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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Engaging Millennials in Missions

Submitted to Dr. Brian Moulton

In fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of
the Doctor of Ministry Degree

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries

by

Annell James

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Mentor Name & Title

Reader Name & Title

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Annell James

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, May 1, 2022

Mentor: Dr. Brian Moulton

The millennial members of the Power of God Church have shown a lack of interest in participating in the local church's mission ministry. This lack of interest has caused the Missions Department and the church concern because fulfilling the mission of God is the mission of the church. The mission statement of the church is the focus of the ministry programs. Suppose the mission department creates a missions training program designed to focus on a technological learning style in which millennials thrive. Could it attract, involve, and engage millennials in future mission trips while educating them? It is this question that the research seeks to answer. Arriving at the answer is achieved by posing questions to millennials at the church via interviews and a focus group and searching books for authorial insight into their characteristics. This research will determine if conflicts within the church influenced the millennial's decision to participate. The findings from this research will be instrumental in informing and assisting churches in identifying potential problems and solutions relative to a generational group within the church.

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Abbreviations

DMIN *Doctor of Ministry*

LUSOD *Liberty University School of Divinity*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis project represents research to determine the steps needed to engage millennials in missional activity due to their diminished interest in missions. This study is completed in the context of the sending church, the Power of God Church.¹ Involving millennials in missions inside and outside of the United States is the church's goal. The research is designed to provide familiarity with the millennial population of the church by posing probing questions to understand their mindset concerning missions. The best way to attract millennials to the ministry of missions should be to use the direct approach. Gaining knowledge of what millennials feel regarding missions and the training that appeals to their learning style should be invaluable to the church in engaging them in missional activity.

Different and relevant methods will be employed to educate and train millennials in the church to continually kindle interest in missions. Training for missions will offer a relational and vibrant way for believers to grow in Christ and respond to Jesus' call to make disciples by spreading the gospel. Jesus' call to make disciples is not a request but a command. There should be an eagerness among this group of adults to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) by making disciples at home and abroad. The missions training program will be designed to encourage millennials, develop relationships, and reignite their eagerness by increasing self-confidence and trust through education and confidence-building exercises.

Ministry Context

The Power of God Church is in Galveston, Texas. There have been numerous pastors at the church prior to Pastor Stanley James being assigned as pastor on November 11, 2011. With a

¹ This name is being used as a pseudonym for the actual church to protect its anonymity.

new pastor came a new mission statement. The new mission statement reads: 'To become an equipping and sending church that converts this world for Jesus by taking the gospel to the four corners of the Earth.' The mission will come to fruition by forming a solid missions department in the church. The mission statement is accomplished by fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus spoke before ascending into Heaven. Jesus' mission became the church's mission when He ascended into Heaven, thereby making it the responsibility of the churches to fulfill by sending people into the world to spread the gospel to the lost.² The resurrected Jesus, by His authority, plainly gave the command to His followers on a mountain in Galilee to make disciples as told in Matt 28:18-20.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."³

Jesus gave this command to His post-resurrection followers and all the future disciples that would come. God sent Jesus into the world to save humankind, and Jesus sent His disciples into the world to present the gospel to all nations purposefully for their salvation. Jesus' disciples are called and sent to make disciples at home and abroad (Acts 1:8). It is not a request. It is a command to 'go'. It is a command for every disciple to make disciples. God puts a priority on seeking people who are lost. He left instructions to go into the 'highways and byways' (Matt 22:9) and invite people to come.

The term 'mission' is derived from the Latin word, *missio*, which means 'to send.'⁴ The biblical basis for missions begins with God, the father, sending God, the son, to save humankind

² R. C. Sproul, *What Is the Great Commission?* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2015), 43.

³ Matthew 28:18-20.

⁴ Sproul, *What Is the Great Commission?*, 39.

from their sins. Jesus, the son of God, was sent for man's redemption. The Scripture that is most quoted and conveys the love of God for everyone is found in John 3:16. The passage reads: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." God has given the world another chance to be reconciled back to Himself. Those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior will be forgiven of their sins. Jesus took the punishment that the sinner deserved. God loved the world so much that He gave His only son to become the sacrifice for the sins of all. Jesus loved the world so much that He gave His life and took man's punishment as He hung, bled, and died on the cross. Forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life have been given to the world as the ultimate gift for believing in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Every Christian church is aware of missions and usually has established some type of missions ministry within their church. The verb 'to send' is used multiple times in the New Testament. Christian churches find that the church's work is grounded in the ability to send disciples into the mission field to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The believer's life is deeply rooted in fulfilling the mission of God. Telling the world about the kingdom of God is included in the mission of every Christian, heralding to those who otherwise would not be introduced to God of the Bible. It is God who ultimately authorizes the church, the body of Christ, to 'go' into all the world with the good news, the gospel. Believers know that God's mission is sanctified, instituted, and mandated by God. Believers live the mission of God. Believers breathe the mission of God. The mission to share the Gospel is ingrained in the believer's spirit as is the truth of the Scriptures.

The Makeup of the Congregation

The Power of God Church is 98% Black and 2% Hispanic. Within the church, there has appeared a lack of missional activity among millennials. When the church members began to institute mission projects to reach the lost to fulfill the church's mission, the Baby Boomers and Generation X members responded readily by joining the outreach. Generationally, the church is composed of baby boomers, generation X, millennials, and generation Z. The baby boomers are faithful to the church and to fulfilling the mission of the church. Those who can no longer physically participate in missional activities support the church's mission by other means. They actively pray for those that travel to other parts of the United States and other countries. Their financial contributions to the missions department have proven to be an indispensable help to undergird the expenses of ongoing missions trips. Likewise, the congregants under the generation X category actively participate in the missions program. There is usually a representative portion from each group who physically take part in fulfilling the mission of God, except the millennial community within the church. It has become necessary for the missions department to dig deeper into the background of millennials to determine the best method to reach them.

The parents of the millennial generation are often referred to as 'helicopter parents' because of their incessant hovering over their children to shield them from any imaginable danger. The parents' focus revolved around making sure that they were not in harm's way. This focus extended to affording the child the best of everything: better living conditions, better schools, better jobs, and better experiences than were realized by their parents. Has this protective parenting style crippled millennials rather than prepared them? Have parents prepared

them for a life of uncertainty, journey, and service to God—our God who has expectations of His followers veritably laying down their very lives for His kingdom?⁵

The character of millennials has been given a less than stellar treatment, being described as moody and lethargic.⁶ A positive element of their character description includes their tendency toward enthusiasm and tech-savviness. Millennials are recognized as a generation distinctively suitable to start a new uprising of hope, equality, and justice around the globe.⁷ The millennials in the church initially showed interest in missions. However, over a five-year period, they began to display disinterest in missional activity. The millennials' lack of interest became a prime focus of the church because of the significant part that they will play in the future of the church. Millennials represent the church's future. The crucial question became, "How does the church engage millennials in missions?"

Geographical, Historical, and Demographic Information

The geographical, historical, and demographic information should be looked at to determine if either one of these factors into the attitude of the church's millennial population. The church is in Galveston, Texas. Galveston is a city in Galveston County located in the southeastern portion of Texas, U.S., 51 miles (82 km) southeast of Houston. It is a major deep-water port on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, at the northeast end of Galveston Island, extending along the Texas coast for about 30 miles (48 km), separating Galveston Bay and West Bay from the Gulf of Mexico.⁸

⁵ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 97.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Galveston, Texas, n.d. accessed January 15, 2012, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Galveston-Texas>.

The demographics of Galveston, Texas are reflected in a July 1, 2019, estimated population of 50,446. The percentage of Black inhabitants in Galveston is 16.9%.⁹ Galveston, Texas, is a coastal island established in 1836. The city boasts of being ethnically diverse and has 50 churches and two synagogues representing every major religious denomination.¹⁰ The church demographics represent 25% millennials, 25% Generation Z, and the remaining 50% are the baby boomers and Generation X.

The complete history of the Power of God Church is not known. The church's inception is rumored to date back a hundred years. It is known by this researcher that there were three pastors before 2011 when Pastor James arrived. All four pastors were affiliated with the same district of nine churches, which are incorporated under a jurisdiction of eighty-two churches and further united under an international church body which includes all jurisdictions worldwide. All the churches under the international umbrella adhere to the doctrine of the Great Commission. The church's national mission department has several outreach programs that target children and families nationwide: Family Life Campaign, programs during the summer (Saints Adventure Camp), empowerment, community, and service ministry programs (The Awakening Project), and youth empowerment, community, and service ministry programs (Youth on a Mission). The last two programs are established to take the gospel to the lost worldwide. They focus on remaining fervently committed to the Great Commission through radical, relevant, and innovative worldwide ministry. The geographic, historic, and demographic elements of the church do not

⁹ Quick Facts for Galveston, Tx, n.d., accessed January 25, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/galvestoncitytexas,galvestoncountytexas/PST045219>.

¹⁰ Galveston Places of Worship, n.d., accessed January 25, 2021, <https://www.galveston.com/galvestonliving/religion/>.

prove to have produced an effect that would be reflected in the millennials changed attitudes toward missional activity.

Relationships and Social Characteristics of the Subject Group

It is with a fervent passion that the Power of God Church commits itself to the ministry of missions. With a similar passion, the church seeks to involve millennials in missions. The North American young people were raised with a certain amount of entitlement, and level of protection from car seats to a multitude of safety measures designed to protect them. They are excellent problem solvers, which leads them to expect and depend on positive feedback for their accomplishments.¹¹

Millennials attended schools while growing up, working on ongoing group projects. It is with this expectant mindset that they navigate through life events. They want the opportunity to be groundbreaking and to collaborate, working well with relational leaders.¹² They would prefer to work beside a leader, within a group, where they can offer their skills and strategy to solve problems. Past generations, Gen Xers and baby boomers, have sought to concentrate on matters concerning provision, passion, and purpose. Millennials place the same three matters in the following order: passion, purpose, and provision. They prioritize the personal, the spiritual, and then the professional.¹³

Millennials are the generation born into the age of technology. They are tech-savvy, and operating computer systems is second nature to them. They have access to the information superhighway, the internet, to discover anything at the touch of a button. Merchandise is ordered

¹¹ Jim Raymo and Judy Raymo, *Millennials and Missions* (Colorado: William Carey Library, 2014), 20.

¹² Benjamin Windle, *8 Innovations to Leading Millennials* (Passaic, NJ: Thrive Co, 2019), 43.

