millennials. These insights were then used to develop recommendations for the different groups involved that were designed to improve and enhance intergenerational relationships, which can revitalize the church.

Based on the data collected in this study, it became apparent that traditional CME values and the values of the younger generation have created tension, particularly in the areas of leadership, worship styles, priorities, and the concept of accountability. These intergenerational disconnects have had a significant effect on church stability and the declining trend in attendance and participation by the Millennials. The data collected in this study provided unique insight into the characteristics of Millennials, church pastors, and the church leadership, all of whom could influence one another and the direction of the church. The Millennials expressed a desire to be included in church decisions and help to develop a message that provides for their interests.

The insights into these three groups revealed an organizational framework, which was then employed to identify potential action items related to each group.

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Ministry Context.....	2
Problem Presented	5
Purpose Statement	7
Basic Assumptions	7
Definitions.....	8
Delimitations	10
Limitations	10
Thesis Statement.....	11
Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework	12
Literature Review	12
Theological Foundation	19
Theoretical Foundation.....	24
Chapter Three: Methodology	26
Introduction.....	26
Research Method	26
Research Design Overview	26
Qualitative Research.....	30
Grounded Theory	30
Project Conceptualization	32
Ethical Consideration	35
Tools, Data, and Analysis	36

Intervention of the Pilot Discipleship	38
Participants.....	38
Implementation of the Pilot Discipleship Program	39
Summary	43
Chapter Four: Results.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Demographics	45
Millennial Survey	47
Pastor Survey	55
Conclusions Regarding the Questionnaires	66
Zoom Interview	67
Analysis of Zoom Meeting	81
Summary	82
Chapter Five: Conclusion	83
Introduction.....	83
The Proposal.....	83
Implementation of Research Project.....	84
Limitation of the Study	89
Recommendations	90
Conclusion	94
References.....	97
Appendix A.....	100
Appendix B.....	101

Appendix C	103
Appendix D	104
Appendix E	105
Appendix F	106
Appendix G	107
Appendix H	108
Appendix I	109
Appendix J	110
Appendix K	111
Appendix L	112
Appendix M	113

Chapter One: Introduction

Like other denominations today, the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church has seen a significant decline in attendance and participation by the millennial generation in attendance and activity. Millennial attendance and participation in church activity is such a concern of the CME Church that during the 2018 CME General Conference, the topic was on the agenda for discussion. During the discussion meeting, several viewpoints were given. The elders of the church genuinely believe that the millennial generation will continue to decline to attend and decrease their membership and the numbers of the church. Some feel that tradition may be the blame because the church refuses to change its ways. Others believe that a lack of vision to understand where the church is going. Others identified that there is greed in the church, and it seems like members/attendees get nothing in return for their donations.

The millennials are the largest generation since the Baby Boomers, and they have a unique characteristic that separates them from every other age. Information gathered from the Pew Research Center suggests that millennials are less religious, become increasingly unaffiliated with any religion, and attend worship services less than older adults (Pew Research Center, 2010).

In addition to viewpoints regarding why millennials do not attend church, the conference attendees addressed the stark realities created by their lack of attendance. Fulfilling the church's mission of bringing souls to Christ has lost its purpose. The elder members of the church are dying, which causes uncertainty for the future of the church. Attempting to meet the needs of the millennials goes against the traditional methods of worship. Churches must decide whether to meet those needs or to continue with their traditional ways. Millennials want an immediate voice

in church decision-making, though traditionally, one obtained a role in church decision-making through longevity in church participation and attendance. Mitchell stated,

There's no doubt that the church wants millennials to engage in the church's work through their tithes and offerings, but the feeling among many black Millennials is that they are viewed as cute novelties at best. The unfortunate reality is this: if the church as an institution is to survive the religious shifts over the next few decades, she cannot afford to view the Millennials as a special project but must engage them as available partners to the life and work of the church today. (Mitchell, 2018, p. 71)

Ministry Context

Many studies have been completed on the Black Church, or some people refer to it as the African Church. This dissertation deals with the missing Millennials in the CME Church will also cause the readers to explore some of the darker roots of history dealing with the American South. It seems odd today to even explain that the CME is just a Black church, but it is worth reviewing a brief history of the church because of the name change. To introduce the CME Church, let us use the teachings of Randall Albert Carter, broken down in a book written by Othal Hawthorne Lakey, exploring the history of the CME Church. The CME Church was established in the year 1870 in Jackson, Tennessee. It was largely considered a noble yet straightforward idea to create a church for people of color that were slaves not long ago. Mr. Carter thanked God for the people who endured the afflictions, necessities, distress, tumults, journeys often filled with hunger, thirst, and bitter suffering (Lakey, 1985). In a General Church Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, in their meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1866, adopted a separation plan. The separation of the church began colored members had separate pastoral charges, separate quarterly, district, and annual conferences.

With the election of two Bishops, William H. Miles and Richard H. Vanderhorst, and the doctrines and polity of the new church firmly established, a new branch of Methodism was born among the followers of John Wesley and the Church of Jesus Christ (Lewis, 2014). The Colored Methodist Church was born fully independent, though amicable in ecumenical relations as CME Church. It went forward to preach the good news, teach divine truth, and heal the brokenness of life by the power of God in our Risen Savior (Lewis, 2014).

Methodist churches released an article stating that Millennials do not like politics being espoused from the pulpit. History has shown the downfall of many religions and churches when they start to mix church and state. The mixing of church and state is not a new problem; this is a problem that has been going on for many years. Now fast forward to the present, and there is a generation of people who are uninterested in the combination of politics in their churches. There was a recent article entitled, “Millennials, Faith and the Future of the Black Church,” released by the Methodist Churches, which indicated that one of the reasons that the millennials are not interested in the church is due to politics (Urban Faith., 2018). Unfortunately, politics were created with the CME Church in 1870.

In many ways, the time has brought about a change or maybe even a shift in the CME Church. The Baby Boomers dragged Generation X from church to church without a choice of how they wanted to serve God. The children of Generation X swore that they would never go to church again when they became adults. That is a part of the problem in the churches. Today, Generation X has abandoned the church, and with Millennials following a similar path (though for different reasons), now the elders of the church notice that children are missing. The Millennials are a different generation of believers. They come from a place of being overprotected and sheltered. Their phones have become miniature computers that are always in

the palms of their hands. They no longer must follow the footsteps of the parents or even serve the same God that they were supposed to. Just like Generation X, the Millennials have moved away to college and drifted away from God.

Three million fewer Americans attend church each year, driving religiously unaffiliated from 8% to 23% in a generation (McGowan, 2018). For millennials, that number jumps to 35%. Twice as many millennials are religiously unaffiliated as their parents' generation and three times as many as their grandparents' generation (McGowan, 2018). Hanson states Millennials are "the most highly unchurched generation in recent history" (Hanson, 2016, p. 31). One study indicated,

UMC reported: 66% of young adults surveyed were searching for meaning and purpose in their lives, and 62% considered themselves 'spiritual' [but] church was not where they were looking to fill this void, as 78% said they never attend church, or only attend occasionally. (Hanson, 2016)

The college experience allows young impressionable adults to stick their hands and young minds into a melting pot of religions, cultures, and everything else the world has to offer when the young adults come home feeling entitled to positions in the church. They want to change the worship service and move away from tradition. They want to control the music and even want to preach the Gospel. Most millennials do not want to go to school or take time to get the experience needed to run the church. They seek more immediate gratification, or they pack up their toys then abandon the church.

Some millennials decided they have no desire for the church or to follow God. Others wonder because they cannot get past the church hurt from twenty years ago. Then some have made themselves preachers, bishops, and apostles in the church. They have titles but no

paperwork to support the years of service they have put in. The church is in a difficult position, and everyone thinks by saving the Millennials, they can stop the church from dying. The CME Church must find a way to balance tradition, the needs of the Millennials, and to make the Baby Boomers still feel secure in their positions to keep the church afloat. The church is not dying; the children are in the church, but they are not being used. Someone must make the call to toss in the towel on tradition and continue this road they are on. Stop being the church of yesterday and move into a ministry that everyone does whatever they feel like at any time and still be saved.

One of the reasons Louie Giglio gave for continuing to focus on the college-age students is from the countless testimonies he receives of older people that have come to Christ who may have grown up in a Christian home but left the faith. He says many of them disclose that they fell away during college or at the college-age bracket (Hanson, 2016). When Giglio was asked about what he thought of all the stats on the Millennials leaving the church, he said, "they are just leaving the building. They were never in the church" (Hanson, 2016, p. 32). This is a fair statement because many parents force their children to attend church at a young age. Now that the millennials have come to the age, they can make their own decisions, and they have made the same choice as their parents who also have abandoned the church. Millennials have grown up believing that life is all about them. They are the center of attention. Tulgan says, "making children feel great about themselves and building up their self-esteem became the dominant theme in parenting, teaching, and counseling" (Deitsch, 2012).

Problem Presented

With there being several deaths of the older generation at Scruggs Memorial CME Church and no new younger members to replace them has left the church with financial burdens

and empty pews, which causes a significant problem for the future of the church. The church must decide on the direction it should take now that it finds itself at a significant crossroads.

Scruggs Memorial CME Church needs more than one generation of babies to change the direction of the dying church. Scruggs must find a way to connect the three generations that are still present in the church. One idea was to take a survey on social issues or injustices to see what the people have in stock and start a group for them to work together (Riess, 2018). At some point, Scruggs Memorial must ensure all generations feel comfortable to be who they are, and the church still needs them. The church should not abandon the elders of the congregation while trying to reach the Millennials, but the church must strive to minister to everyone in the building.

Scruggs must use the same equation they used to have when the church was overflowing with the Baby Boomer generation that led to the glory status of the church. Sometimes the answer is the same, but someone must enter the new equation to do the math. To keep the church from dying, the pastor must fill Scruggs with a new generation of believers and families to make sure the church will not just survive today, but the church will also have a bright future. Thus, the presenting problem of the CME Church is everyone is complaining about the missing millennials, but no one is willing to take the initiative to do something about it. This research is an attempt to not only explore the reason the millennials are missing, but it is also an attempt to reach them on their level. The only way to open the door is to open dialogue and try to find a middle ground to allow the ministry to flourish. The church may have to compromise some of its traditions to enable this generation to grow up one day to become interested in how the church works. Jesus had patience with every generation from the Israelites to the Baby Boomers, so know the church must follow the example Jesus set for Generation X and the Millennials.

Purpose Statement

The problem this research was designed to address was associated with reaching and connecting the church and millennials. How can the millennials hear if no voice is crying out to them from the wilderness? Jesus' call is for the disciples to go out and spread the Good News, but far too often, the Good News is trapped in churches behind locked doors. The purpose of this research was to better understand how Scruggs Memorial CME church can increase presence with the millennials and future generations by understanding what their needs are and incorporating them into the church's vision and mission. The concept must include taking ministry beyond the walls and from behind locked doors to open dialogue with a lost generation.

Basic Assumptions

An assumption that this research presents is that there is a decline in millennials attending church. One assumption is that is preconceived by the older generation about millennials are some of the negative characteristics that have been portrayed by the media and the limited contact they may have with them. Another assumption is there is a lack of understanding about the millennials that makes it difficult for the older generations to embrace them and including them in the operations of the church. The church thus finds itself at an important crossroads. If these gaps cannot be bridged and a common ground cannot be found, the CME Church is likely to reach a breaking point followed by an inevitable decline. Given the relatively small sample size, it is not possible to generalize the focus groups responses to the wider population.

Definitions

Baby Boomers: Identified as “behavioral and attitudinal generation,” these individuals were born post World War II economic boom (Tavener, Byles, & Loxton, 2014).

Belief: An assent of the mind to the truth of a declaration, proposition, or alleged fact, on the ground of evidence, distinct from personal knowledge, a firm persuasion of the realities of religion (Thatcher & McQueen, 1971).

Black Christian Millennials: There are no different from any other race of millennials. The separation of race is only charged by poverty and hardship that a race of people endures.

Church Attendance: Church attendance is the frequency of churchgoing over some time.

CME Church: Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, black Methodist church in the United States, organized in 1870 as the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church; it officially adopted its present name in 1956.

Convenience: The fact that something is suitable for your purposes and causes no difficulty for your schedule or plans: A convenience is also anything that is easy to use and makes life comfortable <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

Generation X: Generation X (or Gen X) is the demographic cohort following the baby boomers and preceding the Millennials. Demographers and researchers typically use birth years ranging from the early-to-mid 1960s to the early 1970s (Generation X has grown up with it).

Generation XX: Generation X, sometimes abbreviated to Gen X-, is a term used to describe the people born roughly between 1960 and 1980. It is sandwiched between the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations. Stereotyped as having characteristics such as a lack of direction and cynicism, members of this group they have been influenced by a wide range of cultural and

political shifts, perhaps most notably the development of technologies

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

Generation Z: the children of the millennials born from the mid-2000s to the present (2019).

What Marketers need to know about the Next Generation of Consumers. Gen Z Defined Gen Z consumers range from 2 to 19, through the target range for marketers lies from ages 11 to 16.

Gen Z is the most diverse and multicultural of any generation in the U.S.—55% are Caucasian, 24% are Hispanic, 14% are African American, and 4% are Asian

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

Millennials: The Millennials, also known as Generation Y, according to researchers, are born between the years 1980 to the early 2000s. The age limit today would be 18 to 30 years old; this will be the test range group for this study.

Mime Ministry: Miming is the art of conveying a message through exaggerated gestures or body movements without the use of words or props. A mime is a person who specializes in this art. In recent years, miming has entered the church as part of dance and drama ministries

<https://www.gotquestions.org/mime-miming.html>.

Tradition: Faith given by Jesus to the apostles and passed on in the Church from one generation to the next without addition, alteration, or subtraction. Belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all these beliefs, etc. for a specific culture or group <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

Values: Values derived from the teaching of Jesus Christ. Fruits of the spirit of how a Christian should live and act in everyday life. The principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong and how to act in various situations <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this research included answering the question of whether Scruggs Memorial CME Church has failed the millennials of the church by not understanding the uniqueness of this generation regarding the traditions of the church, their beliefs, and values, and the convenience of worship with a ministry that is formed for the youth and young adults of the church. There is a need for the information to assist the church with how to improve service and increase the attendance of the millennials.

Limitations

The church has many issues that could not be addressed due to the doors being closed from COVID-19. COVID-19 was never supposed to be a part of this paper, but this pandemic has exposed the church like nothing man could have imagined. COVID-19 has taken so many elders of the church which becomes important to the church because these were the people that were financially carrying the church. If the researcher could have spent more time in worship with the millennials, and pastors to see how they interacted on Sunday morning during worship the research could have rendered other important insights. There were limitations in personal habits i.e., bad attitudes, late to church, or not regularly coming each Sunday that impacted the research.

A huge limitation of the study was getting millennials to be open and honest because they feared backlash or being criticized or removed for their opinions from the church. People have become to like the idea of watching church online in their pajamas with no place to go. Online ministries also allow for the opportunity to hear better preachers, and choirs than their churches have to offer. It also allows for the questioning of millennials to seek answer about religion.

Another limitation was that it was nearly impossible to get more pastors to participate in the research. Pastors gave many reasons, such as having to focus on their ministries and running the church, which did not give them the time to answer questions. Some did not want to spend the time writing the responses to the questionnaires. Others asked the researcher to write out their answers for them, which could have introduced bias. This study was difficult to do in a two-year period because one of the greatest issues with the Methodist church is pastors are often changing from one year to the next, which also causes issues with the stability of the church.

Thesis Statement

Black millennials do not feel connected to the church. They have become disconnected from the worship services, auxiliary ministries, and the sermons are not meeting their spiritual needs.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

After reviewing the literature, it became more than evident that the problem with the church goes deeper than one lost generation. Many people are not responding to the old ways of tradition anymore. People want more from the church. Alvin Reid provided an excellent assessment when he addressed Bishop John Shelby,

Christianity, as contained in the Bible, is intellectually unacceptable. The Word of God is being changed to fit the need of the messenger, which is leading the younger generation on a path seeking the truth. (Reid, 2002, p. 43)

There is a radical shift in the way people are worshipping God. The millennials are not missing; they just chose different forms of worship than what traditional thinking has always offered. This generation is more like a microwave wanting everything instantly. They are not willing to wait on things to develop.

Faith begins at home; in some cases, millennials are fortunate to have parents (Generation X) that had a foundation of religion passed down from their parents, the Baby Boomers. In other cases, unfortunately, some families have produced millennials in homes of unbelief, suffering, and a situation of undealt with church hurt. The idea of hope produced from the average boy/girl raised in the city living in a poor neighborhood surrounded by violence and negativity; it's all they can do to survive another day. They are looking around the area at closed schools, vacant buildings, liquor stores on every corner, and of course, the church on almost every corner. The pastor and most of the office members of the church do not live anywhere near the church, but they often just come and go like hope and abandon dreams. Mark Holmen discussed a sermon he preached entitled "The Functional Dysfunctional Family." In his sermon, he gave his readers

the image of what a good Christian family looks like, as well as dysfunctional family characteristics, for instance, describing a drunk father sitting on the couch as soon as church is over (Holmen, 2005, p. 10). The millennial situation today what church the mind and people have told them about is not meeting up with the perception the people are allowing them to see. Parents and members often look like saints in the church, but they look like demons to their children at home in far too many cases.

The Church and Millennials

The Gospel versus the prosperity gospel. For this research, the millennial participants ranged in age from 24-31. When wrestling with the idea that the millennials are absent from church, the first question is, do they even accept God? From the opinions of our grandparents, if the church is significant and over-flowing with people, it must be good. Skye Jethani surveyed a generation of Millennials and some Generation X and found that the people no longer trust the church; their issue is not with God (Jethani, 2013). Jethani also stated, People believe in doing the work to advance the belief in God, but they want no part in the advancement of the church system today (Jethani, 2016). When you think of the church in America today, one may get the impression the church has been paralyzed while waiting for permission to react (Reid, 2002). Reid suggested the church needs to return to her first love a passion for Jesus (Reid, 2002, p. 21). There is one of the main issues with this new generation of believers because the young preachers teach that there is no need for the Old Testament. Radical unschooled preachers have changed the atmosphere of the church. Preachers have started preaching wealth and prosperity rather than, "Thus said the Lord." This is whom Alvin Reid calls the radically unchurched. The radically unchurched include those who have no explicit personal understanding of the message of the gospel and who have little or no contact with bible-teaching (Reid, 2002, p. 17). With this

generation's attitude, everyone owes them something, and they do not feel like they need to work for anything that creates a problem. They have a microwave attitude towards God and the church. They want their blessing right now, and they want to know what the church can do for them instead of how they can help the church.

