

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Kingdom Millennials Infiltrating Culture:
Reaching in Toward Generation Y to Reach Out to the World**

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

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Abstract

As protestant Christianity meanders through time from its roots as a light post of religious ritualism to a contemporary beacon of Christ-centered worship, there has been a noticeable scattering of a critical portion of its congregants commonly known as the Millennial generation. While their absence is obvious across the entire Christian landscape, the evidence of their displacement is most definite in the small inner-city Black Church context. The writer attributes the cause of the Millennial *diaspora* to the unconscious loss of humanity's God-given purpose: to exclusively worship Him forever. It is apparent that an absent generation will garner a ripple of devastation that will commence within the individual believer, roll into the local ministry setting, and cascade outside the walls of the church into the community in which it serves.

The researcher is adamant about investigating what has driven Millennials away from ministry and in turn providing a platform to seek them and pilot them back into a Christian community, mobilizing them to infiltrate culture for the sake of Christ. The tool of spiritual formation in the form of Christian education can be how Millennials are invigorated, implemented, and inspired to experience spiritual maturity. Influenced by the Holy Spirit, the Millennial generation can be stoked to become the impending class of servant leaders of the church. If Millennials model holistic worship in the form of weekly Christian education, then the local church may experience a sustainable increase in servant leadership.

Key Words: worship, servant leadership, Millennials, spiritual maturity

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I am eternally thankful for my Heavenly Father for commissioning Jesus the Son for the purpose of redeeming my soul through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am sincerely honored that You chose me, an imperfect vessel to handle Your Word and work. Prayerfully, this will guide countless others toward Your kingdom.

I would like to dedicate this project to my late earthly father Daniel (Dan) Clark III in the spirit of gratefulness. I am forever humbled by your relentless love for your family and your consistent encouragement towards us all. May this body of work illuminate your cumulative impact on my life.

Finally, I am lovingly compelled to acknowledge my wife and best friend Tammy along with our beautiful children. Tammy has been the most significant godly influence along this daring journey. After all, it was your idea that I pursue this valiant endeavor. I am overjoyed by your patience, sacrifice, and encouragement throughout this spiritually academic adventure. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, and in her support of this kingdom-minded project, Tammy has graciously invigorated me to remain laser-focused on the mission set forth by Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank you, Honey.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Ministry Context.....	3
Problem Presented.....	8
Purpose Statement.....	9
Basic Assumptions.....	10
Definitions.....	11
Limitations.....	12
Delimitations.....	13
Thesis Statement.....	13
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework.....	15
Literature Review.....	15
Purpose of Humanity.....	15
Obedience to God.....	17
Lifestyle Worship.....	18
The Black Church.....	21
Millennials in Ministry.....	24
Spiritual Formation.....	26
Christian Education.....	28
Conclusion.....	30
Theological Foundations.....	31

Theoretical Foundations.....	36
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	41
Intervention Design.....	42
Permission (Y.A.M.S)	42
Recruitment.....	43
Consent.....	44
Implementation of Intervention Design.....	46
Chapter 4: Results.....	53
Millennial Values.....	53
Kingdom Impact.....	57
Salvation.....	58
Repentance.....	59
Godly Living.....	60
Millennial in Ministry.....	61
Millennial Leadership.....	61
The Divide.....	65
Relationship not Religion.....	68
What Works?	70
Power of Prayer.....	73
Discipleship/Spiritual Development.....	74
Technological Advancements.....	77
Evangelism.....	79

Y.A.M.S. Leadership Workshop.....	81
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	83
12-Week Y.A.M.S. Bible Study.....	86
The Last Days.....	90
Bibliography.....	95
Appendix A.....	108
Appendix B.....	144
IRB Approval Letter.....	147

Tables

1.1	Millennial Values Survey Data.....	55
1.2	Alternative Guidelines.....	68

Abbreviations

BC	<i>Black Church</i>
COF	<i>Cathedral of Faith</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
MOB	<i>Mount Olive Baptist</i>
MOBWC	<i>Mount Olive Baptist Worship Center</i>
YAMS	<i>Young Adult Ministry Squad</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Before the induction of the COVID-19 pandemic, the five industries responsible for resurrecting the American economy from the previous fiscal recession were: healthcare, construction, technology, retail, and non-durable manufacturing.¹ These industries are generally led by members of older generations (e.g., Baby Boomers and Generation Xers). However, in 2020, Richard Fry, a senior researcher focusing on economics and education at Pew Research Center affirms, “Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the nation’s largest living adult generation, according to population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.”² Who are Millennials and why is this generation so significant to the future of America?

As the largest generation in the nation, one may deduce that Millennials represent the most plenteous generation in the U.S. workforce as well. Fry confirmed in 2018 that “more than one-in-three American labor force participants (35%) are Millennials, making them the largest generation in the U.S. labor force.”³ Understanding that Millennials are capable of within secular society, one must acknowledge that Millennials are more than competent to lead within the context of ministry as well.

¹ Alison L. Deutsch, “The 5 Industries Driving the U.S. Economy,” accessed October 31, 2020, <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/042915/5-industries-driving-us-economy.asp>.

² Richard Fry, “Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America’s Largest Generation,” *Pew Research Center* (2020): 1, accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/28/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers-as-americas-largest-generation/>.

³ _____, “Millennials are the Largest Generation in the U.S. Labor Force,” *Pew Research Center* (2018):1, accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/>.

While there are a plethora of years offered by countless scholars, which outline the range of birth years for the millennial generation, the researcher subscribes to the view of Jolene Cassellius Erlacher, author of *Millennials in Ministry*, who articulates that the largest generation in America's history to date was born between 1980 and 2002.⁴

Akin to their non-religious counterparts, the church must overcome formidable barriers to eloquently ingratiate Millennials into the recesses of the ministry. The first obstacle to address is the perceivable generational polarity. Jackie Brack and Kip Kelly comment on this issue in the workplace by asserting, "the sheer volume of Millennials, combined with the relative lack of Gen Xers and the increasing retirement of Baby Boomers means that employers will be facing leadership gaps. And they will be looking to Millennials to fill those gaps."⁵

The second hindrance that must be managed in the process of groveling Millennials into a Christian community is the leadership/knowledge gap between Millennials and that of the past and present church leadership. In Leslie Nye's dissertation titled, "Millennials and Leadership," she explains the results discovered in her research, "the findings addressed as scholarly knowledge gap regarding Millennials' perceptions and beliefs about their current and desired leadership skills and the skills organizational leaders need to be effective leaders."⁶

⁴ Jolene Cassellius Erlacher, *Millennials in Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2014), 6.

⁵ Jackie Brack and Kip Kelly, "Maximizing Millennials in the Workplace," *UNC Executive Development* 22, no. 1 (2012): 2. accessed October 31, 2020, <http://execdev.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/hubfs/White%20Papers/Maximizing%20Millennials%20in%20the%20Workplace%20-%20Final.pdf>.

⁶ Leslie Louise Nye, "Millennials and Leadership: Beliefs and Perceptions of Leadership Skills" (DMin, thesis, The University of the Rockies, 2017), 5, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Supremely, the Millennial is reminded of the purpose in which he or she was created: to worship God forever (Isa 43:7).⁷ Mobilized by the Holy Spirit and in the essence of holistic worship, Millennials will be escorted towards weekly spiritual development in the form of Christian education.

Ministry Context

While the impact of voided kinship by the Millennial generation can be experienced in ministries across Christendom, the implications of their departure can be maximally validated in the small inner-city Black Church. Hence, the researcher's ministry setting is posited within the aforesaid context to accentuate the precedence of this church, its influence on the surrounding community, and the Millennials' role in its future existence.

Cathedral of Faith/Mount Olive Baptist Worship Center (C.O.F/M.O.B.W.C.) is an amalgamation of two previously fruitful Baptist ministries but is now in a restoration process both spiritually and physically. Located in the Greater Third Ward section of Houston, Texas, The original Mount Olive Baptist Church (M.O.B.) was pastored by Reverend Willie J. Coleman for nearly 45 years. It was a bustling congregation founded on the power of the preached Word and a Spirit-filled worship music ministry. Because the Black Church is generally positioned amid lower-income urban communities, the financial resources allocated for the discipleship of youth and young adults are minuscule at best. The forenamed truth was also prevalent for Mt. Olive Baptist Church. In its prime, Mt. Olive's church roll boasted nearly 400 congregants comprised of working-class Black families who heavily relied on the spiritual and practical healing provided by the ministry.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all passages are found in the New American Standard Bible (La Habra, CA: Lockman Foundation).

A similar theme holds for the origins of the Cathedral of Faith Baptist Church (C.O.F), which was founded by Reverend David J. Phillips in August 1993. Rev. Phillips reproduced the successful template provided by the once flourishing M.O.B. and catapulted Cathedral of Faith to a vibrant gospel-based family church. At its peak, the C.O.F. church roll nearly reached 100 members.

In early 2016, Rev. Coleman was diagnosed with a neurological disorder and was professionally advised to resign as the Senior Pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church. In October of the same year, the church's advisory board summoned the pastoral leadership of the founder of Cathedral of Faith Baptist Church Reverend D.J. Phillips. As a young minister, Rev. Phillips was groomed under the tutelage of Rev. Coleman at Mt. Olive Baptist, so the notion that one of his disciples became the bishop over both ministries was most appropriate.

In general, Millennials were not properly furnished to guide God's people effectively and efficiently toward spiritual maturity, while becoming the next crop of Christian leaders. Presently, the church is comprised of chiefly venerable or seasoned saints, who are nearing the end of the Christian race (cf. 2 Tim 4:7-8). There is a total of 30 faithful members on the conjugated church's roll call. Of the 30 congregants, eleven young adults were born between 1980 and 2002. The researcher will meet with these eleven Millennials, also referred to as Generation Y, to discuss their potential needs and negotiate strategies to have those needs met. Again, the researcher and church leadership are committed to ushering the next generation of Christian leaders in the spirit of holistic worship in the form of Christian education. Otherwise, the ministry is in danger of extinction without the preservation of a new era of Spirit-filled leaders.

Some rituals that are most predictable and central to the congregation's culture are the freedom of the Holy Spirit. While the ministry craves administrative structure, the Spirit is free to orchestrate the worship service within the communal setting. The singing of hymns and spiritual songs are instrumental in this ministry's ability to shape its body of believers. The preached Word is steeped in Scripture and supported by Scripture. Powerful corporate prayer is another staple of activity displayed by this ministry. Personal experience, commonly regarded as "personal testimonial reflection," is a time that is historically set aside for congregants to share their personal experience of God's goodness orally and openly before the entire congregation. While this tradition is generally practiced in smaller Black American churches, at the C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C., it plays an inferior role to the foundational Christian ordinances like water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Musical instruments like tambourines, bass guitars, a wooden cabasa, electronic keyboards, and the Hammond organ are prominent symbols that coagulate the oneness of the congregants. Most profoundly, practicing ordinances like the Lord's Supper and water baptism by immersion are other symbols that exemplify the culture of the ministry. On the podium positioned in the front and centered in the sanctuary lies the words of Christ, "Do this in Remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19-20).

The essence of the ministry is categorized by community and fellowship. The COVID-19 Pandemic has attempted to constrain the routine practices of worship in the form of giving tithes and offerings. Customarily, the church is encouraged to stand (pew-by-pew) and walk in a single-file line toward the front of the sanctuary to surrender their financial contributions to God and the ministry. Additionally, on Communion Sundays, female members are encouraged to dress in the color white, while the male congregants are asked to wear black or dark-colored

suits. Again, in the spirit of community, the clergy concludes the worship experience with a practice called the “Right Hand of Fellowship,” in which each member (row-by-row) walks across the front of the sanctuary and shakes the hands of the church leadership. Due to the pandemic, the practice is largely discouraged at this time.

The beliefs or ideas that best describe a congregant of C.O.F/M.O.B.W.C is that they are at liberty to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:23). The believer is free to worship God through song, giving, dancing, and/or in silence. Most significantly, the Holy Spirit is allowed to completely control and unify the worship experience centered around the presence of God. Because there are congregants from two previous existing ministries conjoined to become one current body of believers, spiritual and ministerial reconstruction is a continuous process that appears to be rewarding. While the members from M.O.B. prefer a traditional style of corporate worship, the C.O.F. congregants are more committed to contemporary worship practices aimed at engaging the surrounding culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

M.O.B. was originally situated in the Historic Third-Ward section of Houston, Texas, which is best known as a predominantly African American community with a rich history and cultural legacy along with a new sense of purpose and commitment.⁸ C.O.F. is presently located in the Sunnyside neighborhood on the southside of Houston, Texas.

⁸ “Third Ward Initiative” *University of Houston*, accessed October 31, 2020, <https://uh.edu/third-ward/third-ward-map/>.

Sarah Smith, writer of the article titled, “Sunnyside Fights Again Being Dumped On—Again,” describes the community as, “a historically Black neighborhood in south Houston, set up for Black people in 1912 by a white councilman as the other segregated neighborhoods in the city center grew crowded.”⁹ During the period when Black-owned businesses permeated the Sunnyside neighborhood, many residents referred to a stretch of Cullen Boulevard as Black Wall Street. However, by the late 1980s, many of the businesses had closed.¹⁰

The future location of C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C. will be a brand-new constructed building situated on a two-acre lot in the same neighborhood. Additionally, the ethnic background of the 30 members of C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C. is Black American. There are four married couples, 10 Baby Boomers, three Generation Xers, eleven Millennials, and six Generation Zers.

Due to the familial culture of C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C., the researcher’s wife was spiritually trained under the leadership of both Rev. Coleman and Bishop Phillips. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, on August 2, 2020, the researcher, and his family of six joined the membership of Cathedral of Faith/Mount Olive Baptist Worship Center. The researcher and his family transitioned from leaders in a Black megachurch ministry of nearly 8000 congregants in suburban Houston, Texas to a small inner-city Black church, which can be stimulated in the capacity of servant leadership.

Due to the pandemic, the Christian education ministries have been indefinitely postponed for the remainder of 2020 and into the first two months of 2021. The pastor is weighing his options concerning opening the church building on multiple occasions throughout the week.

⁹ Sarah Smith, “Sunnyside Fights Again Being Dumped On—Again,” *Houston Chronicle* accessed October 31, 2020, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Sunnyside-fights-against-covid-inequality-houston-15571653.php>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Regarding the researcher's project, every third Sunday at the ministry is Youth Sunday. During this worship experience, the young adults and children are charged with leading the praise and worship portion of service, which includes singing, instrumentation, praise dancing, and scriptural reading. The researcher will begin to incorporate weekly Christian education practices for the Millennials and the youth. The resources available for the project will be people or volunteer-based, commencing with the researcher's wife and children. Because his family serves in the worship ministry, he will schedule weekly Bible studies on the same day as the weekly choir rehearsals.

Problem Presented

Because humanity's primary purpose is to worship God of the heavens and the earth, the researcher is compelled to the supposition that every facet of the life of the believer ought to be an act of worship. Robert Morgan defines worship as "our expression of admiration towards the God who has revealed Himself."¹¹ With this definition in mind, it is the holistic worship of the believer towards God that is necessary for the Millennial to spiritually develop in the study of Christian education.

In the spirit of Jesus' words to Satan found in the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel account, "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only," the Millennial is encouraged to sever fleshly and/or selfish desires to seek the will of God and His purpose for humanity (Luke 4:8).¹² Despite their propensity to search for areas to serve causes that are most meaningful to them, the researcher is compelled to intentionally guide Millennials towards serving God and His people as an act of holistic worship.

¹¹ Robert Morgan, *Presentation: Worship and Preaching Part 1* (Lynchburg, VA: LBTS, 2020), 1.

Typically, within the small Black Church context, Millennials were not effectively and efficiently trained by the older generation of believers. The researcher will address the issue of lack of Millennial spiritual maturity by gauging the effectiveness of new resources in the ministry setting. Subsequently, he will comprehensively measure both positive and negative details within the ministry's culture. The problem this research project will address is that the absence of Millennials' participation in weekly Christian education may stifle their development in becoming future Christian leaders within the local church.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry action research project is to study how holistic worship when applied to weekly Christian education can provoke servant leadership by Millennials. The urgency of effective leadership reproduction or disciple-making spiritual development cannot be overstated. The researcher is convinced that Millennials' weekly Christian education (e.g., Sunday school, Bible study, and/or small group) is critical to their spiritual maturity and preparation for church leadership.

An evident source of this dilemma can be triggered by the possibility of negligence in leadership reproduction. The researcher is committed to imploring participation in the weekly application of Christian education in the lives of Millennials to rouse attendance and ultimately augment servant leadership within the small inner-city Black Church context. While the purpose of the research is precisely aimed at a particular ministry located in Houston, Texas, whenever a disciple humbly and lovingly commences work in the name of Jesus Christ, there will be both earthly and kingdom-wide implications.

The researcher is honored to be utilized as an instrument in the symbolic hands of God to wrangle in the Millennial generation in efforts to develop spiritual maturity within a Christian

community. The Gen Y participants will be tangibly equipped in the areas of personal spiritual disciplines (e.g., intimate prayer, meditation, devotional reading, journaling, and giving). The residue of the spiritual formation by Millennials presents the chance for future Christian leadership within the ministry context. The individual must be empowered during his or her secret time and the Father is faithful to reward them openly (cf. Matt 6:4-5).

Basic Assumptions

The researcher presumes the root of the problem concerning the Millennial generation's presence, productivity, and spiritual maturity stems from a form of desertion in spiritual development. This presumption mutually designates both 1.) the parents/guardians (most godly influence) and 2.) the church/ministry leadership as the culprits of the lack of servant leadership by the Millennial generation in the church context. Another presupposition is that the weekly engagement of Christian education with a nurturing environment will stimulate spiritual growth in young adults.

The foremost assumption is that without the attendance, participation, and service of the Millennial generation within the ministry context, it is virtually impossible to aptly develop the next generation of Christian servant leaders spiritually for the sake of Jesus Christ. While the contributors to the Millennials' ministry sabbatical are no longer on trial for their role of a lost generation from church, the spiritual health of the individuals charged with making disciples must be examined. Paul Pettit asserts, "God is more concerned with the development of the person in leadership."¹³

¹³ Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 180.

Definitions

Holistic Worship

Holistic worship, often coined lifestyle worship encapsulates the idea of the daily surrender of the believer's heart in which they humbly and faithfully offer his or her every thought, word, and deed to the glory of the Father. The follower of Christ is convicted to respond to the goodness of God by tendering honor towards the Creator in every aspect of life. Daniel Block concisely affirms that "holistic worship is fundamentally demonstrated in everyday conduct."¹⁴

Millennials

According to Jessica Brack, the group known as Millennials, Gen Y, Gen Next, Echo Boomers, the Baby-on-Board Generation, Screenagers, Facebookers, and the MySpace Generation are unlike any generation that precedes them.¹⁵ While the range of their births is consistently debated among examiners from as early as 1976 and spanning through 2001, this researcher ascribes to the Millennial born date window ranging from 1980 to 2002.

¹⁴ Daniel Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 81.

¹⁵ Brack, "Maximizing Millennials Workplace," 2.

Servant Leadership

The notion of servant leadership was fully displayed by Christ on the final days of His earthly ministry: Pettit asserts, “a servant leader is not motivated by personalized power or benefit. A servant leader is primarily motivated by two things: (1) the fulfillment of God’s mission for his or her ministry or organization and (2) the fulfillment of God’s purpose in the lives of the people who are part of the ministry or organization.”¹⁶ Like the two among the Twelve, who inquired to Jesus who would be the greatest of them (cf. Luke 22:24—27), this concept is not foreign to most leaders both Christian and secular. It must be understood that the servant leaders’ convictions are not aimed at his or her power, benefits, reputation, perks, or privileges; it is geared towards the fulfillment of a godly purpose and for the good of the people being led.

Limitations

During these unprecedented times, some legitimate limits may directly affect the writer’s area of study being researched. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has globally abated most of the earth’s inhabitants in one form or another, the researcher’s systematic study to address the previously mentioned problem can be compromised by means out of his control. Hypothetically, COVID-19’s impact could influence governmental agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to suggest or mandate federal, state, and local shutdowns. With COVID cases rising both locally and nationally, the ministry study location can be adversely altered.¹⁷

¹⁶ Pettit, *Foundations Spiritual Formation*, 180.

¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People,” accessed November 20, 2020, https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesinlast7days.

Additionally, in the context of the small local church, the subjects (Millennial Generation) could potentially fail to prioritize a weekly commitment to Christian education. Finally, in response to local and national mandates for non-essential business closures, church leadership may decide to prohibit the launch of the young adult ministry to protect the metabolic health of the congregation.

Delimitations

The researcher's presuppositions about the Millennial generation's inability to plug in with the Christian community will be categorized as a self-imposed delimitation of the study. Specifically, he will conduct the study in the fellowship hall of the C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C. located in the Sunnyside area of South Houston, Texas. The researcher will meet an appointed young adult leader for 15-30 minutes following each weekly Christian education session. There will be eleven contributors who were born between 1980 and 2002. The entire field of participants will consist of individuals from a Black American ethnic background.

Thesis Statement

The deprivation of Millennials' involvement with the universal Body of Christ is experienced throughout all of Christianity, however, its perilous ramifications on the small inner-city Black Church within the community it serves must be addressed. The paucity of a generation within any arena will all but certify the future destruction of that given sector, so this hypothesis is not unique to the Black Church. Preferably, the researcher desires to investigate and initiate an anchored platform to seek the wayward generation of Millennials and pilot them back into a Christian community.

Spiritual formation or discipleship in the form of Christian education can be how Millennials are invigorated, implemented, and inspired to experience spiritual maturity.