¹³ Grant Skeldon and Casey Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 65.

online, academic classes, exercise classes, and food. Anything that can be purchased in person can be ordered online. Mostly everything has been at their fingertips from the day they were born. This information is valuable for churches because millennials understand technology intuitively and are willing to train older adults.¹⁴

In recent years, there has been a decline in church affiliation among millennials. Previous generations were also likely not to be affiliated with churches in their twenties. Still, millennials are now four times as likely to identify as unaffiliated young adults with any church.¹⁵ The church wants to establish a relationship with all generations, specifically millennials, where there appears to be a disconnect. There is a need to understand their psyche by entreating them with love and listening to their voice to start a dialogue that will lead to all church members coming together in one accord with one goal, to share the gospel.

People are now living longer than they did in 1900. During that year, people lived an average life span of forty-eight. Life expectancy at present is seventy-eight.¹⁶ The challenges ensue because so many generations live with differing characteristics. In the past, there were usually three generations living at any time. Today, for the first time in history, there are seven generations alive at the same time: greatest, silent, baby boomers, Generation X, millennials, Postmillennial/Generation Z, and alpha generation. People classified in the ‘greatest generation’ were born between 1901 and 1927. An abundance of history occurs over the process of one hundred years.

¹⁴ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Missions*, 19.

¹⁵ Windle, *8 Innovations to Leading Millennials*, 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

Some within the older generations think that millennials are entitled and lazy; some millennials think older people are overly critical.¹⁷ The truth is that the older and the younger generations need each other. The mission of God commands all believers to work together to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Together the generations can achieve this common goal.

Finances, People, Time, and Influence

Missions take a great deal of planning. It takes time to plan, collect finances, train, and carve out time for mission trips. The missions department of the church has already picked four members committed to missions with a heart for missions to serve as the President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Chaplin. In this mission department, this researcher will serve as President. Once the millennials have gone through training, one of the millennials will be chosen to serve on the Missions Board. These officers will steer the discussion and bring order to the organization. The mission president will set each meeting of the missions department. At these meetings, suggestions from the officers of the missions department and the members who want to become actively involved with the missions department will be heard. These meetings will serve as ‘brainstorming’ sessions to plan mission trips by deciding the necessary date, location, finances, and whether additional training is needed. In addition, the missions department will attempt to influence the people group being ministered. At the church, outreach has customarily been conducted within the city. After adding millennials to the missions group, the church will contemplate future mission trips.

Prayer and sufficient finances are crucial to the success of the missions department’s ability to spread the gospel. The church’s pastor has agreed to meet with the Power of God Missions Board to determine the amount the church has allocated for missions. The pastor will

¹⁷ Skeldon and Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 22.

consider giving the missions department priority funding status because this group is fulfilling the mission statement of God and the church. The mission department would normally follow this plan described; however, a much more significant problem is affecting the church's mission department.

Problem Presented

The problem is that the millennials in the Power of God Church in Galveston, Texas have exhibited a minimal interest in missions involvement. Millennials, ranging from ages 20 to 38 years old, have shown an enthused determination to support social issues. When approached at the church to join the missions ministry, their enthusiasm waned. The reality of the situation reflects a culture whose interest in missions ministry does not extend beyond Sunday morning service. Why has their interest diminished? How can their interest be regained? These questions will need to be answered to effectively engage millennials in missions.

Training is employed to improve knowledge and skills within the congregation. Millennials represent a generation geared toward technological learning. Through training, the millennial population of the church realize that the most significant social issue of all is living without the knowledge of Jesus. Ignoring the plight of those who are lost, those who do not know Jesus represents a great disservice to those who have not heard the gospel. Unlike worldly social issues, the case of the lost is not due to causes beyond their control. There is a quick resolution to the spiritual blindness that the lost are experiencing. Second Corinthians 4:4 states, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Actively seeking the lost and taking the gospel to them will help cure their lack of vision. Jesus told His followers, "The Son of Man

came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus found the lost and brought salvation to them. This act of seeking stirs the missions department into active service to fulfill its commission by locating those who do not know Jesus. This study is aimed at formulating a training program designed to engage millennials in missions by igniting the spark that will propel them into the mission field to spread the gospel.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMin action research project is to create a missions training program for millennials, promoting service, understanding, and communication in missions activities. It is proposed that if a missions training program is developed to meet millennials within the digital realm in which they thrive, then the missions department can use this program to enrich their doctrinal knowledge and attract them to the mission God left for all believers. It is essential to institute a training program that necessitates education in missional training. Millennials will be able to receive training in local and foreign missions to fulfill the mission of God. In addition, fellowship strengthened through training will aid in building relationships and increasing communication between the generations.

Basic Assumptions

This researcher presupposes that the lack of adequate training, lack of unity between the generations, and a lack of commitment to missional activity have been critical factors in stimulating the decline in interest in missional activity by the millennials in the church. Jesus left instructions with His disciples to go and spread the gospel throughout the world (Matt 28:16-20) in the Scripture passage known as the ‘Great Commission’. This commission is the command for missions for all disciples, past, and present.

This researcher assumes that if millennials have adequate training, they will respond with an increased interest in missions. The training program prepared to educate millennials must be comparable to their learning style. This generation has grown up in the technological age. They are tech-savvy and respond quickly to training modules rather than reading from a training book. Training that uses visual aids will not only give information on their level but will give them a picture of the need of the people that they will be traveling to serve. Video slides from past mission trips and an enthusiastic narrator, will provide an idea of what to expect on future mission trips. Most millennials are biblically illiterate, growing up with an anti-Christian worldview.¹⁸ Training for millennials should end the cycle of raising children with an anti-church view of the world.

Disunity among church members has been a concern for all church members. Disunity affects the whole attitude of the church, invading the mind and traveling to the soul. The baby boomers have negative thoughts of the millennials, and the millennials have negative opinions of the baby boomers. Baby boomers perceive millennials as lazy and possessing a feeling of entitlement. Self-righteous and judgmental are the adjectives used by millennials to describe baby boomers.¹⁹

One characteristic of Christians is love. It is a characteristic that God exhibited when He sent His son, Jesus, to take the punishment for the sins of humankind. This sacrificial act brought humankind back into fellowship with God. Stressing unity will be a focal point of the training by highlighting the love and fellowship between God and man. This same type of unity should be found between man and man. Encounter sessions stressing relational unity will be scheduled at

¹⁸ Windle, *8 Innovations to Leading Millennials*, 29.

¹⁹ Daniel Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call Millennials* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing), 2018, 43.

the church so that the generations can get to know each other and celebrate each other's differences. Detrimental qualities to the body of Christ are revealed and discussed through role-playing. It is crucial to the church body and the spiritual well-being of each Christian that unity is attained. It is critical to the furtherance of missions in the church to have Christians who are fulfilling the commission.

In addition, developing a commitment to missions and the church will help formulate a spirit of faithfulness to missional activity. Millennials are characteristically devoted to causes. They enthusiastically help those who suffer from social injustice, racism, poverty, abuse, food insecurity, and inadequate health care.²⁰ Training will point out the numerous times that God and Jesus helped those hungry, abused, sick, oppressed, and in need. Realizing that Jesus has continuously helped those in need, this researcher believes a spark of commitment to missions will emerge within the millennial's heart.

Definitions

It is important to give clarity to the words that are relative to missions and millennials. Millennials are the generation generally born between 1980 to 2000. Daniel Kramer says, "Millennials are undoubtedly the most infamous of the generations in America, known for being lazy and moody. On a positive note, millennials have shown to possess tendencies toward innate eagerness and proficiency when using technological equipment."²¹ Paul Taylor's research suggests that "Millennials are 'liberal, diverse (racially and culturally), tolerant, narcissistic, coddled, respectful, confident, and broke,' in his book *The Next America*."²²

²⁰ Jim and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 81.

²¹ Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call Millennials*, 44.

²² Joshua I. Mitchell, *Black Millennials and the Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2018), 16.

The *Missio Dei* (mission of God) pertains to the ‘sending of God’ (of His Son, the Holy Spirit, and His church) and the universal ‘reign of God’ (*basileia tou Theou*).²³ Joseph Boots says, “*Missio Dei*’s original intent was simply to communicate the concept that mission must be rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity because our mission flows from the dynamic inner movement of God himself in a personal relationship.”²⁴ God is missional and relational. Tim Davy said, “By missional, I follow Christopher Wright’s use of the term as simply an adjective denoting something that is related to or characterized by mission, or has the qualities, attributes or dynamics of mission.”²⁵ A missionary is a person who undertakes a religious mission. Religious missions are traditionally seen to promote Christianity, or another religion, in a foreign country.²⁶

R. C. Sproul states, “The word mission itself comes from the Latin verb *missio*, which means ‘to send.’ There is a sense in which the whole life of the church and the whole experience of the Christian are rooted ultimately in sending that is founded in the authority and the action of God Himself.”²⁷ God is the one who dictates the church’s activity in mission. Biblically, missions began when God sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem mankind. Present-day disciples of Jesus will continue the message of salvation to the lost upon this earth. Modern-day missionaries preach the gospel to the unsaved and bring needed services, including educational, medical, and supplies for agricultural use.

²³ Joseph Boot, *The Mission of God: A Manifesto of Hope for Society* (London: Wilberforce: Publications Ltd, 2016), Loc 625, Kindle.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Tim J. Davy, *The Book of Job and the Mission of God: A Missional Reading* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2020, 15.

²⁶ Jamie Domm, *Digital Discipleship & Evangelism* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2020), 17.

²⁷ R. C. Sproul, *What Is the Great Commission?*, (Sanford, Fl: Reformation Trust Publishing), 2015, 38.

God is relational as He calls Christians to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to people that do not know Him, resulting in new relationships as converts are added to the kingdom of God. The word gospel derives from the Old English *godspell*, meaning “good story” or “good message.”²⁸ As disciples ‘go’ to spread the gospel message, relationships are created with those that are newly discipled (Matt 28:18-20). The new disciples will, in like manner, and spread the gospel to those who do not know Jesus, creating new disciples. Nona Jones says, “Discipleship is the process of a more mature, disciplined person coming alongside a less experienced, less disciplined person to help them achieve a goal they have set for themselves. Discipleship compels us to go find them.”²⁹ Domm describes a disciple as “one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another, including showing genuine interest in people and seeking to fulfill their mental, physical, and spiritual needs before inviting them to follow Christ and adopt His principles.”³⁰

Limitations

The study’s major limitation revolves around the foundational theory of the characteristics of millennials. Information obtained by researching authors who have written books defining the attitudes of millennials toward people, church, work, family, and life in general is invaluable. These authors have provided a worldview that they believe is consistent with millennials. This could present a potential error since there may be an exception to the rule. The characteristics that have been used to describe millennials as a type may not be consistent with the attitudes and behavior of the group that is included in this study. Books, describing

²⁸ Sproul, *What Is the Great Commission?*, 3.