Millennials are part of a “Woke Generation,” which breaks down to the understanding that they are no longer sleeping. The idea of millennials waking up from the depression of a slave mentality created a conflict between millennials and the Colored Methodist Episcopal church. Freed slaves started the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in what some millennials would say, “the slave master teachings and ideas that will forever keep the CME Church in some form of submitting and slavery to forever.” Millennials do not want to be slaves, and Dane Calloway has even produced evidence challenging everything history has taught about Black, African, and Indian people. Religion and faith start with teaching at home. The parents are the foundation of the belief system (Holmen, 2005). The Christian family has a lovely house with a white picket fence, and both parents live at home, providing for the family. The father gives the son the image of a good Christian man, while the mother teaches the daughter what it means to a Christian lady. These things sound perfect, but once again, a reality in the inner city for church folks relates to a struggling mother raising more than one child trying to make it a day today. In a strange fact, in the 1990s, divorce rates climbed to 50%, and the parents no longer lived in the same household. Today, the average millennial is pushed by other kids and sometimes their parents to enter adulthood early (Burns & DeVries, 2003).

Prefer authenticity versus attraction. The millennial generation has gotten lost in the shuffle with a microwave attitude that the church cannot meet. Preachers who refuse to go to school but have great speaking voices inspired by greed are potentially leading an entire

generation down the wrong path. Hope is an expectation and desire for something to happen. Faith is a strong belief in God or the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. Even the dictionary thinks religion is just spiritual and has no evidence. The world is making every effort to reduce God out of the lives of His people by making them wrestle with their own beliefs. Rick Warren said, "Maybe just maybe we set our worship service so high that we miss the reason for the worship is God" (Warren, 1995, p. 158). Reid added, "the best way to get rid of the darkness of sin is simple: turn on the light! The darkness of sin is forced out by the gospel of light (Reid, 2002, p. 43). In the book, *The Radically Unchurched*, student ministers indicated that millennials want real, honest, biblical substance. Such depth of authentic spirituality is why this generation is key to penetrating the unchurched culture (Reid, 2002). Rick Warren also suggested that all God expects from us is faithfulness and fruitfulness (Warren, 1995, p. 158).

Existential spirituality versus Biblical Teaching. Rick Warren stated that the purpose of the church is to provide people with benefits they can find nowhere else in the world (Warren, 1995, p. 302). Millennials are "the most highly unchurched generation in recent history" (Reid, 2002, p. 98). One study conducted by UMC reported,

66% of young adults surveyed were searching for meaning and purpose in their lives, and 62% considered themselves 'spiritual' [but] church was not where they were looking to fill this void, as 78% said they never attend church, or only attend once in a while.

(Hanson, 2016)

What the Hip Hop generation is looking for is precisely that, a spark that drives them to purposeful action (Bell, 2014, p. 4). The missing ages have lost faith, hope, and purpose. The

church must find a way to reconnect with the so-called lost generation, but the problem is the church must change itself as well as a lifetime of traditions.

CME Church and Millennials

Name change versus heart change. The Millennials today often refer to themselves as a woke generation. Meaning they know precisely who they are and where they came from. The CME Church has chosen in the sixties to change with the time as they changed the name of the church legally from the Colored Methodist Church to Christian Methodist Church. The church decided to move away from the days when Methodist was separated by color, but the name changed, but the conditions did not. The Methodist church is still stuck in a time loop, struggling to separate from slavery, racism, and extreme separation. The Christian Methodist Church is still 98% Black (African) Americans, which always makes the church the Colored Methodist Church in the eyes of the millennials. The name has changed, but the church struggles to join the ranks of the United Methodist, which may be the reason the CME and African Methodist Episcopal (AME), or in some ways dying.

Church traditions were another issue that Millennials find difficult dealing with the CME Church. Dr. Ray Hagan challenged baptism and communion. Hagan teaches that the water has no saving power, and there is no actual spiritual cleansing doing the baptism process. Millennials and believers are being taught you go down in the water a sinner, and you are bought up out the water a wet sinner (Pastor Gino Jennings, a famous YouTube Preacher). The traditions that constitute a significant part of the church need to be explained to the new believer to help them understand that baptism is just the start of a life-changing process (Mitchell, 2018). Nothing happens overnight; it takes time to unlearn bad habits. The words of communion have also caused plenty of problems with painting the picture of Christians being cannibals. Pastor

Jennings and Pastor Ray Haggins have indicated this process is brutal and sickening. The idea of drinking a man's blood and eating His flesh is not only unclean; it is not holy. Other significant religions like Islam also condemn the practice and idea of communion. Traditions in the Church are necessary but, at some point, need to be explained. Parents must introduce their children to Christianity at home when they are young to give them a foundation of belief. Pastor Haggins challenged the idea that Grandparents and parents introduce a book that will keep Black people enslaved for many more generations to come. After reading the Bible, listening to preachers, and reading many books, there are so many ways to destroy millennials and every generation of wavering believers.

Politics versus souls. The millennials today still hear the voice of James Brown's song "I am Black, and I am proud" ringing in their ears. They are looking for freedom, and unfortunately, freedom cannot be found in a black church. The goal of the millennials seemed to be accepted and created as equals and worship with White Americans. In today's society and racially charged climate where history threatens to repeat itself, this generation has threatened to walk away from the church, traditions, and even God Himself (Bush & Wason, 2017). This generation is questioning God because of their children or dying in the streets. The young women are being kidnapped reported missing daily, but the god we serve has decided to sit back and watch all this happen. The Black Church has agreed to follow politics more than putting in the work to save souls. Preachers are worried more about the size of the church rather than the ministry that is supposed to take place in the building.

Positional pastor versus servant shepherd. Preachers worry more about their paycheck than God's sheep. The shepherd has left the wolves to attend to the sheep, which leads to the condition of the church today filled with a few believers holding on by faith. The millennials

may never come back to the Methodist church. The church does not offer the relationship to God that young people seek. There are so many religions and churches in America, and because of media, the millennials have access to them all, causing a world of confusion (Bush & Wason, 2017). People are not sure what to believe now. They do not know if God is Black or White. One religion teaches Jesus and Satan are the same people. The millennials have been taught the Bible is written by a man to enforce slavery, and if the millennials follow any form of Christianity, they will continue to be enslaved (Mitchell, 2018). Today, most people want to go back to the days like Father Abraham when there were no denominations, and they could go to God on their behalf, and He answered. Millennials want to feel God and know that He is real.

Wicca is one of the ancient religions that millennials have started practicing. In 2009, the Barna study group found that 55% of Americans had never heard of Wicca. Still, the study group predicted that in 2012 Wicca could be the third-largest religious group in the United States (Dyck, 2010, p. 110). The polls conducted by the Covenant of the Goddess (the largest group of Wiccans in the US.) there are 800 hundred thousand Wiccans and other pagan religions in the United States (Dyck, 2010). Even Harvard University produced a study that one hundred thousand Wiccan and pagan groups have formed nationwide on college campuses (Dyck, 2010). Millennials have become attracted to the ideas of magic, gods, goddesses, earth-based religions, worshipping nature, and they engage in seasonal rituals (Dyck, 2010). Some faiths teach Jesus, and Lucifer is the same person, so of course, the millennials are being led astray.

The internet rules their day and allows the doors of random ideas to flow into their young minds (Burns & DeVries, 20003). Preachers like Ray Hagan give inspiring sermons on Jesus never existed. When millennials have unanswered questions that they cannot ask at church or home, they go out and find the answer one way or another. In his book “Real Teens,” George

Barna gave the research that in 2001, nine out of ten teenagers, regardless of race, used the internet (Barna, 2001, p. 107). He also pointed out that in 2001 one-quarter of Black teens were using the internet (Barna, 2001). In the year 2020, every young adult has a cell phone in their hands, even children as young as two years old. Millennials can explore everything from music, video games, religion, Wicca, and anything else their heart desires. Millennials no longer must come to their parents for answers they want to know. There was a time that students had to say, "The Pledge of Allegiance." The Pledge of Allegiance was an everyday ritual in elementary school, but the government removed God from the schools one day. Students and teachers were no longer allowed to show their religious beliefs or even pray in the school anymore (Bush & Wason, 2017, p. 49). The shows the millennials are watching, like Harry Potter, Twilight, Ghost Hunters, and Lucifer, have turned the heads of children that were once seeking Christ. Millennials have started seeking pagan gods and seeking old religions.

Theological Foundations

The CME Church, like most churches across the country, has a problem of missing millennials in the church. Bishop Sylvester Williams Sr., the presiding Bishop of the Third Episcopal District, called at the conference that it was time to bring the millennials home. The pastors of the churches are like Shepard's that are charged with taking care of God's children. The history lesson of the Shepard was amazingly broken down in a sermon by Dr. Howard-John Wesley. Dr. Wesley preached about baby Jesus being born in a manger, and the Shepard came to honor Him. The Shepard's job was to attend to the sheep, and because they smelled terrible from dealing with animals all day, they were thought of as the least of these. Amazingly, the Shepards were at the birth of Christ the ones whose job was to attend to the sheep. They came as

they were. The Bible did not say they got dressed up in their most elegant attire, but they came just like they were.

The church should be open for the millennials to come back in whatever condition the world has placed them in. Ministry must be free because most millennials are struggling to make ends meet. The millennials need to hear a word from God, knowing He still cares, and He stands with open arms waiting for them to return.

Biblical Foundations

What would the church look like if the church followed the things the preacher preached about? Thinking about the millennials brings one of the greatest stories in the Bible to mind, “*The Prodigal son.*” This story is found in Luke 15:11-31. This parable is about a young man who decided to take on the world by himself with his father’s money. To ask for one share of the inheritance was unheard of in antiquity; in effect, one would thereby say, “Father, I wish you were already dead” (Keener, 1993, p. 232). In the Jewish Custom, the younger son's action would have been considered a cruel act of rebellion and outrageous conduct that disregarded Exodus 20:12. Exodus 20:12 states, “Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (NIV Bible p. 63). This scripture Luke 15: explores not only one rebellious son, but it points the finger at a generation that feels entitled to everything the world has to offer.

This generation of millennials thinks everything should have to be handed to them on a silver platter. Like most people, when they leave home, they find themselves in trouble after their money has run out, then they must make tough life choices. Find a job or go home, admitting failure and defeat. The prodigal son worked for a pig farmer until he was broken

enough to eat the same food as the pig. He did a horrible job getting what he deserved for his father's mistreatment of feeding unclean animals (Keener, 1993, p. 233). He was reduced to eating carob pods showing the decline of his Jewish lifestyle far removed from Jewish faithfulness and his downward mobility in economic terms a son unto a hireling (the new interpreter's, 2003, p.1888). He then realized what he had at his father's house realizing it was time to go home. He started to think straight and started thinking logically (Barton & Muddiman, 2001, p.947). The Prodigal son learned things from his father to lean on to help him understand the importance of going back, but the millennials have found comfort living in the pigpen. There is no one to tell them what to do, and the food the pigs eat does not taste that bad when you get used to it.

There comes a time when someone must pray for you; the same is true for the millennials and the bible story of "The Prodigal Son." After comparing the millennials to the Prodigal Son, that stepped out into a dangerous world trying to find his own space. Trying to do his own thing and life just distracted him from God. The millennials have a list of things that distract them from a relationship with God. The internet, at the length of a fingertip, makes them available to any and every religion. It also creates a system of doubt and unbelief. Facebook shares the opinion of millions that choose not to believe, causing millennials to spin and spin till their mind is at a breaking point (Mitchell, 2018). Then suddenly, life creates a space just for them filled with darkness, drugs, suicide, and everything else that finds its way to your doorstep when you're out of a relationship with God.

That is where Luke 15:18 gives the millennials good news. It will come a day that the millennials will have enough of what the world has to offer and remember what they had when they were in their father's house. When they realize that even the least of thee had great things

and food to share in the father's house, that moment they start repenting, and with a made-up mind and seeking heart, they decide to come home to their Father's House. They will find the father on a hill (Luke 15:20) filled with pity and tenderness with open arms, ready to embrace every one of them. The assessment of the Jewish father running to meet his son with an open arms embrace would be regarded as demeaning for a Near Eastern Parent, and it also showed a father that was concerned for his son anxious for his son's return (Barton & Muddiman, 2001, p. 947). God is just waiting on them to come home to put a new robe on their back. Some original Jordans on their feet, and some new bling on their fingers. Millennials, people are praying and waiting for you to find your way home. The church counts on you to lead it into the next generation and inspire a new breed of believers.

John 20: 24-30 was another example of a text dealing with this generation of unbelievers. Thomas' experience is meant to help all believers who have not seen the risen Christ (Barton & Muddiman, 2001, p. 998). Jesus earlier appeared to the disciples, and Thomas was not in place (Lk 24: 36-49). The story goes that Jesus appeared to them in Jerusalem, wishes them peace, shows them His hands and feet, and eats the fish they give Him. He (Jesus) gives them (the disciples) a mission to all people and promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit (Barton & Muddiman, 2001, p. 997). When they told Thomas instantly began to refer to pagan tradition's phantoms, ghosts, or no more than a spiritual vision (Keener, 1993, p. 318). Thomas had difficulties understanding Jesus; now, he hesitates when confronted by His resurrection (Barton & Muddiman, 2001, p. 998). Thomas's disbelief would cause him to make some statements he would later regret. In verse 2, Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail mark in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into His (Jesus) side, I will not believe." Thomas's words set up a scenario that Jesus would come and have Thomas touch Him, and Thomas

believed. In verse 29, Jesus told him (Thomas), “Because you have seen me, and have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” The millennials are part of that blessed generation that has not seen but believes. Jesus ‘blessing (v. 29) applies to the readers of John, who believe through the apostolic testimony (v. 31); verse 30 is the culmination of John’s signs motif: signs sometimes lead to faith and sometimes lead to the opposition (Keener, 1993, p. 318). The world is whispering in their ear; Jesus is not real, and life pulls them in many different directions. Somehow, someone must reach the millennials to help them keep believing in keeping them in the church.

Luke 15 Now, the tax collectors and sinners were all coming near to listen to Him. (2) And the Pharisees and the scribes kept muttering and indignantly complaining, saying, “This man accepts and receives and welcomes sinners and eats with them. (3) So, He told them this parable; (4) What man of you if he has a hundred sheep and should lose one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine lost in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? (5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Lk 15:5 The easiest way to carry a lamb was across one’s shoulders, with the legs crossed over one’s chest” (Keener, 1993, p. 232). (6) And when he gets home, he summons together friends and neighbors, saying to them, rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep which was lost (Amplified Bible).

The millennials are no more than rebellious sinners in the eyes of the current day Pharisees (church folks). Jesus did something unusual in this text. He received and welcomed sinners. Everyone is a sinner that has fallen short but is saved because of grace. The millennials have strayed away from the church, and in the ideal church, the pastor would go after the one that has to fall apart or lose their way. The scripture says in Psalm 28:9 “Save your people and bless Your heritage; nourish and Shepard them and carry them forever” (Amplified Bible). God

has commanded that His shepherds go out into the wilderness to take His children (the millennials) and bring them home. The moral of the story is to bring one or thousands of millennials back, and the people of the church should rejoice and be glad for them restoring their relationship with the Lord.

Theoretical Foundation

There has been conversation after conversation about this lost generation of millennials from the church. Everyone is talking about the problem, but no one seems to have a solution. People talk a lot about issues, but very few people make up their minds to step forward to find a solution. The problem may never be solved because there is a possibility that the millennials have found other avenues to worship than the church (Dyck, 2010). The conditions of the churches, preachers with the “I Am God” mentality, and church hurt have led millennials away from the church and their parents (Mitchell, 2018). Just a quick survey around the church, the preachers that love and care for God’s people are often set down and not allowed to do ministry. Elders must choose between medicine, bills, and tithes, and offerings. Some millennials have had days when there was no food on their table, and no one came from the church to feed the needy. With this generation of believers believing they have been waking up from the slave master’s religion, it will be challenging to convince them the church is for them (Dyck, 2010). Then when they attend church, they may get the unmotivated preacher who has come for another paycheck. They often find that the church and traditions have nothing to offer them as millennials.

There are many characteristics of millennials, both positive and negative. They appear to be young and impatient wanting to take over the world. They want to lead the companies and are no longer willing to work their way to the top. The millennials are educated and often have

more to offer than the prior generation. The internet inspires them to instant moments of fame getting hundreds of likes on a single post (Mitchell, 2018). The millennials want to be the preachers they watch on television, making millions of dollars. That is genuinely not how the church works. Then there are those millennials who have found other ways to worship and understand God. Many women have flocked into the old Wicca Religion (Dyck, 2010). While others are content to sit and have Bible conversations at the coffee shop, the church must find a way to reach millennials, which might challenge some of the church's traditions, but either way, the church must try something (Mitchell, 2018).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the research and methodology used to conduct a qualitative experiment exploring the relationship between millennials and the CME Church. The grounded theory approach allowed for data to be collected to give insight into why millennials are leaving the CME Church.

The intervention design includes several components for the assimilation of millennials into the community at Scruggs Memorial CME Church. For years, the goal was for young people to be inspired by the Word of God, but this desire has been met with low participation of millennials within the church community. The objective has thus been to use prayer, dance, and other forms of engagement without forcing religion upon church members. The church's survival needs to find a way to reconnect the millennials with the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The problem has been developing for two generations, but there has been much talk with the Christian Methodist Episcopal Churches and little action in the researcher's area. This research study has been designed to focus on the need for activities involving youth and young adults in the congregation.