Influenced by the Holy Spirit, the Millennial generation can be stoked to become the impending class of servant leaders of the church. If Millennials model holistic worship in the form of weekly Christian education, then the local church will experience a sustainable increase in servant leadership.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Mankind was created to bring forth glory to God’s majesty and His kingdom (cf. Isa 43:7). Although Jesus’ earthly ministry was steeped in the spirit of service towards the Father and His people, it is particularly challenging for the inner-city Black Church to equip the Millennial generation to serve their body of believers. Moreover, if this trend is not reconciled, the Black Church will be stripped of potential generational Christian leaders, who are charged with steering the world toward the much-anticipated triumphal return of the Messiah. Vanessa Taylor, an author of the article located on the ThoughtCo.com reference website titled “The Black Church: Its Impact on Black Culture,” defines Black Church as “a term used to describe Protestant churches that have predominantly black congregations.”¹⁸

Henceforth, the above definition provides the researcher’s cognition of the term “Black Church.” The researcher is compelled to believe that the Black Church has deviated from the purpose for which the entire body was created. The literature review surveys the idea of humanity returning to its purpose of holistically worshipping God through service towards one another.

Literature Review

Purpose of Humanity

Millennials/Generation Y can make a profound impact on secular society but most significantly within the small inner-city Black church context. Considering current topics of discussion within American culture including social injustices toward people of color, sporadic

¹⁸ Vanessa Taylor, “The Black Church: Its Impact on Black Culture,” *ThoughtCo*, (2017): 1, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://www.thoughtco.com/meaning-of-the-term-black-church-4154347>.

acts of violence against all people, systematic and blatant racism, and bi-partisan political strife that emanates from the halls of the White House and meanders down to the underserved metropolitan communities that encapsulate the small inner-city Black church, America has never been more divided as a democracy as they are today. In his book titled *In a House United: How the Church Can Save the World*, Allen Hilton attests to the unmatched division within America following President Trump's 2016 victory, "we had seen the polarization statistics rise, had experienced the disintegration of bipartisanship in government and of common-good collaboration in culture."¹⁹ Interestingly, several experts had even commenced juxtaposing the contemporary America in which they experienced daily with the post-Civil War America that resulted in violence to settle the dichotomy of slavery nearly four decades earlier.

Instead of addressing the problem collectively, Joy Challenger, a professor of World Religions at Duke University, encourages each citizen to investigate a spattering of questions individually, "Who am I?' and 'What am I here for?' or 'What am I here to do?'"²⁰ Aiden Wilson Tozer provides a comprehensive response to the aforementioned questions as he asserts, "God made man in His own image and blew in him the breath of life to live in His presence and worship Him. God sent that man out into the world to increase, multiply, and fill the earth with men and women who would worship God in the beauty of holiness."²¹

With this definition in mind, the individual is equipped to acknowledge that humanity's purpose on the earth far exceeds the commonly assumed standard to simply exist or survive.

¹⁹ Allen Hilton, *In a House United: How the Church Can Save the World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 2.

²⁰ Joy K. Challenger, "Infused: Millennials and the Future of the Black Church" (DMin thesis, Duke University, 2016), 106, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

²¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man: Designed to Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 32.

Interestingly, one may still ponder, inquire, or seek the proverbial ‘why me,’ but Tozer supplied additional commentary by stating, “keep in mind what God created, He created for His purpose and pleasure (see Rev 4:11). God stood man upon his feet and said, 'Look around, this is all yours, and look at Me, I am yours, and I'll see in your face the reflection of My own glory.’”²²

The Lord did not create man for humanity’s sake but for His pleasure (cf. Isa 43:7; Rev 4:11). The Creator imputes divine value on the creation which bears His image. Tozer concludes, “man’s supreme function through all eternity is to reflect God’s highest glory, and that God might look into the mirror called man and see His own glory shining there. Through man, God could reflect His glory to all creation.”²³ Concerning the members of society who are simply *existing* (emphasis added) instead of functioning in God’s appointed purpose, he or she can intentionally redirect their paths by lovingly and willingly surrendering to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Paul Pettit concludes, “at its base, worship is about the presence of God and our engagement with that presence.”²⁴ As the worshiper basks in the glory of the triune God, he will be inspired to respond with a Christ-centered exaltation.

Obedience to God

For a follower of Christ to wholly surrender or submit to the governance of Jesus as Lord and Savior, in imitation of His declaration in the garden of Gethsemane, and despite his or her agenda, the disciple must proclaim, “nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will” (Mark 14:36 NKJV). At the core of mankind’s purpose to worship is the relinquishing of one’s personal

²² Tozer, *Purpose of Man*, 22.

²³ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁴ Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 63-64.

will for that of his or her Father. The prophet Jeremiah affirms that obedience is infused with the spirit of submission when he declares, “but this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and you will walk in all the ways which I commanded you, that it may be well with you” (Jer 7:23). Vernon Whaley asserts, “the heartbeat of worship is obedience to Christ and His commands.”²⁵ This rhythm of worship must be centered on the believer’s intentionality and compliance to his Creator’s will who orchestrates worship through the Holy Spirit. Tozer expounds, “the operation of the Spirit of God within us enables us to worship God acceptably through that person we call Jesus Christ, who is Himself, God. Therefore, worship originates with God, comes back to us, and is reflected from us.”²⁶

Lifestyle Worship

Upon comprehending mankind’s purpose for populating the earth, one must unveil the daily resemblance of authentic worship in the life of the disciple. In the spirit of clarity, to comprehensively provide an accurate illustration of holistic worship, the researcher is compelled to explain what lifestyle worship is not. Whaley affirms this concept of subjection, “if worship becomes something that only occurs at a specific time and location each week, we lose the holistic call to be worshippers as we journey through daily life.”²⁷ Worship is not solely subjugated to a Spirit-filled, music-centered, and often emotionally charged offering from the worship team of the church.

²⁵ Vernon Whaley and David Wheeler, *The Great Commission Worshipper: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 19.

²⁶ Tozer, *Purpose of Man*, 71.

²⁷ Whaley, *Great Commission Worshipper*, 17.

Finally, Paul Pettit contends, “worship of the triune God is the most spiritually formative practice available to us as Christians. It is the spiritual practice par excellence.”²⁸ Until the believer fully unravels the concept of lifestyle worship, and he or she allows it to permeate the nucleus of their daily lives and communities of faith, we are just going to be working harder at the Christian life and getting nowhere.²⁹

Inversely, holistic worship can be best portrayed in Jesus’ declaration to Ananias about Saul from Tarsus when He asserts, “Go, for he is a chosen *vessel* of Mine” (Acts 9:15 NKJV). In the New American Standard Bible’s translation, the term vessel (G. *skeuos*) is replaced with the term *instrument*, which symbolizes a lump of clay intrinsically and uniquely shaped in the hands of the Potter. The worshiper’s heart must be postured in a position of subjection to be amply utilized by Christ for His divine purposes. Whaley states, “our humility is most evidenced by our submission. It is only as we submit control of our lives to His mighty hand that we can experience and enjoy lifestyle worship.”³⁰ One may attempt to visualize what the idea of lifestyle worship might resemble in the life of the Millennial.

The disciple is empowered by the grace of God, mobilizing him or her to do His will in every area of their lives. Pettit expounds, “spiritual formation, in turn, is about how to go about engaging with the presence of God, walking with him day by day, moment by moment, in worship, prayer, obedience, witness, spiritual disciplines, or whatever.”³¹ Holistic worship is perceived as an intentional daily dying of self and picking up one’s cross to follow Christ (cf.

²⁸ Pettit, *Foundations Spiritual Formation*, 52.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Whaley, *Great Commission Worshipper*, 57.

³¹ Pettit, *Foundations Spiritual Formation*, 64.

Matt 16:24; 1 Cor 15:31). Tozer affirms, “for worship to be a vital part of everyday life, it must be systematically and carefully nurtured.”³² Man-centered religious acts or ritualistic offerings towards the Most Sovereign God certainly are unacceptable forms of worship. Daniel Block argues, “unless the worshiper walks with God in daily life, no cultic acts will impress God positively. Speaking biblically and theologically, the sacred and the secular may not be divorced.”³³ However, if an individual is motivated to separate the two, *life as worship* is superior to traditional and ritualistic expressions of worship. True worship is confirmed *primarily* in everyday practices.³⁴

Block turned to Donald Arthur Carson, the Canadian theologian and emeritus professor of the New Testament, to glean an alternative perspective who interpreted Jesus’ statement in John 4:21—24 as a prediction of a day when the focus of worship will shift from place to manner, and to suggest that ‘in spirit and in truth; is a way of saying that we must worship God by the means of Christ.’ In him, the reality has dawned, and the shadows are being swept away.”³⁵ This view of worship is binding or unifying when coagulating the individual members into a well-function body of believers. Byron Anderson equates worship to an environment like a school where people are gathered for some common purpose or associated with some particular practices.”³⁶

³² Tozer, *Purpose of Man*, 178.

³³ Block, *Glory of God*, 81.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁶ Byron Anderson, “Worship: Schooling in the Tradition of Jesus,” *Theology Today* 66, no. 1 (2009): 27, accessed on September 9, 2020, <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001717178&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Anderson further expounds on the parallel of schools and worship by asserting, “worship is a school in this sense as well. Whether we gather in a storefront, meetinghouse, or Gothic cathedral, we as the church are a people sharing methods, forms, and expressions; we are joined together in baptism, by a common commitment to the way of Jesus Christ, to love God and our neighbors.”³⁷ With worship signifying the believer’s daily expression of awe towards the God who has revealed Himself, it is palpable that engaging in a weekly Sunday corporate worship service is a fitting form of lifestyle worship. This concept of lifestyle worship can be manifested in the lives of Millennials and more notably those within the Black Church context.

The Black Church

Fundamentally, one must discern the gravity of the task undertaken by the Black Church (BC) concerning the community it serves, to properly quantify the demand for millennial contributions towards future generations. In unison with the universal body of Christ, without the Millennials’ involvement or service in ministry, the BC is destined to fall short of its mission to “Go therefore and make disciples” (Matt 28:19). Hence, the Black Church's foundational effect on the environment in which it actively engages must be addressed.

In the journal article titled, “Infused: Millennials and the Future of the Black Church,” Joy K. Challenger expounds on the BC’s roots and its significance within the culture. She emphasizes a pivotal function that the BC extends to the community in which it dwells, “there is a high value placed upon both personal and communal identity in the Black Church. As far back as slavery, the doctrinal position of infinite worth and equality of all humans was paramount in the Black Church—instrumental in preventing total dehumanization of slaves.”³⁸ Essentially, the

³⁷ Anderson, “Worship: Schooling Jesus,” 27.

³⁸ Challenger, “Infusion: Millennials Future,” 22.

inauguration of the Black Church was steeped in the neglect and oppression of Black Americans by a presumed superior ethnic group. Kendra Barber asserts, “due to the laws denying blacks access to public space, the Black Church became a foundation of the Black public sphere. Because this public sphere was established in conflict with the dominant white society, we can think of the Black Church as a “counter-public sphere.”³⁹

Systematically, demographic regions that include people of color in impoverished communities across America provide less than favorable fresh food options, in complete contrast to those individuals ascribed to alternative ethnic backgrounds. Eric Klinenberg, a professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University claims, “the USDA reports that about 13 percent of low-income census tracts are ‘food deserts,’ which are areas with the absence of fresh foods.”⁴⁰ Barber describes the BC as a symbolic bridge for the community ushering them from poverty to survival when she states, “the Black Church has often had to fill in the gap of providing services to the black community out of necessity.”⁴¹

In response to the continuous mistreatment of Black American citizens, Challenger reveals the birth of a movement geared to level the playing field between Black people and their White counterparts. The author asserts, “The Civil Rights Generation understood the identity-shaping power of social, educational, political, and religious ideas; and was instrumental in redefining black identity as equal, no longer bound by second-class citizenship.”⁴² Alternatively,

³⁹ Kendra Barber, “Whither Shall We Go?: The Past and Present of Black Churches and the Public Sphere,” *Religions* 6, No.1 (2015): 257, accessed September 9, 2020, doi:10.3390/rel6010245.

⁴⁰ Eric Klinenberg, *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (New York: Crown, 2018), 126.

⁴¹ Barber, “Black Public Sphere,” 251.

⁴² Challenger, “Infusion: Millennials Future,” 116.

the concept of 'blackness' not only epitomized authentic American citizenship from a religious standpoint but in the political realm as well. By providing racial identity theological significance, the Civil Rights Generation refashioned how Black members within the body of Christ viewed themselves as now being made in the *imago Dei* (image of God).⁴³

The Civil Rights Generation was integral in guiding Black Americans toward their God-given purpose of worshiping Him as image-bearers. Unfortunately, there has been a paradigm shift within the Black Church that has alienated the Millennial generation who are seemingly absent from service towards and in fellowship with the congregation. Joshua Mitchell, in his thesis titled, "Bid Them to Come," expresses a similar conundrum regarding the present status of the BC when he testifies, "I have been greatly influenced in my reading about the role of the Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement and I am often prayerful about which movements the Black Church should be championing in this current era."⁴⁴

It may be irresistible to ponder the cause of the evident dilapidation of a generation serving among the body of Christ. Anthony Wayne Bailey presents one theory aimed at the BC's model for discipleship when he asserts, "in many cases, the spiritual offer in the African-American Church has leaned more often than not toward corporate spiritual formation when a church's leaders have considered spiritual formation at all."⁴⁵ While the tradition of discipleship can be viewed as a form of in-reach within the Black Church context, Bailey focuses the BC on

⁴³ Challenger, "Infusion: Millennials Future," 116.

⁴⁴ Joshua Mitchell, "Bid them to Come: Engaging Black Millennials in Discipleship Development." (DMIN diss., Virginia Union University, 2017), 22, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

⁴⁵ Anthony W. Bailey, "Spiritual Formation: A Model to Strengthen the Mission, Operation, and Commitment of African American Churches" (DMIN thesis., Scholars Crossing, 2016), 44, Dissertations & Theses @ Liberty University.

the community in which it serves by suggesting, “To move beyond long-term existing traditions, which are grounded in the idea that spiritual growth is a pursuit of the congregation as a whole, the church must become willing to break down its own historic barriers to reach individuals in its community.”⁴⁶ How might a ministry target Millennials/Generation Y in hopes of grooming them to become the next generation of Christian leaders?

Millennials in Ministry

While it is apparent in the Black Church setting that a considerable dose of neglect emerged in discipleship, the detrimental bearing of church attendance, service, and leadership of Millennials in ministry can be witnessed across all of Christendom. William Cox and Robert Peck assert,

For example, a high percentage of youth leave the church once away from home (Ham & Beemer, 2009), sharing the Gospel is typically an intimidating effort for most Christians (Reid, 2017), two-thirds of the U.S. Christians surveyed by the Pew Research Center say many religions can lead to eternal life, and most of them say some non-Christian religions can lead to life everlasting (2015), pornography has a significant grip on pastors (CBN News, 2016), and biblical literacy among Christians is low (Mohler, 2016).⁴⁷

Considering the alarming statistics above, “the meaning of human life is to glorify God (by imaging Him) and to enjoy Him forever (living in his light and love).”⁴⁸ Has the Black Church neglected its purpose to reflect God’s glory to all creation or more specifically, toward

⁴⁶ Bailey, "Spiritual Formation: Strengthen Mission," 44.

⁴⁷ William F. Cox Jr. and Robert A. Peck, "Christian Education as Discipleship Formation," *Christian Education Journal* 15, no. 2 (2018): 244, accessed September 9, 2020, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2080880941%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁴⁸ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Putting on Christ: Spiritual Formation and the Drama of Discipleship,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 8, no. 2 (2015): 152, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAn3837247&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Millennials? Byron Anderson argues, “it is hard for anyone to inhabit the Jesus tradition if one’s only exposure to it by way of a baby in a manger or a crucified and now absent prophet.”⁴⁹ Jesus Christ is alive, and Millennials can experience Him alive through His body—the church (cf. Acts 1:8; Rev 1:18 NKJV).

The method in which the church approaches Millennials must be marinated in the spirit of service. Grace Pomroy asserts, “generosity begets generosity. The best advocate for giving is a person who has been stirred and inspired by a cause whose passion is so contagious that they cannot help but share it with their friends.”⁵⁰ The mission to usher a lost generation towards servant leadership in the kingdom of God must be substantiated by Scripture. Challenger lobbies, “standing on the promises of Proverbs 22, I remain hopeful of their return, but keenly aware of the changes necessary to see them return home.”⁵¹ Saturated in God’s Word, the author encourages the believer to trust the Father’s promise to, “train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

The aforesaid passage is the antidote to the literal and figurative dissipation of Millennials experienced across all of Christendom. Challenger concludes, “*Diaspora* originates from the Greek meaning dispersion or scattering--which I have categorized among millennials as physical, theological, and practical. I also like the construct of diaspora because it speaks of dispersion by migration or flight from one's land of origin.”⁵² Christians who are African

⁴⁹ Anderson, “Worship Schooling Jesus,” 26.

⁵⁰ Grace D. Pomroy, “Stewardship: What the Church Can Learn from Millennials,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 2 (2018): 14, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIEM180410000726&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁵¹ Challenger, “Infusion: Millennials Future,” 96.

⁵² *Ibid.*

American call the Black Church their religious homeland, nevertheless, a great number of their youth are roaming, disjointed, and bestrewn. Once Millennials have sojourned home to a community in Christ, they are fit to be equipped for spiritual maturity, mission, and mobility.

Spiritual Formation

At the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry, He commanded the eleven with Him to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19 NKJV). He empowered them to continue the mission of making His kingdom known to the world. Initially, Jesus did not send the Twelve immediately into service as He called them from their vocations, however, they were to undergo a process of spiritual development, spiritual formation, or discipleship. Whaley expounds, "People cannot be properly trained as disciples unless they are placed into real-life situations that will force them to overcome their fears and desire to grow spiritually."⁵³

Vanhoozer argues, "every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else."⁵⁴ Pettit supports the position of Vanhoozer that discipleship's primary aim is for the believer to be shaped in the image of the Son as he asserts, "the meaning of the term spiritual formation and a biblical understanding of what it is and how it works is best taken from passages in the Bible that refer to the Holy Spirit in the context of *forming*, *transforming*, and *conforming* a person's life toward Christlikeness."⁵⁵

⁵³ Whaley, *Great Commission Worshipper*, 136.

⁵⁴ Vanhoozer, *Putting on Christ*, 147.

⁵⁵ Pettit, *Foundations Spiritual Formation*, 51.

As a result of the triple-phased sanctification of the worshiper, Bailey asserts, “when transformation takes root in the believer's life, there is a continual renewal and constant ascend to a level of spiritual maturity that strengthens and characterizes his Christlike image.”⁵⁶ Strikingly, this charge is not exclusive to the Millennial generation, but the entirety of Christendom. Jim Putman further expounds, “a leader's job is to guide and equip the saints so that the entire church becomes a mature community in which disciples flourish.”⁵⁷ The believer must assess how they perceive the reality of the world in which they reside. Kenneth Coley explains what innately guides humanity, “the underlying belief system held by an individual that determines his/her attitudes and actions in life.”⁵⁸ This is inevitably true for those belonging to the Millennial generation.

The universal body of believers is to be subjected to the will of the Father, surrendered to the lordship of the Son, and mobilized by the Holy Spirit to reflect His glory. Putman expands, “we've mentioned before how there are three necessary components to the disciple-making process--the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God. These three components work together to bring about spiritual maturity in people's lives.”⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Bailey, “Spiritual Formation Mission,” 42.

⁵⁷ Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 114.

⁵⁸ Kenneth S. Coley, "Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations." *Faith and Mission* 17, No. 2 (200): 124, accessed October 2, 2020, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000174091&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁵⁹ Putman and Harrington, *DiscipleShift Make Disciples*, 137.

Bailey suggests, “to better understand spiritual formation, it is important to know how the Church as a body, and its people as individuals working within that body, should work. As Apostle Paul reveals in II Corinthians, everyone who becomes a new creature in Christ also becomes ‘God's fellow-worker.’”⁶⁰

John Oswald Sanders expounds, “new birth in Christ does not change natural qualities but brings them in line with holy purpose; when they are placed under the control of the Holy Spirit, they are raised to new effectiveness.”⁶¹ Earley concludes, “disciple-making is about helping individuals develop to their full potential for Christ and His kingdom. This happens best in a healthy body where all the parts are functioning the way He intended.”⁶² The essence of spiritual formation is steeped in the desire for the believer to become more like Christ.

Christian Education

The concept of Christian education has been a contemporary term to illustrate the emphasis on the intentional spiritual advancement of believers. Estep and Lawson assert, “educational ministries in the church must equip people to be faithful in living lives as Christ’s ambassadors with a message of hope and reconciliation and lives that back this message up with acts of loving care.”⁶³

⁶⁰ Bailey, “Spiritual Formation Mission,” 42.

⁶¹ John Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 96.

⁶² Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013), 191.

⁶³ James Estep and Kevin E. Lawson, "Eschatological Foundations of Christian Education: How Our Beliefs About Christ's Return Impact Our Educational Ministry Efforts," *Christian Education Journal* 12, no. 2 (2015): 289, accessed September 20, 2020, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1725036424%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

In the contemporary church, there is an irrefutably supple environment for the spiritual boot-camp approach within Christian education ministries, where modern congregants are prepped for challenging circumstances ahead.⁶⁴

Interestingly, many misinterpret the idea as a condition required before launching Christians into the mission field. Whaley asserts, “the common belief among most Christians (even church leaders) is that a person must achieve a high level of biblical and practical knowledge before he can become a reproducing follower of Christ.”⁶⁵ For the believer, understanding, in and of itself is futile absent of an intimate relationship with God Himself. Arguably, intellectually focused activities regarding knowing and understanding the Scriptures (John 5:39-40) are not the prime biblically recommended way toward knowing God and being His disciple. Indeed, knowledge about God that results from academic/intellectual attainments is qualitatively different from personally and experientially knowing Him.⁶⁶

Hence, the researcher subscribes to applying a Bible-based and Christ-centered approach to Christian education as a pursuit in the study. “The inherent connection between education and discipleship is made very clear by Jesus’ command to His disciples (Matt. 28:18-20, NKJV): “Go therefore and make disciples, *teaching* them . . . (emphasis added).”⁶⁷ They were to do what He did (cf. John 14:12, 15:16, 17:18). As important as academics are in Christian education, the more important focus, both temporally and eternally, must be discipleship formation.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Estep and Lawson, “Foundations of Christian Education,” 289

⁶⁵ Whaley, *Great Commission Worshiper*, 134.