²⁹ Nona Jones, *From Social Media to Social Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 21.

³⁰ Domm, *Digital Discipleship & Evangelism*, 16.

millennials not affiliated with any church or leaving the church, are not conformable to the local church setting because they were written without missions as the focal point. It is conceivable that the program for attracting millennials to missional activity will be established but unforeseen circumstances during the program's process may impede its success.

Subjects who answer questionnaires to anticipate the type of response being sought by the researcher will introduce bias into the results. The relationship between the researcher and the subject could yield feedback that reflects the actual relationship between the two, whether bad or good. If the respondents answer questions with answers that are thought to be socially acceptable, instead of truthful, the results become distorted.

Delimitations

The major delimitation of the research is found in the subject group used for the study. The millennials that attend the church representing 25% of the church membership will be used in the study. Only this group will be given a survey questionnaire and attend a focus group with the researcher. The researcher chose the types of questions asked on the questionnaire and in the focus group.

The missions department takes short-term mission trips within the United States and foreign mission trips outside the United States. The study will include training for both types of mission trips to get an idea concerning the kind of trip that will be best suited for the subject. The researcher will design the training modules for this purpose.

Thesis Statement

If the church implements a missions training program for millennials, increased involvement in missional activity should result. The missions training program will utilize

technology to formulate a training program that sets specific goals. As a result of growing up in the digital age, this approach should retain the interest of millennials.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Millennials have lost interest in missional activity in the church. This generation is the future of the church³¹ and represents those in the future who will be sent locally and globally by God, to deliver the salvation message. God is a missional God who sends faithful believers to fulfill His mission to humankind. Chapter 2 covers the literature review, theological foundations, and theoretical foundations.

Literature Review

Millennials are the fastest growing generation during this time, born between years 1982 to 2000.³² Population figures for 2006 specify that millennials between 18 and 24 reached 28.2 million. This population figure has been projected to rise to 30 million by 2010.³³ As the twenty-first century emerged, a culture shift, and view of the church and its ministries became apparent. As a result, millennials have shown a decreasing interest in missions. This literature review covers millennials' generational characteristics and twenty-first-century worldview, the mission of God, the church, cultural issues, training, and engaging millennials in missional activity.

Characteristics of Millennials

Millennials, as young adults, have been labeled with several negative connotations. They have been described as needing positive reinforcement, overly confident, and lacking focus.³⁴ *Time* magazine describes millennials as the 'Me Me Me Generation,' and states that they must be lazier and more self-consumed than any other generation in the universe.

³¹ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, xiv.

³² *Ibid.*, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call Millennials*, 43.

Carolyn Wason disagrees and believes that millennials will be the ones to stop racism and global warming.³⁵ Even though there are mixed point of views concerning traits of millennials, she holds to a positive opinion of her generation.³⁶ Daniel Kramer agrees with the positive assessment by acknowledging that this generation has a penchant toward tech savviness and enthusiasm. He also believes that they could become the next generation around the world to uphold hope, equality, and justice, instead of being undervalued and judged wrongly.³⁷

This researcher believes that millennials are imaginative, adept, and optimistic concerning the world. They are relational and have an inbuilt desire for authenticity. Millennials have been born into a digital world, having direct access to unlimited information at their fingertips. It is a world that is lightning fast and allows them access to digital media from a place of familiarity. In the digital world of millennials, the internet is not merely a place to search for occasional information, it is where they live.

This generation finds themselves preparing for dinner, sitting around the table during a night out with their buddies, every person on their own phone, having no conversation, no one is speaking to the other person, they are alone together.³⁸ This researcher believes that this is the generation that craves the company of other humans sharing like interests without uttering a word. It is the characteristic of empathy that causes them to place themselves into another person's situation. It is this characteristic that will give them the compassion to become mission-minded and desire to minister to others.

³⁵ Andrew F. Bush and Carolyn C. Wason, *Millennials and the Mission of God: A Prophetic Dialogue* (Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call Millennials*, 44.

³⁸ Jones, *From Social Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship*, 12.

Twenty-First Century Worldview of Millennials

The twenty-first century ushered in the new worldviews of millennials. They entered the new century bringing with them a combination of strengths, weaknesses, and quirks.³⁹ Major life events have been experienced, by millennials, during key periods of development, including the events of September 11, 2001, which made a significant impression on their worldview. The sociological and cultural importance is excellent when considering the size of the millennial generation.

The ministry and mission of the evangelical church face huge opposition. Those oppositions consist of radical pluralism, aggressive secularism, political polarization, skepticism about religion, revisionist sexual ethics, and post-modern conceptions of truth.⁴⁰ The church has seen more than a decade of the twenty-first century. Millennials were born into a post-modern culture. They value science and reason, are suspicious of claims of authority concerning reality, and are drawn to fight for causes. In addition, millennials remind the world that women, people of color, and those that occupy the lower economic levels were left out of the information contained in textbooks.⁴¹ Their idea of authority is represented by the image of a white MBA holding male, wealthy, heterosexual and Christian. This becomes problematic for the church.⁴²

Progressively, millennials have grown up with an anti-Christian worldview, showing little or no concern for religious doctrines and principles. Alongside this background, stories from the Bible and parables are no longer familiar and religious songs are no longer sung. The basic knowledge of Jesus as a historical figure, not to mention God, is quickly becoming a

³⁹ Jim Raymo and Judy Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 8.

⁴⁰ Todd A. Allen, *Real Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 19.

⁴¹ Bush and Wason, *Millennials and the Mission of God: A Prophetic Dialogue*, 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*

non-entity in the understanding of those in the Western world.⁴³

The type of worldview that neglects to recognize God is leading the future of the church into an abyss of individualism. This worldview is permeating the fabric of American culture. Worldviews that strive to leave God out of the equation result in a world that is filled with hopeless thoughts built on personal opinions. This world determines whether something is good or evil solely on social constructs. If a specific culture says that something is right, then it is right or if the culture thinks it is wrong, then it is wrong.⁴⁴ In a culture that dismisses God, there can be no meter for truth. The souls of the lost are at stake. Those still attending church must be trained and engaged in missional activity.

The Church and Millennials

What is the fate of millennials in the church? The image of the evangelical church does not look good concerning the future. In North America, evangelical Christianity is dwindling, according to the data. Disturbing trends indicate that younger generations are leaving, in mass, without a plan to come back.⁴⁵ Even though there are roughly 70 percent of Americans who continue to identify as Christian, more than a third (35 percent) of millennials now describe themselves as being unaffiliated with any religion.⁴⁶ There are a growing number of millennials who do not attend any church. Considering millennials who have no affiliation with a church, a significant majority have a negative opinion of Christians. In viewing Christians, the millennials' views must be taken into consideration: 87 percent view Christians as judgmental; 85 percent

⁴³ Windle, *8 Innovations to Leading Millennials*, 29.

⁴⁴ David Platt, *Counter Culture* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2018), 5.

⁴⁵ Todd A. Allen, *Real Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 18.

⁴⁶ Skeldon and Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 65.

view Christians as hypocritical; 91 percent view Christians as anti-homosexual; and 70 percent view Christians as insensitive to others.⁴⁷ In American society, there is an alarming increase of individualism, that sets the stage for a decrease in religious belief as a body of believers, and assigns more importance to personal spirituality.⁴⁸ The environment of religious congregations are like isolated islets in an ever-rising globally-warmed sea of individualism and personal spirituality. The ‘we’ generation has morphed, arguably, into ‘generation me’.⁴⁹ The task of the church is to discover ways to bring the millennial generation back to the activity of the church.

When millennials leave the church, they offer as a reason for leaving: an institution that is sexist, abusive to children, speaks of love but remains exclusive, and dismisses science.⁵⁰ It should be noted that millennials are not rejecting Jesus. Millennials who stay in the church, but have decided to engage minimally in religious ministries, have shown that their spiritual beliefs are equivalent to previous generations. Similar proportions exist for millennials’ beliefs in life after death (75%), heaven (74%), miracles (78%), and the presence of angels and demons (67%). Curiously, millennials had a slightly higher belief in the existence of hell (62%) than other generations.⁵¹ A positive result of the postmodern movement is reflected in its impact on religion. It helped younger adults have the freedom to communicate their displeasure with those teachings that they viewed as prejudicial. There is an abundance of religious leaders who view

⁴⁷ Skeldon and Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 29.

⁴⁸ Martyn Percy, “Sketching a Shifting Landscape: Reflections on Emerging of Religion and Spirituality Among Millennials,” *Journal for the Study Spirituality* 92, no. 2 (2019): 167.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Bush and Wason, *Millennials and the Mission of God: A Prophetic Dialogue*, 2.

⁵¹ Richard D. Waters and Denise Seveck Bortree, “Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?”: The Impact of Responsiveness and Conflict on Millennials’ Relationship with Religious Institutions,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 11, no. 4 (2012): 202.

these cultural changes as the impetus that drives them to reconsider their methodology toward congregational interaction.⁵² The church must search for a way to institute love into the hearts and minds of all generations in the church. The church must operate with one mind toward one goal: missions.

Millennials who spend their lives online will not continue to be drawn by the church experience that is limited to a brick-and-mortar location. The developments will only get worse without a change in ministry to millennials.⁵³ The millennials are not known for planning ahead to ensure that their dreams and passions come to fruition; but they are nevertheless filled with hope, ideas, and zeal. Since they do not plan, they oftentimes become frustrated and disillusioned due to a credulous grasp of the will of God and essential steps are left to chance.⁵⁴ It is at this point that the guidance and training of seasoned adult leaders can seize the opportunity to train and build a relationship with millennials. This guidance and training begin with understanding the mission of God.

The Mission of God and Millennials

What is the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God? For the apostle Paul, the answer to that question is clear: the mission of God is to bring salvation to the world. The means of salvation is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, Israel's Messiah, and only faithful Lord of the world.⁵⁵ The classical doctrine on the *Missio Dei* as God the Father sending

⁵² Waters and Bortree, "Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?": The Impact of Responsiveness and Conflict on Millennials' Relationship with Religious Institutions", 202.

⁵³ Jones, *From Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship*, 12.

⁵⁴ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 19.