Research Design Overview

Phase 1: Pilot Study Discipleship Program

The Pilot Study included five weeks of a Discipleship Program with 20 millennials so that the researcher could establish a baseline understanding and relationship with the participants. The millennials were chosen based on their age, race, and religion. The Discipleship Program included discussions about the Bible and critical issues surrounding the participants. This study provided insight for the researcher, such as the participant's concerns

with the church-related to the millennial generation's lack of participation. At the end of the pilot study, a Pilot exit survey was administered, resulting in the three primary variables (see Appendices E-F) used to develop the millennial questionnaire (see Appendix H).

The participants were also selected for the minister Alliance board's research because they knew the individuals better than the researcher. A Likert scale was used in the survey, which rated all participants using the same qualifications (see Appendix G). Following the Discipleship Program and the Pilot Exit Survey review, three general variables were identified, and a 9-question Millennial Questionnaire was administered (3 questions for each of the three broad topics). Also, from the millennial questionnaire, detailed themes were developed based on the Millennial Questionnaire data collection and analysis. Finally, the researcher sought to gather perspectives from church pastors to compare viewpoints from different generations within the church. Therefore, the variables obtained by the researcher based on the Millennial Questionnaire responses were used to create a list of survey questions that were used as discussion points with five pastors from various CME churches in Saint Louis, Missouri area (see Appendices H-K).

Phase 2: Questionnaire Data Analysis and Pastor Surveys

Phase two introduced the opportunity to hear what the millennials wanted to say about their thoughts and needs in the church. The researcher was also interested in seeing if the pastors were willing to meet the needs of the millennials while at the same time taking the risk of disrupting the church traditions. After the participants completed their questionnaires, and the researcher reviewed the millennials' responses, the researcher used their responses to develop a survey for the five pastors to complete (see Appendix L).

The CME Pastors Questionnaire questions were designed in the same format as the Millennial Questionnaire described above in Phase I. It consisted of nine questions (three for each variable) that were discovered. The questions were designed to help the researcher gather information on connecting with the millennials, pastors, and older members of the church. The researcher obtained feedback and perspectives from both the pastors and the millennials to hear both groups' voices. Once the pastors responded to the CME Pastors Questionnaire, the researcher analyzed the replies that were given by the millennials and the pastors to determine the similarities and differences. From the analysis of these two questionnaires, thematic patterns emerged, which were then used to create a series of discussion topics and questions for a Participants' Focus Group (see Appendix M) was designed to obtain confirmation data and additional responses based on input from the pastors.

Phase 3: Millennial Focus Group

Phase 3 included the Millennial focus group, which was held via a zoom meeting and consisted of nine-question and two follow-up questions (see Appendix M). The ten selected millennials who participated in the research were included in the Millennial focus group. The focus group questions were designed for the millennials to discuss their thoughts about the church and its process, and it allowed them to explain some of the reasons they felt that there is a disconnect between the millennials and the church. Finally, the two follow-up questions were used to challenge the millennials to put themselves in the role of the pastors. This allowed them the experience to see if they would handle things differently in rebuilding the connection between the millennials and the older members of the church.

Conclusion

The 3 phases of this research acted as a narrowing process of understanding the millennial generation better within the CME Church. The central theme (s) of this study emerged from this process—the major theme of prayer, time management, and accountability. The analysis of all the questionnaires, interviews, and surveys rendered that many issues are underlining the millennials leaving the church. Behind every theme was a cry of church hurt and people looking for a change to find peace. This research revealed that the first church that needs to be reconciled is not the CME Church, but the temple that the soul lives in must be cleaned before the church is reconciled. The church is just a building that people come to fellowship and worship together. See summary below:

Phase 1: Pilot Study Discipleship Program

- Pilot Study consisting of a 5-week discipleship program with 20 millennials.
- At the end of the pilot study, a Pilot exit survey was administered, resulting in the three primary variables (see Appendices I-K) used to develop the millennial questionnaire (see Appendix H).
- The participants were also selected for the research from the minister alliance board using a Likert scale (see Appendix G).
- The participants completed the millennial questionnaire.

Phase 2: Questionnaire Data Analysis and Pastor Survey

- After the participants completed their millennial questionnaire, the researcher reviewed the responses of the millennials.
- From the analysis of the millennial's responses, a CME Pastor's Questionnaire was developed (see Appendix L).
- Analysis of the Millennial Questionnaire and the CME Pastor's Questionnaire resulted in developing the Focus Group Questions (see Appendix M).

Phase 3: Millennial Focus Group

- Focus Group Questions were asked via Zoom meeting format to the Millennials.
- From the Focus Group Questionnaire, a theme emerged of disconnection between church leadership and the millennials.

Qualitative Research

Simply stated, qualitative data describe qualities or characteristics collected with questionnaires, interviews, and open dialogue with the researcher to produce feedback, which in turn, can be used to help identify solutions to the stated research problem (Sensing, 2011). A pilot study was conducted with the millennial participants. The collected qualitative data allowed the researcher to evaluate participants' responses and identify patterns associated with similar responses. Three variables emerged from this analysis that allowed the researcher to understand better millennials in the church. The three variables that emerged were: prayer, time management, and accountability. The researcher used these variables to create and distribute a second questionnaire to produce feedback that was further used to create surveys that were distributed to several pastors who are considered experts in their field. The survey responses and input from the pastors were used to develop discussion topics for a final focus group to ascertain the nature of the various issues and identify potential strategies to deal with those issues.

Grounded Theory

As part of this qualitative research, grounded theory was also employed.

Grounded theory is meant to 'build theory rather than test theory.' It seeks to 'provide research with analytical tools for handling raw data.' It strives to help qualitative analysts 'consider alternative meanings of a phenomenon.' It emphasizes being 'systematic and creative simultaneously.' Finally, it elucidates 'the concepts that are the building blocks of theory (Sensing, 2011).

This research method aims to develop ideas that evolve throughout the researcher's investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Grounded theory encourages an evolving process that will become clearer and more focused as the patterns in a researcher's data to become more apparent. Questions, formatting, and other fact-finding aspects are performed according to the theory or concepts tested (Corbin

& Strauss, 1994). Grounded theory benefits from an ongoing research process that produces results, unlike many other qualitative studies. It provides researchers with a framework for discovery, more so than a framework for testing some pre-existing idea.

A grounded theory research design was utilized for this study because of the theory's ability to collect and process data continuously and draw conclusions on human behavior and interviews that reflect current conditions in the workforce. Grounded theory is unique in its ongoing approach to standard qualitative methods. Grounded theory was the best as it allowed the researcher to change on the fly, address specifics regarding the developing theory, and better understand the patterns. The grounded theory further provides a framework for forming approaches that change along with evidence and aims to address present conditions rather than sweeping, everlasting conclusions using memos to track changing ideas, an interrelated data collection, and analysis procedure to form working theories. A system of categorization that changes as theories and concepts present themselves to the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 1994).

Corbin and Strauss (1994) state, "Grounded theory is a systematic methodology that has been largely, but not exclusively, applied to qualitative research conducted by social scientists. The methodology involves the construction of hypotheses and theories through collecting and analysis of data" (p. 19). A study using grounded theory is likely, to begin with, a question or with qualitative data collection, which is how this method was used in this research process. The researcher started with the question of "How to bridge the gap between tradition and non-tradition in the CME Church in efforts to reengage millennials?" As the researcher reviewed the data collected, there emerged common variables present in the millennials' responses.

Project Conceptualization

This research aimed to create a program to aid millennials in their involvement in the CME Church. Assimilation of millennials into the church has been a problem. There has been a lot of analysis but not enough implementation of a plan of change. Reid (2002) stated, "The church on American culture in the past generation, one gets the impression that she's been paralyzed as if waiting for permission to act" (p. 17). Fear can paralyze one to do nothing, or it can motivate one to create change. The CME church has been paralyzed by past rituals and traditions, and now is the time for a much-needed change within the church to bring forth hope to future generations.

Pilot Study Implementation

The pilot study sessions were intended to find the disconnect between the millennials and the CME Church. The simple solution was to find something the millennials were interested in to grasp their attention through different trials and errors. Their interest included a Bible study that was a safe place to ask questions and not feel condemned for things preachers thought they should know. The researcher created an open environment and an atmosphere of compromise that brought security to the relationship. The Bible study allowed them the freedom to feel like they had a part in the church, and it allowed the researcher to have free conversations with the millennials to find why there is a disconnect with the church.

The trial period for the study was expected to take between four to six months to determine if this study would address some of the concerns that the church has of the absence of the millennials and young adults in the church—the period for an adequate evaluation of how effective the ministry will be.

The short-term time limit was also designed to test how committed Scruggs Memorial is to working millennials. It was important for the millennials to show their interest in the church. This four to six-month period was enough time to allow other millennials to gain interest and join. The short-term testing period also gave the researcher enough time to go back to the drawing board to rethink the process if needed.

Establishing Baseline Topics

For the researcher to know how to proceed with the problem of reconnecting the millennials with the CME church, there needed to be some communication. The pilot testing was necessary because it allowed the researcher to pinpoint problem areas that were found by opening the communication through the meetings held and the exit evaluation. While searching through the data, it was possible to find specific themes that started to develop with the comments of the millennials. This allowed the researcher to streamline the wide range of issues that appeared to trouble the millennials which found a common thread. In every discussion and survey, three themes emerged: prayer, time management, and accountability.

Coding and Theme Development

Conceptual ordering for this research effort involved the identification of common phrases that the participants used in their responses. These initial concepts, formed through the deduction of relationships in the data, created the groundwork for theories, which are broader statements that researchers can make regarding their research question. Categories were sorted to pull out more generalized themes, which were then interpreted in mass to create general comments about a research topic. Coding is a process by which data is compared and said

concepts are formed. Initial coding involves comparing raw data points, while focused coding looks at smaller-scale trends and compares those.

In contrast, theoretical coding takes these categories and concepts, comparing them to form a more prominent theory (Sbaraini et al., 2011). The themes were developed from the discussion starting from the pilot group and the exit survey. The feedback and responses from the respondents were analyzed to find similar replies. Each reaction was recorded in a theme table, and three major themes were taken, namely those that were the most consistent from all the surveys. Prayer, accountability, and time management emerged as the three primary themes that were discussed.

Expert Consultation and Feedback

Surveying of the pastors was vital because they were the experts in their fields. The pastor is the head authority figure of the church, so if someone wants change to meet the needs of the millennials, there is no better place to start. The experiment's goal is to help reconnect the millennials back to the church, and the pastors are essential to the connection. The pastor must be willing to negotiate with the millennials as they look to answer why their churches are dying. The church is grounded in traditions, so the pastor must decide if tradition is more important than a youthful congregation.

Focus Group

The purpose of the focus group was to pull the participants into one space to have a real-time discussion on the reality of the church today. At the beginning of this process, the overall research question was why were the millennials leaving the church and could they be convinced to stay. The focus group brought the millennials together to pinpoint some reasons millennials chose to leave the church. To understand the millennials, it was necessary to sit down and look

at things through their eyes. Moments of talking and working with the millennials allowed opportunities for pastoral counseling, teaching, and preaching. The researcher's greatest thing from the millennials was that they also had voices that needed to be heard. They wanted someone to listen to them as much as elders demand the respect, they often do not return the same respect they demand.

Through listening it became apparent that millennials had been hurt by the CME Church and they desired healing through prayer. There were moments that the researcher had to remind the millennials church is not just about them, but there are other people in the church that also need their needs met. When the group could no longer meet in person due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, everything was moved to a zoom format. With the zoom format and time limit for every meeting, the group modeled time management. It was important for the researcher and the millennials to keep the discussion focused and moving in the right direction.

Ethical Consideration

Several levels of permission were required before beginning the research. The first permission was from the IRB committee and getting authorization from Scruggs Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Once approval was given to the researcher to move forward from the Pastor of the church and the IRB committee, permission from the participants was also required. Once the members who volunteered to participate in the study were selected, a questionnaire was given to complete, and they were then given the consent form. The consent for the participants was sent through email (see Appendix B). Finally, after the approval was returned, they were given a date and time for a focus group using internet communication through Zoom. Data was collected from the online focus group and then used by the researcher to identify the barriers to millennials' involvement in the church. The researcher conducted

interviews through Zoom and data was coded using pseudonyms and kept under lock and key. The use of pseudonyms was designed to protect the participants' identity while increasing the experiment's validity and organizing the data collection process. Data was stored under lock and key. All in all, this study has no direct benefits for the participants, and there is minimal risk.

Tools, Data, and Analysis

Tools

This study represented an opportunity to answer an essential question that millennials are in the best position to answer. Research, time, and commitment were the only way to analyze what is happening in the church today. The design included various questionnaires (e.g., Pilot Exit Survey, Millennial Questionnaire, CME Pastors' Questionnaire, and the Millennial Focus Group via Zoom meeting) sent out through emails and other social media platforms. This allowed the millennials and pastors time to fill them out and return them to the researcher to collect and analyze.

The ministry met at Scruggs Memorial CME Church once a week on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The devotion started at 5:30 p.m. with scripture and prayer, led by the young adults randomly chosen. The objective of this task was to allow and empower every young adult with the experience of being a part of one of the church's roles and responsibilities. From 5:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Bible Study is in process. This is where the discussion of scripture and the relation of the Bible to the current day is the time to ask and answer any question to help them better understand. The Bible study was used to support the young adults in learning how to utilize the bible for their everyday trials and tribulations that they may be facing, which allowed them to understand the purpose of the ministry better.

Data

Qualitative data can be arranged into categories based on physical traits, gender, colors, or anything that does not have a number associated with it (Taylor, 2019). The researcher kept notes on the interaction of the participants in the pilot study and the interviews conducted using Zoom. This was a unique way of researching the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking notes became a necessary tool to use because of the guidelines of having social distancing. The facilitator had to keep detailed notes on the interaction that the participants were doing during the pilot study and the interviews.

Analysis

Data saturation is a term used in research to indicate that no new information is added that will enhance or change the findings of a study. Data saturation is essential to achieve. It is reached when there is enough information to replicate the research and obtain additional information. Further coding (e.g., identifying the three themes) is no longer feasible (Sensing, 2011). Once the researcher started collecting data, themes emerged from the millennial questionnaires, which reached a point of data saturation. Then the next step in the process to build on the research was the pastor's comments to the question presented to them based on the replies of the millennials. The final step was the recorded interviews within the focus group.

In-depth interviews and focus groups are two commonly used methods of qualitative research. So, through the various questionnaires and findings, the similarities through the participants' responses to the study. After completing the survey, the data was collected and reviewed after consolidation to create a chart that helped highlight the comparisons and contrasts of all questionnaires. Themes from the millennials and pastors helped the researcher form an

unbiased opinion of the condition of the church to produce a pattern to see if millennials were truly considering leaving the church.

The Intervention of the Pilot Discipleship Program

Young adults must be integrated into the discipleship strategies of the local church body. This section provided the implementation and design of the research. While some applications of discipleship principles may differ, young adults need to be part of a group that includes mixed genders, multi-generational groups, and families. Relationships are also a high priority for many young adults. They often look for qualified mentors to begin careers, establish their own homes, and build marriages. Discipleship provides one way in which to meet these needs while encouraging young adults on their Christian journey.

Participants

The participants in the study were Millennials from 24-31 years of age. The Millennials chosen for the research were all consistent with the millennials' core age bracket. Some young adults in this group are married, making them essential to the study because they are starting their families and can continue to teach the next generation about the church's traditions. The design was implemented to determine if the married participants with children were willing to sacrifice their time and bring their families. Many young adults work, and some still attend college part-time/ full-time.

The research group consists of ten millennials ranging from the age of 24-31 years of age. There were ten participants chosen out of the twenty that started when the research began. The ten that displayed the most interest and willingness to go through with the researcher became the core of the focus group. The millennials all live in Missouri or communities within a

50-mile radius of St. Louis. All ten participants were of African American descent. The group included three males and seven females. Only one male and four females were currently active in the church at the time of the study. Two males and three females were not as involved in the church as the other five members because they were reportedly trying to figure out whether the church meets their needs or their expectation of ministry.

This research will help by providing valuable data from participants, which may drive church membership and retention by directly engaging millennial generation members and several pastors to understand the discrepancies in perspectives better. When the researcher steps into the experience, he can become a part of something that requires them to take a risk. Many people have researched the topic, but no one within the researcher's church and district of churches has attempted to meet this generation from this unique qualitative perspective. This research provided an opportunity to bring two or more generations back into a better relationship with the CME Church. For this research, the researcher used emails, messenger, Sunday morning announcements, and the quarterly conferences using zoom and one of the millennial pastor's YouTube channels.

Implementation of the Pilot Discipleship Program

The intervention of the Pilot Study called the Pilot Study Discipleship Program (PSDP) included five distinct sessions. The pilot study was conducted as the first task in the intervention, and it was designed to establish a rapport with the participants and gather essential baseline data. The PSDP consisted of the following five lessons, followed by the administration of an exit survey to identify the most prominent topics that might represent a meaningful connection or disconnection associated with the older and younger generations. The pilot group was held every Thursday at Scruggs Memorial CME Church to figure out the range of

commitment from the millennials. The group met with bible study, which started with a devotion that forced the millennials to find and read scriptures.

Session 1 Youth and Humanity (1st Timothy 4:12; peter 5:5-9)

Lesson one dealt with youth and humanity using two scriptures, 1st Timothy 4:12 and 1st Peter 5:5-9. 1ST Timothy 4:4 opened up with a simple statement, “For everything God has created is good, and nothing is to be thrown away or refused if it is received with thanksgiving.) Timothy was letting the others know they must be good stewards while ministering for Christ. Timothy spoke a lot about training and showed the importance of following Christ. This led to the following thought-provoking questions for the millennials to discuss.

- What is an example of speaking in the love of Christ? Has anyone in the church ever looked down on you just because of your age?
- What makes you worthy of taking a leadership role in the church?
- How do we keep from making the same mistakes that were made today from the generation of tomorrow?