⁶⁶ Cox and Peck, “Christian Education Discipleship,” 246.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 248.

While it appears that Christian education is targeting the ministry context, the believer is being relationally developed to engage society. Cox concludes, “relationship is the central aspect of education.”⁶⁹ Sanders proclaims, “all Christians are called to develop God-given talents, to make the most of their lives, and to develop to the fullest their God-given gifts and capabilities.”⁷⁰

Conclusion

The researcher is compelled to prompt humanity and specifically Millennials toward their God-ordained purpose to worship Him and aim glory towards His kingdom. Worship is orchestrated by the Creator down to the hearts of man which triggers a supernatural response in him. The worshiper, who is fashioned with the Holy Spirit is mobilized by their obedience to the Father as a way of submission to His will. It is in this posture of surrender that the believer can be fully utilized by Christ in every area of his or her life for His glory and the good of mankind. Estep and Lawson affirm, “education that is Christian cannot simply preserve the past, nor can it merely seek contemporary application. Rather it must prepare Christians for the future, utilizing the past and present as the trajectories of the believer’s hope, with its possibilities and opportunities.”⁷¹

The deficiency of Millennial contributions to the kingdom of God is experienced throughout Christianity, however, its acute impact on the Black Church within the community it serves must be addressed.

⁶⁹ Cox and Peck, “Christian Education Discipleship,” 249.

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Excellence*, 13.

⁷¹ Estep and Lawson, “Foundations of Christian Education,” 289.

Mitchell expounds, “the church tends to enable the widely reported exodus of Millennials from the church by failing to engage them in meaningful and attractive spiritual development models because of a limited understanding of the factors that contribute to their willingness to engage in the teaching ministries of the church.”⁷² The absence of a generation within any industry will all but ensure the future demise of that given industry, so this concept is not unique to the Black Church.

Preferably, the researcher desires to explore and establish a stable foundation to pursue the lost generation of Millennials and accompany them back into the fold. Mitchell concludes, “teachers and local congregations seeking to re-engage Black Millennials must be in continual exploration of the character of God, a variety of texts about God, and answers to the questions posed by a ‘post-Christian’ generation.”⁷³ Spiritual formation or discipleship in the form of Christian education can be how Millennials are encouraged, equipped, and empowered to experience spiritual maturity. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Millennial generation can be stimulated to become the next breed of potential servant leaders for God’s kingdom.

Theological Foundations

The researcher’s conviction to propel the Millennial generation towards purposeful Christian leadership in the form of spiritual formation is steeped in the Old Testament model of discipleship displayed between Moses and Joshua (cf. Num 13—Josh 1). Despite his insecurities and vacillation (cf. Exod 4:10) regarding Yahweh’s charge to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage, and to lead them into the land of milk and honey (cf. Exod 3:8-10), Moses, the chosen

⁷² Mitchell, “Engaging Black Millennials,” 24.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 37.

instrument of deliverance in the hand of God unequivocally exemplified holistic worship in the way of Joshua's spiritual formation.

Sprouting from mankind's divinely orchestrated purpose to herald glory to the Father, (cf. Isa 43:7), Moses amenably honored God's command to service by equipping Joshua for service. In the concordant spirit, the researcher is committed to serving the Millennial generation as a manner of lifestyle worship, and in turn, the subjects of the study could be convicted to lovingly serve God and His people holistically (cf. Mark 12:30-31). This concept of service is not a proclamation instituted from the selfish ambitions of the researcher, but instead by the unmatched grace of his Savior. In the tenth chapter of Mark's Gospel account, Jesus asserts, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 NKJV).

While the Old Testament relationship between Moses and Joshua best illustrates spiritual development from one generation to another, the relationship between the apostle Paul and his spiritual son Timothy provides an intelligible New Testament perspective of biblical discipleship aimed towards Christian servant leadership. Paul emphasized the importance of proper devotion time and attention to gaining knowledge concerning God's Word, local ministry, and the culture in which it dwells. He encouraged Timothy to "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15 NKJV).

Indisputably, during the Lord's three-year earthly ministry was the most pronounced manifestation of Christian discipleship which exhibited an array of settings, situations, and circumstances where Jesus guided the Twelve towards spiritual maturity. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Messiah esteemed the apostles with nine blessings priming them for future service

(cf. Matt 5:3-12). He concludes the Beatitudes by highlighting the distinction between the disciples of Christ and the secular world. Jesus declared, “you are the salt of the earth” and “you are the light of the world” (Matt 5:13-14).

As witnesses to various miracles, episodes, and epithets situated amidst the Gospels, the disciples were being divinely transformed from an unsuspecting collection of ex-fishermen and a tax collector who would become the perpetual gallant vessels utilized by God to form the first-century Church (cf. Matt 4:19; 9:9-13, 16:18). Amid doubt and distractions, the disciples still chose to worship Christ (cf. Matt 28:16-17), which prepared them to receive His subsequent directives that were sealed with a comforting promise (cf. Matt 28:20).

The three-year spiritually developmental journey of the disciples culminates in the final three verses of chapter 28 in Matthew’s Gospel account. After confirming the jurisdiction in which His authority blankets, both “heaven, and earth,” Jesus commissioned them to, “Go therefore and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20). The faithfulness of God toward His followers is littered throughout Scripture, however, existing in the bosom of His character was a genuine desire for spiritual advancement for future generations.

Because of Moses’ disobedience, he was not allowed to lead the children of Israel into Canaan (Num 20:11). Instead, his protégé Joshua was commissioned to guide God’s people “into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you” (Deut 31:23).

Eugene Merrill confirms Moses' consultation of God before appointing Israel's next leader "which guaranteed the wisdom of His choice. The leader, Moses said, should be like a shepherd who would lead Israel, his sheep, out and . . . in."⁷⁴ This model of divine consultation is an essential element in the ministry context of the researcher's project.

Despite man's consistent infidelity against Yahweh which emanates from the fall of Mankind (cf. Gen 3), God's banner of devotion to humanity has never wavered. His unchanging hand can be experienced amidst the entire book of Esther even though His name is not mentioned once within the narrative. Tony Evans, theologian and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas asserts, "Esther is unique because it is the only book in Scripture that does not mention the name of God directly. This is because God wanted to use the book to show His providence (that is, His invisible hand) works behind the scenes to bring about His purposes in history."⁷⁵ Interestingly, the demonstration of God's providence which stems from His sovereignty is not solely exclusive to Old Testament Scripture.

In the beloved disciple John's Gospel exposition, the recurring term *abide* is well exercised throughout the account. In the 14th chapter, Jesus comforts the disciples about His pending ascension by affirming to them "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (cf. John 14:2). Carson provides contextual analysis when he exclaims, "if Jesus invariably speaks the words of God and performs the acts of God (5:19ff.), should he not be trusted like God? If *he* tells his followers not to let their hearts be troubled, must it not be because he has ample and justifiable reason?"⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Eugene H. Merrill, *Numbers*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 1984), 249.

⁷⁵ Tony Evans, *Esther*, The Tony Evans Bible Commentary: Advancing God's Kingdom Agenda (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 479.

The rationale is immediately determined: the departure of the Messiah will be exuberantly advantageous to those who lovingly and willingly choose to follow His leadership.

While these are pertinent kingdom details for every believer to embrace and find comfort and victory in heaven, the trinket of the passage can be discovered in the text when Jesus eloquently illustrates the concept of the oneness between the Father and the Son. He asserts, “he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do because I go to the Father” (John 14:12). Carson expounds, “but Jesus is about to return to his Father, he is about to be glorified, and in the wake of his glorification his followers will know and make known all that Jesus is and does, and their every deed and word will belong to the new eschatological age that will then have dawned.”⁷⁷

The Messiah was enlivening the cluster of his most dear followers to *abide* in him, just as He and the Father are one by *remaining* in One another. On the surface, to proclaim that a dependent crew of ex-fishermen were to perform “greater works” than Christ accomplished during His earthly ministry was supremely outlandish. However, the Son later explained to disciples that upon His departure, they would not be left alone to fend for themselves. In chapter 16 of John’s Gospel, Jesus proclaims, “it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away; the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).

Tony Evans concludes, “the Father sent the Son into the world (3:17), and the Son would send the Spirit into the world (16:7). Thus, the Trinitarian God is at work, each Person carrying out the next phase of his kingdom program.”⁷⁸ The Holy Spirit *was* the inspiration that

⁷⁶ Donald Arthur Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 488.

⁷⁷ Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 497.

authorized the disciples to spread the gospel amongst the earth and He *is* the catalyst driving the researcher and the Millennial generation toward spiritual maturity.

Theoretical Foundations

From the inception of the first-century church to the contemporary ministry setting, there has existed a myriad of models implemented to develop one's spiritual maturity within a Christian context. In Britain in the 1780s, Sunday school was created to equip poor children with tools to learn how to read. Due to the Industrial Revolution, many children were bound to work long hours in factories when Christian philanthropists were inspired to deliver these children from the bondage of illiteracy.⁷⁹ While the researcher's desire is not to specifically promote cognitive literacy among young people on generic matters, he is intrinsically convicted to foster an environment to develop young adults from a spiritual perspective. Deborah Pardo-Kaplan, author of "Bible Study's New School" expounds on the sentiment of mission over cognition, "it's time for us to be a little more deliberate in making sure our study of the Bible isn't purely for enjoyment [or merely] intellectually but to truly mobilize us to what God intends us to be in the world."⁸⁰

In other contemporary Christian ministries, Bible studies are considered the standard discipleship mechanism for cultivating spiritual maturity. Historically, they are like Sunday

⁷⁸ Tony Evans, *John*, The Tony Evans Bible Commentary: Advancing God's Kingdom Agenda (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 1053.

⁷⁹ Timothy Larson, "When Did Sunday School Start?" *Christianity Today*, accessed November 29, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/when-did-sunday-schools-start.html>.

⁸⁰ Deborah Pardo-Kaplan, "Bible Study's New School: How Bible Study Fellowship is Rewriting Its Rulebook to Double Its Under 40 Membership and Adapt for a New Generation," *Christianity Today* 61 no. 8:40, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://search-ebsohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIiGEV171030003404&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

school lessons typically taught in the morning before a weekly worship service. Moreover, the Inductive Bible Study Method prompts the Bible reader to consider three phases in understanding the biblical text. First, the reader engages in the *observation* phase, which presents the question, “What does the biblical text say?” Second, the believer encounters the *interpretation* stage, which inquires, “What does the text mean?” Third, the disciple confronts the *application* step, which ponders, “What does this mean for my life?”⁸¹

The three-staged approach of inductive Bible study closely mirrors the triple-phased practice of proper hermeneutics mentioned in the book, *Introduction of Biblical Interpretation*. The authors emphasize the three-pronged answer to why biblical interpretation is an essential element to the spiritual development of Bible readers by asserting: (1) to discern God’s message; (2) to avoid or dispel misconceptions or erroneous perspectives and conclusions about what the Bible teaches; (3) to be able to apply the Bible’s message to our lives.⁸²

Anchored to the bedrock of the timeless forementioned discipleship devices of traditional Sunday school and inductive Bible study the researcher is incentivized to establish a healthy relational environment commonly regarded as small groups. Plucked from the model displayed in the early church (cf. Acts 2:42, 46-47), the researcher is persuaded that augmented spiritual growth can be nurtured within an inferior group versus a corporately gathered setting. In theory, the Millennials involved in the research will be received into a Scripture-based environment where their questions will be answered with truth in love (cf. Eph 4:15) and their insights will be intentionally harkened by church leadership.

⁸¹ Dave Jenkins, “What is Inductive Bible Study?” Christianity.com, accessed November 29, 2020, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-inductive-bible-study.html>.

⁸² William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation: Revised and Updated* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 19-20.

Harley Atkinson proclaims, “in the United States it is estimated that 80 million adults participate in a small group, and 60 percent of these belong to groups affiliated with a church or synagogue. Bible study groups, prayer groups, recovery and support groups, cell groups, and self-help groups represent the wide variety of groups used by the church.”⁸³ The strengths of the proven method of discipleship by small groups can be observed by growth in the literal numbers of Christians since the inauguration of the Church. As of 2015, of the 7.3 billion human inhabitants on the earth, there were nearly 2.5 billion Christians around the world.⁸⁴

While the sheer number of believers on the earth does not explicitly indicate strength in the discipleship model of small groups, one can postulate that the small group illustration demonstrated in the first-century church did serve as a nourishment-rich environment for individuals who were seeking to be spiritually developed. Atkinson expounds, “by the 19th century, nearly 1800 years after Christ issued the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the fulfillment of the mandate remained a daunting task to most Christians. Knabb and Pelletier suggest, “that healthy, securely attached small groups may allow Christians to experience God in new ways, ameliorating a fear of abandonment or a desire for independence and self-sufficiency.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Harley Atkinson, “Small Groups: Context and Strategy for Christian Formation and Evangelization,” *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1: 72, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001980000&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁸⁴ Conrad Hackett and David McClendon, “Christians Remain World’s Largest Religious Group, But They are Declining in Europe” accessed March 8, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/>.

⁸⁵ Joshua Knabb and Joseph Pelletier, “A Cord of Three Strands is Not Easily Broken”: An Empirical Investigation of Attachment-Based Small Group Function in the Christian Church,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* vol. 42, no. 4 (2018): 355, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAn3794353&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

As Christian small groups experience intimacy with one another, they may begin to improve unhealthy internal working models that have been historically projected onto God. In defending their hypothesis concerning the paramountcy of small groups within the church setting, Knabb and Pelletier assert, “as a result, securely attached adult relationships seem to improve the desire to pursue spiritual growth, believe life has a purpose, and believe that God offers guidance.”⁸⁶ The researcher is convinced that the Millennial generation is wired to embrace the relational basis of Bible study within a small group setting.

Geoffrey Sutton in his book review titled, “Helping Groups Heal: Leading Small Groups in the Process of Transformation” mentions six vital components of the healing cycle which are grace, safety, vulnerability, truth, ownership, and repentance.⁸⁷ Most notably, the grace element to healing can be the catalyst that ignites the other five components to become active in the lives of the members within the small group. While vulnerability and repentance are critical cogs in the proverbial wheel of small groups, the component of truth serves as the axle in which the other five elements revolve.

A potential weakness in practicing the small group model of discipleship is the possibility of an abuse of trust by leadership or lack of trust between participants within the group. Confidentiality is vital when discussing sensitive matters revealed by participants. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher must be intentional in how he preserves the confidentiality of

⁸⁶ Knabb and Pelletier, “Cord of Three,” 354.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Sutton, “Helping Groups Heal: Leading Small Groups in the Process of Transformation,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 36, no 4: 352, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAI FZK180131001987&site-ehost-live&scope=site>.

all participants. Also, he must continually reinforce the significance of confidentiality amidst the group although it cannot be guaranteed.

More substantial weaknesses in the small group model are the possibilities of higher depression anxiety and stress-related symptoms that might lead to an insecure attachment within a church-based small group setting, rather than the other way around. Regardless of what a lead pastor might say on stage, no group of people will start, grow, and multiply healthily by addressing differences amongst group members. Joshua Rose addresses the difficulty of cultural differences between group members when he asserts, “cultural and ethnic diversity can bring a richness to the small group experience but can also be the source of great frustration to the group and its development as expectations and communication habits can differ from culture to culture.”⁸⁸ Rose sites four observations that nurture critical thinking among small group members suggesting, “critical thinking helps make better decisions, helps understand Scripture and doctrine, helps apply Scripture to life issues, and is related to spiritual maturity and faith development”⁸⁹

Peter Bunton concludes, “today’s interest in small groups and cell groups is not new. Throughout history, when there are renewal movements and those desirous of following God in earnest, some form of small group ministry is established to assist people to obtain that objective. History can point us to several lessons useful for our employment of small groups today.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Joshua Rose, “The Power of Small Groups in Christian Formation,” *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 2: 387, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIKZK190832002673&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 388.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Upon IRB and church leadership approval, the principal investigator launched a campaign to conduct a study within the ministry context where Millennials at C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C were asked to complete a set of survey questions. He systematically collected information from eleven Generation Yers, who when ignited by the Holy Spirit fueled a miracle revival like those seen in biblical times. In Joel 2:28, the prophet records a response from the Lord affirming,

Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and young men will see visions. In those days I will pour out my Spirit on even servants—men and women alike. And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth—blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before the great and terrible day of the Lord arrives. But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, for some on Mount Zion in Jerusalem will escape, just as the Lord has said. These will be among the survivors whom the Lord has called (NLT).

Decisively, the researcher safely secured the findings of the data compiled from the study and transitioned to the training segment of the research project.

Following the above-said research study, the facilitator inaugurated a one-day discipleship training workshop in which the participants collectively submitted ideas to construct a Sunday worship service from the perspective of the Millennial. They are a generation of trendsetters that are tech-savvy, energetic, optimistic, and social.⁹¹ Hence, gathered within a

⁹⁰ Peter Bunton, “300 Years of Small Groups: The European Church from Luther to Wesley,” *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1: 104, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001980002&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹¹ B. O. Hanson, *Branding Faith: Do Christian Ministries Reach Millennials with Branding?* (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed January 9, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fbranding-faith-do-christian-ministries-reach%2Fdocview%2F1796864061%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

small group format, the participants were encouraged to surrender proposals for twelve stratum of a Sunday worship service which includes: (1) welcome/opening prayer; (2) praise and worship/scriptural reading/prayer; (3) benevolence offering; (4) worship choir; (5) responsive reading; (6) announcements; (7) pastor's pen; (8) tithes and offering; (9) alter prayer (10) sermon; (11) invitation; (12) benediction.

Intervention Design

Permission

Upon IRB approval, the researcher sought permission from Bishop D.J. Phillips via letter to conduct the study involving his Millennial members at C.O.F./M.O.B. In the written petition, the facilitator disclosed that he was a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University and that he would be conducting research to better understand Millennials' vision for the next generation within the ministry context. He communicated the title of the research project, which is "Kingdom Millennials Infiltrating Culture."

The researcher culminated the letter by presenting the purpose of his research, which is to discover what factors drive Millennials away from plugging into ministry and what draws them towards service. Subsequently, the appeal was finally completed with a statement that clearly and concisely articulated that he was writing to request Bishop Phillips' permission to contact members of his church to invite them to participate in his research study. Accompanied with the letter to church leadership, the researcher provided a copy of the said survey questions formulated for the participants.

Also, the researcher provided the church leadership with a permission letter that responds to his inquiry with approval or rejection. The return document asserted that after careful review

of the facilitator's research proposal entitled "Kingdom Millennials Infiltrating Culture," the Bishop granted him permission to contact his congregants and invite them to participate in the research study. Nevertheless, the researcher provided a form of written confirmation for church leadership to properly respond.

Recruitment

Akin to the proposal written to church leadership for permission, the researcher communicated the purpose of the study in the recruitment letter to the eleven Millennial congregants of C.O.F/M.O.B.W.C. Also, he presented the parameters for eligibility in the study, which stipulated that those participants must be born between 1980 and 2002. To participate, and in honor of the C.D.C.⁹² and the Texas Department of State Health Service COVID-19 protocols,⁹³ volunteers were in prearranged and socially distanced desks in the fellowship hall.

Each desk was furnished with an ink pen and a copy of the survey questions (faced down). Prompted by the researcher, the participants thoroughly completed the survey and return it by folding it and placing it into a provided slotted box. The facilitator encouraged Bishop Phillips to contact him via email for more information. The estimated time to complete the entire survey ranged from thirty to forty minutes. Upon completion, the researcher secured the slotted box to ensure each participant's confidentiality.

Finally, a consent document was attached to the recruitment letter and was given to each participant one week before the issuing of the survey questions. The consent document contained

⁹² "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC 24/7; Saving Lives, Protecting People," accessed January 9, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

⁹³ "Texas Department of State Health Services" COVID-19, accessed January 9, 2022, <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine.aspx>.

additional information about the principal investigator's research. The participants did not need to sign and return the consent document.

Consent

Resemblant to the permission letter surrendered to the church and recruitment letter tendered to the Millennials, the researcher provided the potential participants with the purpose of his study. However, he supplied the reader with the title of the study which is "Kingdom Millennials Infiltrating Culture," and the name of the principal investigator who is *Daniel Clark IV*. The document commenced with a beckoning in the form of inviting the individuals to participate in the study. If the participant agreed to be in the study, he or she was asked to be willing to set aside about forty minutes after a specified Sunday worship service to complete a set of survey questions. The subjects in the study were asked to be honest and elaborate on each question to provide the researcher with a thorough idea or perspective of their experience. Finally, the participants were encouraged to be confident in knowing that their identity and responses would be seriously protected from the observation of others.

The participants were notified by the principal investigator of their potential benefits to society, which includes a spiritually mature generation of Christian leaders forging ahead in expanding God's kingdom on earth. The researcher prayed that the participants in this study would be empowered to infiltrate the culture in which they dwell for the sake of the gospel.

Paul Richey expounds, “the principal of cultural intelligence revealed the importance of understanding one’s ability to engage in a manner that moves beyond knowledge alone and incorporates the ability to engage in a manner that is natural.”⁹⁴ Additionally, the risks involved in this study were minimal and were mentioned to the participants, which means they were equal to the risks they would encounter in everyday life.