⁵⁵ Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2018), 23.

the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was extended to include yet another movement: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. The essential assumption here has to do with the exposed nature and purpose of God, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. Being mission-minded is a characteristic of God.⁵⁶ A compelling case for missions can be seen within the Bible. First, in fulfilling the Great Commission, given by Jesus in Matt 28:20, the basis for evangelism, missions, and church planting is established. Second, there are many groups of people globally who have not been introduced to Christ or the church. Third, the church in the West is needed as a collaborator with other countries in missions in reaching the lost in the world. Fourth, God is the one who gives authority to the believer for missions. Fifth, the direction mission groups are headed is toward the complete expression of the gospel which Millennials favor. This expression exhibits love of God, along with the declaration of the truth of His word.⁵⁷

Millennials are characteristically relational. God is relational and establishes relationships between himself, as Creator, and His creations. The work of missions consists of humans who are in relationship with God introducing yet other human beings to Him. God's purpose is relational. The calling in missions to all Christians is relational and training for missions is relational. Individuals, like God, must be energetic and engaged in relationships with others.

The church holds an important place in the larger picture of the mission of God. The church is the primary instrument of God, in this time-period, to bear witness to His kingdom. In describing the relationship of church and kingdom, the church is a foretaste of the

⁵⁶ Darrell L. Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 170, accessed November 3, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=4859126>.

⁵⁷ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 24.

kingdom of God, a sign, or instrument. Craig Ott says that the Kingdom of God does not only represent the Christian's future hope, but within the present age emerges as a present-day reality in its infant stage that has been conveyed in and through church's life and influence.⁵⁸ David Johannes' agrees that the Kingdom of God always has been a present reality being conceived as the saving rule in the lives of all mankind, by the graciousness of God. It must be remembered that humankind lives in the tension of knowing that the consummated Kingdom is a state of 'now' and 'not yet,'⁵⁹

Enoch Wan clarifies the role of the person following Jesus when he acknowledges that a disciple is a person following Jesus Christ, which can be considered as a state of being. This person is spiritually changed, which is a state of becoming more like Jesus and yearning to bring others to Jesus Christ with a Kingdom-orientation, representing a sense of belonging.⁶⁰ Through the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a possibility of experiencing a foretaste of the promised messianic age of peace. This is understood as the 'first installment' of future salvation (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14), through the ones who abide in Jesus, the prince of peace.⁶¹ Darrell L. Guder goes a step farther by adding that the '*missio ecclesiae*' (mission of the church) originates from *Missio Dei*. Therefore, mission occupies a place within the structure of God's plan of salvation and history of salvation.⁶²

⁵⁸ Craig Ott, *The Church on Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 31.

⁵⁹ David Joannes, *The Mind of a Missionary: What Global Kingdom Workers Tell Us About Thriving on Mission Today* (Prescott, AZ: Within Reach Global, 2020), 235.

⁶⁰ Enoch Wan and Mark Hedinger, *Relational Missionary Training* (Skyforest, CA: Urban Loft Publishers, 2017), 11.

⁶¹ Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, 162.

⁶² Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*, 169.

All Christians agree upon the centrality of the gospel. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16: “It is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jews, then to the Gentile.”⁶³ God sent His Son to reconcile the universe through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the basis and the goal of mission. The gospel is the ‘good news,’ explaining that Jesus Christ, being a gift from God to all humankind, paid the penalty for humankind’s sins so that they might be reconciled to God by having faith in Christ alone. David Platt views the gospel as the lifeblood of the Christian, and that it lays the groundwork for countering culture. For when we honestly believe the gospel, Christians understand that it constrains them to face social issues in the culture around us. It is the gospel that creates contention between Christians and the surrounding culture.⁶⁴

Cultural Issues and Millennials

The gospel is taken through the arm of missions to the United States and abroad. When taking the gospel to other nations, missions is taken to various people groups. These groups are linked by a common self-identity, along with customs, history, patterns, and practices based on two primary characteristics: ethnicity and language.⁶⁵ There is no doubt that the nations still need Jesus because there are 2.3 billion Christians within a world of 8 billion people.⁶⁶

There is a fantastic collection of diverse people groups spread across the world. Modern globalization and human migration have brought various peoples into contact with one another. This connection with different people groups reflects the foreshadowing described in the Old

⁶³ David Stark, *Reaching Millennials: Proven Methods for Engaging a Younger Generation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2016), 88.

⁶⁴ Platt, *Counter Culture*, 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁶⁶ Jones, *From Social Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship*, 31.

Testament, and through the apostle Paul in the New Testament referencing the revelation of mystery of the gospel. This revelation revealed that God would include the Gentiles equally in the Kingdom of God.⁶⁷

Engaging and Training Millennials for Missional Activity

Church leaders should actively seek relationships with millennial church members. There is a viable approach for engaging Protestant millennials. It consists of five responses: pursue, empathize, validate, self-disclose, and probe.⁶⁸ Millennials enjoy authentic, real-life stories that illustrate God's grace, protection, provision, and power. Millennials can be motivated to become involved in missions activity by sharing real-life stories in addition to presenting a solid biblical foundation. Missions will create an awareness of God's work in the world.⁶⁹

Reaching millennials involves telling the story of values, cultures, and the why behind what is done. Millennials have similar interests. These interests typically revolve around service to the community, giving back to the community, desiring to be missionaries without including the 'God-part' of the equation, as helping those in need by given aid worldwide.⁷⁰ Seasoned leaders of the church should seek to build relationships and establish communication filled with respect and love. When correction appears to be necessary church leaders should refrain from exhibiting a mode of lecturing, giving ultimatums (i.e., demands for agreement), and seeming condescending.⁷¹ Leaders need to be flexible when working with millennials. They should be

⁶⁷ Ott, *The Church on Mission*, 79.

⁶⁸ Keith A. Puffer, "Protestant Millennials, Religious Doubt & the Local Church." *Religions* 9, no. 8 (2018): 20, 12.

⁶⁹ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 23.

⁷⁰ Stark, *Reaching Millennials: Proven Methods for Engaging a Younger Generation*, 56.

⁷¹ Puffer, "Protestant Millennials, Religious Doubt & the Local Church", 12.

willing to make alterations to their knowledge base or religious habits and learn to rely on God to work in and through millennials' lives separate from their wisdom.⁷²

Millennials have matured with the digital age. They are tech savvy and have procured the knowledge for technology without setting foot in a classroom. Working with technology is second nature to millennials. They are genuine Digital Natives, absorbed in a lifestyle of wearable tech, online communities, social media, and streaming music and videos. They are the ones who design most of the virtual reality apps, engineering AI (artificial intelligence), and redefine how humans manage everyday work and play.⁷³

The church's mission department will use the digital platform to train millennials for mission. In turn, they will learn to disciple others. Discipleship is more than the transferring of information. Millennials can access content from an internet site. Discipling must include sharing the gospel with your life.⁷⁴ The process of discipling is a process of repetition. Disciples will equip new followers through the modes of teaching, nurturing, or providing an example to emulate and to grow in grace towards spiritual maturity. The new disciples will begin the process again to disciple others.⁷⁵ Millennials will be disciples who reach others physically and digitally through mission activity. A *digital disciple* accepts and helps in the dissemination of the teaching of Christ by using digital tools in a digital space. However, digital discipleship services can expand to the physical world, and is not only limited to digital areas. The physical and digital

⁷² Puffer, "Protestant Millennials, Religious Doubt & the Local Church", 15.

⁷³ Benjamin Windle, *8 Innovations to Leading Millennials*, 33.

⁷⁴ Skeldon and Waller, *The Passion Generation: The Seemingly Reckless, Definitely Disruptive, but Far from Hopeless Millennials*, 65.

⁷⁵ Wan and Hedinger, *Relational Missionary Training*, 129.

realms should often intersect through the services offered.⁷⁶ Young people, not afraid to operate newly developed technologies, will be instrumental in cross-cultural mission strategy as part of the emerging global, digital world.⁷⁷ As reflected in the review of literature, millennials are a growing population of young people considered by examining their generational characteristics, the twenty-first century worldview of millennials, the mission of God, the church, cultural issues, training and engaging millennials in an effort to establish relationships and methods for training them for missional activities.

⁷⁶ Domm, *Digital Discipleship & Evangelism*, 15.

⁷⁷ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 19.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundation for missions is grounded in the Word of God. The Word of God was written by men but divinely inspired by God. Mission theology explains God's heart and reasoning and defines His mission's underlying principle. It conveys what God is doing in this world and why he is doing it.⁷⁸ This knowledge enables missionaries to understand the purpose of God and helps them to understand the will of God for their lives. The justification of this research is to ascertain the theological foundation for missions, to be utilized as part of a training program designed to engage millennials in mission activity. This theological approach is to inform millennials of an organized methodology of instructional missions training to solicit a positive response. Christopher Wright says, “Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.”⁷⁹ God is a missional God. The church is also missional. Craig Van Gelder notes “God’s Spirit forms a people and leads them from bondage to freedom. The people of Israel are called in their common life to witness to God’s ordering of human community to the nations. In Jesus, God comes in the flesh to share the place of humanity and embody God’s reign, reconciling us to God.”⁸⁰ Leonidas A. Johnson says, “Beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation, book after book and Scripture after Scripture yields abundant evidence that God loves us and offers us hope that springs forth as an antidote to the poison called sin. In fact, in

⁷⁸ Gailyn Van Rheen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 63.

⁷⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, 22-23.

⁸⁰ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2018), 63.

one way or another, every book of the Bible renders testimony of God's heart for the peoples of the world."⁸¹

The Old Testament marks the beginning of the revelation of God's purpose as it is incorporated through the entirety of the Bible. The mission of God, *Missio Dei*, is demonstrated through the people which God has chosen. His people are called and sent on a mission to spread His redemption message. The entire history of mankind points to God's redemptive purposes as it is developed throughout the Bible. Michael Lawrence states that the history of redemption is a "single story, a coherent narrative of the redemptive acts of God"⁸² Wright further adds, "It is not so much the case that God has a mission for His church in the world, as that God has a church for His mission in the world."⁸³ Embedded within this story is the theme of God's faithful love for the people He created, who have rejected God and His love repeatedly.

God is the designer of the mission. Through His infinite wisdom, He knew that man would sin and would need a Savior. Jesus, the Son of God, was willing to die for sinners. He became the mission's message. Understanding the flow of the mission of God would be to acknowledge that God is the originator of the mission, Christ was brought to earth in human form to perform the mission, the Holy Spirit gives power to the mission, the church carries the mission, and it is at this point that the world hears the mission.⁸⁴ God's revelation has been progressively disclosed through a historical timeline. It is the church's responsibility to let the world know God's mission.