The second part of the lesson that arrived from 1st Peter 5:5-9 reminds the millennials that they are still young in ministry and should still have some respect for their elders in their church. There arose some interesting questions that helped produce mind-changing conversations with the millennials. Why is it essential to clothing yourself in humility? Can we cast all our anxieties besides because God cares for us? Does the Devil still prowl around like a roaring lion trying to devour us today?

Session 2 From the Beginning (Jeremiah 1:4-9)

Jeremiah was a priest and prophet that helped readers understand the religion and the politics in Judah during the last forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The

importance of Jeremiah's message in 1st Timothy is that it explores the idea that God knew the millennials even in the womb. Millennials have confessed to struggling to understand God because they have gone through or have seen in this reality of daily living. God was there from the creation of the millennial, and he shall continue you to bide in them until their dying day. The scripture also teaches the millennials that even with all the life experiences that God is preparing them for the mission He has called them to do. In 1st Timothy 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb, I knew and approved of you before you were born, I set you apart. In vs. 7, God said, "Say not that I am only a youth; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you should speak." The first question for the millennials,

- Do you honestly believe God knew you in the womb?
- Does God have a purpose just for you?
- When you are in trouble, do you still believe that God will come to the rescue today?
- What is your take on God saying, "before you were born, I set you apart?"

Session 3 Slave to Christ (Romans 1:1; Eph 2:6)

Paul was the only apostle that never walked with Christ, and he met Christ after His resurrection. Paul is considered by many the author of the faith and inclusion of the Gentiles into Christianity. In some scholars' eyes, Paul was extreme in his beliefs, and he was dedicated to his mission of introducing people to Christ. Paul suggested that we must be a slave to Christ. Still, today's revelation and the idea of what slavery was to the ancestors of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (original name of the CME Church) sparked an interesting debate.

- What does it mean to be a slave to Christ?
- Does the Bible condone slavery?
- Are we still willing to be slaves for Christ today?

- What does slavery mean to you?
- What does it mean to be a slave to sin?

Session 4 How to be saved by Grace? (Roman 10:9)

In Romans 10:9, Paul gave the formula for being saved. If one confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. There seems to be a growing debate as to what a Christian must do to be saved. Some people believe that one must be baptized to be saved. Others believe that a person must speak in tongues, but Paul made it plain and straightforward that believers must confess, meaning to speak that Jesus is Lord of their lives. Then they must believe in their heart which is an inner sign that only the millennial truly knows. Meaning this is a moment of self-evaluation that they must investigate for themselves because no one can answer for them. With the internet and so many different religions saying Jesus never rose from the grave, one must ponder the question do they believe Jesus rose from the grave? Paul opened the doors to a complex but straightforward condition of salvation. One must believe in the impossible that God raised Jesus from the grave to challenge the understanding of salvation. Everyone needed to be in one accord with the basic knowledge of one's salvation. Two questions emerged, allowing millennials to wrestle with how one is being saved:

- Are we saved by grace or our works?
- If we are saved by grace, on what basis can a person be sure of their salvation?

Session 5 By Faith, the walls fall (Acts 16:35; Hebrews 11:30; Joshua 6:1)

Matthew 17:20 tells us if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains. Acts 16:35 Paul was released from jail. Joshua 6:1 The people believed the words of

God and followed His instruction, and they were able to walk into the Promised Land. Hebrews 11:30 because of faith, the walls came tumbling down.

- Is God for us or against us?
- With faith and obedience comes deliverance?
- Do you have faith to move mountains?
- Can faith still deliver us today?

Summary

Chapter three provides the specific design elements used in this phenomenological study. The role of the researcher, the processes of the research, the details about the selection of the participants set the framework for developing the essence of the study. The section on the data collection process provides the nature of the study. The section on data collection processes provides the rationale for the various questionnaires and the Pilot Discipleship Program.

The basis of the study captures the essence of the role of millennials within the CME church and their future impact within this beloved denomination. It is anticipated that this study will illuminate and contribute to the deficit of literature on this topic. The next chapter will discuss the details of the results of the phenomenological analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the phases of data collection and the findings related to this study. More specifically, it examines whether millennials can change the current trend toward declining membership and participation in the CME church by evaluating a church in St. Louis, Missouri. The overall objective is to gain knowledge and insight from the data participants (i.e., millennial members and pastors) that will impact the CME Church's efforts to expand their congregation. The results indicated three themes that emerged: prayer, time management, and accountability.

The pilot study helped determine reliable and suitable candidates to move forward with picking the ten millennials for the focus group. The desired outcome for the experiment was to see if the CME Church was dying and if the millennial generation was the key to saving the church. The first phase of the process was the study group held at Scruggs Memorial CME Church every Thursday from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. This study group focused on biblical interpretation, prayer, and basic life conversations. Here was the chance to learn who the millennials were and if they would be committed to the research study. The second phase was to find the participants who were willing to participate and met the study's qualifications. After the pilot group ended, an exit questionnaire was given to all participants that allowed them to express their views, concerns, likes, dislikes, and a choice if they would like to move to the next part of the process.

The millennials received a phone call. The researcher sent follow-up emails with the second set of questions that would lead to their in-depth responses toward the three themes and assist with creating the questionnaires for the pastors who the experts in their field of study were. The third phase was to complete pastor surveys and break down their responses to create the

format for the Zoom face-to-face recorded group session with the millennials. Finally, the Zoom meeting (fourth phase) was held among the study participants (i.e., no pastor involvement) to exchange ideas and determine if improvements in communication and understanding between the millennials and church leaders could be established and enhanced.

Demographics

The research study consists of ten millennials ranging from the age of 24-31 years of age. The millennials all live in Missouri or communities within a fifty-mile radius of St. Louis. All ten participants are of African American descent. The group is broken down into four males and six females. Half of the participants are currently active in the church right now. Five participants were married, and one was going through a divorce. Four were single, and 80% of the participants have families and careers. All participants are graduates of high school, and six have bachelor's degrees from colleges.

Diamond is a 26-year-old African American woman. She lives in Saint Louis North County. She works as a Customer Service Representative. Diamond is a high school graduate with a college education.

Monica is a 30-year-old African American woman. She is a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) in St. Louis. She lives in a suburb of St. Louis. Monica graduated from high school and completed an LPN program.

Leroy is a 35-year-old African American man. He is a postal worker. He has an Undergraduate Degree in Theology. Leroy is presently going through a divorce.

Bobby is a 28-year-old African American man. He lives in Creve Coeur, Missouri. He works as a paralegal. He has an associate degree. Bobby is married and does not have any children yet.

Martin is a 27-year-old African American man. He lives in St. Ann, Missouri. He works as a Financial Analyst. He has an Undergraduate Degree in Business Finance. Martin is married to Diane, and they have two children.

Diane is a 27-year-old African American woman. She lives in St. Ann, Missouri. She works as a Dental Hygienist. She graduated from a dental program. Diane is married to Martin and has two children.

Ruby is a 27-year-old African American woman. She lives in St. Louis, North County area. Her profession is a Pre-School Teacher. Ruby is a high school graduate with an associate degree.

Jessica is a 24- year-old African American woman. She lives in Florissant, Missouri. She works as Delivery Driver. She is a high school graduate with a college education. Jessica is married to Johnny, and they have one-and-a-half children.

Johnny is a 27-year-old African American man. He lives in Florissant, Missouri. He works as a bank teller. He is a high school graduate with a college education. Johnny is married to Jessica, and they have one-and-a-half children.

Sapphire is a 31- year-old African American woman. She lives in St. Louis, City. She works as a Human Resource Specialist. Sapphire has an Undergraduate Degree in Business Administration.

Millennial Survey

While exploring the perspectives of the millennials, it became apparent that many of the participants experienced some form of hurt by the Churches lack of opportunities. Also, the heavy expense of fees attached to being a member (e.g., conference claims, different events requiring donations) of the church were the reasons their interest was moving away from the church environment. The millennial survey (see Appendix H) was emailed to the participants to complete before their scheduled interview. The research explained the three themes from their surveys with prayer, time management, and accountability questions. A total of three questions were asked to understand better all three themes (i.e., questions 1-3 were related to prayer, questions 4-6 were related to time management, and questions 7-9 focused on the concept of accountability).

Theme 1: Prayer

The first set of questions (questions 1-3) of the millennial survey addressed the Prayer Theme identified from the millennial questionnaire completed at the end of the pilot study (see Appendix F). There were commonalities the millennials prayed for, including peace, family, and prosperity. The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 1 of the millennial survey.

Monica's response supported this idea with her comment.

Peace, most millennials pray for peace, purpose, and prosperity. Because most millennials are depressed, they lack their purpose.

Bobby stated this about the question,

I think the most important prayers that millennials find valuable are prayers about the safety of friends and family and themselves. I also feel that blessings about personal and or career success would be beneficial. These prayers would be valuable because these things are what most, if not all, millennials face daily, and they want to see the best possible outcome.

Martin then mentioned,

I believe the most important prayers are for my loved ones. The world's state is now that simple prayers for protection and guidance will do wonders for people. These prayers are valuable because they give me a sense of confidence. Knowing that God answers all prayers, I know I am protected and guided in the right direction. And the same goes for my family.

Sapphire also mentioned that sometimes millennials question many things with their faith, and here is her response.

With everything that is going on now, I think many millennials are praying for faith and strength. There is so much going on, and sometimes it may make you question religion, and you may be going through so much that you ask how much more you can take. So, you are constantly praying for strength.

In reviewing question 1, the data revealed the following responses regarding the importance of prayer. In the communities that most millennials live in or grew up in, there is fear of what might happen next. Children are getting murdered at an alarming rate. It does not matter if it is by their peers or the police. There is a significant problem. African American children have increasingly started missing, and somehow Black Lives Matter has found itself rooted throughout the community. The millennials have reason to pray for their homes and families today. The simple idea of financial stability makes sense in being able to take care of oneself and their family. Millennials want to move to better and safer neighborhoods, and the one problem that the CME Church presents: most of their churches are in low-income-based communities. Many millennials find it a turn-off because they do not want to go to church in dangerous areas.

The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 2 of the millennial survey.

Martin responded,

I often pray for protection, healing, and guidance. Whenever I make a drastic decision, I pray for the Lord to order my steps. I pray for these things because God is the head of my life, and I do not like to move forward unless I have had a conversation with him.

Monica also stated,

I pray for peace, understanding, and guidance. I am often lost, confused, and need advice.

Bobby then mentioned,

I pray for the safety, health, and well-being of friends and family, also for guidance, and for God to allow me to make good decisions.

In reviewing question 2, the data revealed several variables the participants prayed for, such as guidance, or more specifically, the comfort of knowing and believing that God would order their steps to avoid danger and unnecessary pitfalls. Once again, the millennials' perspectives were generally consistent with most church members that worry about the day-to-day troubles they face.

The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 3 of the millennial survey regarding whether prayer changes things. Monica stated,

While during a storm, she prayed and prayed till the point of losing faith, then right in the middle of a breakdown, God granted her peace.

Martin added,

A person may not always get what they are exactly praying for, but God does make the situation better.

Jessica suggested,

Prayer does change things, but sometimes there must be action on the person's part instead of waiting for God to respond.

In reviewing question 3, the data revealed the participants thought that prayer could change things as it was directly connected to God, or stated another way, "Is God an on-time God?" The participants were looking for an immediate response from Him. It was a sign of disappointment for having to wait but hope that God would still come through, and the

enlightenment that sometimes a person must help themselves and not just wait on God to do everything.

Theme 2: Time Management

The next set of questions (questions 4-6) were presented to the participants focused on the second theme, Time Management. Questions 4 thru 6 of the millennial survey help get a better understanding of the millennials' thoughts about time management. The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 4 of the millennial survey regarding time management:

Martin stated,

I hardly ever plan my day. If I have appointments, I plan my day around that, but otherwise, I never plan. Even with work, it is hard for me to plan my day out because it is constantly changing when I walk in the door. Most of the time, I am just thanking God for getting me through the day and waking me up.

Ruby also responded,

I do not actually “plan them” most important things to me are being productive, along with time, spending time with loved ones, and meditation.

Diane expressed how they did not plan their day, but they did have this to say,

I do not plan my day. I take whatever the day gives me. I see it as whatever happens in my daily was meant to happen. I take on each day with a ready attitude, and nothing breaks me. The most important part of my day is seeing my girls wake up with a smile on their faces. When I see that, I know it is going to be a good day.

In reviewing question 4, the data revealed millennials rarely planned their day and time at all. They seem to go along with whatever the day brings.

When they were asked question 5, “As a millennial, how much time do you dedicate for God and things related to the church, and in what ways do you use this time?” many of the responses were slightly different. They answered with the duties they did for the church to the

amount of time they may have spent with God. Here are a few of the responses that the participants made.

Jessica response was,

To be truly dedicated to God and in church, I am usually involved in my church's media. For example, I tape the service and take pictures and post them on our church FB page. The essence of doing all of this is making sure I give people a church to let our people see and hear what we are about.

Sapphire stated,

When we could do things in the church, I would dedicate a lot of time to the church. Sometimes I think I let everyday life get in the way of how much time I should commit to God.

Monica answer to the question was,

I try to give God 15-20 minutes of my day. I read the Bible and be still to see if I can hear him.

Bobby reply was this,

I dedicate at least an hour, silently talking to God each day. I am not as involved in the church as I was when I was younger; however, I maintain a relationship with God.

In reviewing question 5, the data revealed interesting features that were consistent and understood their attitude about giving time to God. The interesting observation that came from this question concluded that spending time with God went hand in hand in their church efforts. Some millennials did not respond, showing that they had a personal relationship with God. Even if they did not have a personal relationship with God, their good works and deeds in the church never seem to go unnoticed. Only two people related their relationship with God with self-meditation and studying of the Word.

The participants addressed how much time they dedicated to God and matters related to the church. The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 6 of the millennial survey that was presented to them regarding time management:

Diamond stated,

I will be willing to commit as much time as I need in the ministry by having events bringing in millennials, not having members that are not so judgmental towards the younger generations, and just doing things that will keep the youth in the church.

Johnny responded,

I do not know how much more time I am willing to commit, but I will dedicate more time if everyone works together, and nobody has their agenda.

Jessica answered,

What I would do to make more time is more involved, like getting into singing in church, making daily announcements, praise dance, etc.? I take off time from work so that I can be at church. I need more of the church because work is stressful. Church gives me Faith and hopes I can make it through.

Finally, Monica said,

I would not mind committing to the ministry, but it often does not feel like churches welcome millennials.

When the researcher asked the participants how much time they were willing to commit to a church, it became more of a game of reasoning and excuses. Millennials seem to take rumors as facts rather than fact-checking the source for validity. The researcher observed the millennials and found they were attempting to create their own space in the church. The researcher took the time to listen to what the millennials wanted, but the pastors are not ready for that kind of change in some churches. It is true that there are millennials who have the talent to dance, sing, and lead services, but one must keep in mind that the things done in the world are sometimes not appropriate for the church experience. The problem is that every generation believes they know how the church should be run and managed, and millennials want to change right now. Some things must remain the same in the church to continue to be part of the CME denomination.

Theme 3: Accountability

The final set of participant questions (questions 7-9) covered Theme 3: Accountability. Many of the participants had no problem explaining what makes a person accountable to them and what it meant to them to be accountable to someone. The following are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 7 of the millennial survey that was presented to them regarding accountability:

A person being accountable is being a person of their word. They also take ownership of their actions and situations. I feel that is also my definition of accountability. They are taking ownership of all your actions.

The next participant, Diamond stated,

You are willing to accept the outcome of your choices, actions, and behaviors. To me, accountability means owning up to what you have done and not making excuses.

Participant Sapphire answered,

It means you own up to your actions. If you say you are going to do something, you see it through no matter what the outcome. You take responsibility for the things you say and do.

Participant Bobby said,

Accountability means that you are responsible for your decisions and actions, whether right or wrong, good or bad. A person is accountable if they can show that they can take responsibility for what they do or say.

The question regarding what makes people accountable was relatively easy for them to answer, with general agreement. They felt they had to be accountable for their choices and remove excuses or merely take responsibility for what they said or did.

After reviewing the data to question 7 from the study participants, most of them had similar responses to the previous question. Still, when they were asked question 8, “How they could help others become more accountable to God?” the following are transcripts of how the

participants answered Question 8 of the millennial survey that was presented to them regarding accountability:

Participant Sapphire stated,

I feel like you can only be accountable for the things you say or promise you will do. You can be accountable to God by doing the things he set out for you to do. If you say, “God, I will do you will,” then that is what you should set out to do. If you tell your friends and family that it is something that you are going to then you that is what you should do. If you see things that you see going on in your community that you think should change, you be accountable and help with that change.

Participant Diane responded,

Well, you cannot make someone accountable. A person must hold themselves to a higher standard and value, but I would explain that words mean nothing, but actions speak a million words.

Participant Bobby answered,

A person can help their friends become more accountable by being an example of accountability themselves.

Finally, participant Monica said,

If you are honest with them, create a safe space for them to be vulnerable, telling them the truth even if it will hurt.

In conclusion, to question 8, the participants were asked, “how they could make people accountable for what they offered or what they know they should be doing?” The millennials agreed that they could not make people accountable for their actions, but it is up to each person to assume self-responsibility.

The last question (question 9) asked the participant if they thought accountability was an important part of being in a ministry within the church. One of the participants (Ruby) had this to say, “Yes, you cannot throw rocks from a glasshouse. Period!!!”

Even though the previous response was short and to the point, many followings are transcripts of how the participants answered Question 9 of the millennial survey that was presented to them regarding accountability:

Participant Diamond said,

Yes, I believe accountability plays an important part in the ministry because if you are a teacher/preacher, you are accountable for leading your people to the straight path. Suppose you are a minister of music and are supposed to have specific selections for Sunday's service, but you would insist on doing something else. In that case, you are accountable for the outcome of not being prepared.

Participant Martin responded,

I think it is because people must have integrity with their message. Many people who do not believe have the predetermined notion that ministers, and believers do not practice what they preach. Knowing this, I think that as believers, we should strive even more to hold ourselves accountable.