In pursuit of consent from the participants, the researcher notified the volunteers that the records of the study would be kept private. Published reports did not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Emily Anderson and Amy Corneli assert, “when preparing data to be shared, you must consider how to protect the personal identifiers that are linked with those data.”⁹⁵ With this suggestion in mind, research records were stored securely, and only the researcher has access to the records. In addition, his or her responses were kept confidential using city codes. Data was stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Ultimately, the subjects were reminded that participation in this study was voluntary. His or her decision whether to participate did not affect their current or future relations with Liberty

⁹⁴ Paul Richey, "The use of Pauline Evangelism Principles for the Development of a Strategy of Evangelism to Engage a Culture Influenced by Intersectionality." (DMin thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed January 9, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fuse-pauline-evangelism-principles-development%2Fdocview%2F2596928421%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁹⁵ Emily E. Anderson and Amy Corneli, "What Do I Need to Do to Ensure That I Protect Participants' Identities When Sharing Datasets with Others and That Participants Are Informed of This Possibility?" in *100 Questions (and Answers) About Research Ethics*, 175-76., SAGE 100 Questions and Answers. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2018. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4135/9781506348681>.

University. If an individual decides to participate, he or she was free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The researcher's methodological leadership approach diverged from that of his predecessors in the arena of spiritual formation, in that while the C.O.F/M.O.B.W.C functions under a traditional church leadership paradigm within the ministry context, the Y.A.M.S. ministry primarily operate within a collaborative or delegated authority model. Melanie Duffy and Shirley Fields McCoy, who are practicing Critical Care Registered Nurses (CCRN) describe *delegation* as, "the transfer of responsibility for the performance of a task from one individual to another while retaining accountability for the outcome."⁹⁶ The researcher served as a facilitator of the Y.A.M.S. ministry but he eventually assembled a council of leadership within the small group. They collectively brainstormed ideas and strategies to best reinforce the mission of the Y.A.M.S. ministry: Equipping young adults to infiltrate culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The group leaders assigned each participant an accountability partner who was encouraged to contact their teammate at least two times per week. The purpose of this accountability tool is to urge the participant to reflect on the previous week's Bible study session and to share how God is working in their daily lives. Finally, the participant was stimulated to disclose how he or she has responded to God's activity in their day-to-day walk.

The researcher and the group leaders established an incentive-based attendance reward system categorized by quarter, bi-annual, and annual durations. In the form of rewards, the

⁹⁶ Melanie Duffy, Shirley Fields McCoy and American Nurses Association, *Delegation and You: When to Delegate and to Whom* (Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association, 2014), 2, accessed January 10, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1044114&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

subjects are granted gift cards to popular restaurants and presented with contemporary Christian apparel. The writer is committed to illuminating a refreshing perspective of Christianity free of legalistic stiffness while simultaneously emphasizing holistic worship towards the Father.

The author was more concerned with the qualitative data stemming from the encounter than the numerical detailed statistics. Surveys were the tool of choice utilized by the researcher. Also, the facilitator furnished the group leaders with surveys in hopes of igniting potent discussion within the focus group setting.

The researcher was committed to using survey questions to gather data. The study consisted of eleven participants, so it was improbable that the researcher attempted to fulfill the quantitative requirements consistent with questionnaires. The researcher prepared deeper qualitative questions to provoke lengthy and substantive answers from the participants. Preferably, they would respond to the proposed questions with long open-ended answers about how they felt about the given topic. With practice, the writer was sure to commence each question on the survey with words like *why* or *how* to promulgate a more extensive postulation.

Steeped in the recesses of the Y.A.M.S. ministry, focus groups seamlessly align with the fabric of a relational Christian community. Group-led discussions on topics extracted from the researcher's surveys allowed participants to seriously engage and bounce ideas off one another. Survey questions and focus groups were the most fruitful data gathering mechanism due to the combination of anonymity and positive reinforcement.

The researcher continued to chronicle his project-related venture in the form of a reflective journal. Recording the literary journey of the researcher proved to be advantageous in efforts of restricting unjustness within the project.

Helen Cepero explains, “our true goal is a deeper relationship with the God who longs to meet us at the heart of all that we were and are and hope to be.”⁹⁷ The action research project was demonstratively one of the most galvanizing experiences for the researcher and would be tragic if it was not properly archived.

Cepero concludes, “attention to our own reality—our dreams and our wounds, our desires and our hopes, our friends and our enemies, our past, our present, and our future—is not for its own sake, but to tune our hearts to hear God’s transforming Word for us.”⁹⁸ Katherine Martinez describes Cepero’s *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice* by stating it, “invites us, as readers and writers, to become participants in our formation—to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and write our way toward that thorough knowing of God and self.”⁹⁹ In compliance with current IRB guidelines of preserving the confidentiality of the research participants, the reflective journal is stored in a password-protected computer, which is locked inside of a desk only accessible by the P.I.

Initially, the researcher presented the problem of the lack of Millennial involvement within the church ministry context. They needed to understand or resonate with the problem before they can commit to a possible solution. The writer emphasized the realization that if the next crop of spiritual leaders is not cultivated in this generation, the future of the small inner-city Black Church will be in jeopardy of literal extinction. Based on the history of the Black Church, the Millennial was extensively informed of the impact on the community in which it dwells and

⁹⁷ Helen Cepero, *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God Through Attentive Writing* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 12.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Katherine B. Martinez, “Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God through Attentive Writing,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 68, no. 1-2 (2010): 77, accessed January 10, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001871132&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

was reminded of his or her duty to serve God and His people (cf. Mark 10:45; Mark 12:30-31). The researcher empowered the Millennial to accept his or her role as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9 NKJV).

If someone does not want to participate or desires to drop out of the study, the researcher was obliged to modestly respect their requests. While the Millennial’s decision to not participate may be emotionally difficult to overcome, the writer approached each encounter with the potential subjects with a wondrous measure of grace. Interestingly, witnessing others who have committed to the Y.A.M.S. ministry may have enticed individuals to join who may have initially rejected the opportunity.

The researcher must also cognize that all participants possess distinct levels of spiritual maturity which may precisely translate into contrasting measures of commitment to the study. As the body of Christ has received “grace upon grace” (cf. John 1:16), the researcher was compelled to be a dispenser of grace to both those who accept and reject the opportunity to participate in the study. In the spirit of peace, the researcher humbly surveyed the individuals who are made available by God for the collection of data and in hopes of blossoming the next generation of Christian leaders.

Power of Prayer

One element of the participant’s spiritual journey is their understanding and the significance of prayer in the life of the believer. The apostle Paul encourages all, simply put, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). This passage of Scripture signifies a continual communion between a loving Father and His beloved child. While on the surface, this appears to

be a figurative passage in nature, because the text is “God-breathed” (2 Tim 3:16 NIV), it can be digested in the literal sense to fully encapsulate God’s intention of the oneness with His people. Pulpit Commentary expounds, “this is not a mere precept capable of fulfillment in idea, rather than in fact; but it is an exhortation to live in a devotional frame of mind.”¹⁰⁰ This concept resonates with the researcher’s appeal that the compilation of Christian’s efforts is bathed in the essence of worship, which can be displayed in various forms of devotion. The participants were questioned about their level of commitment to consistent prayer and the powerful benefits that overflow from the spiritual discipline.

Kingdom Impact

The eleven participants in the study were questioned about various elements of their spiritual journey including but not limited to their introduction to the faith, their definition of salvation, repentance, and godly living. While these foundational components of Christianity are vital to each believer, it was equally imperative to assess each Millennial’s grasp of these integral tenets of the faith. Robert King suggests, “with the coming of Christ to save us from our sins, God has given us his Holy Spirit, which not only increases our faith but also empowers us to live a godly life.”¹⁰¹ King concludes, “the Spirit who dwells in us is mighty and powerful despite the struggles that ensue between flesh and Spirit as we dwell in this world serving Christ. But God has not changed, for He still provides what is needed for victory in freeing and saving His people.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Bible Hub Commentary, “1 Thessalonians 5:17,” *Pulpit Commentary*, accessed January 4, 2022, https://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/1_thessalonians/5.htm.

¹⁰¹ Robert A. King, “Empowered by the Spirit,” *Priest* 72, no. 11 (2016): 50, accessed January 4, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=118307081&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 52.

Small Groups

In leading a collection of Generation Yers down a path of self-reflection and discovering their roles in God's kingdom agenda, the researcher initiated dialogue concerning small group settings. Mark Lamport and Mary Rynsburger affirm, "It has been my experience that while training, leading and working with groups that most people go into a small group with a limited level of self-awareness and self-knowledge."¹⁰³ It was critical that the participants grasp, at minimum, a baseline assessment of who they are in the love-filled omniscient eyes of Christ. In addressing both the natural and supernatural elements of healing and transformation within a small group context, Rodney Bassett asserts,

Illness, pain, loss, and anguish are not experiences to be avoided, forgotten, repressed, or triumphed over by neglecting the real past and ignoring the real present, escaping into a glorious mythic future." They are not issues to be transcended by the church for the sake of happy fellowship in the hope of heaven. Such church life would provide a profound sense of gratitude for the wholesome life experience of healing together. People who can be grateful can be psychospiritually healthy. It needs the healing of depth psychoanalytic care.¹⁰⁴

The use of small groups was a key cog in gathering and growing the participants with hopes of cultivating an environment steeped in grace, safety, vulnerability, truth, ownership, and repentance.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Mark A. Lamport and Mary Rynsburger, "All the Rage: How Small Groups are really Educating Christian Adults Part 2: Augmenting Small Group Ministry Practice-Developing Small Group Leadership Skills through Insights from Cognate Theoretical Disciplines," *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (Fall, 2008): 393, accessed January 4, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fall-rage-how-small-groups-are-really-educating%2Fdocview%2F205412440%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹⁰⁴ Rodney Bassett, "Helping Groups Heal: Leading Small Groups in the Process of Transformation," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 36, no. 4 (Winter, 2017): 352, accessed January 4, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fhelping-groups-heal-leading-small-process%2Fdocview%2F1979139181%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The Divide

Arguably, in no other period in recent history has the United States of America been so frequently referenced as the *Divided States of America*.¹⁰⁶ On the heels of one of the most controversial Presidential elections in U.S. history, in conjunction with the immediacy for social justice reform, the U.S. is metaphorically “licking its wounds.” While this matter of division exists in the highest levels of the institution, its impact can stretch far beyond and has crept into the recesses of the body of Christ as well.

More specifically, contention can be experienced between congregants across the nation who belong to various generational groups. Generally, Baby Boomers and Generation Xers fail to faithfully recognize the character strengths of Millennials both on an individual and collective level versus bluntly magnifying disdain for their apparent infirmities. James H. Cone defines the foresaid Christian community as, “the community of the oppressed which joins Jesus Christ in His fight for the liberation of humankind.”¹⁰⁷ The participants will be asked how “The Divide” impacts their spiritual development and what they would like to be adjusted in discipleship.

¹⁰⁶ Richard D. Land, *The Divided States of America: What Liberals and Conservatives are Missing in the God and Country Shouting Match* (Nashville, TN: W Publishers Group, 2007), 5.

¹⁰⁷ James Hal Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 26.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this study, the primary investigator has delicately researched eleven Generation Y participants. He collected data from a series of survey questions distributed to the examinees. The facilitator's purpose was to investigate the millennial generation's experiences within a Christian community context.¹⁰⁸ The participants were given twenty-one questions to answer honestly and comprehensively. Some core topics addressed by Millennials in the surveys are their kingdom and cultural impact, salvation, value system, ministerial ordinances, discipleship, and evangelism.

Millennial Values

In efforts to empathize and fully understand the perspective of Generation Y, the primary investigator sought to uncover where or in what Millennials determined their value in a societal context. Through a series of questions in the survey, the researcher first presented to the participants a list of civic virtues (e.g., faith, family, money, work, and reputation), which they were encouraged to arrange in order of importance from greatest to least. Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais expound on the millennial generation's societal impact when they state, "their fundamental belief about religion, marriage, and child-rearing will play an important part in how Millennials' shape America's social institutions for at least the next half-century."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research: 4th Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 222.

¹⁰⁹ Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais, "Millennial Family Lifestyles," in *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America*, 193, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1btbvz1.15>.

Jeremy Shaffer asserts, “Millennials now are finding it very easy to disassociate from faith and religion [altogether]. Some of that can be chalked up to the culture they’ve inhabited that sees religion as...shaming people [instead of being] a life-giving source for our communities.”¹¹⁰

Nine of the eleven participants in the study valued their faith in God ahead of family, money, work, and reputation.¹¹¹ The final four items on the list were inconsistently configured among the responses of the Millennials. While “the family” was in pole position of one participant, the family unit was routinely the most significant value to Millennials following their faith in God.

Another significant value that was repeated in the responses of the Millennial participants of the study pointed to their lack of input within the church context.¹¹² This concept of “not having a voice” is whispered across the Christian world by Millennials who contrastingly in culture venture to be heard by the masses (see Table 1.1).

¹¹⁰ Darrell Bock and Mikel Del Rosario, “The Table Briefing: Ministering to Millennials,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 174, no. 695 (2017): 344, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIBCB171023004676&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹¹¹ See Appendix A.

¹¹² Ibid.

Millennial Values Survey Data

Document	Responses	Codes
Sofia's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 13	Most of us want to be known for something in life; we want people to know about us. Lastly, we want to have a voice. Something that proved this was this election year.	
Lima's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 13	Having a voice for sure.	
Milan's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 13	I would say having a voice.	
Milan's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 33	Additionally, the church can ask about causes close to our hearts and find ways to get the church involved. When Millennials feel like they're making a difference, they're far more likely to not only be active but stay active.	
Paris' Answer to Survey Questions, Pos. 13	Most Millennials would say money and status. The world we live in today revere all money.	
Cairo's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 14	If I had to narrow it down to a few things I would say Millennials probably hold having a voice is pretty vital to their existence as well as a sense of purpose.	
Cairo's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 14	The way I believe this generation operates is off respect. We have seen what it looks like to not have a voice in previous generations and collectively as a group we don't tolerate it. Examples of this can be seen in protests, toxic work environments, and family interactions.	
Cali's Answers to Survey Questions, Pos. 13	Having a voice	

Table 1.1

Stella Rouse and Ashley Ross, authors of the article, “Millennial Generation Persona: Who Are Millennials and Why Should We Care?” both affirm, “generational identity is fundamentally rooted in cultural shifts resulting from social, economic, and/or political events or phenomena. Generations are people born within the ‘same historical and sociocultural context, who experience the same formative experiences, and develop unifying commonalities as a result.”¹¹³ The oppression of the Millennial perspective has led to a catastrophic impact on church attendance among Generation Y congregants. Keith Puffers expounds on the matter,

The unwise response by local church leaders to the doubting habits of these young parishioners is a significant reason for the departure. Interview data indicated the Protestant Millennials had several complaints. The freedom to voice questions about the Christian faith was limited in their local churches. Disclosures of doubts were met with trite responses by older Christians (e.g., Baby Boomers) who also seemed doubtless and judgmental.¹¹⁴

This group of believers is unique on various platforms. Mark Kiessling and Julianna Shults affirm, “a generation defined by events like 9/11, sexual scandals in the church, and the economic crisis of the late 2000s will hold different views and priorities than other generations. They have seen and made changes to corporate culture, social institutions, and church bodies.”¹¹⁵ The deeply rooted values of Generation Y are what stabilize their footing for the transition into leadership within the church context as well as in culture.

¹¹³ Stella M. Rouse and Ashley D. Ross, “Millennial Generation Persona: Who Are Millennials and Why Should We Care?” In *The Politics of Millennials: Political Beliefs and Policy Preferences of America’s Most Diverse Generation*, 5, accessed October 12, 2021, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.9526877.6>.

¹¹⁴ Keith A. Puffer, “Protestant Millennials, Religious Doubt, & the Local Church,” *Religions* 9, no. 1 (2018): 1, accessed October 1, 2021, doi:10.3390/rel9010008.

¹¹⁵ Mark Kiessling and Julianna Shults, “The Search for Young People: 2017 Research of Millennials and the LCMS,” *Concordia Journal* 44, no. 4 (2018): 19, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAI9KZ190121000808&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Kingdom Impact

Despite the current decline in church attendance around the globe, and the appearance of many believers defecting from godly living, since the inception of the church (see Acts 2), the body of Christ continues to swell in numbers beyond recognition. Interestingly, many believers are commonly introduced to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ through a variety of means, methods, and mechanisms. While there are countless ministries designed to propel the body of Christ to “Go, therefore and make disciples” and a plethora of evangelism courses taught in every seminary from Oxford to Lynchburg, the most significant tool of evangelism utilized in the hand of God is the nuclear family construct. The Millennials in the study highlighted the integral position of the family in ushering individuals into God’s kingdom.

Family

Consistently, the millennial participants in the study illuminated the significance of the role their family members played in guiding them towards salvation. Various participants acknowledged that either their parents, grandparents, or close members of their extended families were the culprits of ushering the gospel to them. No matter how trivial, the participants testified to being introduced to the gospel of Jesus in the form of a Sunday Worship Experience. Mary Beth Meltzer explains, “Jesus loves children and wants them to come to Him, but He uses parents and other godly adults to shepherd and guide them on the path of righteousness.”¹¹⁶ Concludingly, the blessing observed from many of their individual experiences was the seasoned family member’s consistent commitment to worship.

¹¹⁶ Mary Beth Meltzer, "Epic Families: Equipping Parents to Reclaim their Biblical Mandate while Inspiring Children to Know and Love the God Who made them" (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 222, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Michael S. Wilder asserts, “The family is a God-ordained launching pad for gospel ministry.”¹¹⁷ Inviting young people into a Christian community is a vital step in equipping young believers for a more grandiose mission. The inward conviction to evangelize the children of seasoned Christians serves as the genesis when responding to the Great Commission (see Matt 28:19-20). Timothy Paul Jones concludes, “God’s calling does not end with the rehearsal of the gospel in our own households, though. The proclamation of the gospel that begins in our households should spill out beyond the confines of our homes, into our communities, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth (see Acts 1:8; 2:39; 26:20).”¹¹⁸ Exactly, how did the young people accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior of their lives?

Salvation

In the survey, the millennial participants of the study were asked to define or explain salvation and repentance. The primary investigator logged responses from the eleven Millennials that generally described salvation as “the need to be saved from something.”¹¹⁹ Many of them precisely explained the need to be saved from the penalty of sin or they spoke of the transition from darkness to light. Donna Kampen Entz expounds, “in the Old Testament, salvation and light mean the offer of complete well-being, as intended by the Creator. Light is the antithesis of darkness, disorder, and chaos, and salvation is the antithesis of oppression, exploitation, and despair.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Michael S. Wilder, “Building and Equipping Missional Families,” in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 245.

¹¹⁸ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 79.

¹¹⁹ See Appendix A.

Repentance

In addition to being surveyed about their perspective of salvation, Millennials were queried about their understanding of repentance within the process of salvation. Five of the eleven participants acknowledged that repentance was a necessary action by the new believer to receive the gift of salvation.¹²¹ More interestingly, the Millennials comprehensively addressed the necessity for seeking God for the forgiveness of some form of sin, transgression, or inequity.

What were they guilty of? Why were they ashamed? Herman Bavinck expounds, “In humans, every sin is a turn away from God, disobedience, rebellion, anarchy, lawlessness, and at the same time, since sin is never self-sufficient, a turning toward a creature, idolatry, pride, self-seeking, sensuality.”¹²² Mary VandenBerg concludes “In short, sin turns us away from our true source of life and toward the false promises of life found in ourselves and the culture around us. We look for life in all the wrong places.”¹²³ Convincingly, the millennial participants in the study discerned that repentance is a turning away from sin and towards God and His kingdom.

¹²⁰ Donna Kampen Entz, “Sharing the Light of Jesus in a Multifaith World,” *Vision* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 59. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIgFE171218002988&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹²¹ See Appendix A.

¹²² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 ed John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 152.

¹²³ Mary VandenBerg, “Shame, Guilt, and the Practice of Repentance: An Intersection of Modern Psychology with the Wisdom of Calvin,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 50, no. 3 (Spring 2021): 299, accessed September 16, 2021, EBSCOhost, search, [ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIACO210524000553&site=ehost-live&scope=site](https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIACO210524000553&site=ehost-live&scope=site).

Godly Living

In consummating the first two questions on the survey, the participants were prompted to describe in their own words what the notion of *godly living* meant to each of them. One participant suggests that godly living means to live a life that reflects Christ.¹²⁴

While another contributor associates godly living with a supernatural restraint that equips the believer to operate in the spirit of humility. She highlights a relationship that is in alignment with the Father by listening to His voice, praying, displaying faith, while refraining from doubting Him.¹²⁵ Jeremy C. Shaffer argues that the theology found in the book of Daniel displays the template of godly living for the contemporary believer. Shaffer asserts, “the theology and purpose that Daniel gave are this: rest in God’s sovereignty, but remember He is coming again—live like there will be no tomorrow!”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ See Appendix A.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Jeremy C. Shaffer, "A Cohesive Theology of Christian Living: Principles from the Book of Daniel," (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fcohesive-theology-christian-living-principles%2Fdocview%2F867674806%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

Millennials in Ministry

To better understand Generation Y, one must begin to discern the dynamics of Millennials' expectations, communicative preferences, and team relationships. Karen Myers and Kamyab Sadaghiani expound, "First, Millennials expect close relationships and frequent feedback from supervisors. Second, they expect open communication from their supervisors and managers, even about matters normally reserved for more senior employees. Third, Millennials prefer to work in teams, in part because they perceive group-based work to be more fun but also because they like to avoid risk."¹²⁷

L. Paul Jensen discusses Generation Y's appeal to draw from all parts of the Christian faith. He asserts, "this fosters gratitude for what God has done through each part of the Christian tradition and expresses the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17), as well as the enrichment that diverse parts of his body contribute to other parts (1 Cor 12)."¹²⁸ Jaco Hamman suggests earlier generations should get to know Millennials by stating, "those who befriend young adults will discover that this generation knows loss and trauma intimately; they build alternative communities as they seek authenticity; they nurture their spirituality and appreciate accountability."¹²⁹ The Generation Y contributors were unanimous in the confidence of their leadership competency inside and outside of the ministry setting.