⁸¹ Richard Noble, *On Mission Together: Integrating Missions into the Local Church* (Beaver Falls, PA: Falls City Press, 2019), Loc 379, Kindle.

⁸² Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: The Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 27.

⁸³ Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, 24.

⁸⁴ Van Rhee, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, 70.

In the Beginning

Each person has a purpose. Discovering the purpose for one's life, brings a deeper understanding of God's purposes. Everyone in the Bible had a purpose established by God. Within the Gospel of Matthew, the Great Commission was given by Jesus as one of the last important commands given to His disciples. The instructions were clear, 'preach the gospel' and 'make disciples' of all nations. This command was also given for all future disciples of Jesus Christ. These were explicitly strong instructions to 'go' and perform mission activity, but this was not the first time. God's purpose for the body of believers has been interwoven throughout the pages to the Old Testament, continuing into the New Testament. The believer's purpose is the same as God's purpose. Richard Noble says "Embedded within this story is the theme of God's faithful love for the people He created, who have rejected God and His love repeatedly."⁸⁵ By nature, the church is missional, driven by the love of God to worship Him, follow Jesus and tell the world about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit so that there are more inhabitants added to the kingdom of God, awaiting the triumphant return of Jesus.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, along with everything that exists. Jesus and the Holy Spirit were present during creation. Genesis 1:2 pictures the Holy Spirit moving upon the waters. There is a state of chaos, filled with emptiness, wasteness, and darkness.⁸⁶ God began His creative process by speaking light to dispel the darkness and order to dispel the chaos. John 1:1 clarifies where Jesus was at the time of creation. Using the exact words used in Genesis 1:1, John says that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

⁸⁵ Noble, *On Mission Together: Integrating Missions into the Local Church*, Loc 393.

⁸⁶ Allen P. Ross, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1985), 28.

God. He was in the beginning with God.” John continues by saying that Jesus, the Word, caused everything to come into being. There is not one thing that exists that did not have its inception apart from Jesus. He is the light that illuminates and dismisses the darkness (John 1:3-5). The account of God in Exodus notes His act of redeeming Israel by destroying the Egyptian forces of chaos. Allen Ross says, “The prophets and the apostles saw here a paradigm of God’s redemptive activities. Ultimately, He who caused light to shine out of darkness made His light shine in the hearts of believers (2 Cor 4:6) so that they become new creations” (2 Cor 5:17).⁸⁷

In God’s act of creation, on the sixth day, God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed His breath of life into a lifeless body of dust, thereby making him a living person (Gen. 2:7). God analyzed His act of creation and remarked that it was good (Gen 1:31). Eve, deceived by the lies of Satan, succumbed to his persuasion resulting in her disobedience to God. She consumed fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17), inviting Adam to join her in her disobedience. Craig Ott states, “Creation itself is impacted by the results of human rebellion against God’s reign, and the consequences are devastating” (Gen 3).⁸⁸ This sin shattered their relationship with God. Sin continued to mar their relationship as it became fragmented resulting in them blaming others for their transgressions and justifying themselves (Gen 3:11-14). It was at this point that they needed a Redeemer. God knew before the foundation of the world that man would need a Savior. Many years would pass before God sent His Son wrapped in human flesh to save the world from its sins. The God who would save mankind from its sins is Jesus Christ.

⁸⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 32.

⁸⁸ Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2010), Loc 577, Kindle Edition.

Engaging millennials in missions involves seeking instruction and discernment from God's inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient word. It is imperative to understand what the Scriptures have to say about missions to obtain a more exceptional knowledge and understanding of God's love for missions. Cultivating a theological framework of missions aids in strengthening one's foundation for understanding the mission of God, missions, and the role of the church in the international plan of God.⁸⁹ This can be accomplished by connecting those working in missions completely to the story of God which is found in the Bible.

There are certain beliefs that the church holds regarding the Bible. As Jesus' followers, the Bible is believed to be inerrant.⁹⁰ It is without error and contains the truth in all that it upholds. In addition, the Bible is accepted as the word of God in written form. God speaks to us through His word. Therefore, the Bible is the essential reason for the faith, teaching, and spiritual life of the Church. The followers of Jesus believe that God's word is sufficient. It comprises everything the Church needs to know to fulfill the requirements for salvation as one is led to the mercy and redemption of God, and it discloses all the guidelines needed regarding living a life filled with righteousness.

God's Promises of Redemption

The first promise of a coming Redeemer would benefit the entire human race. Genesis 3:15, the *protoevangelium*, was directed to the serpent by God concerning the ongoing struggle between the seeds of the serpent and the seeds of the woman. God's proclamation was witnessed by Adam and Eve during their darkest hour.⁹¹ The seed of the woman and the seed of Satan

⁸⁹ Noble, *On Mission Together: Integrating Missions into the Local Church*, Loc 379.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1972), 85.

would be enemies from the date that God deemed it to be. God announced that an unending struggle between the forces of Satan and mankind would occur. Allen Ross notes, “It would be between Satan and the woman, and their respective offspring or ‘seeds.’ The ‘offspring’ of the woman was Cain, then all humanity at large, and then Christ and those collectively in Him, and the ‘offspring’ of the serpent includes demons and anyone serving his kingdom of darkness, those whose ‘father’ is the devil (John 8:44). Satan would cripple mankind (you will strike at his heel), but the Seed, Christ, would deliver the fatal blow (He will crush your head).”⁹²

The *Missio dei* begins with God. The foundation of the mission of God is God Himself. Sin separates man from God. At the inception of the first sin in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were separated from God. Adam was created from the dust of the ground and Eve was created from Adam’s rib. The first two humans were created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28) and created from the dust of the ground (Gen 3:5-6). They should have lived their lives as reflections of God. However, the commission of sin kept them from becoming perfect images. The free will God gave them at creation enabled them to choose between good and evil. Adam and Eve were given instructions indicating that they could eat from any tree in the garden, but they could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The deceptive serpent contradicted what God had told them would happen if they ate from the tree. The tempter, Satan, also cast doubt over the character of God, implying that God was jealous and seeking to keep Adam and Eve from their destiny.⁹³ Satan not only told Eve that she would not die from eating the fruit, but also that she would have the ability to ‘become like God, knowing good and evil’

⁹² Ross, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 33.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

after eating the fruit from the forbidden tree (3:4-5). Every word from Satan proved to be a lie. None of the promises made to Eve were kept.

Once Eve persuaded Adam to eat from the tree, they both became aware of the sin that had been committed. They hid because they were ashamed. God came looking for Adam and Eve saying, “Where are you?” (Gen.3:9). God was not requesting their location. He already knew where they were because He is omniscient, and He knew what they had done. God was looking for them to renew their relationship with Him that had been severed because of the sin. God is a missionary God. To this day, He continues to ask people that are alienated from Him, “Where are you?”⁹⁴ It is this missionary spirit which causes God to want to reunite with those who have been separated from Him. The mission of God which is undertaken by the church is to diligently look for all of those which remain separated from Him to offer them salvation which will bring them back into fellowship with Him.

There are themes traveling through the pages of the Bible offering insight into God’s mission, including the glory of God, creation, sin, covenant, law, the kingdom of God, the people of God, love and grace, the Gospel and mission. It should be noted that missions are the essence of the church’s existence, the response to its participation in God’s plan, its participation in the coming of the kingdom of God and the governing framework within which all biblical interpretation takes place. The theology of the kingdom of God is not separate from *Missio Dei* but it permeates and enriches its meaning.⁹⁵ The God who calls and sends also reigns.

Genesis 8 begins with this hopeful statement: “But God remembered Noah....” Everyone upon the earth was dead except for Noah and his family. God remembering Noah, and not

⁹⁴ Van Rheezenen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, 24.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

destroying Him and his family, was an indication of God's mercy being extended once again to mankind. God had caused it to rain for forty days and nights (Gen 7:4). Once the water completely receded (Gen 8:16), God began to rebuild the kinship relationship between humanity and the whole of creation (Gen 9). God's desire to redeem mankind will continue through the ages until creation begins to understand its full potential in the Kingdom of God.

In Genesis 12, God called Abram to go from one culture to another. Abram (later Abraham) served as the original missionary. Paul Borthwick says, "God promises him that through his faith and dependence blessings will come to him. Moreover, all nations will be blessed because of this promise."⁹⁶ Verses 1-3 recorded God's call to Abram, and verses 4-9 recorded Abram's obedience. The mission of God has consistently been a sending program. God chose Abram to send to a new land. He addressed Abraham in the land of the Chaldeans and told him that he would become the father of a great nation. God formed a covenant with Abraham solidifying the blessings that would come to him and to his descendants.

Mark Boda states, "God's redemption as story is a theological construction is clear from the opening line of the Decalogue: "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. 20:2).⁹⁷ God is proclaiming that He is the God of Israel, linking this to the historical redemption of God's act of salvation of Israel from Egypt. His declaration does not just underscore the theological nature of the redemptive narrative but also implies its vital core. God had visited Moses amid the wilderness of the Midianites and sent him back to Pharaoh with a simple message. The message to Pharaoh was to let the people of Israel go. The plan had been conceived by God long before the message was delivered. God persuaded Pharaoh with His

⁹⁶ Paul Borthwick, *Missions: God's Heart for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 12.

⁹⁷ Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*, 16.

miracles and wonders to not hinder the Israelites from leaving Egypt. It was God who sent His children out of Egypt, delivering them from the bondage of Pharaoh. He sent His children out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, and when they were disobedient to the covenant that He had made with them, He sent the prophets to warn them. When that did not bring them around, He sent His Son.⁹⁸

In Isaiah 2, one of the key themes revealed to Isaiah was an eschatological vision of the nations coming to Zion to learn and worship from the Lord:⁹⁹

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isa 2:2–3)

The prophets began to tell the story of God's relationship with the nations. God will judge the nations and they will be accountable to Him. The nations will be drawn to the God who is exalted above all other false gods and idols. In addition, the kingdom of God will be established in peace.¹⁰⁰

Within the New Testament Scriptures written by Paul, he indicates that God's mission consists of Him instituting His plan to free those who believe from the power of sin and death. Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." The fullness of this deliverance is found in a future reality in which we confidently hope. The freedom which is nothing less than new creation promised prophetically: "that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of

⁹⁸ R. C. Sproul, *What Is the Great Commission?* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2015), 41.