Participant Sapphire stated,

Accountability is an important part of anything you do. Especially when you are dealing with God, you should always hold up your end. Why would you want to shortchange God? When God sets out to do things for you, you should have the same type of enthusiasm when it comes to God and the ministry.

In conclusion, to question 9, the participant's felt accountability was important in ministry in the church. It is important to be accountable in ministry or as a church leader because the millennials feel these pastors are leading God's people. If the pastors do not hold up their end, they are cheating God.

Pastor Survey

After reviewing and going through the feedback from the millennials, the questions and themes were broken down to survey the pastors that are considered the experts in their field (see Appendix L). In the first question (question 1), the researcher asked the pastors, "What they perceived the biggest priorities to be in the millennials of their congregation. Also, they were

asked if their use of prayer was similar to and are different from how the older generations use it.” Below are some of the responses given by the pastors who participated on the minister’s board.

Rev Smitty response was,

In the area in which the church operates and in this time in America, I believe that the biggest priority for millennials is just surviving and keeping family together. Because we have Altar Call Pray Time built into our worship liturgy, communal prayer is included in their worship experience. However, I do not believe that they do much praying outside of the church. The older generations were taught that prayer was how you communicated with God and how to strengthen your relationship with God.

Rev Ron replied,

The most important priorities to us are financial security, stabilizing the family, and supporting worthy causes that improve the lives of others.

Rev Jenny concluded,

I believe that the biggest priorities in the lives of millennials are their walk with God, their dreams and goals, and their family. Some of them pray with the older generation of the church throughout the week when they can. Getting up early to pray is a habit they are trying to develop like the older generation.

Rev Bella responded,

The biggest priorities for millennials are Social Justice and serving God’s people in a tangible and impactful way. Just like the older generation, millennials use prayer to connect/ converse with God. However, they do not rely on prayer alone like most older believers. Prayer is coupled with action and fearlessness that enables them to get in good trouble—the type of good trouble that forces conversations about the elephant(s) in the room. In turn, it cultivates an environment for change or changes itself.

Rev Roy mentioned,

When it comes to youth or the older generation seeking council, I think it just depends on the person and, I think that a healthy church has a great discipleship program so that other Christians can hold each other accountable.

The data from the first question asked to the pastors revealed that the millennials' highest priorities in the pastors' views were family, financial security, and political views. The pastor also concluded that the millennial's prayer life was no different than the older generation.

While reviewing the millennial's comments on the various themes that were identified, the researcher's second question (question 2) to the pastors was. "Are millennials more likely or less likely than your older church members to seek your counsel about their faith and the challenges they face in their daily life?"

Rev Jenny felt this way,

They are more likely to go to God about challenges in their lives. They have discussions about faith and spirituality, but not usually for advice.

Rev Ron's response was similar:

Millennials are more likely to inquire about clarifying Biblical interpretation and doctrine issues. They are more willing to admit that they are wrestling with faith issues.

Rev Smitty added this unique insight:

Millennials are less likely than the older members to discuss their lives with the clergy. There is a built-in mechanism in humankind that does not like their shortcomings and frailties to be exposed. I believe that they find some of our ways old-fashioned and not in tune with the realities of this world.

Rev Bella emphasized the issues that millennials face regarding their faith and life challenges:

Millennials are more likely to seek my counsel about their faith, life challenges, etc., because they can relate to me. When they look at me, they see themselves. They see a leader who is transparent, approachable, fashion-forward, and fluid in ministry. By the word fluid, I can see and think outside of the religious box created by society. Thus, providing a space for them to reveal the good, the bad, and the ugly, free from scorn but filled with care and compassion. #notafraidtotellmystory.

The data from the second question asked to the pastors revealed that the millennials do not have the trust and connection with the pastor as their elders once had. The millennials tend to wrestle with their issues while striving for salvation. Younger pastors seem to believe they

have a better connection with the younger people thinking it creates the opportunity to minister despite their beliefs.

The researcher asked the pastors the third question of “Do you think that millennials consider prayer an important part of their faith? Also, do you place the same value on prayer as older members of your congregation?” Rev Jenny had this to say, “Yes, prayer is an important part of their faith. I think the older members place more value on prayer.” Several of the pastors had this to say regarding the question.

Rev Smitty openly expressed,

Prayer must be understood as a means of addressing God and is not necessarily connected to faith. Belief and trust in God can be strengthened by reading the Bible, listening, and studying with fellow believers. The older members were taught that prayer changes things, and many of them gave God credit for providing during difficult times because He answered their prayers and supplications. The older members were taught that God responded in His due season because someone else prayed for them.

Rev Ron strongly suggested,

Millennials consider prayer to be a significant component of their faith just as much as elder members. Millennials want to pray about jobs, careers, and relationships, while older members pray more about health issues and their spiritual legacy.

Rev Bella passionately shared ideas felt by some millennials in the following way:

Millennials value prayer. They feel it is essential to spend time talking to but most importantly listening to God. Millennials realize and adhere to the fact that He is at the helm of their journey. But they do not believe that prayer and only prayer will solve the woes of the world. As mentioned before, Millennials couple prayer with action.

Rev Roy concluded,

Most of the time, not all the time, youth come to church either for two reasons: friends or parents say they must come. Prayer is taught by the Holy Spirit and through life experiences. I do not think we can judge or determine the depth of the young people’s hearts or how they feel about prayer as a priority. I would only say that it depends on the person. When a person realizes they have to have a total dependency on Christ, their prayer life changes.

The data from the third question asked of the pastors revealed an agreement that prayer was important. The answers leaned heavily on the old theme prayer changes things. The pastor also connected to the millennials with things often prayed about, such as family, financial security, and family protection.

Next, the pastors were asked the fourth question, “Do you think Millennials dedicate enough time to their faith and do they appear to be as dedicated as older church members? If not, why do you think this is the case?”

Rev Ron offered an opinion that opened the floor for a much-needed conversation:

Millennials do not devote as much time to church activities because they tend to be preoccupied with the immediate needs and concerns of becoming independent. Hence, they do not appear to be committed and dedicated to the faith community. However, millennials do not want to sit in a building engaged in theological conversation. They prefer completing ministry tasks that reflect their beliefs and commitments instead of simply attending Sunday School and Bible Study.

Rev Smitty responded.

I believe that those Millennials that stay within the context of the Institutional Church are just as dedicated as the older members.

Rev Bella suggested the idea that time changes many things, but far too often, things remain the same:

Millennials dedicate just as much time, if not more, as their older counterparts. But their dedication looks and feels different. They are action-oriented, so their commitment is seen when feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, protesting for equity, leading Social Justice initiatives, etc. Most often, the older generations gauge dedication to one’s faith by how often a person is inside the four walls of the church, which is archaic. If we are honest with ourselves, the spiritual journey of most Millennials truly reflects the life of Christ. They are out in communities across the nation-changing lives, changing policies, and changing the world one Godly act at a time.

Rev Roy continued the support that most things stay the same with very little change:

I think that young people of this generation are the same as any generation in that they deal with their faith in how they were taught, so if that individual church makes discipleship important, then that youth group will cherish their faith more.

Rev Jenny indicated,

No, they do not dedicate as much time to their faith because they have lost interest. More local activities were designed for their generation and focused on Christian education and training outside of worship services and programs. They would most likely set aside more time. They would rather see more outreach activities.

The data from the fourth question asked to the pastors revealed how much time they dedicated to their faith. It was concluded that millennials do not devote much time to their faith, but they usually become all in when they have something of interest. The pastor did seem to think that the older generation is only doing a little better than millennials nowadays.

The fifth question of “How do you think that the CME Church can encourage Millennials to set aside time to participate in church activities?” The responses from the pastors for this question were very similar, even though there were some differences. For the most part, they felt that it was not up to the church to encourage the millennials to set aside time to participate in church activities. However, they still struggle with how to reach them. The researcher saw this through their comments and suggestions. Participant Rev. Ron suggested this, “Repetitive high impact ministry projects that do not require long term and extended participation.” Pastor Rev. Bella felt this way, “The CME Church would get more buy-in/participation from millennials when they are involved in the planning and when the creativity is recognized and is not denounced.” The researcher found that a few other participants had other comments, suggestions, and more to say.

Rev Smitty had this to say:

I do not believe that any denomination should be encouraging any member to participate in church activities but should be attempting to make disciples of Jesus Christ. It is one

of the most significant challenges of the Institutional Church to stop making members conform to church polity and begin to mold them in the likeness of Christ.

Rev Roy opened the debate with the following response:

The church should stop holding catchy events to get youth to come out because those are all fads. The church is to learn holiness and the Word of God and to fellowship with others. As Christians, the best thing we can do is invite people to come and pray that Jesus would lead them to salvation.

Rev Jenny offered a formula that could help the church succeed in reaching its goal:

If the CME Church had more worship services, programs, and activities developed and led by millennials, they might set aside time to participate. They are an active generation and like to move around. Many millennials do not fear change, like to travel, and take risks. We must tap into their interest and get them actively engaged.

The data from the fifth question asked to the pastors revealed that some of the pastors believed by allowing the younger generation opportunities to lead and direct programs, they would become more involved. At the same time, other pastors thought that the denomination should not focus on the youth but invite all people.

The researcher presented them with the sixth question. “Who should be responsible for encouraging Millennials’ involvement in the church (e.g., the pastor, the congregation, their family), and what types of changes in the church culture do you think would make Millennials want to set aside time for their church?”

Rev Jenny had this to say about who should be responsible for encouraging millennials involvement in the church:

Everyone involved should be responsible for encouraging Millennials to be involved in the church. Many of them are more compelled to focus on their generation and the youth because they have not seen sustained efforts in the CME Church.

Rev Roy replied,

All the above- every baptized believer should encourage youth to come to church. And the only change the church needs to get back to is preaching the fundamentals.

Rev Bella taught a lesson that it is everyone’s responsibility to encourage God’s people,

It is everyone's responsibility to encourage Millennials to get involved in God's work. Space must be created for them to grow in their gifts and talents, positions in the church must have term limits, age must not always equate to wisdom, and Millennials must be valued where they are in life are changes that need to be made in church culture.

Rev Ron concluded that there is a place and role for everyone:

Pastor and congregation must help millennials see that there is a role for them to fulfill in ministry. They must be challenged to offer their unique insights and perspectives that can improve and enhance the church's ministry.

Rev Smitty discussed the foundation of the church:

God has created community and family. The members and the leadership are responsible for helping to shape the Body of Christ (church). Ideas about God, faith, church, and family are shaped in a person before being introduced to the Institutional Church. In any institution, including the church, persons must feel valued, needed, and accepted. People must be allowed to think that they belong where they are. The church culture can sometimes not provide that feeling or provide a culture of waiting until it is your time, and we do not allow a particular type of activities in our church (e.g., Hip Hop Gospel, Dancing). Jesus is the head of the church, and the church is God's hands and feet in the world. We must understand who our neighbor is.

The data from the sixth question asked to the pastors revealed that they felt encouraging millennials in the church falls on everyone. This response was a common response of the pastors. It takes a village to raise a child, and they felt that the church must be more than a church. It must become a community and a family.

The seventh question asked of the pastors was, "Are the Millennials in your congregation more/ less accountable for their actions and mistakes than the older church members? Please give examples." Rev. Jenny concluded, "The millennials in my congregation are accountable for their actions and mistakes. I would not say they are more/ less accountable." While Rev. Roy had this to say, "In my congregation, they are more accountable for their mistakes because, as I said, we are a fundamentalist holiness church." The others had this to say about the millennials being accountable for their action.

Rev Smitty responded with the following insight:

From where I sit, I do not see much difference. Age does not make one accountable; attitude about what is pleasing or displeasing to God forms the basis for being responsible. I see some cultural differences. Ex. Millennials teach their children to ask adults for money, whereas I would not condone that with my children.

Rev Ron indicated,

Millennials in our congregation are more accountable because they seek the counsel of others when accepting ministry assignments, and they honor whatever ministry or financial commitments they make to the church.

Rev Bella respectfully challenged the group by considering the value of a person imagining themselves as the controller of their actions:

I do not think accountability for actions/ mistakes is more/ less for Millennials. However, the older generation seems to have selective memory when it comes to their indiscretions. They tend to highlight Millennial mistakes, i.e., serving time, having children out of wedlock, and coming to church smelling like alcohol to incite shame instead of celebrating the transformation journey.

The data from the pastors' seventh question revealed common agreement among pastors that millennials and elders' accountability to the church is roughly the same. The church elders hold the financial commitment of taking care of the building.

The eighth question asked was, "Do you think that millennials are accountable enough to participate in decisions that Church Elders have historically made? Why or why not?" This question was huge for the pastors due to many of the comments that were made by the millennials. The researcher felt this question would put many things in perspective between the millennials and the elders of the church. Here are several of the pastor's responses.

Rev. Smitty stated the following:

I believe that Millennials are accountable enough to make decisions in the body of Christ. They sometimes have more knowledge about a particular subject than some of the Church Elders. Being old is not synonymous with possessing wisdom. Jesus welcomed

the little children because He realized that they had pure motives and ideas that adult intervention had not entirely changed.

Rev. Ron followed with,

I believe millennials are accountable enough to be decision-makers. They have proven themselves to be earnest in endeavoring to grow and mature spiritually. They creatively demonstrate their love and commitment to fulfilling the great commission in the local church.

Rev. Bella expressed this about the participation of the millennials in the decision-making process:

Absolutely! If our ability to make decisions depended on accountability, nothing would ever get done, especially since the church's rules for accountability are not the same for everyone. For instance, we have pastors who are proven adulterers who make decisions daily that affect the body of Christ. What is the difference? To err is human.

Rev. Jenny agreed:

Yes, they are accountable enough to participate in decisions historically made by Church elders. Still, they feel that inclusion and diversity are issues within the church, like many other organizations. They are willing but need education on the history and discipline of the CME Church and training, so they understand the methodology of how and why we do things the way we do.

The data from the eighth question asked to the pastors revealed that some believed allowing the younger generation to participate in the decision-making process would allow them to be invested in the church. The pastors generally agreed that the millennials could be trusted to make important decisions about the church just like the elders.

The elders of the church in this question refer to the grandparents and parents of the millennials. The church elders have been keeping it going for the last sixty years, and it has run efficiently with few problems. With this generation of believers dying off, it would be beneficial to teach millennials how to maintain the church successfully. The pastors feel that some of the millennials can step in and handle the financial responsibility of the church. The millennials are not interested in being treasures, trustees, or stewards of the CME Church. Millennials want to

lead high-impact and dynamic ministries passing over the traditions that make the church work. There is only one fact that remains true, “You can only teach people who are willing and have a desire to learn.” The researcher also found that some elders will not teach the younger generation in fear of being replaced and forced out of their positions.

The ninth question asked of the pastors was, “How do you encourage your congregation to be more accountable to each other, their family, and God?” This final question was presented to the pastors showed how similar and different the pastors and the millennials may be in their thinking on the issue of accountability.

Rev Smitty offered a map to salvation:

Everything starts with God. God sets the standards. God directs our paths, and God rewards us as He sees fit. Jesus has said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" I encourage people to put God first, family second, and the church third. God created the family before the church, and a strong family is essential to being taught who God is and about loyalty and responsibility. The church comprises like-minded persons who have expressed hope in the only begotten Son of God, Jesus the Christ. He is our example for living a God-centered and God-directed life. Jesus is returning to heaven-sent a helper, the Holy Spirit, who helps us live as Christ-like as we can in this world. The question for each of us is, "Who is Your Master?"

Rev Ron gave a simple invitation:

As a pastor, I welcome, encourage, and support millennials challenging us to be a relevant and relatable Christ-centered church inspired by the word of God.

Rev Bella reminded everyone that love is the key:

Love and compassion work hand in hand with accountability. I remind them there is no greater love than the love of Christ, and he held everyone around Him accountable for their actions. So, if they strive to be more like Him, then accountability must be part of their DNA. However, love and compassion must be its foundation.

Rev Jenny concluded it is necessary to spread the Gospel by any means necessary:

I encourage them to call, write, or video chat with their family members, church members, and friends to keep in touch. To show others that they love them and not just to tell them. We show and give love through our actions, words, and body language. Additionally, I encourage them to meditate, pray, and act on God's word to strengthen their walk. We meet weekly for Bible Study, Sunday School, and after worship service, we virtually unmute our devices and fellowship.

The data from the ninth question asked to the pastors revealed that the common theme to bridge the gap between young and old was love. The people must have compassion and respect for one another. The people must be willing to reach out to people to check on them even when the church doors are closed.

Conclusions Regarding the Questionnaires

The millennial and Pastors' questionnaires were great tools to develop the mindset of the actual condition of the CME Church today. The millennials and pastors both seem to be willing to meet on common grounds with specific issues. The prayer life of millennials was no different than that of Generation X or the Baby Boomers. The significant difference between the millennials and other generations was tithes and offerings, which produces a huge obstacle between the church and millennials because the millennials want to lead the church. Still, they are not financially taking care of the building. The researcher observed that the Millennials felt they deserve a seat at the table for leadership, and in hindsight, a few deserve a place or at least a chance. The pastor's questionnaire data revealed that the elder pastor dealt with change a little different from the younger pastor because they understood that some traditions must remain in the church because those traditions make the church the church. Baptism and communion are examples of practices in the church that must remain. Younger preachers have moved communion from the first Sunday until they decide they want it, and others do it every Sunday. There is no right or wrong way to serve communion. Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant

between God and His people, an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it” (Luke 22:18-20 NLT). This Bible verse challenges millennials and others to believe that it is okay to have communion on other days instead of the CME belief that this should occur on the traditional First Sunday. Some pastors were willing to allow the millennials to step up into roles like trustees, stewards, and preachers to meet the desires of the millennials. The researcher observed how the millennials showed signs of stepping up to help their churches move online after the church doors closed, showing that millennials could help the church. Though the millennials and pastors have started the conversation, it is still in process. After the researcher reviewed the data, it became apparent that pastors and millennials are at a crossroads in their compromise.