¹²⁷ Karen K. Myers and Kamyab Sadaghiani, "Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials' Organizational Relationships and Performance," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 229, accessed October 5, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605781>.

¹²⁸ L. Paul Jensen and Wilbert R. Shenk, "Rhythms of Spirituality and Mission in the Postmodern Age," In *Subversive Spirituality: Transforming Mission through the Collapse of Space and Time*, 1st ed., 219, the Lutterworth Press, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt16wdm0c.12>.

¹²⁹ Jaco Hamman, "Ministry with Millennials," *Ministry Matters* no. 1 (2019): 1, accessed October 28, 2021, <https://www-ministrymatters-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/all/entry/9531/ministry-with-millennials>.

Millennial Leadership

Despite the countless reasons for the current scattering of Millennials from the body of Christ, many young adults are still convicted to worship the living God in spirit and in truth (see John 4:23), as well as serve His people within a Christian community. What the millennial generation would like to experience in ministry is adherents of their generation proportionately represented in church leadership. Whether previous generations like it or not, Millennials are leading in countless other industries around the globe, so it is a matter of time and God's opportunity that they will be empowered to lead in the ministerial context. "At this point, Generation Y occupies every level of the educational structure."¹³⁰

Ann Fritschel suggests, "Millennials are searching for authentic connections: places where they can be vulnerable, accepted and affirmed. They want to be part of church leadership and practice the radical, inclusive love and faith of the New Testament."¹³¹ Bill Hybels further illuminates the first-century body of believers by asserting, "the early church gave life, purpose, hope, forgiveness, healing, belonging and a sense of wellbeing to those who believed and gathered together in wondrous praise and communion."¹³²

¹³⁰ "Teaching Resources." *Feminist Teacher* 17, no. 2 (2007): 182, accessed October 28, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40546023>.

¹³¹ Ann Fritschel, "Beyond the Mission Trip: Millennials, Financial Stewardship, and the Congregation," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 2 (2018): 16, accessed October 18, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIiREM180410000727&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹³² Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 12.

Robert Wuthnow affirms, “whatever the rubric, one thing is clear: younger adults are not only the future of American religion; they are already a very significant part of it. There are at least a sizable minority of most congregations. They are the young families who look to congregations for guidance in raising their children.”¹³³ However, before launching into the stratosphere where Millennial leadership resides, the participants delve into the unbecoming depths to address the most significant factors which have stunted the spiritual development of many Generation Y believers.

Nearly thirty-one percent of the Millennials in this study affirmed that they desire to assume leadership roles within the ministry context. They commented on the contemporary church being behind the times. In her thesis project, Althea Simmons argued, “only 8 percent say they don’t attend because the church is ‘out of date,’ undercutting the notion that all churches need to do for Millennials is to make worship ‘cooler.’”¹³⁴

Instead, the author displays a litany of complaints by Millennials such as moral failures in church leadership, the presence of judgment, hypocrisy, anti-homosexuality, and insensitivity to others.¹³⁵ David Brooks affirms, “In the past ten- or twelve-years students are no longer embarrassed about being interested in religion – or spirituality, as they call it. That’s a huge change. People used to feel as if they had acne being raised in a religious home.”¹³⁶

¹³³ Robert Wuthnow, “American Religion: An Uncertain Future,” in *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion*, 2, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7rnz3.5>.

¹³⁴ Alethia Janise Simmons, “Rescuing the Millennials; Four Essential Lessons Learned and Eight Key Principles to Reclaiming this Generation,” (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Frescuing-millennials-four-essential-lessons%2Fdocview%2F1678624767%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹³⁵ Simmons, “Rescuing the Millennials,” 1.

Graciously illustrated on the backdrop of the perceived shortcomings of the previous generation, Millennials are nevertheless, geared up and eager to worship and serve the Triune God of heaven and earth. In leading, Millennials are experiential by nature and must be inserted into the setting of ministry to be effective. Ryan Fouts asserts, “Millennials attach an experiential value to their spirituality.”¹³⁷

In other words, the millennial generation can relate and invigorate the participation of other millennial congregants by convening at the intersection of experiences and sociological familiarity. Fouts believes that the core Lutheran principle of *Tentatio*, which highlights the theology of struggle and experience as the avenue through which God makes mature disciples.¹³⁸

From a practical standpoint, one must inquire what millennial leadership might look like. The researcher is convicted that Generation Yers hold a more universal position concerning their methodology towards leadership. James Weber expounds, “They have broader understandings of the traditional notions of the marketplace, supervisor-subordinate relationships, cultural diversity, task performance, and ways information technology can be used to enhance organizational performance and maximize productivity.”¹³⁹

¹³⁶ David Brooks, “The Organizational Kid,” *Atlantic Monthly* 287, no. 4 (2001): 40, accessed October 10, 2021.

¹³⁷ Ryan Fouts, “Embracing Luther’s Theology of Tentatio as Key to Reaching the Millennial Generation,” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (2013): 64, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLS0001942309&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹³⁸ Fouts, “Embracing Luther’s Theology,” 64.

¹³⁹ James Weber, “Discovering the Millennials’ Personal Values Orientation: A Comparison to Two Managerial Populations,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 143, no. 3 (2017): 520, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45022157>.

Generation Y author Colleen Dilenschneider states, “Millennial board members can help spearhead a new generation of connectivity to your organization and a new era of philanthropy over time.”¹⁴⁰ Why are Millennials so misunderstood?

The Divide

Elza Venter emphasizes the significance of the relational aspect of humanity when she asserts,

Human beings are in essence relational thus in need of contact with other human beings. During interpersonal communication people contact others as persons, thus reinforcing their own humanness. Mutual communication means recognizing another human being’s humanness in a world shared together. Meaningful interpersonal communication looks at how two people interact as a dyad treating each other as unique and irreplaceable individuals. In other words, they have an impact on each other’s lives.¹⁴¹

Venter explains, “the majority of Baby Boomers have a problem with the way Generation Y uses technology for work, play, and studies, while Generation Y sees Baby Boomers as being resistant to new technology and change.”¹⁴² Anastasios Zopiatis et al suggests, “As expected, differences, often described as a ‘generational gap,’ exist every time there is a comparison of generational cohorts.”¹⁴³ Although followers of Christ are explicitly instructed by the apostle Paul to “walk by faith and not by sight” (see 2 Cor 5:7), contrarily many believers, especially

¹⁴⁰ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Generation Why: Why Adding Millennials to Your Board Is a Good Move, TBH.” *History News* 71, no. 2 (2016): 6, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44605926>.

¹⁴¹ Elza Venter, “Bridging the Communication Gap Between Generation Y and the Baby Boomer generation,” *International Journal of Adolescence & Youth* 22, no. 4 (2017):497, accessed November 1, 2021, doi:10.1080/02673843.2016.1267022.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 498.

¹⁴³ Anastasios Zopiatis, Maria Krambia-Kapardis, and Andreas Varnavas, “Y-Ers, X-Ers and Boomers: Investigating the Multigenerational (Mis)Perceptions in the Hospitality Workplace,” *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 12, no. 2 (2012): 101–21, accessed October 28, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43498600>.

Millennials subscribe to the “see-to-believe” ideology. Unlike preceding generations, Millennials can visually assess whether not people's (individual or organization) words are in alignment with their deeds via social media.

Colleen Dilenschneider suggests, “organizations should aim to constantly show who they are. Audiences trust what they see more than what you tell them.”¹⁴⁴ Dilenschneider offers a conclusive anecdote to ministries and organizations when she asserts, “we need to be better at showing this audience the relevance of our institution through our understanding of people and behavior and creating more influence.”¹⁴⁵ Mikael Pelz maintains, “despite the expectations associated with social identity theory among evangelicals, there is nevertheless growing evidence suggesting that political shifts may well have occurred among Millennial evangelicals that serve to differentiate them from preceding generations of evangelicals.”¹⁴⁶

Lake Lambert III insists, “the Millennials surpass the Boomers in size, are more diverse than any generation in American history, and were changing American culture already in the 1990s when they were just children and teens.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Generation Why: History Repeats Itself (Even When It Comes to Engaging Millennials),” *History News* 70, no. 2 (2015): 5, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43504321>.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Mikael L. Pelz and Corwin E. Smidt, “Generational Conversion? The Role of Religiosity in the Politics of Evangelicals,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54, no. 2 (2015): 383, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24644347>.

¹⁴⁷ Lake Lambert, “The Future of Workplace Spirituality,” in *Spirituality, Inc.: Religion in the American Workplace*, 153, New York: NYU Press, 2009, accessed October 28, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qgcrb.10>.

Karen Thickstun claims that ministries and businesses alike operate in the fruit of the spirit called self-control by remaining vigilant “in what you say and do on social media (or in any aspect of your business), anything you say or do can be instantly shared with the world.”¹⁴⁸ She later shared data in which seventy-three percent of Ys will leave after one bad experience; but furthermore, eighty-five percent will tell others about poor experiences.¹⁴⁹

Neil Howe and William Strauss claim, “every generation derives comfort from its collective memories, that special grab bag of habits, tunes, images, gadgets, and words it calls its own. The older it grows, the more it sees in the rising generation a living reminder that such memories are mortal and must be paved over by those who don’t share like them.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Karen Thickstun, “It’s All Your Business: Marketing to The Millennials,” *American Music Teacher* 62, no. 3 (2012): 47, accessed October 18, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43540116>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Generation* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 24.

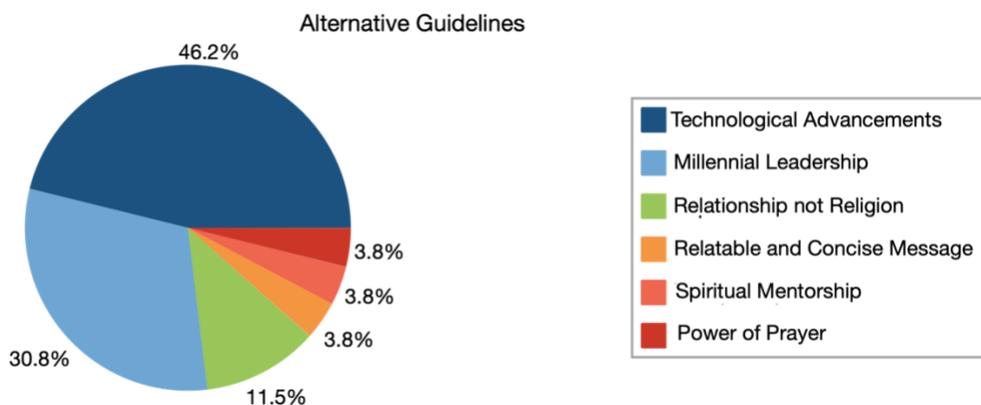


Table 1.2

Relationship not Religion

A modest 11.5 percent of the Y.A.M.S. (see Table 1.2) in this study articulated their desire for meaningful relationships within the ministry context instead of maintaining the status quo with performing traditional Christian rituals. In discussing the state of the modern church, Frank Viola conveys that many members of the contemporary body of Christ are “shaped by lifeless rituals and held together by religious programs.”¹⁵¹ However, with several participants, Thom and Jess Rainer describe a current condition in which the church suffers as Baby Boomer Reflux. They recounted a Millennial woman’s definition of the aforementioned condition: “The Boomers give money to the church, but it comes right back to them to keep them content. They hire the staff to do the ministry they won’t do. The money goes to make the buildings more comfortable for them. And then churches begin all kinds of ministries for Boomers and their families to keep them happy. Most churches today suffer from Baby Boomer reflux... That’s not New Testament Christianity. That’s a religious social club.”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook Publishers, 2008), 12.

¹⁵² Thom Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2010), 267.

Jaco Hamman extracts a scriptural anecdote to remedy the unnerving generational gap that exists in many contemporary ministries, when he affirms, “every theme of Joel explored here can be an entry point into the life of a young adult (or another person). Creating community, introducing a compassionate God, nurturing a rich spirituality, appreciating accountability, or even being a blessing are wonderful gateways to relationships and a life of faith.”¹⁵³ Jonathan Ruehs asserts, “for Millennials, relationships are of prime importance. So, even though many Christian Millennials seek proof of God’s existence in the experiential realm, in the end, relationships become even more important for helping them to sort through disillusionment and doubts.”¹⁵⁴

What is religion today? Armand Boehme defines it as, “religion today is primarily concerned with the realm of ethics (being for or against family values, homosexuality, abortion, sex outside of marriage, illegal immigrants, the environment, etc.) or emotions and feelings: What did you feel when you read that passage? How do you think Jesus felt when He was hanging on the cross?”¹⁵⁵ Peering ahead into the horizon, one can swell with optimism from the response of the study’s millennial partakers.

¹⁵³ Jaco Hamman, *The Millennial Narrative: Sharing a Good Life with the Next Generation* (Nashville, Abingdon, 2019), 2.

¹⁵⁴ Jonathan Ruehs, “Millennials and Maslow: First Article Needs and Christian Apologetics,” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (2013): 59, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001942308&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁵⁵ Armand J. Boehme, “The Church and the Culture of the Millennials: The Best or Worst of Times?” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no.1 (2013): 99, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001942315&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

What Works?

While the problems related to the *diaspora* of the Millennial generation from the evangelical landscape have been well documented amidst religious and secular academia, “Generation Me” has a lucid outlook on a propitious future. Ann Fritschel affirms, “Millennials want to be a part of something that has a clear vision, a vision that changes the world for the better.”¹⁵⁶ Theodore Sasson et al allege, “Millennial generation children of intermarriage...are the first cohort to experience the denominational, cultural, and institutional changes in the 1980s and 1990s that welcomed and included intermarried families.”¹⁵⁷

Chapman Clark attests that the older congregants are afraid of Generation Y cohorts but offers this advice, “we who claim to follow Jesus Christ, both individually and corporately have no choice but to reconstruct a new vision for reaching out to this emerging generation, regardless of how different and threatening they may appear.”¹⁵⁸ When discussing the future of the church, various detractors assumed doom was inevitable. Chad Lakies affirms, “far from fading away into pure secularity, Rieff predicted religion would more and more take on the character of therapy.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Fritschel, “Beyond Mission Trip,” 17.

¹⁵⁷ Theodore Sasson, Janet K. Aronson, Fern Chertok, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, “Millennial Children of Intermarriage: Religious Upbringing, Identification, and Behavior Among Children of Jewish and Non-Jewish Parents,” *Contemporary Jewry* 37, no. 1 (2017): 104, accessed October 1, 2021, doi:10.1007/s12397-017-9202-0.

¹⁵⁸ Chapman R. Clark, “Creating a Place for a New Generation: An Ecclesiological Perspective on Youth Ministry,” *Christian Education Journal* 3, no. 2 (1999): 95, accessed November 2, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAI FZK171030003376&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁵⁹ Chad Lakies, “Candy Machine God, or, Going to Church without Going to Church: Millennials and the Future of the Christian Faith,” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (2013): 17, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001942304&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Boehme concludes, “You Lost Me’ encourages established Christians to live a life that faithfully follows Jesus, while living in a changing culture, and to personally model and mentor that kind of faith for successive generations.”¹⁶⁰

Relatable and Concise Messages

One of the most derogatory characteristics of Millennials stems from their consistent need to be stimulated or entertained. Oftentimes, this appears in the form of a short attention span or lack of focus within interpersonal relationships. So, lengthy and convoluted sermons are the antithesis of Millennials’ vibe. Keith Studebaker asserts, “despite the plethora of publications, conferences, blogging, and preaching on what is needed to connect to and truly disciple millennial youth, the lasting fruit of youth persevering in their faith walk is not as anticipated.”¹⁶¹ Christopher Deitsch concurs by affirming that despite making, “the message of the church more palatable to the Generation Y” these efforts are largely ineffective in developing a settled faith in youth because they are insufficient.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Boehme, “Changing, Culture, and Millennials,” 103.

¹⁶¹ Keith Studebaker, "Saving the Sheep, Preserving the Fruit: A Plan of Christian Education for the Millennials and Beyond in the Midwest Wesleyan Church," (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed October 1, 2021, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fsaving-sheep-preserving-fruit-plan-christian%2Fdocview%2F2046417910%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹⁶² Christopher Mack Deitsch, "Creating a Millennial Generation Contextualized Church Culture," (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed October 1, 2021, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fcreating-millennial-generation-contextualized%2Fdocview%2F1039563005%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

Get Involved

Millennial participants in the study were unilaterally aligned in their convictions to become more involved in ministerial service.¹⁶³ Eddy S.W. Ng et al declare, “It has been suggested that many of the career goals and expectations among Millennials are ‘supersized,’ unrealistic, and disconnected between reward and performance.”¹⁶⁴ Ng concludes, “they are also looking for work that is meaningful and fulfilling. Millennials are increasingly looking for those firms that go beyond simply making money.”¹⁶⁵

Instead, Tamara Erickson affirms that members of Generation Y are bound together by two major experiences: terrorism and technology.¹⁶⁶ Erickson further expounded on the concept of terrorism is an integral variable that has shaped many Millennials, “rather than the institutionally driven, government-controlled hardship of war faced by previous generations, Ys has been subject to random, unpredictable, individually executed acts of terror and, particularly in the U.S., school violence.”¹⁶⁷ In response to the aforementioned cataclysmic events, Generation Ys most inescapable characteristic can be its commitment to a sense of immediacy. For Generation Y to be properly appreciated in the ministry context, they need to be proportionately injected into service on every level of church government. Strikingly, they are willing to get involved with serving Christ and His kingdom.

¹⁶³ See Appendix A.

¹⁶⁴ Eddy S. W. Ng, Linda Schweitzer, and Sean T. Lyons, “New Generation, Great Expectations: A Field Study of the Millennial Generation,” *Journal of Business and Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 282. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605786>

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹⁶⁶ Tamara Erickson, “The Millennials,” *RSA Journal* 158, no. 5550 (2012): 23, accessed October 18, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26204117>

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

Power of Prayer

The researcher anticipated the Kingdom Millennials' prioritization of prayer to rank relatively high in the lives of mature believers. However, the data stated the contrary. The section categorized as "Power of Prayer" was tied for fourth place in the order of importance according to the Generation Y participants (see Figure 1.2). Archie Smith Jr. ponders the question, "what is prayer?" He then suggests, "basic prayer may be thought of as a way to cultivate depth of meaning in life by emptying of the self and intentionally waiting in the presence of divine mystery as one seeks for the innermost meaning of the journey that one is on."¹⁶⁸

Power of the Music Ministry

Sam Burrows and Yael Klangwisan explain the impact music makes on young adults, "Popular music is a medium that often poignantly expresses shared experiences of the next generation and both speaks on behalf of young people and to them."¹⁶⁹ On his album titled, *The Book of Psalms*, the world-renowned secular recording artist Bono discussed a prevalent dichotomy existent among Gen Yers, "words and music did for me what solid, even a rigorous, religious argument could never do, they introduced me to God, not belief in God, more an experiential sense of GOD."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Archie Smith Jr., "Thoughts Concerning the Pastoral Prayer." *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 1 (02, 2018): 85-86, accessed January 6, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fthoughts-concerning-pastoral-prayer%2Fdocview%2F1965734300%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹⁶⁹ Sam Burrows and Yael Klangwisan, "Synergeo: Fear and Trembling: Finding God in the Music of the Millennials," *Stimulus* 27, no. 4 (2020): 1, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN+ATLAI+REM210130001028&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁷⁰ Bono, "Introduction" 1 *The Book of Psalms*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999, CD.

“Millennials and Gen Z experience the fragility and complexity of contemporary society in disconcerting ways, caught up as they are in the flux of reality in the brave new world.”¹⁷¹ The eleven participants agreed that music played a significant role in the worship experience. They equally preferred contemporary music but were committed to singing traditional hymns.

Tradition

In analyzing the data, the researcher was quite intrigued that over fifty percent of participants were surprisingly tethered to various forms of tradition within the ministry.¹⁷² Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton proclaim, “while moving into emerging adulthood, many youths remain in the religious tradition of their teenage years, but many others shift to some other religious tradition or to become non-religious altogether.”¹⁷³ Multiple partakers expressed an affinity to several church traditions or traditional forms of leadership.

Discipleship/Spiritual Mentorship

The essence of discipleship may be steeped in Jesus’ Last Commission to “Therefore go and make disciples” (Matt 28:19-20). “Jesus is interpreted by v.20 as the authoritative bringer of revelation, and ‘all that I have commanded you refers not to one command but the whole of Jesus’ teaching—not just imperatives but also proverbs, blessings, parables, and prophecies.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Burrows and Klangwisan, “Synergeo: Fear and Trembling,” 3

¹⁷² See Appendix A.

¹⁷³ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 31.

¹⁷⁴ “Commentary on Matthew,” In the Oxford Bible Commentary, *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, accessed November 16, 2021, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/book/obso-9780198755005/obso-9780198755005-div1-823>.