⁹⁹ Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, Loc 809.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Loc 817.

the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). Even though this is a freedom we hope for, God is at the present time freeing mankind from the bondage of sin and death by means of Jesus Christ, through the sin-defeating and life-giving death and resurrection of his Son.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.” The Jewish people knew that God loved all the children of Israel. But this verse points out that God’s love extends to everyone regardless of race, sex, nationality, or creed. God loves a world that is inherently evil; but God had a plan to fulfill His mission. Jesus gave His life to save the world from their sins.

The world is so wicked that John elsewhere forbids Christians to love it or anything in it (1 John 2:15-17). These words do not indicate a contradiction between prohibiting Christians to not love a world that God does love. Christians should not love the world with the selfish love of involvement; God loves the world with the self-less, valuable love of redemption.¹⁰¹

The Scriptures have normally been read messianically. From the book of Genesis to the end of Revelation, Jesus has been the focal point. He is the center of the Bible’s theme. He is the one who was prophesied in the Old Testament. The prophetic fulfillment was realized in the New Testament. In the book of Genesis, amid God delivering His word of judgment to the serpent, Adam, and Eve concerning their disobedience, He gave them a ray of hope. In Genesis 3:15, God foreshadowed Jesus as the coming Messiah who would deliver sinful man from the clutches of Satan.

After the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus spoke to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). He ventured beyond His messianic centering of the Old Testament Scriptures to their missional thrust as well. Then he cleared their minds so they could comprehend the Scriptures.

¹⁰¹ D. A. Carson, *Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013), np.

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:45-47).¹⁰² This Scripture gives clear emphasis that the Bible should be read not only messianically but also missionally. All disciples and all future disciples must read the word of God messianically and missionally. The Messiah was the promised one who would embody in his own person the identity and mission of Israel, as their representative, King, Leader, and Savior.¹⁰³ The mission of Israel, as descendants of Abraham and sharing in the covenantal blessings, was to become the witness to the Gentiles of the redemptive power of God.

A redemption purpose was seen in the accounts of Noah, Abraham (Gen 12) and throughout the Law, the History, the Writings, and the Prophets. In the New Testament, redemption was seen with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. God’s mission began to expand to the Gentiles when Jewish Christians scattered because of persecution. Those scattered began to spread the Gospel to the inhabitants at Antioch.¹⁰⁴ They told the story of a loving, holy God who called people out of history to participate in His mission. These people became reconciled back to God because they accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Christ had died for their sins and rose for their justification. Luke confirms this was the work of God: “The Lord’s hand was with them, and a considerable number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:21). The conclusion of the story occurs with the triumphant return of Jesus Christ, the definitive

¹⁰² Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 29.

¹⁰³ Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Van Rheenen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, 22.

formation of His kingdom, the decisive defeat of evil, and the universal confession that Christ is Lord.¹⁰⁵

Theoretical Foundations

This research seeks to develop a training program for short-term missions by employing a theoretical foundation as the framework to inform millennials of an organized instructional methodology with direct practical involvement. The instructional session of missions training will be developed by utilizing this research that has examined the history of missions as told in the Old and New Testaments. It is necessary to procure an amount of information necessary to fulfill the requirements for doctrinal missions training to yield the anticipated results. In addition, physical role playing will be included to arouse feelings of affection and a desire to develop relationships with instructors, mission workers, fellow trainees, and those in need. This should yield a knowledge of the church's position in the mission of God and a love for the communities that are still untouched by the gospel. The training is designed to ignite a spark of interest in millennials to compel them to develop a hunger and thirst to become active in missions.

God created the heavens and the earth. The account of the creation is written in the book of Genesis, the book of beginnings. Moses, under the divine movement of God, penned the Pentateuch of which Genesis was the first book. The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) was the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, and the Bible is the Word of God. It is the Word of God that is the foundation for the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. Genesis is filled with myriad firsts. The Bible begins with the account of the first man, first woman, first encounter with Satan, and the first sin. God gave the first command to the man and woman. He instructed them to freely eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden, except from the

¹⁰⁵ Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, Loc 584.

fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them that if they ate from the tree, they would surely die. Eve found herself in a veritable web of deception. She was deceived by Satan who appeared in the guise of an unassuming serpent into thinking that God was lying; however, it was in fact Satan who was lying and distorting the truth. Adam and Eve both disobeyed God, ate the fruit, and the death that they immediately suffered was spiritual rather than physical. They were no longer in fellowship with God.

If Adam, the first man, and Eve, the first woman, had never committed the first sin, there would be no separation from God. They would live in a state of peace and harmony with God. There would be no need for man to perform blood sacrifices of animals for the forgiveness of sins because there would have been no commission of sin. The ultimate sacrifice, Jesus, would not have to leave heaven to become wrapped in flesh to endure ridicule and cruel punishment, to give His life by crucifixion, painfully and slowly, on the cross to cover the penalty for man's act of sin.

God's Plan

God did not create Adam and Eve as mindless automatons. God created them with a free will, with the ability to make decisions to accept or reject God, and with the ability to obey or disobey God. When He spoke the world into existence, God knew that man would not be obedient and would sin. A plan was formulated by God to redeem sinful man back into fellowship with Himself. This was the rightful position that man should have been in from the beginning before sin separated him from God. Before the foundation of the world, God knew that mankind would need a Savior.

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and

spotless, *the blood* of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Pet 17-21)

Engaging Millennials

Millennials are the generation that are instrumental in the activities of the present-day church and will become the leaders of the future church. It is important to place a keen focus on this millennial culture. They should become an overriding priority. Craig Van Gelder says, “Questions of the church’s identity and faithful engagement with a changing cultural context have become paramount. What was built up over the past several hundred years—and what churches have been trying to revise, renew, or restructure for the past fifty years—is now coming apart at the seams.”¹⁰⁶

In recent years, millennials have become adults. Many have left the church because they have been dissatisfied with the doctrine of the church and the attitude of the baby boomers who they feel are too judgmental. Most millennials do not have a vast knowledge of the church or the doctrine of the church. They rely on bits, pieces, and things that they have heard or seen on social media. Kinnamen states, “Millions of young adults leave active involvement in church as they exit their teen years. Some never return, while others live indefinitely at the margins of the faith community, attempting to define their own spirituality. Some return to robust engagement with an established church, while some remain faithful through the transition from adolescence to adulthood and beyond.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2018), 38.

¹⁰⁷ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 19.

It is the truth of the doctrine of missions, in the Word of God, that should draw Millennials back to missional activity. Once the reason God felt compelled to save the lost has been understood, the urgency of missional activity will be realized. God has from the beginning devised a plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. God declared it to Satan, the serpent, Eve, and Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:15). Prophets prophesied in the Old Testament, and, at the appointed time, the prophesies were fulfilled in the New Testament. Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming Messiah stating that a virgin would give birth to a son and would name him Immanuel or 'Lord with us' (Gen 7:14).

Jesus, the Messiah, grew up among the Israelites and lived among them with a specific purpose: to save mankind from their sins. Matthew 1:21-22 confirms Isaiah's prophecy, "She will give birth to a son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins" (Isa 7:14). Now all this took place so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: "Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they shall name Him Immanuel, which translated means, 'God with us.'"

The Cause for Salvation

Millennials question the way things have always been done in the church. Daniel Kramer suggests, "there is a desire for change. There is a millennial generation that doesn't like what they're seeing but doesn't quite know what the solution is."¹⁰⁸ It is at this point that bringing the mission of God to millennials would give them a clear plan of action. This is a generation that loves causes. They want to tackle social injustice and they believe in fighting for what needs to be changed. They are a generation filled with hope and belief that the world can be changed. The English writer Samuel Johnson said, "There lurks, perhaps, in every human heart a desire of

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call to Millennials* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2018), 37.

distinction, which inclines every man to hope, and then to believe that nature has given himself something peculiar to himself.”¹⁰⁹ It is this attitude of confidence that will cultivate a champion for missions, once properly trained with a theological foundation.

The cause that needs to be fought for is the cause for mankind’s eternal existence. The cause is to prevent mankind from dying in their sins by persuading them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. God does not want anyone to suffer the consequences of a sin filled life: eternal torment and separation from God. The apostle Peter says, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9). God did not want anyone to be eternally lost for their sins. The penalty for sin is death but the gift of God is life eternal. God loved the world so much that He devised a way for man to be reconciled back to Himself and receive eternal life by giving His only Son to become a sacrifice and suffer the penalty of death instead of mankind (John 3:16). The plan to reconcile God with man requires that the church become involved in the mission of God to take the Gospel to the lost.

This generation needs to be taught the gospel straight from the Bible. The ‘feel good’ message that is being taught to them in church is not helping them to fight against the individualism, consumerism, and materialism that comes with the evils of this world. David Kinnaman says “We need to rediscover the Bible’s grand narrative and teach an all-encompassing, multi-dimensional gospel. By showing how the life and death of Christ brings reconciliation with God, neighbor, creation, and self, young adults will hear the call to live as a prophetic sign of God’s coming kingdom.”¹¹⁰ It is the responsibility of the church to learn as

¹⁰⁹ Kramer, *Generation of Change: A Call to Millennials*, 47.

¹¹⁰ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 216.

much as possible about millennials. Getting information about millennials is great; getting information directly from them is greater. Relationships must be forged as the church undertakes the task to engage millennials by having first-hand knowledge of their feelings concerning the church and missions.

Focus on Forging Relationships to Strengthen Missions

There should be a focus on the relationship of this changing culture of millennials and the church. It is time for congregations to take a long hard look at the direction that the church and the missions department is headed. The church is an extension of God to continue His mission here on earth. Missions cannot continue if the importance of it is not taught within the walls of the church. The importance of missions should be taught according to the Word of God. The Great Commission is the instruction in the New Testament given by Jesus to His disciples and future disciples to share the gospel with all nations, commanding all disciples to make disciples and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matt 28:16-20).

The congregation of the church should begin to seriously examine the relationship of the church and the cultural context that is changing as the world changes. Millennials do not have the same characteristics as the baby boomers. None of the generations have characteristics exactly alike. The identity of the church must be re-examined. It is within this context that the church must examine relationships amongst the congregation to bring the generations together under a common goal: to become a missionary church again to fulfill God's mission. The goal is to focus on training that will enlighten the millennial population of the church through missional education which will further seek to produce concord among all generations resulting in missional activity which flourishes within the church.

Craig Van Gelder stated, “Focusing primarily on the church’s mission without a larger discernment of the church’s identity with respect to God’s mission will get us nowhere. Instead, we need to place God’s mission as lived out with respect to a holistic gospel into dialogue with the realities of contemporary culture.”¹¹¹ Incorporating a theological foundation into the missions training program for millennials will ensure that a crucial element of the training program is not neglected.