COVID-19 played a more significant part in the research because the pandemic forced the church doors to close and attempt to find other ways to survive. Churches that had millennials were able to survive and move their ministries online. At the same time, others struggled to stay open and stumbled their way through church on the internet. The researcher noticed that millennials were interested in other online denominations with youth and a huge internet presence. The pastors seemed to have a more refreshing Word that reached the millennials and fed them spiritually. This could be considered part of many reasons millennials are pulling further away from the church. Some Pastors’ focus has shifted to raising money rather than keeping the millennials in the church. It would be a great benefit to resume the study till after the church doors are opened again to see the actual effects of the research.

Zoom Interview

Based on the responses of the survey participants and the feedback from the pastors. A series of questions was prepared for a Zoom meeting for the researcher and all the participants.

To put them back in the mindset of the church, the researcher asked questions and told them to put themselves in the shoes of the pastor. The old folks had a saying, “Try walking a mile in my shoes.” The researcher asked the millennials how they would react to the same situations they found troublesome if they were pastors. The questions were intended to make them think critically and look at things from the pastor’s point of view. Things changed when the millennials had to respect other people's feelings instead of addressing their own needs. The pastor must think of the needs of the entire church and not just one group of people. The research pushed the millennials and challenged them to come outside of their box to meet the needs of others. They had to answer on the way they would respond instead of pointing the finger at others because life was different when they decided to run the church. The millennials suddenly understood the need for money to keep the church running. They understood that the light bill had to be paid, and in its way, the church was still a business. They talked about the challenge and remembered the uncomfortable and awkward feeling of inviting people to church. There was a great deal of excitement about the opportunity to run the sound system and video ministry. At the end of the Zoom meeting, there was a fresh hope to continue church in a new form. They believed the church doors might be closing soon for good, but they remained optimistic of a new online service built to fit them. The way church service is run today looks different from what tradition has taught the believer what church is supposed to be. The appearance of the church today is nowhere near the church that your grandparents and even your parents attended. The millennials have so many choices on what church or faith to follow that the millennials have started wandering away from the Methodist church.

In the Zoom interview, question 1 asked the millennial participants, “Does ministry matter if it comes from a different denomination or different religion rather than the CME

Church?” Many participants stated that it did not matter what denomination you were when it comes to ministry if you were a part of the church.

Bobby responded to question 1 with the following:

No, it does not matter what denomination you are to serve God. He felt that God was universal. I have been a member of my church since I was a baby. Growing up going to church with my parents and fellowshipping with other churches has allowed me to see how we serve the same God no matter what denomination we are.

Johnny indicated, “It does not matter what denomination you are, because we are all Christians and fall under the same umbrella of faith.”

Martin and Diane stated,

It does not matter what denomination you are because we cannot attend our church right now due to it being closed and online services. Even though we are millennials, they felt that they still wanted to be in a church where they could worship God. While their church doors were closed, they started attending their parents’ church, another denomination.

The data obtained from the participant's responses to the first question revealed that millennials had minimal concerns about church denomination. The denomination, as well as the church’s traditions, are just part of Sunday worship. To millennials denominations, traditions are something that has been passed down through generations. Their parents followed these traditions and chose this denomination, so they are expected to continue with the same family customs. The millennials want to serve God, worship, and just be allowed to do what they want to do in the church.

The CME Church started as the Colored Methodist church that was separated by race. Some churches have already integrated, but most churches are the same from the day they started. Does the church need to change its attitude about race and separation to survive in this climate today?

In the Zoom interview, question 2 was asked to the millennial participants: “Have the days of segregated churches come to an end?”

Bobby concluded,

No, it is time for it to end, but it will not end anytime soon. The Megachurches are integrated like Faith Church that is located here. They seem to be the only ones that are integrated. Even though Friendly Temple is a big church, it is not considered a Mega church because it is predominantly black.

Diane offered a dose of reality by asserting,

No, it has not, but the pandemic is helping it come to an end.

Sapphire gave a point of the location being the real reason for separation:

No, not really, but if you look at some of the churches located downtown or on the cusp of the city, they are integrated. If the neighborhood is integrated, you may have an integrated church. However, it depends on where their church is located. People will make the drive to where they feel more comfortable.

Martin replied,

No, however, with gentrification happening, I could see it happening in the future, just not right now.

Johnny also pointed to location,

No, churches will not be integrated because some people do not feel like coming to the neighborhoods when some big churches are in the city.

The responses to question 2 revealed that participants agreed that the day of the segregated church is not over and most likely never will be. The reasoning behind the separation was not only race but the location of the churches. There is almost a fear of coming to churches in an urban community based on heavy criminal activity.

In the Zoom interview, question 3 asked the millennial participants: “Does the age of a pastor determine your willingness to participate in church service? Do you like the style of younger minister vs. old minister? Will the millennials commit more time if they respect the pastor? Who do you think is more accountable, the younger or older pastor?” There is a trend of

new churches opening with young pastors taking charge. It was an interesting theory that young people would respond better to a young pastor that broke away from traditional teaching. Some of the most compelling responses from the millennials are presented below. Bobby responded with the following:

No, it depends on what type of crowd or membership you want to reach and bring to your church. If you are looking for a traditional kind, your pastor needs to follow the tradition and the rules set forth by the church. The younger generation has different views, so it is hard for them to go to a traditional church. However, if they are looking for that is the type of church they should attend.

Sapphire asserted the following:

No, yeah, like my pastor is older than most, so he has minimal views. He is very old school and traditional, so he has limitations on who is in the pulpit and what they are to be speaking on. So that is what makes me hesitant about certain pastors. I feel like they must know what they are talking about, and you must know what they are talking about for yourself and not know that they are just feeding you anything. I do not think age has to do anything with it. I would not mind going to church with a younger minister. It just knows that they know what they are talking about. One of the issues is that I need to know that they know what they are talking about or who they are practicing seeing that they understand the word versus just following some trend out right now.

Bobby agreed with others:

No, it depends on what type of crowd or membership you want to reach and bring to your church. If you are looking for a traditional kind, your pastor needs to follow the tradition and the rules set forth by the church. The younger generation has different views, so it is hard for them to go to a traditional church. However, if they are looking for that type of church, they should go.

Leroy concluded that,

No, we need to look for the anointing of God. You know the anointing is what brings forth victory. The anointing brings forth the teachings of the scripture, so it does not matter about the ages. The only thing that matters about the man godly and walking in the ways of the Lord is that the Bible says let the older men pour into, the younger men. All I can say is there is a lot of pastors out their pimping churches. You know you must have discernment and ask God for understanding and wisdom when it comes to those things.

The participants' responses to question 3 revealed that the millennials agreed that the pastor's age does not matter. They seemed to be looking for spiritual gifts, leadership, and the minister

showing signs of studying the Word. They want a scripture-based church that they can follow while being taught by the pastor.

In the Zoom interview, question 4 was asked to the millennial participants: “After reading the responses from the entire group of millennials in the study, you all agreed the priorities were financial security, a stable family structure, and a prayer routine. Confirm that financial security, family, and prayer routine are most important. What other things are important?”

The millennials were totally in agreement that their priorities were security, a stable family, and a consistent prayer routine.

Diane concluded,

I will say that family is important. For many families, as far as in the church is important because you have someone who can help you understand something you feel. If you do not understand scripture or if I am confused about the sermon, I have the option to go to my parents. As for financial security, remember the church is like a business. You must keep in mind that the church operates on a give and receive. For instance, you get a word from the pastor, and then you give back to the church in the form of tithes and offerings. As for prayers, it is what gets you through, you know, even your stuff, even with the stuff we go through spiritually. Just with the smallest prayer, you can feel the weight lift from your shoulder, making everything feel better.

Jessica replied.

I mostly pray to God or talk to my dad because he is a preacher because he knows the word forward and backward. If he is not available, I will go with my father-in-law.

Monica suggested.

Who would I go to outside of the church? I would say that it would be my mom. I would also go to my sister.

Bobby concluded,

I would go to my mom just because she brought me through the church when I was a kid, and we pretty much went every Sunday. So, I will go to her if I need a better understanding even though she might not know things herself, but we could work through it together.

Leroy replied,

I have friends with whom I went to seminary, and I would go to one of them to work through whatever I need a little assistance with.

The participants' responses to question 4 revealed the millennials were totally in agreement that their priorities were security, a stable family, and a consistent prayer routine. The researcher wanted to know how much time the millennials dedicated to prayer. There must be moments of meditation where one spends time with God without distractions from the World. The millennials often brought out the need to pray for their parents and children as part of their daily process. If the millennials could figure out how to set a time aside that is just for God like they do with their agendas for everything else in life, that will answer the question of whether prayer changes things. The pastors responded that the millennials spent about equal time with the elders in the church. The lack of time spent with God through prayer leads one to believe that some people do not have a relationship with God. The entire church experience is becoming a drive-through readymade service that may not be pleasing to God. Prayer and fellowship go hand and hand. When two or more gather in His (God) name, He shall be in the midst. For the church to work and the CME Church to continue growing, God must be in the center of all things again.

In the Zoom interview, question 5 was asked to the millennial participants: "With all the events going on in America (social injustice, COVID, work/jobs), and the election of a new president, have your views of faith and prayer changed?"

Johnny asserted,

Well, truthfully, when I hear about the rappers getting killed and stuff like that, I feel like everybody needs more prayer. Prayer should have been the cornerstone instead of something people try to fall back on when things get bad. I feel like everybody needs to just pray for everybody. Prayer should be a part of our daily tasks. If we look at it the other way around and only go to somebody when we are in trouble, that is the only time we talk to somebody they might not want to deal with us anymore, and we got to look at that from God's point of view. What if God asked us, "What are we doing while He continues to work on our behalf?" There is no need for Him because all is good, and then

when the first sign of trouble, you want to call out to God after you thought there was no need for him. When all along, you should have been praying and praising Him daily.

Ruby had similar feelings:

I have faith in God. I pray every day, but I feel that everybody lately is saying that their faith has not wavered. I guess I will be the only one to say that my faith has wavered. Yes, bad things happen to people every day, but it happens in my personal life and has been happening more consistently. For some reason, this year, I have had a lot of deaths in my family. This year there have been many things going on, and do not get me wrong, I am a positive person. I may sound very down or depressed right now but, I am positive. I never question God, but I have been asking lately why God allows so much turmoil to happen to my family. It seems we could pray all day, and that is what Christians from in the church say that they pray, pray, pray but at the end of the day, what are we doing because we got to put feet to our faith. So, what are you doing because we could pray, but we got to put work behind the prayer?

Diamond pointed out the problems with wavering faith:

I feel it does not matter about your age; your faith constantly wavers at some point in your life. It just may not be at this point their time for their storm or their season to go through it. We often have problems that we must struggle through make it through, but at the end of the day, as you said, your faith will keep you going through the difficult times.

Monica had this to say about the strength of the foundation:

On this life journey, I can say that the foundation laid and poured into me gives me strength when I am having a wavering moment. Lord knows August 4th was a game-changer for me and was a life changer for me in the loss of my son. One thing was for sure when it happened, it was like who me you cannot be talking to me not this cannot be true, but in this daily journey, I have my days not so much why I may question God, but whereas I am like OK Lord I need some answers. I need some understanding, but daily prayer, daily word, and encouragement do it for me. The people I am surrounded with and have been blessed to be surrounded have increased the solidarity of the foundation in which I have. So, what I am learning is to pour more into others even though I do it, I am learning to do it more and more and pouring positive into others, asking God every day to use me to pour into others what he would have me to do what it is that he wants me to do. That is what I am learning on this journey of understanding. If I am wavering, my best prayer is to ask God to fix whatever needs to be fixed within me.

The participants' responses to question 5 revealed that the millennials agree that prayer was of critical importance with all the events in the world today. Racial unrest, COVID-19, women, and children died violent deaths every time you heard a breaking news report. They expressed how important prayer was in day-to-day living.

In the Zoom interview, question 6 was asked: “After doing the surveys, have your pastors found ways to help you become more accountable and active in the church? Has your pastor done anything to discourage you?”

Johnny said,

No, I have not seen much change as of late. We are still in church, and our church is smaller. I do not see anything changing as far as pastors trying to find more ways to get younger people into the church or include people closer to our age. Even though many churches are losing millennials, they might be keeping some of the older people in the church that provide more money to the church. So, they try to cater to the people that they are putting money into the church. They may feel like this is building their church more.

Ruby replied,

I belong to a small family church. I stopped going for a while because they got caught up in tradition. I am a younger member, and I do not feel like my needs are being met as a younger member of the church. The pastor caters to the older members, and the younger members do not have a voice. This could be bad because the older members are dying off, and you have run the younger members off. This will lead to a dying church. The pastor wondered why the younger members were no longer interested or returned to the church once they returned from college. Now I realize why the pastors did not cater to the church's younger members because we do not contribute as the older congregation members do.

Martin had this to say:

As a young man going to church, there have been many times that the older church members have judged me by labeling me as a Thug or a gang banger. My only goal was to come to church to get the word and build a foundation and relationship with God. Different things may have happened at various churches that I went to, but the church that did the most damage to me was the church I grew up going to because the members there knew me most of my life and still judged me.

Sapphire felt this way:

People will talk about things from A to Z, and I may withdraw when the environment becomes toxic. I then started to think about what my reasons are for coming to church. Is it for the people, or is it for the word? Once I figured out my expectations for coming to church, I realized that it is not about the people. It is about the word and the teaching that I am there to receive. I started just going to church to get what I came to get and leave. I might lose the fellowship part, but it has been keeping my focus on the important things.

It also has made it hard for me to attend other churches if this is what I will get from the church.

The participants' responses to question 6 revealed another question that arose after the pastor did their surveys. The question was, "Did they come back to their churches to try to make any changes after hearing what the millennials wanted?" Unfortunately, nothing changed, leaving some millennials struggling to find a voice in their churches. At the same time, other millennials left the church or found other places to worship.

In the Zoom interview, question 7 was asked to the millennial participants, referring to question 5 of the survey, "If you guys were the pastor, how would you encourage the millennials to participate in the CME Church, and how would you bridge the gap between generations?"

Diane and Martin gave several suggestions on bridging the gap between the younger members and the older ones. They also explained that it was okay to search for a church that fit their needs. Here are the comments regarding this question.

Diane

I wandered from church to church for a long time until I found a welcoming church that made me feel renewed and wanted to engage and learn more about the bible. So, I would say that it is okay to wander until you find a church that will not judge you make you feel like you are not welcomed or meet their expectations as a member of their church. Especially if you are looking for a place that is going the accept you as you are.

Martin

The easiest way to bridge the gap is to find out what they like. Many millennials have trouble belonging to the church because they have two different churches, the children's church, and the older church. For the millennials to feel accepted, they need to feel like they are needed and belong to the church. They feel like there should be an offer to be a part of the church by offering them positions where they are being used and needed.

The participants' responses to question 7 led the researcher to ask the millennials if they were the pastor how they would bridge the gap between the generations to better the church. The answers given were essentially related to finding a church that fits your wants and spiritual needs. The

millennials felt the church could bridge the gap by meeting them halfway, but many pastors are unwilling to.

Question 8 asked the millennial participants in the Zoom interview: “Who is responsible for your salvation? (a) God (a) pastor (b) church (c) yourself?”

Sapphire said this:

God gives you salvation, but it is up to you rather or not you accept it. You must receive what God has to offer you.

Martin responded with this,

I believe God and you are responsible for your salvation. God saves you, but you must be willing to accept him in your life.

Monica replied,

My salvation is the responsibility of myself first as an individual. Collectively, the pastor first and the church second should assist on my journey when needed. #SupportSquad

Question eight was multiple choice and straightforward. Everyone agreed that each person is responsible for their salvation. One of the pastors responded that it is everyone’s job to minister to God’s people in the church. In the Zoom interview, question 9 asked the millennial participants, “When was the last time you invited your friends or family to church?”

Ruby stated this about extending an invitation to someone visiting their church.

When I feel they need an uplifting and cannot do so without hearing the word alone.

Monica had this to say,

Before my church closed its doors, I invited a friend to attend service via a phone conversation. Now that the doors are yet closed again, I share my online feed, or if I am attending someone else's service, I share that to minister to God's people and try to draw the unsaved.

Sapphire also has something to say regarding inviting someone to church.

It has been a while. I also felt like my church was not in the position to be bringing in people.

With the idea of changing the church as leaders, the millennials were asked when was

the last time they invited someone to attend church was. The response was overwhelming that it had been a while or maybe a year ago.

Here is a reply to the follow-up of question 9 - One pastor responded to ways he reached out to minister to people, and he asked if you, as millennials, are willing to call, text, write, or even video chat with members? The second part of question nine asked the millennials whether they try to write, call, facetime, or even visit elder members since the church doors are closed for the time being. They talked about the lack of outreach, but they did not agree to go out themselves to minister to their church members. Only one person stated that she would go out to spark up conversations with people if needed.

In the Zoom interview, question 10 asked the millennial participants, "Have these surveys opened your mind or changed your opinion about the church?"

Monica responded.

No, it is not the survey that has changed my mind. The "church people" and the lack of outreach of the "church people and "pastors have changed my mind about the church organization. We, the people, are the church.

Sapphire replied.

Not really, I know that many churches are different, but it is not about the church, even though you must go for yourself.

Ruby challenged.

My mind can be changed, but only if I allow it. Not in a bad way only make me want to venture out and know More

Martin responded.

Not really. It was great hearing from others about their walks with their spirituality.

Diane replied.

Yes, I have looked at what I am doing to get God's word across to others. I figured just by starting the conversation about God, and it opens the door.

The researcher noticed that only one person believed that their mindset was changed or helped see that having a simple conversation will open doors to introduce others to Christ. The other responders responded with the honesty of church folks. Church folks (people) often admit that the first change must come from themselves. When the person realizes that they are the church, and their body is their temple, victory is.