Concerning the significance of biblical marriage, Andrew Walker et al affirm that “at the end of the day, the Bible opens with a wedding and closes with a wedding. We need the immersion in the grand narrative of Scripture so that we are going back to the biblical text repeatedly until we are fully formed so that we can see with biblical eyes within the culture that we live in.”¹⁷⁵

Anne P. Horan defines spiritual formation as, “the life-long transformational self-analytic and relational process where individuals become more like Christ through the Holy Spirit and biblical guidance resulting in a relationship with God.”¹⁷⁶ The eleven Millennial contributors in the study subscribed to the opportunity for discipleship and/or spiritual formation.¹⁷⁷

Small Groups

The concept of small groups was introduced to the participants in the survey questions as the medium in which meetings were to be facilitated. 100 percent of the study’s Millennial participants responded positively to gathering within a small group setting prior, during, and after Sunday worship services. They were inclined to exhibit more transparency on personal matters and shared perspectives without reservation, which was opposed to the researcher’s presuppositions. Alan Fadling expounds, “Millennials are more interested in promoting honesty, depth of relationship, authentic community, and what I might call ‘cultures of grace.’”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Andrew Walker, Eric Teetsel, John Stonestreet, Lindsay Swartz, and Trevin Wax, “Millennials and Marriage: Evaluating the Younger Generation’s Views on Sexuality and Marriage,” *The Journal of Discipleship & Family Ministry* 5, no. 1 (2015): 71, accessed October 18, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIACO200731000102&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁷⁶ Anne P. Horan, “Fostering Spiritual Formation of Millennials in Christian Schools,” *The Journal of Research on Christian Education* 26, no. 1 (2017): 56, accessed November 16, 2021, doi:10.1080/10656219.2017.1282901.

¹⁷⁷ See Appendix A.

While the participants respected and honored being held accountable for what was said and done within the close Generation Y community, the small group assumed the role of a safe space that was absent of condemnation, criticism, and castigation.

Ordinances

Concerning the believer's response in *faith* in Jesus to be baptized, the *hope* found in the Lord's Prayer, and the display of Christ's *love* to observe the Lord's Supper, Timothy George proclaims (emphasis added), "Faith, hope, and love are an ecumenical trio of virtues because, while these three realities of the Christian life are intended to unite believers in Jesus, they have become places where Christians are divided. Yet by working together at faith, hope, and love, Christians may, in the power of the Spirit, be drawn closer toward that unity for which Jesus prayed, and for which we still yearn."¹⁷⁹

Interestingly, the participants were unanimously united in the recognition and observation of the foresaid foundational Christian ordinance which is sustained in the Millennials' worship experience.¹⁸⁰ Several young adults acknowledged that "baptism, as Christian initiation, is both God's gift and our human response."¹⁸¹ Water baptism and the observance of the Lord's Supper

¹⁷⁸ Alan Fadling, "Boomer Befriending Millennials," *Conversations (15482057)*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2015): 32, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=116842231&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁷⁹ Timothy George, "The Drama of Baptism: Testimony and Tradition in the Early Church," *American Baptist Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2018):123, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIREM190819000527&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁸⁰ See Appendix A.

¹⁸¹ George, "Drama of Baptism," 123.

appeared to remain a pivotal fixture within the belief system of the millennial participants of the study. The data indicates a generation committed to obedience to God's Holy Word.

Technological Advancements

From their time of conception, this collection of believers has been connected both individually and collectively. Ben Pugh argues, "They continually narrate their lives to one another on social networking sites. They need to journey together, to rise and fall together with other fellow travelers."¹⁸² Yolanda Pantou suggests, "now as young adults, they are living hyper-connected lives: virtually everything they do, see and think is announced to their contacts in real-time. This lifestyle is not limited to the youth."¹⁸³ Technological advancements are inevitable across the contemporary global landscape, around local culture, and even amidst the ministry context. Tamara Erickson explains the impact that technology plays in the life of Millennials in contrast to previous generations,

Ys woke up in a world that was wired. They absorbed intuitively things that others learned intellectually. Most Ys first used computers as young children, unconsciously inventing new things to do as they explored the technology's capabilities. Older adults, in contrast, tend to apply the technology to their existing habits; to established ways of getting things done. As a result, Ys not only used digital technology extensively, but they also do different things with the technology and have formed their own impressions of how the world works.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Ben Pugh, "Recapitulation and Theosis," In *Atonement Theories: A Way through the Maze*, 1st ed., 37. The Lutterworth Press, 2014, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1cgf45k.7>.

¹⁸³ Yolanda Pantou, "Ecumenical Movement for Millennials: A Generation Connected but Not Yet United," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 73, no. 1 (2017): 1, accessed November 16, 2021, doi: 10.4102/hts.v73i1.4735.

¹⁸⁴ Tamara Erickson, "The Millennials," *RSA Journal* 158, no. 5550 (2012): 24, accessed October 18, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26204117>.

James Davis expresses the conundrum regarding the velocity information is sent and received by the millennial generation, he claims, “the greatest advancement in language communication since the Gutenberg Press made the Bible available to everyone 500 years ago is the Internet that is making virtually everything available to everyone. The emerging world of Googlers is far different than that of the Gutenbergs. The Gutenberg generation is finding it hard to communicate with the Google generation and vice versa.”¹⁸⁵ Whitney Bauman et al describe Millennials as, “being continuously connected to information, online social networks, and people and places around the globe via increasingly customizable digital technology is an inherent facet of what it means to be human.”¹⁸⁶

Katherine G. Schmidt affirms, “doing theology in the digital age, then, means that to the extent that theologians care at all about what it means to be human and human-together (social), their subjects are being shaped by the dynamics of digital culture.”¹⁸⁷ Schmidt says, “we both shape and are shaped by the wide variety of forms through which we mean to encounter nature, God, and one another.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ James Davis, *Gutenberg to Google* (Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit Resources, 2009), 25.

¹⁸⁶ Whitney Bauman, Karline McLain, Maureen H O’Connell, and Sara Mya Patterson, “Teaching the Millennial Generation in the Religious and Theological Studies Classroom,” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 17 (2014): 301, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0002004334&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁸⁷ Katherine G. Schmidt, “Millennials and Public Theology in a Digital Age,” *Concilium* 2020, no.4 (2020): 151, accessed October 10, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIACO201130001534&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

Katherine Schmidt concludes, “theological reflection is ever bound to history, laying before theologians the human realities upon which the Revelation of God is to be brought to bear. Therefore, more and more millennial theologians are mining the experience of digital culture—in all its absurdity and perplexity—for possible theological reflection.”¹⁸⁹ Matthew Stuhlmuller asserts, “he is advocating that Christian faith is experienced most fully through worship that emphasizes the theological significance of the body (both individual and corporate) by intentionally engaging all five senses.”¹⁹⁰

Evangelism

The title of the researcher’s project is “Kingdom Millennials Infiltrating Culture.” While the endeavor has undoubtedly described or examined the components that characterize the generation called Millennials, the idea of “culture” has not been properly addressed. Oddly, the concept of culture will not be extensively explored, however, it will be clearly defined. Paul Wendland, simply dubbed that “culture is a shared system of behavior, values, and beliefs.”¹⁹¹ Hence, the mission of Kingdom Millennials is to permeate the immediate and distant shared secular system of behavior, values, and beliefs with the love, peace, and truth displayed by the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. “Without the mission in our gospel presentations, we do people a

¹⁸⁹ Schmidt, “Millennials and Public Theology,” 151.

¹⁹⁰ Matthew Stuhlmuller, “Any Body There?: Worship and Being Human in a Digital Age,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 3 (2018): 67, accessed November 2, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIe58180709001725&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹¹ Paul O. Wendland, “Postmodernism and the Millennial Worldview,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, vol. no. 3 (2016): 213, accessed October 18, 2021, EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIbCA160912000805&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

grave disservice. We imply that they can be Christians without being on a God-given mission to love others in His name.”¹⁹²

Any mission taken with the hopes of being fully sustained and protected from seen and unseen dangers must be extrapolated from Scripture, most significantly the words of the Prince of Peace. In Matthew’s Gospel account, Jesus declares, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt 5:9). William Tillman explains, “We cannot forget the first Baptists were essentially counter-culturalists with an interpretation of the Gospel to also engage the culture.”¹⁹³

The millennial generation possesses an expansive approach regarding the diversity of the potential recipients who stand to engage “the good news” of Jesus Christ. James Weber maintains, “this generation is more global in their perspectives and experiences through their advantages of social media. This leads to a great appreciation for diversity.”¹⁹⁴ Contemplating the journey set before them as they embrace their calling to be “My witnesses” (see Acts 1:8).

¹⁹² Andy Crouch, “From Four Laws to Four Circles,” *Christianity Today* 52, no. 7 (2008): 33, accessed November 9, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ofm&AN=504487524&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹³ William M. Tillman Jr, “Building a Culture of Peace: Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, the First Seventy Years,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 46, no. 3 (2011): 77-78, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001912269&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹⁴ James Weber, “Discovering the Millennials’ Personal Values Orientation: A Comparison to Two Managerial Populations,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 143, no. 3 (2017): 520, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45022157>.

Jeff Cloeter conveys, “The shift in focus from place to people highlights the need for deep investment in the maturity of God’s people for the sake of mission. A narrative approach to evangelism aligns with this paradigm.”¹⁹⁵

William Stewart et al reveal the universal body of Christ’s primary function is “to outreach to the world as well as to equip its members to go out and impact the community for the gospel, build Christian community as well as for our cultural good (Matt 28:20; 1 Tim 2:1; Gal 6:10; 1Thess 3:12, 5::15).”¹⁹⁶ Sarah Guldalian concludes, “This self-expressive, self-aware group appreciates that which is experiential and ‘real.’ Although turned off by institutions, they may not, however, be opposed to *hearing* about Jesus.”¹⁹⁷

Y.A.M.S. Leadership Workshop

In response to the data gathered, analyzed, and reported in the study, the researcher conducted a one-day leadership workshop geared toward *growing* Millennial involvement with worship service design (emphasis added).¹⁹⁸ Before the training workshop, the researcher created a group chat in a mobile app called GroupMe available on Google Play and the Apple App Store. On the app, the P.I. formulated a Y.A.M.S. (Young Adult Ministry Squad) group chat, including

¹⁹⁵ Jeff Cloeter, “On Millennials and Story,” *Missio Apostolica*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2013):49, accessed October 18, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001951532&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹⁶ William Stewart, D. Scott Barfoot, Jeanette Stewart, and Lindsay Nelson, “The Influence of Church on Wellbeing in Adolescents and Millennials,” *The Journal of Ministry & Theology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 94, accessed October 18, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar@AN=ATLAI7210607000012&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹⁷ Sarah Guldalian, “The Millennials: Reflections on Reaching a Lost Generation for Christ,” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (2013): 43, accessed November 16, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLA0001942307&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix B.

a profile picture. The purpose of the group chat was to unite, encourage, and inform the young adults in the spirit of spiritual development. The Y.A.M.S. are encouraged to submit ministry ideas and daily encouragement throughout the week. It is a safe space where Millennials can offer suggestions free of judgment and ridicule, however, the Y.A.M.S. are held accountable for their words and deeds.

Furthermore, in the chat, the troops were provided the date and time of the one-day workshop. Then, the team was supplied with the twelve elements of the worship service that would be designed collectively. Three weeks before the workshop, the Millennials were advised to pray about their contributions towards the event and to offer their suggestions via the GroupMe chat. They were also given the choice to record their ideas in an analog format and bring them to the workshop as well.

The eleven millennial members who participated in the study attended the one-day training workshop. During the training conference, the facilitator and the participants collectively developed a Millennial-led Sunday worship service.¹⁹⁹ In the spirit of unity, the researcher and the participants discussed and agreed on the specifics of twelve modules of a Y.A.M.S.-led Sunday worship service.

Milan, a participant in the study recorded the minutes of the experience. As they sat in chairs arranged in a full circle, the facilitator graciously began the workshop with an opening prayer. Each segment of the service (e.g., welcome, praise & worship, offering, announcements, sermon, and invitation) was discussed by the entire assembly. As Dubai closed the workshop in prayer, the Millennials were empowered and excited about their designed service, which aimed to unify all generations of the congregation in the spirit of corporate worship.

¹⁹⁹ See Appendix B.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In summation, the researcher will discuss the findings extracted in Chapter Four in the form of a summary. He will place the stakeholders' perspectives in the broader social context of the issue by comparing their viewpoints with those presented within the literature.²⁰⁰ The facilitator will then explore the implications of the study for services, policies, and practices related to the people and issues investigated. Finally, the writer will display how the primary stakeholders' perspectives illuminate the issue investigated and suggest changes in organizational or programmatic practices implied by the outcomes of the research.²⁰¹

Kate Shellnutt, explains, “today, as American Christianity faces declining affiliation, intense public debates over religious freedom, changes in the family structure, and technological advances, millennial Christians have already picked up the baton.”²⁰² Interestingly, as a Kingdom Millennial is empowered to embark on a mission to infiltrate culture for the sake of the gospel, one must discern the generational and life-stage pattern of those they will encounter. Lynne M. Baab expounds, “not all individuals fit into the commonly described generational patterns . . . but hold them lightly, especially because experts disagree on the exact birth dates when each generation begins and ends.”²⁰³ Some argue that Millennials as a group are uninterested in leadership within the church or any field for that matter. However, other experts

²⁰⁰ Stringer, *Action Research: 4th Edition*, 225.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Kate Shellnutt, “Meet the Rappers, Activists, Writers, Preachers, Artists, and Business Leaders Shaping the Next Chapter of American Faith,” *Christianity Today* Vol. 58, no. 6 (2014): 35, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAn3765868&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²⁰³ Lynne M. Baab, “Pastoral Carers Consider the Web of Relationships,” in *Nurturing Hope: Christian Pastoral Care in the Twenty-First Century*, 101, 1517 Media, 2018, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22p7kqv.12>.

attribute several factors that spark the Yers' willingness to serve. Christopher Einolf contends, "numerous studies have connected adult participation in volunteering with childhood participation in religious congregations, community associations, and school-based service work."²⁰⁴

Historically, research around Generation Y and its impact on society has been grossly irresponsible due to its exploration from the perspective of one particular demographic, while neglecting to ingratiate all other cohorts of the Millennial generation. Ronald Bailey expounds, "I often criticized the narrowness of projects such as Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* (1998) because they were too focused only on White males."²⁰⁵ With this sentiment in mind, the researcher has filtered his investigation from the viewpoints of various races, genders, and socio-economic classes.

While several experts characterize these young individuals as civically involved, socially conscious, interested in helping others and solving the problems of the world,²⁰⁶ others portray them as the exact opposite, pointing to their narcissism, materialism, lower empathy, declining concern for others, and lower civic engagement."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Christopher Einolf, "Millennials and Public Service Motivation: Findings From a Survey of Master's Degree Students." *Public Administration Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2016): 431, accessed October 22, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24772878>.

²⁰⁵ Ronald W. Bailey, "American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs—A," *Fire!!!* 2, no. 1 (2013): 63, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5323/fire.2.1.0060>.

²⁰⁶ Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising: Next Generation*, 27.

²⁰⁷ Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 17.

Even more, “research suggests that members of Generation X and Generation Y are less engaged politically than any other previous generation. It might also be indicative of a certain degree of confidence in how the political and social systems operate.”²⁰⁸

Nevbahar Ertas suggests, that individuals with greater public service motivation (PSM) are more likely to work for the government and that individuals in this sector are also more likely to engage in other pro-social behavior outside of work.”²⁰⁹

“The sharp sociological and spiritual differences between Millennials and preceding generations demand a fundamental redefinition of Christian practice for an era of digital interconnectedness.”²¹⁰ Panzer concludes, “put simply, generations born into the digitally mediated world have disconnected from institutional religion at rates not seen in previous age cohorts. Despite this disconnection, Millennials and subsequent generations remain spiritually curious, imaginative, and even inventive.”²¹¹ In hopes of igniting Millennials’ spiritual inquisitiveness, the researcher is compelled to utilize Christian education to further develop the millennial participants in spiritual maturity.

²⁰⁸ Fayneese Miller and Erica Foster, “Youths’ Perceptions of Race, Class, and Language Bias in the Courts.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 71, no. 3 (2002): 194, accessed October 28, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3211236>.

²⁰⁹ Nevbahar Ertas, “Millennials and Volunteering: Sector Differences and Implications for Public Service Motivation Theory,” *Public Administration Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2016): 517, accessed October 22, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24772881>.

²¹⁰ Ryan M. Panzer, “Hearing the Millennials: Ministry Alongside an Unchurched Generation for the Sake of the Gospel,” *Word & World* 39, no. 4 (2019): 352, accessed November 9, 2021, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAIACO200127001231&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Twelve-Week Y.A.M.S. Bible Study

After implementation of the Millennial-led Sunday worship service, the researcher will facilitate a weekly inductive Bible study on the church premises. By gathering Millennials together each week in a small group setting huddled around God's Word, the researcher is persuaded that emulating the first-century church in prayer, study, and having "all things in common" (cf. Acts 2:44) with one another can beneficially address the stated problem. In the spirit of unity, the researcher is seeking to bridge the gap between the traditionally didactic discipleship approach of "sit-and-get" and a relational-based biblical contemporary methodology. The Millennial participants in the study are prime candidates to flourish from the said discipleship strategy.

In efforts to incentivize the Millennial participants to commit to twelve weekly Bible studies, the researcher will provide moderate dinner options available to each family before the study. Every Wednesday evening from 6:15 pm to 7:15 pm, an abbreviated pre-ordered catered meal will be available to participants and their immediate families.

At 6:10 pm, a church leader will pray for both the physical and spiritual nourishment for everyone involved with the Bible study. Participants will be given one hour to eat as a family, then they will be led to get their children situated in the church's designated area for childcare. From 7:15 pm to 7:25 pm the subjects of the study will congregate in the fellowship hall where the pre-arranged circle of eleven chairs is positioned.

The study session meeting time will be from 7:30 pm to 8:45 pm. At the commencement of the Y.A.M.S. Bible study, the researcher will open the session with prayer. However, moving forward, he will encourage and invite others to lead the group in consulting the Father. The curriculum utilized by the small group is titled "The Gospel Project" by Lifeway, which is a

three-year chronological, Christ-centered Bible study that examines how the consummation of Scripture gives testimony to Jesus Christ.²¹²

Due to the intimate nature of these sessions, the researcher will designate the first 5-7 minutes for participants to either share praise reports (answered prayers by God that were mentioned in previous sessions), or prayer requests (soliciting intercession of the saints to petition God's grace and mercy over a given situation or circumstance). The leader will then be compelled to transition to the specific scriptural text of the evening.

The Gospel Project provides a title of the session followed by a "Session in a Sentence" and "Background Passage."²¹³ Each session is self-explanatory; however, it is integral that the facilitator relies heavily on distributing roles and creating an environment of inclusion with the millennial participants. The leader is encouraged to gingerly ask plenty of questions to discern the level of spiritual maturity of the congregants. During this process, the researcher will be able to gauge who is most suitable to lead within a contemporary ministry setting.

At the culmination of three major points provided in the lesson, the participant will be prompted by a contextual-related action question (how the lesson plays out in the life of the believer this week). Also, the subjects will be charged with a "Daily Study" of relative scriptural text that can bolster their understanding of the text for that week. The facilitator will humbly summon an individual to close the session with prayer and the group will be dismissed. The participants can gather their children and depart to their preferred destinations.

The intervention of engaging in weekly Bible study will spiritually illuminate the Millennial to take the biblical text from the pages of Scripture and supplant it into their daily

²¹² LifeWay, "The Gospel Project" accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.lifeway.com/en/shop/the-gospel-project/adults>

²¹³ Ibid.

living. Considering the common and anonymous quote that “people make time for what they want,” the researcher is compelled to believe that they *want* to be well fed both physically and spiritually. More specifically, the Millennials desire to develop their understanding of who God is within a Christian community but are unsure how to translate knowing Him into a favorable life on earth and in heaven.

Weekly Bible study welcomes the participant into a community where Jesus is Lord, and the chief aim of the group is to spiritually develop one another in reverence of the Son. Millennials will be equipped to lead a life on a mission to do the will of the Father, which will ultimately usher glory to the kingdom. As a result of participating in the Y.A.M.S., through Bible study, the Millennial is inspired to holistically worship God through their daily living, and they will desire to lead others toward that revelation. They will foster an atmosphere of discipleship by multiplication (disciples making disciple-makers).²¹⁴

The resources needed to conduct this study will be twelve volumes of “The Gospel Project.” The researcher will need at least eleven Bible study guides of each volume for the participants and at least one teacher’s guide as well. The facilitator will need to develop a short series of questions posed for the team leader to assist in evaluating the spiritual maturity of the other ten participants.

The truth about the problem of Millennials being absent within the ministry context of the Black Church is that they surprisingly attend weekly worship services. The principal investigator’s sole objective for this study is not to go seek Millennials in the world who do not attend church, it is to spiritually develop young adults who are already committed to corporate worship on Sundays. By engaging in the study, those leaders will be compelled to venture

²¹⁴ Putman, *DiscipleShift*, 7.

outside the walls of the church to navigate their contemporaries towards the kingdom. Moreover, the newly empowered leaders are proficient for the next era of congregational ministry.

While “The Gospel Project” Bible study series is designed to explore the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation in three years, a fair trial time frame to evaluate the researcher’s intervention is three months. Preferably, the researcher argues that a six-month trial period (more than 24 sessions) to amply assess the spiritual development of Millennials would be more than sufficient. However, twelve or more consecutive weeks of inductive Bible study within a small group setting could provide a satisfactory amount of data.

A successful outcome of the researcher’s proposed intervention is to cultivate an atmosphere of mature spiritual development that will promote a paradigm shift in ministerial leadership. Particularly, the Millennial generation will be energized to broaden God’s kingdom by fervently investing in the lives of others. They can germinate an affinity for the hermeneutical interpretation of Scripture and mutually yearn to transform their circles of influence. Essentially, the new era of leaders will recapture the zealous custom of relational discipleship demonstrated by the first-century church.