¹¹¹ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission*, 340.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The Power of God Church is a church which seeks to minister to the lost. The church members strive to be in the will of God and to do the will of God. Knowing that God is a missionary God powers the church's belief that God wants the same thing for the church. This was exemplified as Jesus addressed the disciples prior to His heavenly departure. Jesus had vital information to convey to His disciples before He ascended into Heaven. The disciples, bewildered and perplexed, listened to Jesus when He gave His important set of instructions for all future disciples. In Mark 16:15-19, the words of Jesus are recorded as saying,

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

The emphasis for Jesus' words was on missional activity. The missional activity of a missional God was Jesus' focus as He began His earthly mission. Jesus encouraged the disciples to continue the work that He had started. A list of three commands was provided by Jesus, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teach them to follow all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19, 20).

This chapter will establish a strategy to investigate why millennials of the Power of God Church have chosen to no longer participate with the outreach programs instituted by the missions department. The project will seek to understand the mindset of the millennial community within the local church through research and one-on-one contact with the individual members of the church. The future outlook of the missions department depends on having the millennial community on board with the vision and mission of the church. They are the future of

the church and are parents to the next generation who will be tasked with taking the mission of God to the lost. The intervention design and implementation design will seek to answer questions that relate to the absence of the millennial population of the Power of God Church within the missions department and establish a viable training plan to engage millennials in missional activity. The first, the intervention design, will detail the joint mission of God and the church, the research design used to collect data, and the target population. The second, the implementation design, will detail the action plans used to execute the intervention design.

Purpose

It was of uttermost importance for the disciples to know the will of God and for the church to know that their place was to fulfill the mission of God. Craig Van Gelder writes, “To be a disciple is to be a witness; following Jesus means being sent to show forth God’s love to those who do not know it, in the power of the Spirit” (Jn. 20:21–23).¹¹² C.J.H. Wright says, “Mission is an extension and amplification of God’s very being. Missional theology builds on the understanding that God is Trinity and missional. Mission is participation in the life of God.”¹¹³ Mission is to become synonymous with the compelling sending and being sent that the Holy Spirit did in the past. This is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit’s role in the missional sequence. The church must become actively engaged in God’s mission to the world. Training millennials will equip them to go out and become engaged in missions. Missions is relational. It involves a relationship between God, the church, and the community being reached, whether that community is across town or across the world. Wan states that “In our normal

¹¹² Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission*, 345.

¹¹³ C.J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2010, 211.

ministry training, we very often start by thinking of a human messenger and a human audience. The two people are linked together by what we might call simple active ministry.”¹¹⁴ It is this active ministry that will become the focal point of the mission training designed to attract the millennial community in the church. The expected result of the training that is provided by the missions department is to ignite a spiritual fire commitment for the mission of God.

The church is a multi-generational institution. The mission activity of the church must revamp the way it reaches out to those that do not know the Lord. When determining the direction for the missions department in churches, Gelder says “We believe that a more expansive, more intentional, more diverse, and deeper missiological dialogue about faithful Christian witness and service in contemporary America is vital for churches in the twenty-first century.”¹¹⁵ It is with this particular mindset that the church chooses to continue the mission of God as established from the beginning. The mission of the church should retain the original fervor that God has for lost souls. As the centuries pass, it becomes evident that the missiological basis for the current church does not change. The focus is to meet the needs of those in need both locally and abroad. Knowing that the need for God has always been the foremost need for those that do not know Him, the gospel should be presented first. Most people that do not know God are not aware that they need Him. It is the love of God that compels the church to live out the Great Commission. This need is fulfilled while extending the love of God, the knowledge of God, and the provision of God to those who have not come to the knowledge of His truth. Training the millennials in the church prepares them for service in His kingdom. Knowing God has brought redemption to many lost souls throughout the course of history, through the ministry

¹¹⁴ Wan and Hedinger. *Relational Missionary Training*, 128.

¹¹⁵ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission*, 341.

of the church, encourages the church to become even more steadfast in its mission. The believer must be reminded that the mission of God is eternally linked with the mission of each believer in the church.

A Mission for Every Believer

God's mission has been woven throughout the continuous history of mankind. The plan of God was established from before the foundation of the world. His plan to redeem mankind from their sins came with the provision for a savior who was first foretold in Genesis 3:15 stating, "And I will make enemies of you and the woman, and of your offspring and her descendant; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel." This prophecy given by God was spoken after Satan used his art of cunning to persuade Eve to disbelieve and, ultimately, disobey God and consume the forbidden fruit. Once Adam joined Eve in eating the fruit, the first sin was committed because of disobedience. This preceded their confrontation by God because of their willingness to disobey His command. All people born in the future would be born in sin and shaped in iniquity (Ps 51:5). Our redemption came via the perfect plan of our creator, God. First Peter 1:18-21 states that, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you." Inheriting the sin nature from our forefathers requires the need of a savior. Sin created a great divide between God and man. There was no device at man's disposal that had the ability to reunite the two. It was only through the love of God that a plan was devised to bring man back into fellowship with Himself.

Those who believe in Christ, as Lord and Savior, will be saved and inherit eternal life, living in the presence of the Godhead for all eternity. The gift of eternal life is freely given to all who believe. To believe in Christ, one must first have knowledge of who Christ is. It is at this juncture; the church rises to answer its calling. God's mission is ongoing in all of creation. The church has a particular vocation to bear witness to that mission as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's restoration of all things in Christ through the power of the Spirit.¹¹⁶ God's future for the many nations of believers involves the healing and bringing together of that which had been torn apart by the ravages of sin and, but by the grace of God, is being reconciled back to God. This world appears to be in a state of hopelessness for those who have not heard the gospel. Believers know that the promises of God in His Word are being fulfilled. Van Gelder says that "Claiming these promises and sharing them meaningfully with neighbors in an America that desperately needs sources of hope and healing is the church's central work at this moment." These promises are shared with not only Americans but with all nations of the world.

The church's mission includes taking a message of hope to a world that feels like it is surrounded by despair and evil. During the period of conducting this research, as mentioned earlier, the world has been overwhelmed by the pandemic, COVID-19 (the virus). The effects of the virus were far reaching as it quickly became a pandemic in the early months of 2020. It was responsible for 74,176,403 cases in the United States. Out of that number, the number of people that have died total 898,680. The worldwide statistics reflected 411,619,321 cases and 5,831,561 deaths.¹¹⁷ These numbers are significantly higher because all the cases were not reported.

¹¹⁶ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission*, 400.

¹¹⁷ Coronavirus Cases, February 12, 2022, accessed February 13, 2022, www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/.

The mission of God to bring the gospel has become a crucial ministry to the lost. This is the ministry that the local church is compelled to undertake. There are numerous people who have been affected by the COVID-19 virus and lost hope. There are many that are downtrodden, many that have lost loved ones, their livelihoods resulting in lost homes, transportation, and their current lifestyle. In a time when there is no such thing as normality, people need to become aware of God and the message of His kingdom and the hope that He gives during times of dire circumstances. It is this great task that God has commissioned His church to oversee. It is for this great responsibility entrusted to the church that the Power of God Church seeks to discover the reasons for the absence of its millennial community for the purpose of bringing the millennials back to the mission department to fulfill its mission.

Intervention Design

The intervention (plan) will begin by stating the problem as perceived by this researcher. The problem that has been observed by the mission department will be resolved by using action research. Action research is used to solve a specific problem. The specific problem of the Power of God Church has been observed to be a lack of participation in missional activity by the age group which is represented as millennials. The mission department is concerned about living God's purpose for and through His people. God's purpose entails sending the church to fulfill His mission of salvation. David Bosch states, "Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission not vice versa."¹¹⁸

The Power of God Church views God as love and feels united with Him, willingly participating in the movement of God's love toward mankind. A crucial component of this

¹¹⁸ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 389.

movement reflects the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Savior who died for the sins of all, enabling those that receive Him to be freed from sin and to regain fellowship with God. This is the ministry of reconciliation of the Power of God Church.

The problem will be researched by using qualitative methods. Tim Sensing quotes Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln as editors of *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, stating that “Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter...meaning that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them....”¹¹⁹ This method enables the researcher to study and collect information by using a varying array of practical materials: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, life experiences, and interactions.

The intervention is designed to generate a change in the problem. The process of Instituting an intervention should lead to a successful outcome. The success lies in the collaboration of the researcher and the participant. As previously stated, one of the characteristics of millennials (participants) is to feel like they have contributed to the goal of the project. They are relational and becoming a part of the plan allows the participants to feel that they have been involved in the process employed to solve the problem. The training will be designed to help millennials feel like they are contributing to the mission plan from the beginning of the training throughout the outreach experience.

¹¹⁹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 57.

The Believer's Buy-In

God has a mission that He has commended to the church to complete. Completing this mission should become foremost in the mind of the body of Christ. The church cannot conduct this mission without the assistance of those who have not only become believers in Christ but believers in the mission of the church, which is the mission of God. Once a person becomes a believer in Christ, it should be difficult to separate the believer from God's mission. It is this mission that helps to identify the person as a believer. The believer should recognize that the Great Commission is the command that was left by Jesus, one with all authority, to all converts throughout time as a mandate to be fulfilled.

The body of Christ has been bestowed with gifts for ministry by God. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12). God has equipped the church with those ones that will complete the work of dispensing the gospel and building up the church by bringing in new converts and edifying current members. Stearns writes, "We are told that God has distributed the gifts throughout the Church to equip His people to do kingdom work."¹²⁰ It is within this kingdom work that the mission department seeks to incorporate the millennial community of the Power of God Church.

The task of the missions department and its president becomes making a case for instituting a revival of missions in the local church. Knowing that the millennials in the church will become the leaders of the church, it is of utmost importance that they become the object of attention when focusing on the mission of God. The main concern of this project is to actively

¹²⁰ Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel: The Answer that Changed My Life and Might Just Change the World*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010, 264.

engage the millennial community in the mission of the church and to convey that the church's mission is the same as God's mission.

As part of the training that is planned for those millennials that decide to reengage in the mission of the Power of God Church, the commission that was given over 2000 years ago will be reviewed. Fearing retaliation from the Jewish authorities, the disciples hid behind closed doors. Standing in their midst before their eyes, Jesus became visible. The 'Great Commission' as it is called because of its weighty importance in the life of the believer was given by Jesus to His disciples as He appeared after His resurrection. The disciples were reminded by Jesus that they were being sent by Him in the same manner that the Father had sent Him. The disciples were instructed to stay in Jerusalem to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 5). The disciples still did not fully understand the reason for Jesus' death and resurrection. They asked Jesus if He would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time. Jesus informed them that only the Father knows when the kingdom would come. However, Jesus told them the Holy Spirit would endow with the power they needed to become witnesses throughout the earth (Acts 1:6-8). It was to them and future generations that Jesus commanded to become witnesses.