Being able to venture out and openly talk to other believers that they have never met allowed them to see themselves and the CME Church through other people's eyes. They had a willingness to explore other churches and continue seeking God instead of letting church hurt fester in the roots of their souls. They must pull together and create the church they want to have. If they're going to do outreach, they can do it together to help others. If they decide to pray, they can do it together because when two or three gathers in Jesus' name, He will be in the mist. From their responses, the researcher could see that they learned the things they wanted to do for the church could be done outside of the church where they would have no resistance. The researcher was reminded that the church is just an old building, but the people make the church.

In the Zoom interview, question 11 asked the millennial participants, "Do you still believe not only the CME Church, but all churches are dying today?"

Martin responded with the following:

Yes, I think that COVID has hindered many people from experiencing church. Some people have walked away because they have been detached for so long. Although I feel that there are plenty of online church options, many local churches may not last. Not really. It was great hearing from others about their walks with their spirituality.

Ruby hopefully suggested,

Yes and no, I say yes because many people have this thing as if they left the church or did not want to go because of certain people in the church. I said no because if we keep reaching out and allowing others to come with welcoming arms, more people will.

Sapphire testified,

Because of COVID-19, yes. But also, because times are changing, and the older people are dying in the church, it is hard to keep millennials in the church.

Monica concluded the following:

Yes, I do. We used to be a staple in the community, and of society, now we are perishable. No longer non-perishable, due to man allowing money and worldliness to creep on and take over instead of the holy spirit.

Bobby replied,

I do not think the churches themselves are dying; instead, the older traditions are dying out.

Diane replied,

Yes, if you have no legacy, none to leave your teachings to, the church will not go on, but it will die with those unwilling to branch out.

The participant's responses to questioning 11 revealed that one person did not believe the church was dying, but tradition is dying. Tradition is the things the church has done from the beginning that make the church the church. The CME Church has two traditions that every believer follows. Communion is done every First Sunday. Communion is now done whenever the preacher feels the need or as often as they feel the need to do it. Baptism is done by sprinkling instead of full-body baptism. The form of baptism separates the Methodist from the Baptist because the Baptists believe that the body should have full emergence to be cleansed. These are the basic traditions of all Christians that follow traditional belief systems. Tradition is the church's foundation in so many ways, so there is no church without tradition. In many ways, the millennials cannot blame the confusion when many preachers even in the same denomination challenge the church system on their beliefs and practices. The CME Church itself no longer has a set protocol on how the church service should be run. The bishop stated just last year, "I should be able to walk into a CME Church and know where we are in service because it should follow CME traditions."

Many millennials believe the CME Church is dying, but every other denomination faces the same faith. They agreed that COVID-19 had closed so many church doors that may never reopen. Then the misfortune for some churches will reopen, but it will no longer be business as usual. They concluded the church must change its way to survive.

Analysis of Zoom Meeting

The Zoom meeting became a spirit-charged atmosphere where the millennials were able to express themselves with open hearts. They supported and encouraged each other to continue serving God no matter the obstacle that stood before them. They spoke freely about the things that hurt them while they worked in the church. The millennials revealed that they often felt judged for how they dressed for church or how many days they missed church. Some heard the rumors that were spread about them. They refused to walk into the church because of shame. Issues like a woman being made to stand and apologize for getting pregnant at a young age have hurt many young people and turned their attention away from the church. Young men were labeled troublemakers, and gang members felt like no place for them in the church.

The researcher is reminded that there is room at the cross for every person in the church is a sinner, and no one sin is greater than the other. The question was asked to the millennials if they were the pastors and had to bring souls to Christ, could they? The zoom meeting became an honest discussion on what it would take to save the church. In conclusion, the session helped the millennials understand that church is also a business that must be run with accountability for the doors to remain open. The pastor's job as a CME Preacher is to raise conference claims. If the conference claims are not paid, the pastor will be removed from the church and replaced by someone who can, leading to money over salvation because, in corporate America, the business comes before salvation and people. The one issue of money was also determined to be a key to

the survival of the church. Learning to open up and talk about feelings, praying for one another, promising to commit more time to the church were all emerging factors and much-needed conversations that the millennials discussed.

Summary

From the millennial surveys, three themes emerged: prayer, time management, and accountability. These themes combined with the pastor surveys showed that some pastors want to meet the millennials on common ground to help further the church. Then some pastors refuse to make changes that go against what they feel makes the church work. Being a pastor is also a job where money and church governance play a role, often leaving millennials feeling disenfranchised. Lastly, the Zoom meeting was a healing place for the millennials dealing with past hurt and hope as a posture of humanity was seen by pastors and millennials. Hope gives a foundation or starting point for the possibility of a CME Church continuing for many more generations.

The next chapter discusses the above-emerging themes and emerging processes within the study of the millennials within the CME Denomination. Also, a potential assimilation model infused with the variable of hope will promote health and healing within the CME Church.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The CME Church has many eyes looking upon it to see if it will survive. This research considered that millennials were the key factor in saving the church with the battle between tradition and elders, making room for the youth to become leaders. This paper came in a rare time in history where the researcher had the opportunity to see the church struggle to keep the doors open. The doors were closed not just from the loss of millennials or seniors dying off, but a pandemic called COVID-19. The church's doors were closed due to a pandemic, but many churches moved their ministries from the church building to an online platform to reach the masses. This chapter will discuss the proposal, implementation of the research, the limitations of the study, a series of recommendations for the CME Church to consider employing now, and subjects for the church to consider for future studies.

The Proposal

The researcher looked at the CME Church to better understand the decline in youth membership in the church. The researcher observed that some churches had more millennials than other churches in the same area. The researcher assumed that the churches with more millennials attending were often directly related to whether they had a younger pastor in the pulpit. A young pastor with a perspective more like their parishioners combined with a willingness to address community concerns created a space for millennials to thrive. Politics was a surprising reason that millennials reportedly became interested in church. The researcher assumed that the youth moving away from older pastors was not necessarily a primary determining factor. The research data revealed that traditional factors of generations of family members belonging to a particular church were a significant influence. The mindset of children

staying in a church because their grandparents, mother's, father's church mattered to many believers. Though somewhat contradictory, the tradition was the complaint and reason many millennials did not want to stay in the CME Church. Still, traditions of family ties were also reported as reasons that kept Millennials coming to church.

After many surveys and conversations with the millennials, the outcomes of this research became apparent. The church appears to decline, and pastors must find a new way to attract new parishioners from the younger generations. The Millennials who participated in this study reported their desire to change the idea of certain traditions that have made the church thrive and function over the last century. The notion that millennials often tend to hop from church to church and then come back to the CME Church in search of change is controversial.

In contemporary history, millennials tend to favor churches having strong praise and worship and television screens throughout the church. Millennials are better educated than prior generations, but their education does not relate to ministry. They tend to want to run the church like a corporate business. The Millennials who participated in this study indicated that, in many instances, they are resistant because they feel they're natural-born leaders. In some things, they do tend to have the drive that allows things to work. They reportedly value effort overdetermination as the means of achievement of objectives.

Implementation of Research Project

Millennials Survey

The millennial survey was vital because it was a chance to open a line of communication with the young adults. If there is a question, the best result is to go to the source to find the answer. The researcher used nine survey questions that range opinions from being excited about

the church to being angry and hurt from past issues with the system. No matter their background or thought, the process of being able to talk and have someone listen to their point of view seemed to give them a sense of validation. There were some things like prayer that the millennials found to be necessary for their daily lives. There was not a single person who took the survey that did not see the value of prayer. Prayer still works, and people, no matter what age, find this is their communication with God. Some millennials pray once a day, while others find peace in their normality daily with their closer walk with God.

There was a discussion about time management. The millennials were willing to give their time if they could have a voice. They want to be seen and heard. Some millennials are not very patient when it comes to time, and they want things right now. Traditionally in the CME Church, many things in the church must be done correctly and in order. It is easy to offend people in today's age and time, so the church is becoming like politics in many ways. Without being offensive, there is a need to speak to people and direct people of many different races, creeds, ages, and feelings. Millennials want things instantly, referring to earlier in the research, it was referred to as a microwave society. They want everything quick, laid out, and ready for them to go forward.

Accountability to the church and in the church, there was a challenging subject. It was strange that everyone seemed to have their definition of what it means to be accountable. It was clear that the millennials were willing to hold the church accountable for its actions, but not many of them held themselves accountable. Over the years, the CME Church has been held responsible for the wrong things they have done. The church's attitude towards the millennials had been disrespectful in many ways.

Millennials have taken the time to have conversations and understand that the church rests and abides inside them. They are the CME Churches future. This research is intended to provide insights into the relationship between millennials and the CME Church leadership. The hope is that the study will contribute to the transition between the present leadership and millennials' future leadership, providing a future for the CME Church.

Pastors' Survey

The pastor survey was nine questions written from the responses of the millennials. Many preachers charge the leaders of the church to find out why the millennials are missing. Talking with the millennials brought out some good points that should be laid back at the feet of the pastors. With the challenge of empty buildings and filling pews, the aging pastor could step away from centuries of tradition to accommodate a demanding generation. There was a significant shift in the mood while working with the pastors because three different generations of preachers were surveyed. This was purposely done to figure out the actual condition of the CME Church. The first group was the preachers in their 60s and 70s who were impressively more willing to go against tradition to include the millennials in ministry and the church's everyday working. The elders were more concerned about the church dying than worrying about tradition. The second group of preachers was fifty to fifty-five, which would be the most challenging of the preachers. This group of preachers striving to become the elders and Bishops of the church were willing to work with millennials and found ways to balance tradition in their ministries. The last group that saw themselves as millennials still and leaned more to worldly political events as the obstacles in the church. The final group of preachers was millennials who needed to have a voice from the preacher's point of view.

Prayer was the first question. Many preachers felt that millennials could handle their prayer and thought they understood the value of a good prayer life. The older and seasoned preachers agreed with the millennials that family, friends, health, and finances were important to focus on with their prayers. The middle-aged and millennial preachers felt it was more important to pray about social justice and political concerns. One within this group of preachers stated, “they cannot rely on prayer alone.”

Time management and setting time for the church was an interesting topic as well. One of the pastors said it best, “the older generation has selective memory when it comes to their indiscretions.” He was correct that the young are carefree and reckless in all stages of life, but as one gets older, they know better. Wisdom comes with the understanding that it does not matter what generation has been written about. It takes time to develop the character to become the leaders of the church. Millennials have gifts and talents that can help the church do more than survive today, but if both generations work together, they can produce a clear path for the future. The preachers must include the millennials in the church, but they must also keep working with the elders in the church to make it work. The church must become a family on one accord to survive in times like this.

Focus Group Recorded Interview

The focus group was done by zoom meetings where all the millennials could come together in one forum to discuss the research and surveys they responded to. The millennial pastor was included in the zoom meeting to observe how he related to his peers. This was the last opportunity to sit down with the researcher to ask questions and discuss the responses from the pastors. The pastor's answers were written into questions to keep from leading the conversation. The researcher went through every question from the beginning of the process to ensure every

question could be answered. With a simple thank you and opening statement, the researcher had at most twenty seconds to get the group to engage in conversation with himself and the others for this to work. The questions had to adapt slightly, but most churches were in the same predicament of lack of millennial participation and dwindling congregations.

During the recorded interview, the researcher and the millennials had to get acquainted with each other, so the millennials felt comfortable answering honestly regarding the way they felt was challenging. Once the zoom meeting became an open conversation, this provided healing for the years of church hurt, and disappointments were discussed. They prayed, laughed, and ministered to each other as the group went through eleven questions. The researcher pushed to ensure that everyone was involved, though there was a consensus about prayer, time management, and family. Debate only seemed to arise when it came to questions regarding pastor accountability and the pastors' roles and responsibilities.

The researcher asked the millennials to put themselves in the pastor's place for the last four questions. The millennials were asked who was responsible for the parishioners' salvation. With an overwhelming response, they responded that they were responsible for their salvation, not the pastor. The final question was designed to determine when they last invited someone to go to church with them. With an awkward moment of silence, the universal consensus was that it had been years. The researcher asked whether the millennials were willing to call, text, write, or video chat with older members while the church's doors closed due to COVID-19. Many millennials were ready, but some felt like that was not their calling.

Limitation of the Study

The church has many issues that could not be addressed due to the doors being closed from COVID-19. COVID-19 was never a part of this paper, but this pandemic has exposed the church like nothing man could have imagined. COVID-19 has taken so many church elders, which becomes important to the church because these were the people who were financially carrying the church. Suppose the researcher could have spent more time worshipping the millennials and pastors to see how they interacted on Sunday morning during worship. The research could have rendered other important insights. There were limitations in personal habits, i.e., such as bad attitudes, late to church, or not regularly coming each Sunday, which impacted the research.

A considerable limitation of the study was getting millennials to be open and honest because they feared backlash or being criticized or removed for their opinions from the church. People have come to like the idea of watching church online in their pajamas with no place to go. The other issue that online ministry causes are the opportunity to hear better preachers and choirs than their churches offer. It also allows questioning millennials to seek answers about religion and beliefs on a small box with a wide range of lessons. Millennials will find themselves questioning what to believe with a closed church and no one really to ask questions to.

Another limitation was that it was nearly impossible to get more pastors to participate in the research. With excuses like the pastor had to focus on their ministries and run the church, they did not have time to answer questions. Some did not want to type out the responses to the questionnaires. They wanted the researcher to write out their answer, which made the paper unbiased. This study was difficult to do in two years because one of the most significant issues

with the Methodist church is pastors changing from one year to the next, which also causes issues with the stability of the church.

Recommendations

Recommendations to Millennials

While this research included many difficult questions directed at Millennials, it is important to note that their generation has many positive attributes. They're technically savvy, which, if harnessed, can take the CME Churches to a new level, specifically in terms of reaching the masses who will never have experienced without the millennial's influence and guidance. The millennials can establish and expand the church via zoom, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms. These streaming ministries allowed the churches to reach and connect with family, friends, and new believers as the church gained virtual followers. Which also allowed for greater opportunities for financial reward from applications like cash app and givelify. When the church's doors closed, the millennials used their gifts to help create an atmosphere of the church without walls.

The millennials offer hope for the future of the church. They can find and promote a new inspiration as they begin to step up and become church leaders. They can find ways to inspire themselves and others in what is primarily understood as a difficult moment for the church. When the church's doors seem to be closing, the Millennials and subsequent generations have a unique opportunity to adjust the church's message and its delivery to make a real difference.

The researcher may have been biasing looking at the millennials at the beginning of the research. The initial report was millennials were lazy, shellfish, and wanted everything right now. Calling millennials lazy was unfair because technology has advanced, so they do not have

to work as hard as prior generations. When the pastor or the members learn how to communicate with the millennials, they can explore many new avenues. The millennials can help the church go places the church never imagined. The millennials have some great and unique qualities that could be used to help create a new church. The millennials are adventurous and motivated to work in the church as well as the community. The millennials are conscious of everything that is going on in the world today. The idea is to use the millennials' passion and challenge them to help minister outside the walls of the church.

The recommendation to the millennials is that it is time for them to use the tools that God equipped them to wish to change the church today. Just being accountable to the people of the church will change the opinions of others in the church. The millennials are more educated than the prior generations, so the pastor and elders take time to help teach them instead of challenging them. It's time to engage the pastor and see how millennials can become a part of their ministry. This is how millennials can express their opinion without being disrespectful. It is okay to want things to go their way, but sometimes it is better to go into things with an open mind. Listen to what the pastor has to say because millennials want them to listen to them. The key is to look at this as a team coming together to compete for the championship. Look at the pastor as the coach pushing millennials to be the best they can be and asking millennials to tap into the abilities that God has placed deep inside of them. Create a youth Bible study and even a prayer group that helps connect with different generations. Today is the day that millennials can become leaders and take the church to a higher level. With the internet, the millennials are unmatched. They can reach different countries and create short videos to highlight powerful service moments to attract people to your church. The church and world are literally at their fingertips. Use the power for

good and help the pastor reach the masses and introduce Jesus to people who may never have had the opportunity to hear His call before.

Recommendations to CME Pastors

Recommendations for CME pastors are not so simple, though it seems their commitment to preaching the Word of God is foundationally important. Pastors, regardless of their age or message, must be strong, deliberate, and reliable. The pastor must lead and be flexible enough to adjust within the limitations of the church. Pastors accept the call of God, so they must maintain and express tier commitment to faith regardless of changing circumstances and conditions.

The researcher's thoughts changed as his biases led to the belief that pastors were stuck in their old ways. Some pastors are looking for ways to help the church survive, but they are limited to what they can do because of the church structure. The pastors have people they must report to and a certain amount of money they must raise to keep their jobs. The pastor must include the millennials in the formation of this new church. The millennials seemed to be turned off from the megachurch big business centers. A pastor that feeds God's people and teaches them the Word of God is what the people want. Pastors teach the message from the Bible because millennials want to follow their message in the book. Millennials are socially conscious and do things like volunteering to feed the homeless. A recommendation for pastors is to engage this attribute of the millennials and for the church to adopt a social justice campaign teaching the millennials the biblical ways of caring socially. Also, pastors could use millennial-friendly technology to engage the millennials in discipleship instead of preaching against it. Lastly, Pastors need to practice active listening and shepherding skills with their millennial congregants. As they are cared for by the CME Church, they can survive and thrive in future transitions.

If the pastors can remain humble and just be willing to work with God's people, they could lead the church to unbelievable new heights. The internet allows people to hear their voices as they call out to the people suffering and lost throughout the World. If Pastors can begin to see themselves as a beacon of light, allowing millennials to find their way out of the darkness back into the safe hands of Jesus.

Recommendation for the Future of the CME Church

The recommendation for the future of the CME Church comes down to the simple thought of everyone working together to make the church flourish. When the people get together on one accord, God will be in the midst. The pastors teach and preach. The millennials use their media know-how to entice the world. The church needs to go back to its roots, where God came before finances and business. When the CME Church gets back into the soul-winning business, it will be untouchable. The strongest suggestion one could give is not to become like the world, remain who you are. The beauty of the CME Church was that it was different from other denominations. The CME Church was about studying and learning the Word of God. Matthew 6:34 says, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Therefore, the recommendation for CME leadership is to take change one day at a time. Continue to preach the Word, disciple the millennial generation, and allow God to unfold His plan in His timing.