Fadling shares a pivotal sentiment that may be shared by numerous Generation Yers across Christendom when he concludes, “what I’d love to see, Alan, are boomer leaders like us hanging out with this next generation, even handing them the keys and saying, ‘You drive. I’m going to be in the passenger seat, and you lead.’”²¹⁵ Clark concludes, “the church is called to be a Spirit-filled open community where the body seeks to understand and then take advantage of the winds of change to the Spirit’s advantage.”²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Fadling, “Boomers Befriending Millennials,” 35.

²¹⁶ Clark, “Creating a Place,” 104.

The Last Days

The kingdom of heaven is not the solitary aim of the Millennial. Instead, he or she can allow the reign of God to continue to *grow* within and around their circle of influence. Andy Crouch argues, “that’s not to say that life after death isn’t important. But it’s not the whole story. It’s the final chapter, but there are still many chapters to be lived out.”²¹⁷ However, in hopes of explaining the eschatological perspective of the researcher, Andrea H. Tapia provides a comprehensive description of his stance,

The pretribulational-dispensational premillennialists differed from other premillennialists in that they believed that the rapture would be a time when Christians would be instantly transformed into glorified beings and disappear from the face of the earth. After the rapture, those that were left behind would be thrown into seven years of tribulation. After the tribulation, the Christians in their glorified forms would return to earth, led by Jesus Christ, to fight the Anti-Christ at the battle of Armageddon. After good wins the battle, there will be a Millennial Kingdom when Christ will reign for 1000 years of global peace.²¹⁸

With this sentiment in mind, the primary investigator is committed to empowering the Millennial generation to boldly engage the culture in which they dwell.

Due to a presumed individualistic reputation, congregants from previous generations often misdiagnose Yers’ willingness to remain committed to the daunting task of service, discipleship/mentorship, and mission within the context of ministry.

²¹⁷ Crouch, “Four Laws Circles,” 33.

²¹⁸ Andrea H. Tapia, “Techno-Armageddon: The Millennial Christian Response to Y2K,” *Review of Religious Research* 43, no. 3 (2002): 266–86, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3512332>.

However, “their commitment is not just to their journey, it is also to the religious community through which their spiritual quest is to be pursued, and to the surrounding community as well.”²¹⁹

Andrew Root reminds the church of the words of German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer when he expounds,

Since the days of the youth movement, church youth work has often lacked that element of Christian sobriety that alone might enable it to recognize that the spirit of youth is not the Holy Spirit and that the future of the church is not youth itself but rather the Lord Jesus Christ alone. It is the task of youth not to reshape the church, but rather listen to the Word of God; it is the task of the church not to capture the youth, but to teach and proclaim the Word of God.²²⁰

By His grace, the church can be energized by Scripture to operate in full obedience to His instruction regarding its future. Jesus encourages the future of the church in Matthews Gospel when He proclaims, “upon this rock, I will build My church, and *the gates of Hades will not overpower it*” (Matt 16:18) (emphasis added). In other words, with all authority, Christ as the Head, will not allow His body (the church) to be defeated by death (Hades). Hence, the future of the church rests exclusively in the peace, the power, and the presence of Jesus Christ the Lord.

²¹⁹ Richard Flory and Donald E. Miller, “Conclusion,” in *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation*, 158, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008, accessed October 22, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hhx33.9>.

²²⁰ Andrew Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), 121.

Through the process of implementing the research project, and regardless of the mainstream narrative that “59% of 18-29-year-olds have dropped out of attending church at some point and over a quarter of Millennials who identify as Christian report they have completely walked away from the church and don’t see the need to attend,”²²¹ the primary investigator has learned that the Y.A.M.S. in this study *do* succinctly desire to *get involved* with servant leadership inside and outside the ministry construct (emphasis added). However, the conditions in which their services are rendered may be the synthesis of the project’s results.

Collectively, they would like their voices to be heard and their opinions valued by church leadership, but they were not wholeheartedly committed to the idea of change if it meant their ideas and stances would be met with significant resistance. Unlike previous generations, this crop of believers was not inclined to boldly challenge tradition or the status quo, instead, they chose the passive-aggressive alternative in implementing necessary change.

The most compelling snippet of data was the Y.A.M.S.’s affinity for collaborative small group projects to synthesize a shift within the ministry context. In hopes of limiting risks to individuals, the Millennials sought to form small groups to insulate their persons with a proverbial social barrier from potential blowback.

²²¹ Brian Eck, Scott A. White, and David N. Entwistle, “Teaching Integration to Postmodern and Millennial Students: Implications for the Classroom,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 35, no. 2 (2016):125-36, accessed January 27, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=Isdar&AN=ATLAn3967230&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Kit Carlson discusses the significance of small groups in the Christian setting stating,

these groups will not prove to be a magic bullet to solve all the evangelical problems of the twenty-first century mainline churches; however, these guided conversations on faith with small groups of post-Boomers have helped to surface both challenges and opportunities for proclaiming faith into the future, as that future now falls into the arms of those Xers and Millennials who do believe.²²²

The Y.A.M.S were inclined to spiritually ripen if they were cushioned by the presence of the small group in sharp contrast to maturing individually.²²³

The herd-like small group mentality is not unique to Christian Millennials, as it is a common characteristic among the entire generation. Whether in academia or the workplace, Yers are compelled to seek careers or projects that are enjoyable or captivating. Theresa Phipps expounds, “the millennial generation has a quest for fun, has little tolerance for boredom, and seeks careers that are interesting and fun.”²²⁴ Phipps concluded, that, “they also prefer a mixture of course activities including lecture, group work, discussion and problem-solving to enhance the learning experience.”²²⁵

The researcher recommends to the stakeholders, parents, and ministry leaders alike, to revisit daily mankind’s purpose for being created. Humanity was created to worship God forever.

²²² Kit Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generations to Speak their Faith Aloud," *Anglican Theological Review* 98, no. 4 (2016): 703, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fequipping-next-generations-speak-their-faith%2Fdocview%2F1836947325%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

²²³ See Appendix A.

²²⁴ Theresa Phipps, "Team-Based Interactive Student Learning for Accounting Courses." *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice* 19, no. 6 (2019): 156, accessed January 27, 2022, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fteam-based-interactive-student-learning%2Fdocview%2F2310652542%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

²²⁵ Ibid.

In everything, the believer is encouraged to holistically worship his or her Creator in matters ranging from unessential to the most meaningful. King David confidently declared, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).²²⁶ Through Scripture, ignited by the Holy Spirit, the congregation will be empowered to worship the living God with their whole person (mind, body, and spirit).

In response to the thesis statement of this action research project,²²⁷ the researcher is compelled to believe that a realistic infusion of servant leadership was experienced at C.O.F./M.O.B.W.C. Akin to the sanctification stage of the salvation process, and in partnership with modeling holistic worship in the form of Christian education, the Millennial participants were incessantly influenced by the unction of the Holy Spirit to become more spiritually mature. The writer prays that Generation Y lovingly and willingly receives the proverbial baton of Christian leadership passed to them by previous generations. What might be the most harmonious climate to ensure a plentiful harvest of spiritual fruitfulness?

Successive to an individualized practice of daily holistic worship for the believer, one can begin to focus on spiritually developing on a collective level. Another recommendation for church leadership is to create an environment rich in mentorship, discipleship with an aim for evangelism. In this atmosphere of shared worship to spiritually blossom, the Millennials, as well as the entire body of Christ, will prosper by reproducing dynamic servant leaders while perpetuating God’s kingdom.

²²⁷ See Page 13.

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APPENDIX A

Milan's Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was born into a family of fervent believers (Grandmother, Mother, and Aunt). From the moment I was born, they prayed over me, by me, and with me. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been passed down in my family for generations.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation means being rescued by God from the consequences of our sins. It is a gift of freedom and eternal life through Christ's death and resurrection. Repentance is turning away from sin. It is a change of heart and a change of direction. Godly living is to give thanks in all circumstances, seeking the knowledge of Jesus, and bearing the image of Christ. It also means to yield to the Holy Spirit and not to our fleshly desires.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. As Christians, we are to obediently follow God and trust in Him. We must trust Him at all times and under all circumstances. The moment we fail to trust God is the moment we fail to follow. Prayer is communication with God. When we pray, we get to see God's essence and capabilities, and attributes in action. Giving is a command. When we give, we are making room for God to give us more. When we don't give, there is no room for the new and additional blessings God has waiting for us. When we give, our lives reflect our faith that God's promises of provision are true. We are called to persevere, and one of the benefits of perseverance is that our faith is shown to be genuine. God promises that when we stand firm and persevere in our faith, we will be saved (Matthew 24:12). Self-control is one part of the fruits of the spirit, so exercising it means reflecting the Spirit of God. To exercise self-control is to discipline ourselves, set boundaries, and govern our behavior.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. I am not a telephone person, and I don't do well with checking voicemail. For me, texting is convenient and less disruptive to everyday life. I prefer the email method when it comes to school or business. Social media is used to stay up to date with family, current events and to find funny and entertaining content.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Spiritual leaders (other than the pastor) can effectively connect with Millennials through mentorship. This helps Millennials feel relationally accepted in the church. It is a necessity for ministry leaders as well as seasoned adults to become friends with the next generation of believers. A small group ministry is a great opportunity in helping Millennials to develop discernment skills, especially in understanding and interpreting today's culture. Small groups create safe spaces for young adults to learn, grow, and be vulnerable. Educational programs can help us understand our purpose in life through church, learn how Christians can positively contribute to society, and how to apply our hearts and minds to today's cultural realities. These types of ministries are a way to bring our faith in Jesus to the problems we encounter in the world.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. I would say having a voice. When a church forges ahead without asking for our input, we get the message loud and clear. The church can combat this by inviting Millennials to serve on leadership teams or advisory boards where we can make a difference. Church leaders should care what we think.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. Faith, family, money, work, and reputation

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. Decisions come in all shapes and sizes. The Bible is my guide on all matters. It provides clarity, helpful principles, and gives practical insight into any situation.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. Jesus Christ is my Savior and Redeemer. He is the source of life and light to all things.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. Baptism is a sign and symbol of our personal commitment to follow Christ. It is also a way to publicly show our faith before others.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. We take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the body and blood of Jesus that was broken and poured at the cross. It reminds us of Jesus' suffering and shows us the amount of love He has for us. It also reminds us that Jesus is coming back.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. Some are viewed as a prime source of support, and some are viewed as hypocrites.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. We are to build up the body of Christ so that we would grow from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity. Individual Christians need to be connected to other individual Christians. Head, shoulders, knees, and toes are all dependent upon each other. God designed his people this way also, like walking through life with others by our side. Another aspect for connection is teaching, training, oversight, and accountability.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. Find things they are interested in by sending out a survey either within the church, on the church website, or on social media. Ask Millennials what their interests are and what types of things they'd be most interested in leading with. Make it easy for Millennials to check out the latest programs, leadership opportunities, and volunteer opportunities. Social media, forums on the church's website as well as text messaging to get the word out.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. Create ways to build and facilitate meaningful relationships; making us feel like we are a part of the movement of the church. The church can engage its millennial members by hosting an event that is planned by and intended for young adults. Church events are a wonderful way to equip Millennials by getting them to know one another, share their ideas for helping the church grow or strengthen, achieve its mission, and serve others in the community.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. Very receptive. The church can encourage this by offering us opportunities that matter to our community. We want to make a positive difference and that means going out (infiltrating the world with the gospel) and doing things in the community versus just asking people to come to the church. Additionally, the church can ask about causes close to our hearts and find ways to get the church involved. When Millennials feel like they're making a difference, they're far more likely to not only be active but stay active.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. First by doing what God tells us to do. It's comforting to know that if we just do the things God tells us to do, our faith will grow. If we're not diligently applying ourselves to the things God tells us to do, we're not going to have much faith or grow in faith. No one's faith will grow unless he or she really focuses on obeying God. Second, keeping God's Word into our minds. If we're not consistently putting the Bible into our minds, we're not going to have much faith or grow in faith. The more we look at physical

circumstances, the less likely it is that we will have faith. The more we look into God's Word, the more we will grow in faith. Faith believes that God watches over us, cares for us, and hears our prayers.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials?

R. Absolutely not. It caters to the Elders and the Baby Boomers. What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward? Eliminating some of the traditional concepts and implementing some contemporary concepts.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. Offer worship services of varying styles so that everyone can attend a service that meets their personal preferences. Or transform the existing service to incorporate varying styles of worship and bring unity to the vast age spans and various cultures that may be represented in the church and community. I believe many churches are stuck in the past with no missionary mindset at all. Churches need to make changes in worship to stay relevant to the community around them.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. The preached word is powered by the Holy Spirit and brings glory to God. The preached word explains what the Scripture says and how the Scripture reveals Jesus Christ and His saving work. It also expresses why the Scripture matters to the congregation. It is by hearing the Gospel that people are saved and how God's people deepen their faith.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Challenging the congregation to take responsibility for their spiritual growth and teaching them how they can be more intentional. The church can fire up Millennials' spiritual growth just by communicating more clearly about steps we could take to grow. This may entail events, classes, church experiences, and relationships that will help people grow. The pastor can also preach a series on spiritual progress to launch a spiritual growth path.

Berlin's Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I've always attended church with my mom. However, around the age of six my aunt Rita was the person who really introduced me to Jesus.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation means to be saved by God. Repentance is when you ask God for forgiveness for something you've done. Godly living is living for God.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. The 10 commandments are a list of principles that have stuck with me.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Text messaging and Facebook

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Group events and events for the younger generation at church.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Millennials hold money, friends, and fashion vital to their existence.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. family, faith, reputation, work, money

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. The 10 commandments are what I live by.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. Jesus is someone who you can call in a time of trouble. Jesus is a friend and died for our sins.

- Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?**
R. It's important because it is symbolizing your new beginning.
- Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.**
R. To eat the body of Jesus shows God our dedication.
- Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?**
R. Very closed-minded
- Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?**
R. A big part of it: The new generation of the future.
- Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.**
R. Make them actually feel like they are being listened to.
- Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.**
R. Bible Study
- Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.**
R. Very receptive when it is offered.
- Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?**
R. Being more selfless. Reading the Bible more.
- Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?**
R. It caters to Millennials, but it could be improved by having more Millennials in leadership positions.
- Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?**
R. Having a youth mentorship program.
- Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.**
R. Choir singing, praying, and the sermon are most important for me.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Mentorship: so, they can have an actual role model since most don't.

Rome's Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was introduced when I was a baby. I remember wanting to play instruments, sing and *get involved* when I was super young. My parents allowed me to *get involved* and grow.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation means safety from harmful things. Repentance means asking God for forgiveness for sins committed. Godly living means assurance that you will follow God and do His will.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. Jesus' life and actions serve as a primary example of how we should act as Christians. Following Jesus' example will us to God and eternal life.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.

R. Videos are really important for communication. They give us visuals of things that can be posted and seen all over the world.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Educational programs and small groups are a good way to connect. And having young group leaders better help connect with Millennials.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Status and having a voice.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, money, work, reputation

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. I try to model myself after the depiction of Jesus. The Bible also has many stories that fit any situation you may be in.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. My Lord and Savior. His life can be seen as an example that we should follow.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. Baptism symbolizes the washing and cleansing of sins.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. The Lord's Supper represents the death of Jesus. The bread is the body. The wine is the blood.

How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

S. Many pastors are open to conversations about the Bible.

S. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. As the voice and messengers of the Word.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. By speaking with people their age.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. By letting them participate in things around the church. Whether it be the choir, dance, or fixing the church.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. Those who grew up around the church are more receptive.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. When they get to help other people like them come to Christ.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. More Millennials should play smaller roles, like with the announcements or ushering.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. By speaking on topics that would interest them. Things that make them ask questions and seek to learn more.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. The worship ministry because it allows you to connect one-on-one with God.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. The church should speak on things that would keep Millennials listening and coming to church.

Sofia's Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. My first experience with church that I can recall was with my mom. I cannot remember exactly when, but I would attend the Fountain of Praise with her on Sundays. I would not be engaged at all, and I would often sleep through the whole service.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. In my opinion, salvation means to accept Christ as the Lord and Savior of my life and believe in my heart that He died on the cross for my sins. Repentance, again, in my opinion, means to ask God for forgiveness. But I also believe that you have to put action behind it. I can't ask God to forgive me for the sin I committed, then continue to sin relentlessly. Because of this, I make an effort to show God that I'm genuinely sorry by turning away from the sin. To me, godly living means to live a life that reflects Christ. We should try and mirror Him in everything that we do. We should be a beacon of light to others, and just be positive, encouraging, and selfless.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. I think that perseverance was a biblical principle that stuck with me. My great-grandmother is responsible for this. Throughout my childhood, I had to go on weekend visitations with my father. I did not have good experiences while I was there with him, so of course, I dreaded going. I would always cry to my great-grandmother and beg her to do anything to keep me from going with my father. She couldn't do much, but what she could do was pray. She would pray and lay her hands over me, and it gave me a strong feeling of peace and perseverance. I felt like I had strength in the Lord, and He would help me get through the weekend. I am forever grateful for her instilling that in me.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. There's an app called "Remind" that sends text messages to specific groups of people to give out information. My experience with the app comes from school-related activities. For example, my soccer coaches used it to tell us which color uniform to bring or if a practice was canceled. Social media is equally as effective, for the younger generations. Most people under 65, and some over (no shade), go on social media at least once a day. So that's another way to reach a large group of people. Remind is friendly to all age groups though.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. I think this can vary among churches. I feel like leaders must evaluate the Millennials in their church. Some Millennials feel more connected and comfortable when they can be taught in small groups. Others may feel perfectly fine when they are amongst the whole congregation. Additionally, I think that planning activities outside of the church would help build a relationship and unity between the Millennials in the church. One suggestion I would have is to let us plan it ourselves. Everyone has their work schedules and personal lives, and on top of that, we don't like to be forced or pressured into things. By allowing these things, I believe it would make for a better outcome.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. I think all of these things are pretty balanced. We want to be comfortable with our money. Most of us value having a good relationship with our families. Most of us want to be known for something in life; we want people to know about us. Lastly, we definitely want to have a voice. Something that really proved this was this election year. A lot of Millennials have strong opinions about the injustice that has been shown in the US and have spoken out about it. A lot of them also did not like the leader of the country. So, they used their voices and their platforms to speak out and advocate for change, and it worked for the most part. We definitely like to be heard and enjoy it when people listen to our opinions about things. All in all, I think that all of these things are important.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, reputation, money, work

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. I feel like the bible helps the little voice in the back of my head that helps me make my decisions. It tells me when I probably shouldn't be doing something, and it also prompts me to do things. Different instructions and events in the Bible help me to differentiate between right and wrong.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. Jesus Christ is someone I can trust. He will never leave or betray me. He won't tell anyone anything I tell him. He's always there to listen. He has my best interest at heart. He's basically the perfect friend I think we all wish we had. He's also someone I can ask for help when I can't ask anyone else.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. I think that water baptism is important because it's like raising a flag for Christ. There's a bunch of flags that we like to wave that present our personal beliefs. So, baptism to me is like showing everyone that you are dedicating your life to Christ.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. I feel that it's a reminder of what Jesus did for us. It's an eye-opener, and I think it makes us remember why we can have eternal life.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. I feel like it turns people away from the church when there are too many rules and regulations. I understand that there have to be rules in place so that there's order, but some things are just too strict. For instance, not being able to wear pants to church or not being able to chew gum. In no way am I saying that people should be allowed to come in church dresses inappropriately or they should be allowed to chew their gum in a disturbing manner. I just think that certain things don't get in the way of worship and leaders should take that into consideration.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. Millennials can serve as a bridge between the two generations in the church. They can give ideas on how to make church appealing to other Millennials and run smoother.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. I think Millennials would be more inclined to lead in ministries if their ideas were taken into consideration. A lot of times, millennials would lead if they didn't have to stick to such strict rules. I feel that they would appreciate some creative freedom.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. I think that food will always make people come. That's a great incentive. Also, maybe allow Millennials to talk as a group and plan something on their own. I think they should come up with ideas on their own, so they don't feel like they're forced to do something.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. For the most part, I'm always open to advice on how to spread the gospel. Something that would turn me away though would be if the person was pushy or they weren't open to ideas on how to better cater to my generation.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. Becoming diligent in devotionals, being able to help others in their walk of faith. There's a feeling; you just feel more connected to God and it's easier to see Him in your life.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. I think that our worship service does a good job of catering to the Millennials. One improvement I have would be to read in a different translation. Personally, it's hard for me to understand the King James Versions. Also, I would limit the number of irrelevant rants; you lose the attention of the audience.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. As I stated above, reading in a translation that's easier for more people to understand (ESV, NASB, NIV). Also, there is a traditional way of preaching called "hooping". In my opinion, it is too much. It takes away from the words of the message and makes it hard to listen and apply the message. I think Millennials would appreciate the message more if it was given to them as if you were talking to your friend.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. The most meaningful parts of worship, in my opinion, are the worship and the preached word. Most Millennials love music, so I feel like it's self-explanatory on why the singing would be enjoyable. The Word is also pretty significant (I feel like Millennials find that the main reason we come to church). It just gives you motivation and things you need to know to continue to grow as a Christian.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Before I give my two cents, I would like to say that I think our church does a solid job at catering to Millennials. But here's ways I think the church can improve:

- I feel like technology could be implemented more. A lot of times people have the resources to give, but they don't have cash. Also, technology can be used to alert members on events happening in the church.
- I think that leaders should be mindful of time. When service is dragged on, I know for a fact Millennials' brains start to drift elsewhere. I am not saying that there should be a strict schedule, but I don't think we should be sitting in church for 3 hours.
- I believe that the choir should sing songs that cater to all generations. They cannot sing old hymns and expect us to engage. There should be a balance.
- I think that distractions should be avoided at all costs. I can't speak for everyone, but I have a strong feeling that we Millennials get distracted very easily. For example, during prayer, the music should be at a whisper level and there should be no words. It makes it hard to comprehend the words when there's a ton of background noise that you have to dig your way through.
- I don't think that there should be a strict dress code. I understand that there needs to be order, but it should not be so strict that it pushes people away. I have been to churches where pants are not allowed, and your skirt/dress has to reach past your knee. By doing this, some people won't come at all simply because they don't

have anything to wear. In my opinion, as long as what you choose to wear is not distracting to others and is appropriate for church, then it should be allowed. It doesn't change the way you worship just because your skirt is past your knees. I think everyone should be given the opportunity to worship comfortably.