To figure what the millennials want from the church is about as complex as putting together a thousand-piece puzzle without the picture on the box. Although the task seems impossible, it becomes so much easier when you find a couple of pieces that fit together. The first step is to take the time to get to know the youth in your church. The common factor is that millennials do not work well in traditional churches. Since some traditions hinder churches from

moving towards the future, it may be best to figure what practices should be faded away in the church. While improving on some of the church's traditions, another way to connect with the millennials is by including them in the vision of the church's future. Also, make sure that older members include some of the millennials in the church's planning and operations. They can do this by mentoring them and showing them how the church operates. If they are a part of the rebuilding and maintaining of the church, this will show the millennials that they are fully vested and that they are valued, and their opinions matter. This also creates the unity the church needs to survive in an ever-changing world.

Conclusion

A qualitative analysis methodology was employed to examine the status of the CME Church and the declining church membership, particularly among the Millennial generation. The primary objective of this research was to gain insight into how Millennials perceive the church, their pastors, and church leadership, as well as insight into how pastors perceive Millennials. These insights were then used to develop recommendations for the different groups involved designed to improve and enhance intergenerational relationships, revitalizing the church.

Based on the data collected in this study, it became apparent that traditional CME values and the values of the younger generation have created tension, particularly in the areas of leadership, worship styles, priorities, and the concept of accountability. These intergenerational disconnects have had a significant effect on church stability and the Millennials' declining trend in attendance and participation. The church thus finds itself at a critical crossroads. If these gaps cannot be bridged and a common ground cannot be found, the CME Church will likely reach a breaking point followed by an inevitable decline. Alternatively, the church, its pastors and leadership, and the Millennials have an opportunity to collaborate. Through personal growth and

a heightened commitment to faith, it is possible that a new group of multi-generational leaders emerge from adapting to accommodate the younger generation and strengthen the CME Church. This can be accomplished not by compromising God's Word but by understanding cultural changes and recasting the tensions and disconnects as possibilities instead of problems.

The data collected in this study provided unique insight into the characteristics of Millennials, church pastors, and church leadership. All of them could influence one another and the direction of the church. The Millennials expressed a desire to be included in church decisions and help to develop a message that provides for their interests. The pastors expressed a desire to keep traditions intact while also reaching out to the Millennials with a message that resonates with them. Finally, the church leadership must facilitate the church's evolution by promoting a more comprehensive range of activities and events that can accommodate the older and younger generations. All three of these groups must be willing to come together with open minds to develop a shared purpose, namely, to improve the church and increase the participation of its members.

The results of this research shed much-needed light on the Millennials, pastors, and leadership within the CME Church and the potential pitfalls that have contributed to the decline in the Millennials' participation in church activities. The insights into these three groups revealed an organizational framework, which was then employed to identify potential action items related to each group. Given the relatively small sample size, it is impossible to generalize the focus group responses to the broader population. Accordingly, the next logical phase of research in this area should include a larger sample size while following a similar methodology to make generalization possible. The following research step can also use the conclusions and recommendations presented in this study as a foundation to explore further and implement

strategies to improve and strengthen the intergenerational connection among church members. Finally, the findings presented in this study can also facilitate the development of open-minded church leaders and pastors to successfully guide the CME Church through these challenging times by creating a message and mission that resonates with both the younger and older generations.

References

- Barna, G. (2001). *Growing True Disciples*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press.
- Barna, G. (2007). *Revolutionary Parenting Raising Your Kids To Become Spiritual Champions*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
- Barton, J., & Muddiman, J. (2001). *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, R. (2014). *Bigger Than Hip Hop 7 Questions for Effectively Reaching Young Adults in Ministry*. Ronald Bell Ministries.
- Burns, J., & DeVries, M. (2003). *Parenting with Parents in Youth Ministry*. Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers.
- Bush, A. F., & Wason, C. C. (2017). *Millennials And The Mission Of God*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers.
- Cloud, H., & Townsend, J. (1999). *Boundaries In Marriage*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Coombs, W. T. (1999). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publicatio, Inc.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1994). *Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crabb, L. (2013). *Effective Biblical Counseling: A Model for Helping Caring Christians Become Capable Counselors*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Deitsch, C. M. (2012, July 6). Creating a Millennial Generation Contextualized Church Culture. Liberty.
- Devlin, N. (2018). Millennial Mission: The Transmission of Christianity Is Not A New Task. *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, 42-45.
- Devlin, N. (Mar/ Apr 2018). Millennials Mission. *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, 42-45.
- Dr. Mitchell, M. R. (2010). *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks.
- Dyck, D. (2010). *Generation EX- Christian Why Young Adults Are Leaving The Faith... And How To Bring Them Back*. Chicago: Moody Publishers.
- Floyd, S. (2008). *Crisis Counseling: A Guide for Pastors and Professionals*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications.

- Hanson, B. O. (2016). *Branding Faith: Do Christian Ministries Reach Millennials with Branding?* Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University.
- Heath, R. L. (2006). Best Practices In Crisis Communication: Evolution of Practice Through Research. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 245-248.
- Holmen, M. (2005). *Faith Begins At Home: The Family Makeover with Christ at the Center*. Bloomington: Bethany House Publisher.
- James, K. (1987). *Holy Bible NIV*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing.
- Jethani, S. (2013). Millennials and the Megachurch Bubble.
- Jethani, S. (2016). Why You're Sick of Church.
- Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press.
- Lakey, O. H. (1985). *The History of The CME Church*. Nashville: CME Publishing House.
- Lewis, D. R. (2014). *The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*. Memphis: CME Publishing House.
- Martinelli, K. A. (1998). Intergrating Public Relations and Legal Responses During A Crisis: The case of Odwalla, Inc. *Public Relations Review*, 443-460.
- McGowan, D. (Sep/ Oct 2018). As the Christian Church Crumbles, Is Humanism Ready to Step Up? *Humanist*, 17-21.
- Mitchell, J. (2018). *Black Millennials & the Church*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press.
- Parratt, J. (1995). *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Pearson, C. M. (1998). Reframing Crisis Management. *Academy of Management Review*, 59-76.
- Platt, D. (2010). *Taking Back Your Faith From The American Dream Radical*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Multnomah.
- Rainer, T. S., & Geiger, E. (2006). *Simple Church*. Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group.
- Reid, A. I. (2002). *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications.
- Riess, J. (2018, June 26). *Why Millennials Are Really Leaving Religion (It's Not Just Politics, Folks)*. Retrieved September 1, 2019, from <https://religionnews.com/2018/06/26/why-millennials-are-really-leaving-religion-its-not-just-politics-folks/>
- Sbaraini, A. (2011). How to do a grounded theory study: research study a worked example of a study of dental practice. *Bio Med Central*, 1-10.

- Sensing, T. (2011). *Qualitative Research A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock.
- Staff, U. F. (2018, June 11). *Urban Faith*. Retrieved from Millennials, Faith, and the Future of the Black Church (Video Transcript): <https://urbanfaith.com/2018/07/millennials-faith-and-the-future-of-the-black-church-video-transcript.html/>
- Tavener, M., Byles, J., & Loxton, D. (2014). Expert perceptions of the popular baby boomer image. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, E31-E35.
- Thatcher, V., & McQueen, A. (1971). *The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*. Chicago: Consolidated Book Publisjers.
- The Amplified Bible*. (1987). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- The Holy Bible, New International Version*. (2005). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. (2003). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Thomas, D. D. (2017, May 11). *Exodus: Why Black Millennials Are Leaving The Church*. Retrieved September 1, 2019, from <https://www.unfitchristian.com/black-millennials-church/>
- Warren, R. (1995). *Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Wilson, J. C. (2015). *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- Zickuhr, K. (2010, December 16). *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from Generations 2010: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2010/12/16/generations-2010/>

APPENDIX A

November 24, 2019

Millennials

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear Millennials:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to find a way to reconnect the Millennials with the CME church, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are between 18-30 years of age, are a member of the CME Church, are black (African American), and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will take 15-20 minutes and an interview that should take approximately 30-45 minutes for you to complete. Your name and other information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at [Phone/Email] to receive the screening survey to determine your eligibility to participate. If you are eligible to participate in the study, the researcher will contact you via email with further instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and once questionnaire is completed, and you are selected to complete the audio recorded interview further instructions will be provided to you.

The consent document will be emailed to you upon acceptance into the study and it contains additional information about my research. If you wish to participate, please sign, and return the consent form and completed questionnaire to the researcher in person at the time of the interview or via email prior to the scheduled interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Albritton Nelson
Researcher

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Reconnecting Christian Methodist Episcopal Millennials to the Church
Albritton Nelson
Liberty University
Rawlings School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study on reconnecting the Millennials back within the church. You were selected as a possible participant because you are between 18-30 years of age. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Albritton Nelson, a doctoral candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to investigate the intersection between the black millennials and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church to find a way to connect them together.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a 15–20-minute Questionnaire.
2. Take part in a recorded interview for 30-45 minutes.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty mentor will have access to the records.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and in a locked desk and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and paper records will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Albritton Nelson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. David Dixon, at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX C

Initial Screening Survey

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Directions: Once you have completed this Initial Screening Survey, please return it to Albritton Nelson in person or email it to him at [REDACTED]. If you are eligible to participate, a consent form will be emailed to you/ provided to you from the contact information that you provided. You will then be given further instructions on how to complete the remaining questionnaire and if chosen the participant will complete the audio recorded interview process.

1. Age: 18 – 30 31 – 43 44 – 56 57 & Above
2. Do you attend church? Yes or No
3. Are you a member of a church? Yes or No
4. If you are a member of a church, what faith are you?
5. What race are you?

APPENDIX D

November 24, 2019



Dear Rev. John Smith:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The title of my research project is “Reconnecting Black Christian Methodist Episcopal Millennials to the Church,” and the purpose of my research is to find a way to reconnect the millennials with the CME church.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Scruggs Memorial CME Church within your district and to utilize your membership list to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to complete a screening survey for approximately 10-20 minutes; after being chosen from the screening process participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire which a Likert Scale will be used in a narrowing process of the participants by the Ministry Board that will take 15-20 minutes; and the final step for the chosen participants will be an audio interview that should take approximately 30-45 minutes. Once they have completed all the procedures, the data will be used to develop a medium between the church and millennials. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Albritton Nelson
Researcher

APPENDIX E

Exit Survey

1. Are you willing to commit the time to the study?
2. Do you have any issues with the church?
3. Why are you not interested in continuing with the study?

APPENDIX F

Discipleship Program Pilot Exit Survey

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Direction: Once you have completed this Millennial Questionnaire, please return it to Albritton Nelson by emailing it to him at [REDACTED]. If you are eligible to continue participating, you will then be given further instructions on the location and time of the audio interview emailed to you/ provided to you from the contact information that you provided.

1. Do you believe in God?
2. What is the importance of religion to you as a millennial?
3. How often do you pray?
4. How often do you, as a millennial, wonder about what happens after life?
5. Can you describe what Heaven and Hell may look like?
6. Do millennials still believe that there is a Heaven or Hell?
7. Do you, as a millennial, feel that your generation is missing from the church?
8. If you feel your generation is missing from the church, what are some reasons they are missing?
9. What can the church do to make itself more appealing to the millennials?
10. What are the millennials expectations of the church?
11. What traditions do the millennials find challenging in the church?
12. Are you as a millennial willing to commit to the process of learning how to develop a relationship with God?
13. What are your expectations of the facilitator of the research?

APPENDIX G

Ministry Board Questions

1. In your opinion does the person meet the criteria of a Millennial ages 18 to 30 years of age?

Yes or no

2. Does this person meet the criteria of Christian Millennials characteristic? List of following characteristics to meet: Promote awareness of the Gospel; Believe that all people matter; They understand that people should be vulnerable to each other.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

3. Has this person demonstrated what it means to be a Christian in the CME Church?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

4. Does this person demonstrate a positive member of the CME Church?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

5. Do you think this person would be a good person to participate in the research study?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

APPENDIX H

Millennial Interview Questionnaire

1. Tell the researcher what it is like to be A Christian millennial in our culture today?
2. Tell the researcher what it is like to be a black Christian in the CME Church?
3. In your own words what is important in the expression of your faith in our culture today music, service, etc.?
4. In your own words are there any traditions in the black CME Church you find challenging if so, why?
5. In your own words or there any traditions you will change?
6. In your own words are there any traditions you like?
7. tell the researcher what is the biggest change you would like to see in the CME Church?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell the researcher about being a member of the CME Church?
9. Is there anything else you would like to ask the researcher?

APPENDIX I

THEME 1: Prayer		
Question	Comment/Response	Int. ID #
1. What do you think are the most important prayers that millennials find valuable? Why?		
2. What kind of things do you pray for or pray about? Why?		
3. Do you believe prayer changes things? Why or why not?		
4. How often do you plan your day, and what are the most important things you do in your daily life?		
5. As a millennial, how much time do you dedicate for God and things related to the church, and in what ways do you use this time?		
6. How much time would you be willing to commit to the ministry, and what other things do you think would make you want to commit more time to the ministry?		
7. What makes a person accountable, and what does accountability mean to you?		
8. How can a person help their friends and others become more accountable to God, their friends, their family, and community?		
9. Do you think accountability an important part of being involved in the ministry? Why or why not?		

APPENDIX J

THEME 2: Time Management		
Question	Comment/Response	Int. ID #
1. What do you think are the most important prayers that millennials find valuable? Why?		
2. What kind of things do you pray for or pray about? Why?		
3. Do you believe prayer changes things? Why or why not?		
4. How often do you plan your day, and what are the most important things you do in your daily life?		
5. As a millennial, how much time do you dedicate for God and things related to the church, and in what ways do you use this time?		
6. How much time would you be willing to commit to the ministry, and what other things do you think would make you want to commit more time to the ministry?		
7. What makes a person accountable, and what does accountability mean to you?		
8. How can a person help their friends and others become more accountable to God, their friends, their family, and community?		
9. Do you think accountability an important part of being involved in the ministry? Why or why not?		

APPENDIX K

THEME 3: Accountability		
Question	Comment/Response	Int. ID #
1. What do you think are the most important prayers that millennials find valuable? Why?		
2. What kind of things do you pray for or pray about? Why?		
3. Do you believe prayer changes things? Why or why not?		
4. How often do you plan your day, and what are the most important things you do in your daily life?		
5. As a millennial, how much time do you dedicate for God and things related to the church, and in what ways do you use this time?		
6. How much time would you be willing to commit to the ministry, and what other things do you think would make you want to commit more time to the ministry?		
7. What makes a person accountable, and what does accountability mean to you?		
8. How can a person help their friends and others become more accountable to God, their friends, their family, and community?		
9. Do you think accountability an important part of being involved in the ministry? Why or why not?		

APPENDIX L

Pastors Questions

I want to thank you for participating in my study. As we discussed, I am investigating the reasons for the significant drop in the attendance and involvement of Millennials in the CME, and to ascertain whether this trend can be reversed. I am seeking your insight on a few prevailing themes that emerged from the feedback I was able to obtain from my study group, which consisted of 10 Millennials between the ages of __ and __ who currently belong to the _____ Church.

The 3 themes that emerged include the Millennials feelings about prayer, time management, and the concept of accountability. Your perspective on these topics will provide me with a better understanding of the generational similarities and differences that may exist within the CME. Accordingly, the following six questions were developed for that purpose.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in my study.

1. What do you think are the biggest priorities in the life of Millennials in your congregation, and how is their use of prayer similar to and/or different from how it is used by the older generation?
2. Are Millennials more likely or less likely than your older church members to seek your counsel about their faith and the challenges they face in their daily life?
3. Do you think that Millennials consider prayer an important part of their faith? Do they place the same value on prayer as older member of your congregation?
4. Do you think that Millennials dedicate enough time to their faith, and do they appear to be as dedicated as older church members? If not, why do you think this is the case?
5. How do you think that the CME can encourage Millennials to set aside time to participate in church activities?
6. Who should be responsible for encouraging Millennials' involvement in the church (e.g., the pastor, the congregation, their family), and what types of changes in the church culture do you think would make Millennials want to set aside time for their church?
7. Are the Millennials in your congregation more or less accountable for their actions and mistakes than the older church members? Please give examples.
8. Do you think that Millennials are accountable enough to participate in decisions that have historically been made by Church elders? Why or why not?
9. As a pastor, how do you encourage your congregation to be more accountable to each other, their family, and God?

APPENDIX M

QUESTIONS FOR ZOOM MEETING

1. Does ministry matter if it comes from a different denomination or different religion rather than the CME Church? – Link prayer by finding out if they are committed to the underlying principles Methodist faith, and if they left, why and what is better at non-denomination?
2. Have the days of segregated churches come to an end?
3. Does the age of a pastor determine your willingness to participate in church service? – This can be linked to prayer, time management, and accountability. Do you like the style of young vs. old? Will they commit more time if they respect the pastor? More accountable to younger or older pastor?
4. After reading the responses from the entire group of millennials in the study, you all were in agreement of the priorities were financial security, a stable family structure, and a prayer routine. Confirm that financial security, family, and prayer routine are most important. What other things are important?
5. There was a strong agreement among millennials about the need for an importance of prayer. With all the events going on in America (social injustice, COVID, work/jobs), and the election of a new the president, have your views of faith and prayer changed?
6. After doing the surveys, have your pastors found ways to help the millennials become more accountable and active in the church? Has your pastor done anything to discourage you?
7. Question 5 of the survey for the pastors asked, “If you guys were the pastor, how would you encourage the millennials to participate in the CME Church and how would you bridge the gap between generations?” – Explain the challenges facing pastors.
8. Who is responsible for your salvation? (a) God (a) pastor (b) church (c) yourself
9. One of the pastors responded that it is everyone in the church job and responsibility to minister to God’s people. When was the last time you invited your friends or family to church?

- Follow-up to #9 - One pastor responded ways he reached out to minister to people and he asked were you as millennials willing to call, text, write, or even video chat with members?
10. Have these surveys open your mind or changed your opinion about the church?
11. Do you still believe not only the CME Church, but all churches are dying today?