London's Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was introduced to Christianity through my family. I have attended church since I was born.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. To me, salvation means being saved by God. Repentance means to ask God for forgiveness. Godly living is living in a way that would please God

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. Being a giving and selfless person has stuck with me because I know that is what God would want.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Text messaging

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Giving them a purpose or job to do.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Friends, family, money, and power are vital to Millennials along with having a voice.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, work, money, reputation

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. The Bible says to not steal, kill, lie and curse along with other things. I try to not do these things on a daily basis.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. Jesus is someone who died for our sins and is still a Comforter today.

- Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?**
- R.** Water baptism is important because you are showing God that you are now walking with Him.
- Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.**
- R.** The Lord's Supper symbolizes our love for Jesus.
- Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?**
- R.** Leaders today seem to be stuck in their way of doing things. They may not even realize that they need to switch something up.
- Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?**
- R.** Right now, Millennials are not a big part of the church but play a huge role in the body of Christ as a whole.
- Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.**
- R.** Usually, all you have to do is actually ask a Millennial to do something and they will do it.
- Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.**
- R.** Training
- Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.**
- R.** think most Millennials are longing for mentorship.
- Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?**
- R.** Helping others without needing anything in return.
- Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?**
- R.** I think it caters to Millennials.
- Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?**
- R.** By singing current gospel songs that are on the radio. Having a praise dance team.
- Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.**
- R.** The sermon is the most important part of service to me.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Including Millennials' opinions.

Lima's Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. When I was five, my grandma got me out of foster care. I got baptized at my papa's church. So being the First Lady's granddaughter, I had to go. Lol.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation means doing good by people. Repentance means confessing your sins to God. Godly living means believing in Jesus Christ.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. Keeping my mouth closed (to be humble), listening, praying, having faith, never doubting God.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Social media is huge for today's time in addition to texting.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. All examples given are good. Our youth at my original church would go on retreats and community outreach events.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Having a voice for sure. (The love of) Money is the root of all evil. I really believe they will do anything for it.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, reputation, family, work, money

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. In all honesty, I don't read it. I tried, but I did not understand.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. My Lord and Savior.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. Now, that I do not know.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. N/A

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. I personally like the old structure of the Church.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. N/A

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. More retreats. Some people do not know their callings or just need to be led.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. Teach them, lead them the correct way to help them understand.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. N/A

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. N/A

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. They need to preach/teach in a way for all ages to understand.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. Make it teachable and learnable.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. Alter prayer, worship, and the preached Word. I chose those things because a lot of people need/want prayer, but they may not know how to ask for it, who to go to, so the alter prayer pretty much extends a walkway to prayer. Worship gives each individual time with God in His house. Although, we can worship God anywhere. The preached

Word for me is hand and hand, meaning not every preached Word may have meaning, or we may not understand the main message. There has been a lot of times we sat in church and were just there, did not hear or understand. I want to.....

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. It's the understanding, outreach, preaching in a way for the youth/young adults to understand.

Dubai's Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ by my family since I have been going to Mt. Hebron MBC.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Using salvation repentance and godly living in that order.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Using overhead projector for Medicine Shop. Open store and make fliers.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Going to a daily planner weekly that is set up for the church.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Computer Apple and IBM 1990 Bit make a scratch

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. Faith is the name of the preacher's daughter. (Dad is the pastor). Wednesday is the prayer meeting. Has companies that are around the church.

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. It informs me how to deal with Ephesians.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. A Savior who died for my sins. That believe to live for eternal life for my friend is the Son of God.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. I merge through Word, baptism re-watch to be born again Jesus Christ for yourself.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. To represent taking the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus body by taking bread in the remembrance of His body and wine for His blood and from daily heaven.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. By the acting of the members of the church with the fellowship of the church wise.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. We don't have to worry about death because there is a heavenly body for us.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. Start joining members joining ministries doing job worth of service in church.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. Have fundraisers helping wash cars.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. When you are made to speak in front of the church with a microphone. To describe what faith you have through the Bible.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. Cause people, we what they learn at experience go time to work.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. All it is comped to like a pyramid in all ways. With email, communication, phones, computers, and a lot of different books of the Bible. To study with a group class 2021.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. How glorified the church is.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Falling when learning at the church and water.

Mecca's Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. My Papa (stepdad) Willie James Coleman Sr along with my mother. The church location was in Third Ward, Texas. And it's been since I was a kid. That I can remember.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. It means getting prepared for God to come back and then we live forever.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. Ephesian 6:1-4. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." My mother and father were the first 1st portion. My mother showed me.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Mostly some type of social media app or via text messaging.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. They may have to break it down in the type of English that they speak.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. 'Don't' really understand or understood but seems like money then family, etc.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, reputation, work, money

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. The Bible sounds just as a whispering of a voice of many waters.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. He is everything!!!

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. I cannot really say because the outside world sees us differently from us inside.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. It is Jesus' blood and the Bread He broke in the upper room. They even had one fish.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. It builds me up because I get so many blessings out of it.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. I don't know where they at. But He is always on the side of me.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. They would need a rapper to break it down in lyrics, such as myself. It is understood. No Lie!!!

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. We should have church functions like my Papa used to. Go out in godly war.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. When asked I bless the information I know and pages of the Good Book.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. The Word of the Lord gets better and better and my foundation keeps building.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. The Word is felt not just because it is my cousin, He and my Papa the only two that give me the keys to the Jeep

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. You cannot. It got to be in your heart.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. The Word is my favorite. I learn about Jesus. Over the past couple of Sundays, I have learned about the donkey still catching story...

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. Nothing at all. It got to be in their heart.

Paris' Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was introduced to Jesus Christ by my mom at the age of 5 at Riverbrook Baptist Church.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation to me is giving your life to God. Repentance is confessing where you have fallen short and asking God for forgiveness. Godly living is living your life to please God.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. Trust in God with all your heart and lean not to thine own understanding Proverbs 3:5-6.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Social media and texting.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Unconventional approaches

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. What I hold vital to my existence is family. Most Millennials would say money and status. The world we live in today revere all money.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, reputation, money, work

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. It informs and directs you by telling you to follow Christ and His teachings. So, you can be productive on a daily basis.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. My Lord and my Savior.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. They believe water baptism is washing away your sin and becoming new spiritually.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. Millennials today don't really know the importance of the Lord's Supper, but I take it very seriously. Growing up, my mom made sure we knew the importance of the Lord's Supper. She explained that communion was nothing to play with, and we had to consecrate ourselves before taking the Lord's Supper.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. Most Millennials view traditional leadership as old school and outdated.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. We are the future leaders of the church.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. N/A.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. One way leaders can equip Millennials to serve in church is to start them off in small roles. Roles like ushering or being a deacon.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. You must show the world that Christ is the right way of living and you must live in order to mentor it to the world.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. Read the word, be around people of strong faith.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. Yes, Bishop breaks it down so well that not only the elders can understand but Millennials also.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. Sing old songs with a twist, something like what Kanye West is doing. His choir sings old church songs but remixes them so both generations relate.

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. I believe when they acknowledge that they need help and give their life to God, it's a beautiful thing. Most people really don't know how hard it is. It takes courage and confidence. Every element is important from worshipping to the preached Word, even the giving segment.

The message may not always be in the preached Word but in the song the choir sing or the prayer that is being prayed during alter call.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. I cannot really speak for the rest of the Millennials on the question I believe the church is balanced.

Cali's Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I've been a follower of Christ since I was little. My parents introduced me to Him. Then I've been trying every day to grow closer to Him and be more like Him.

Q. What do salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. Salvation is being saved or delivered from sin. Repentance is admitting the sins you've committed. Godly living is spreading God's Word on a day-to-day basis and communicating/talking to Him as much as possible.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. The Lord's Prayer has always stuck with me along my Christian journey. Psalm 23 and John 3:16 have also stuck with me along my journey.

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Some appropriate methods of communication for me would be texting, calling, and social media.

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Some ways to connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for me would be small groups, activities, and educational programs.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. Having a voice, family, making money, and making an impact on those around me are some ideas that are vital to me.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. faith, family, reputation, money, work

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. The Bible informs and/or directs my decisions on a daily basis by giving me knowledge of how to get closer to God. So, every decision I make, I try to think about the effects of it and if it'll benefit me positively.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. The Person who died on the cross for me without hesitation, the One who forgives us of our many sins. He's a friend, the One who is there for me when I feel lonely or scared. He is there for me when no one else is.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. Water baptism symbolizes a soul being born again or being renewed. It shows that you are ready to change your ways and be born again.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. The Lord's Supper is important because it symbolizes Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us. He loves us so much that He sacrificed His life for us.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. I think my pastor does well at his job, but I think he should work on trying to connect with everyone in the church when he preaches.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. I think my job in the church is to sing praises to God's name because I love singing and I think that has something to do with what I'm going to be when I'm older.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. Motivation from someone with experience is a way Millennials can be encouraged to lead in ministry. The people you are around can also encourage you to lead in ministry.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. Leaders can equip Millennials to serve the church by motivating them, influencing them, and teaching them.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. Gospel mentors would be very helpful because they teach us so that eventually we can teach others. They can help us better understand the gospel and answer any questions we may have.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. Some way I feel like I'm growing in my faith is when I look for ways to better myself and when I'm praying God puts things on my heart to pray about, which makes me feel closer to Him.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. I don't think that the current morning worship service adequately caters to the needs of Millennials. I think it caters to the adults more. What can be improved is changing the messages to reach everyone including Millennials.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

R. Pastors and worship leaders can create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with the previous generations by getting us more involved in the Word. This means creating activities for us to do after church such as Bible Trivia, a few questions about the gospel to think about, then write down answers, etc. (e.g., Kahoot)

Q. What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.

R. The most meaningful elements of worship service to me are the preached Word, alter prayer, communion, and offering/giving. Although all the above are very meaningful, I chose these because they stand out to me, and I understand them.

Q. What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?

R. I don't think the church is lacking anything. I just think they could elaborate on a few things regarding the spiritual maturity of Millennials just so that we would be able to understand the gospel more.

Cairo's Survey Answers

Q. How were you introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Describe who, when, where how).

R. I was about ten or eleven when me and my family started going to church and that's where I was first introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our church home was called Belaire Missionary Baptist Church and was in Markham, Illinois. I believe my mother's friend invited her to church and the rest was history, we became believers.

Q. What does salvation, repentance, and godly living mean to you?

R. From my understanding, salvation is something that God has given you as a believer without you having to ask for it. It's His grace. Repentance on the other hand is essentially an apology to God and the acknowledgment that you have done something wrong. It is also an opportunity to wipe the slate clean and align yourself back under his will. Godly living means exactly that in my opinion, living under his will and doing things that will bring glory to his name.

Q. What biblical principles have you heard or read that stuck with you during your Christian journey? Explain. (e.g., trusting God, prayer, giving, perseverance, self-control, etc.)

R. I often associate my faith with the 10 commandments. They were set forth to mold us and shape us to be more like Him. Despite it being difficult at times, I think it's an essential part of our beliefs and it's important to enforce when you're aligning yourself under His will.

("I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have any strange gods before Me." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day." "Honor thy father and mother." "Thou shalt not kill." "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.")

Q. What are some appropriate methods of communication fitting for someone of your generation? Explain. (e.g., short soundbites, snapshots, texting, email, social media, etc.)

R. Social Media is pretty impactful these days, I would consider that a way to reach out outside of church. I would just make it an option and see how it goes by announcing it at service. Maybe you make an Instagram account or engage with the congregation that way. (Daily inspiration, church announcements, Student giveaway, Birthdays, etc.)

Q. How can spiritual leaders effectively connect with the uniqueness of Millennials for the sake of the gospel (e.g., small groups, activities, unconventional approaches, educational programs)?

R. Outside of the internet, I think bible study groups are pretty effective but make it fun. Learning something new should always be enjoyable, even if it's getting to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Q. What ideas do Millennials hold vital to their existence? Explain. (e.g., family, money, status, service, having a voice, etc.)

R. This is a hard question because of course everyone is going to have their own opinion of what they hold dearest to them. If I had to narrow it down to a few things I would say Millennials probably hold having a voice pretty vital to their existence as well as a sense of purpose. Money, status, and family are no brainers. You could travel through time and despite the era, everyone is going to cherish those three things for the most part. The way I believe this generation operates is off of respect. We have seen what it looks like to not have a voice in previous generations and collectively as a group we don't tolerate it. Examples of this can be seen in protests, toxic work environments, and family interactions.

Q. Please list these items in order of importance. (faith, reputation, work, money, family).

R. Faith, Family, Reputation, Work, Money

Q. How does the Bible inform or direct your decisions on a daily basis?

R. When I'm seeking guidance I either pray or reference the Bible for advice. 9/10 whatever you're going through someone in the Bible has gone through and that can provide clarity on the decisions you should make for your own life.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ to you?

R. My Lord and Savior, the one and true living God that died for my sins, so I may have a chance at eternity with the father. A gift to mankind.

Q. What are the ways Millennials understand the importance of water baptism in the life of the new believer?

R. It's symbolic, the water used isn't magic or anything like that but the gesture itself sends a message to those around you and most important to God that you've accepted Christ.

Q. According to Millennials, what is the significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of Christians? Explain.

R. I mean it depends, not all Millennials even know what the Lord's Supper is so it may mean nothing to them if they don't read and study the bible. The Millennials that are engaged at church who can follow probably just know the story. Personally, that's where it would stop for me, I don't know the true significance I guess other than the fact that Jesus was betrayed, and he knew it as he broke bread.

Q. How do Millennials view traditional leadership of the Church?

R. I can't speak for everyone, but I don't mind the traditional leadership at church I don't really have a problem with it. For me, if anything it's how the sermon is preached and

how the word is being taught that would make the biggest difference. Choosing Christ is optional though and I don't think you can't force people to do it. It has to be something they want for themselves no matter how exciting or fun you make service.

Q. Where do Millennials view themselves as part of the body of Christ?

R. The congregation. As a whole, I think we are still trying to convince ourselves to fully commit to Christ which may be the reason why there are a lot of us in leadership roles at church. So, unless you have a musical talent the bulk of us are probably just in the pews taking notes trying to stay engaged until we're ready for the next step.

Q. In what ways can Millennials be encouraged to lead in ministry? Explain.

R. This is the million-dollar question. If we had the answer, the lack of leadership in the black church from Millennials wouldn't be an issue. I believe it could stem from being forced to go at an early age or not buying what the preacher is selling due to the generational gap. Encouraging the opposite behavior is challenging and I'm not sure what the solution is. I think it has to be a desire from the individual or God has to put it on their hearts.

Q. In what ways can leaders equip Millennials to serve the church? Explain.

R. Being available. Life comes with so many hills and valleys, and I think just having a mentor or someone they can call and pray with or read the Bible with can work wonders in a young person's life. They may even take it upon themselves to be that guide for someone else down the line.

Q. How receptive are Millennials to mentorship with hopes of infiltrating the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Explain.

R. We're a receptive group I think and as long as we can use our gifts to share the gospel versus going door to door or something, then we would be open to it.

Q. What are some ways Millennials feel like they are growing in their faith?

R. Consistent prayer is something I feel is a good way to track your alignment with God and the progress you're making with your faith. I do daily devotionals and take notes at service as well. When you consult God and involve him in everything you start to get a sense of where you stand and the relationship you've developed.

Q. Do you feel the current Sunday morning worship experience adequately caters to the needs of Millennials? What do you feel could be improved upon moving forward?

R. Yes. The timing of service isn't an issue in my opinion plus most people have the weekends off. Moving forward I would say having meaningful dialogue and including Millennials in some of the planning at service may be beneficial for both sides.

Q. How can pastors and worship leaders create a worship experience that unifies Millennials with previous generations?

- R.** Preach something that both generations can identify with. Use examples, illustrations, and analogies that everyone can grasp.
- Q.** **What are the most meaningful elements of worship service to you? (e.g., the worship ministry, giving, the preached word, corporate worship, invitation, alter prayer, etc.) Explain.**
- R.** All of it is meaningful but the part of service I look forward to the most is receiving the word from our paster. Life can be so challenging sometimes, and I think it's important to gain encouragement through Bible stories or hear how Jesus delivered someone else through testimony. Those two are big for me because at the end of the day it fuels hope and give you the tools you need in this life to keep going.
- Q.** **What do you feel the church is lacking in cultivating spiritual maturity among Millennials?**
- R.** I don't know that's not a simple question to answer. Collectively I think traditional churches could make the church experience itself more exciting but, in my opinion, it has to be a choice the individual makes.

Conclusively, the researcher will describe the actions taken by the Millennials to resolve the issue or problem. It is his sincerest hope to clearly and concisely literate the testimony provided by each of the participants to usher positive change to the stated problem.

APPENDIX B**2021 Y.A.M.S. Leadership Workshop**

Minutes Taken by: Milan

Primary Investigator (PI): Min. Danny Clark IV

Y.A.M.S. in Attendance: Milan, Sophia, Cali, Paris, Dubai, Rome, Cairo, Lima, London, Berlin, Mecca

Opening Prayer: Min. Danny Clark IV

1. Opening/Welcome

[Recite a short Scripture, Short Prayer, Honor God, Good morning COF/MOBWC, Introduce self and honor Bishop Phillips and First Lady Phillips]

2. Praise & Worship

[2 songs. No Scripture reading or prayer in between]

["Jesus Is All" – Fred Hammond] ["There Is a Name" – Byron Cage]

3. Benevolence Offering: Removed and re-inserted into the main tithes and offering portion of service.

4. Responsive Reading: We will use the *NIV* Responsive Reading pamphlet on 3rd Sundays.

5. Announcements: Paris volunteered to read announcements on youth Sunday. However, all YAMS are welcome to volunteer in presenting the church announcements on the 3rd Sunday. Along with presenting church-wide announcements, he/she will inform the church of after-service rehearsals (e.g., choir rehearsals, praise dance rehearsals, and YAMS choir rehearsals).

6. **Pastor's Pen:** Remains the same. However, Bishop Phillips will address the four methods of giving during tithes & offering time [1. Cash; 2. Check; 3. Cash App; 4. The Venmo App is suggested by the Y.A.M.S. It allows individuals who do not possess cash or check and are under the age of 18 to give electronically.
7. **Offering:** Y.A.M.S. will serve as ushers on the 3rd Sunday. Instead of asking the congregants to stand and walk to the front of the sanctuary, three ushers will stand at the first pew (1) one usher will stand between the wall and the pews while the other (1) usher will stand in the middle aisle. The third usher will stand on the opposite side of the sanctuary between the wall and the pews. The usher standing closest to the wall will pass the offering tray and the congregants will place their tithes/offering/building fund/benevolence offering in the tray and pass it to their neighbor in the direction toward the usher in the aisle. The ushers will repeat the same process on each pew until the entire sanctuary is covered. Finally, the ushers will pass the trays to those in the pulpit and the choir stand. The minister will pray over the offering and deliver it to the back near the finance room.
8. **Choir Time:** The Millennials have submitted several songs that they would like to sing on Youth Sunday. To name a few: ["We Gon Be Alright" – Tye Tribbett] ["I Smile" – Kirk Franklin] [Everybody Clap Your Hands" – Joshua Troop] ["Victory" – Tye Tribbett] ["The Best is Yet Come" – Donald Lawrence] ["Glory to Glory to God" – Fred Hammond] ["Jesus Can Work It Out—Diane Williams] ["Revolution" – Kirk Franklin] ["Anything" – Kirk Franklin] ["Melodies From Heaven"—Kirk Franklin] ["The Blood Still Works" – Malcolm Williams] The remainder of songs presented will be submitted to the Minister of Music Sister Valla Phillips.
9. **Alter Prayer:** Whoever conducts alter prayer, he/she will provide (3) three ways to approach alter prayer: 1.) approach the pulpit by standing or kneeling upfront; 2.) at the congregant's seat either standing or sitting. There will be soft music and no singing during prayer. Following the prayer, the musicians can judge the audience for appropriate music volume.
10. **Sermon:** Shorter message with vivid contemporary illustrations.
11. **Invitation:** Coined as the "the most important portion of the worship service," because everyone is provided an opportunity to respond to the preaching and teaching of God's Word, the congregation will corporately sing a short song (acapella) in unison titled "Just Come" by Joe Pace.

During the song, a church leader will present two invitations: 1.) for the lost to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the ministers will pray The Sinner's Prayer and usher the new believer into the family of God. 2.) the second invitation is for those who have confessed that Jesus is Lord in the past but has backslidden away from God's presence or those who have become detached from a household of worship. They may have bounced from one church to another or

may have fled from their church home. The church leader of COF/MOBWC will confirm that the congregation desires to become a church family and Bishop D.J. Phillips would love to become their pastor.

12. Benediction: The church leader concludes, “May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Church Motto: The entire congregation in unison proclaims: “A church with a vision, filled with hope, leading to untold blessings, where God’s spirit meets the soul. Stay salty, stay lit, and stay sweet.”

Church leader at service concludes, “You are dismissed.”

Closing Prayer of Workshop: Dubai

IRB Approval Letter

April 27, 2021

Daniel Clark IV

IRB Approval FY20-21-660: Kingdom Millennials in Culture

Dear Daniel,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Yinong Fang

IRB Mentor

Liberty University