Their purpose would be to spread the gospel, to take a message of forgiveness, peace, love, mercy, and grace to all men that would accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior so that their sins might be forgiven (John 20:19, 20-23). In the same manner that Jesus gave them the power to declare this message, He gives that same power to the believer today. God's mission has not changed. Van Gelder and Zscheile state that "what is required is a distinct set of questions about how the church is gifted and called to participate in God's mission in its time and place."

The beginning point for the church is to acknowledge that the church's very nature is missionary. This is a new day with new methods for reaching the lost. It is further stated by Van

Gelder that “it requires paying critical attention to the cultural context and the faithful translation of the gospel to speak meaningfully in the vernacular of that context. It involves ongoing discernment of the Spirit’s leadership as the church contextualizes its ministry all over again in its relationship with its neighbors.”¹²¹ The church has an obligation to develop a theologically based missiology. Making sure that the missions department has a theological base will greatly strengthen the mental attitude of those making the decision to become committed to upholding the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus left to the believers (2 Cor 5:18). God is the source of the local church’s missional activity.

The Mission or Mission Field

Oswald J. Smith has been quoted as saying “the mission of the church is missions.”¹²² He is also quoted as saying, "Every person is either a missionary or a mission field." His meaning is that every believer ought to be a missionary to make God known to others and every unsaved person is a mission field to get to know God by receiving the ministrations.

It is with this a missionary approach that the Power of God Church attempts to rectify the problem of the absent millennial population in the mission department of the church. How can the church engage millennials in missional activity even though they have shown minimal interest in missions? The engagement can occur through a technologically- and relationally based training program focused on the mission field. This researcher believes using this type of training methodology can compel millennials to come to the decision to increase their involvement in the church’s missional activities.

¹²¹ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participation in God's Mission*, 339-340.

¹²² 100 Mottos and Ministry Quotes, [www. http://harvestministry.org/100-mission-mottos](http://harvestministry.org/100-mission-mottos), accessed 4/6/2022.

Tasks

The mission department has felt the effects of the millennial communities 'missing in action' status in the church's mission outreach. It was becoming a dire situation. The mission statement of the church was written to align itself with the mission of God. At this point, it has been difficult to fulfill the church's mission which would fulfill God's mission. The situation made it necessary to formulate a list of things that needed to occur before the mission department could become operational again.

A list was composed beginning with the most important things that needed to be accomplished. The list beginning with the goal "To Engage Millennials in Active Missions," including the following:

- Obtain permission from the Pastor to conduct the research study with the purpose of determining a method to entice millennials to become active again in the missions department.
- Obtain approval from the Internal Review Board of Liberty University.
- Post and hand out flyers announcing the meeting at the church to discuss the upcoming research study to aid the mission department's membership drive. The invitation will specifically seek to recruit a specific age group.
- Select 10 names, as being representative of the millennial community, based on the answers from the screening questionnaire, answered by the group of millennials that indicated an interest in becoming participants in the study.
- Send out and receive the signed consent forms via email to and from potential candidates.
- Contact all participants to notify them of the timeline for the Zoom session for the questionnaire and the focus group.
- The timeline will consist of a questionnaire filled out by the participants and the time for the focus group. The interview and the focus group will be conducted using the Zoom platform scheduled on different days and times.

Pastor's Permission

The pastor of the Power of God Church will have to grant the researcher permission to conduct a research study within the local church. The pastor will be given the details of the mission department's attendance records as it relates to the ability to plan mission trips. The records will show that the millennial community's attendance has drastically dropped off since 2015. There has been a 75% reduction in the attendance of the millennials that who take part in the mission services. The pastor will be given the information for the project indicating that the researcher is a graduate student working on a doctorate. The purpose of the study is to perform research with the hope of creating a missions training program for the millennials in the local church which will be aimed at engaging them in missional activities. This will be a way to attract millennials back to missions. The study is directed at promoting interest in missional activities. It is proposed that if a missions training program is developed to meet millennials within the digital realm in which they thrive, then seasoned members in the church will be able to institute a training program that will promote education and interest in missions. The pastor has agreed to allow the study to be conducted within the local church.

Institutional Review Board of Liberty University Approval

The Institutional Review Board application was completed and submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for any corrections. Along with the application, the following documents were forwarded to the IRB through their website: participant research flyer, pastor permission request, participant recruitment, participant consent, questionnaire questions, and the focus group questions. The IRB sent all corrections to the investigator. The corrections were completed and returned to the IRB. Approval from the IRB was received by the principal investigator on July 7, 2021.

Initial Meeting with the Potential Participants

Participant research flyers distributed to millennials at the general information meeting after church. The flyer noted that there were two requirements to become part of the research study:

- Are you 25 to 40 years of age?
- Do you want to become instrumental in revitalizing the missions department?

At this meeting, the researcher (also known as the mission president of the Power of God Church) conveyed the importance of the *Missio Dei*. The importance of God's mission was communicated by reiterating the significance of the command that Jesus left for all disciples to follow. God fulfills His mission by sending the church into the world to spread the gospel. With so great a mission ahead, the church needs the millennial community as a committed community of believers. This researcher would stress to the millennial community that their importance to the missional activity of the local church and their involvement in the project will be crucial to encouraging others to join the missions team. Having more millennials join the missions team is a big step toward connecting with future disciples for the kingdom of God. The screening questionnaire to determine which millennials will participate in the study will be:

- Are you within the ages of 20 to 38?
- Do you believe that hospitality should be practiced as a Christian?
- Do you believe that hospitality will give you the opportunity to supply the needs for the needy, including ministering the gospel?
- Do you believe that an individual should be trained before participating in short-term missions ministry?
- If selected for this research, are you willing to complete a 10-minute questionnaire

relating to millennial views of missions and missions training via a Zoom platform?

- If selected for this research, are you willing to participate in a focus group (40 minutes via a Zoom platform) relating to millennial views of missions and missions training?
- If selected for this research, are you willing to participate in an 8-hour training session via 2 Zoom sessions) for short-term missions?

Interview Questions

To understand the way the stakeholder group (millennials) perceives the problem, the interview questionnaire will include questions concerning their perceptions. The questions asked will be like the following: Do you perceive a problem as relates to missional activity in the church? For whom does it become a problem? How do you perceive the problem in detail? What is your level of interest in missional activity: very interested, interested, slightly uninterested, or not interested? Are there any underlying issues that relate to the initial problem? The millennials will complete the questionnaires verbally as read by the researcher. The researcher will review the questionnaires to determine the millennials' mindset concerning missions prior to the focus group session. The researcher will compile relevant subsidiary questions from each participant's questions to use with the focus group. The questions asked as part of the interview:

- What is your general understanding of missions ministry?
- Do you think that the church has an established missions outreach in the church? If so, can you describe the outreach program?
- In your opinion, what would constitute an ideal missions outreach program?
- What tools do you think the church needs to effectively do mission outreach?
- Why do you think there has been a decline in the attendance of millennials in the church?

- How would you explain the importance of having millennials involved in mission
- What knowledge do you think you would need to effectively minister to people on mission trips?
- What type of missions training would you like to see implemented in the church?
- Once you have been adequately trained, would you feel comfortable going on short missions trips?
- What do you think is the advantage of going on short missions trips?
- Which way, in your opinion, can growth and attendance of the millennials in the church improve?
- In your opinion, what recommendations do you have for the church that will increase interest in the missions department?
- Some Millennials claim that the Church is disconnected and irrelevant to today's culture, and thus cannot relate to their generation in a meaningful way. Do you agree with this statement? How would you describe the relationship that the Church has with Millennials today?

Measuring Change

Measuring change within the participant group sessions will be ascertained based on the data that is gained from the questionnaires and the focus groups. The sessions will be recorded to be able to revisit the answers and interactions between the participants. A journal will be kept to write down thoughts while listening to the answers. The journal will be used to log recurrent themes as they emerge during the conversations. The recordings will be kept on a USB drive and kept in a secure safe for three years, along with the information contained in the notebook and the actual questionnaires and consent forms that have been procured from the participants. The

researcher is the only one that will have access to this information. The results of this research will be used to engage millennials in the missions department and to foster more activity in missions outreach.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The Action Plan: Interviews and Focus Group

The action plan will begin by gathering with the focus group. This group will require ten members to participate. Choosing 10 (ten) members will allow for any unexpected dropouts or nonparticipation. If training is a viable option, it will be opened to all millennials in the church once the study is completed. The researcher is expecting at least five to ten participants to become part of the training program. If the training is successful, the training will be offered to new participants every six months.

The researcher will schedule a meeting with the selected participants who will become part of those who will answer the questionnaire and take part in the focus group. The focus group will use the Zoom platform for the meeting since it occurred during a time of global pandemic. The coronavirus (Covid-19) is the infectious disease that has gripped the world. Due to the devastatingly deadly nature of the disease, countries were shut down for months. This led the researcher to decide to conduct the focus group online as opposed to an in-person assembly.

The plan is for the project to begin two weeks after IRB has given approval. The beginning date for the questionnaire would be July 21, 2022. Once the questionnaire is returned and reviewed, an invitation will be given to the 10 millennials inviting their participation in the focus group to determine how to create an interest in missions. Once the ten focus group participants have been confirmed, a date and time will be given to participate in the Zoom conference. Utilizing Zoom will allow all participants to come together at the same time without

being concerned about social distancing and wearing masks. The questionnaires will be scheduled for individual participants and the focus group will be composed of all the participants at the same scheduled time. Beginning July 21, the participants will be scheduled as three participants on July 21 at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 in the evening. The subsequent two days will repeat the schedule for July 22 and July 23. On July 24, the last participant will be scheduled at 6:00 pm. The focus group will meet on the following Saturday at 10:00 am. The researcher will send the log in information for Zoom to all the participants at least three days in advance in case there are scheduling conflicts.

The researcher will begin by greeting the participants and establishing a relaxed atmosphere conducive to yielding truthful responses. The researcher will ask the participants for permission to record the conversations. A recording will yield a more precise way to secure and retain the information collected for later review. The researcher and participants belong to the same church and should be acquainted with each other. The results of the initial information gathering will be discussed to provide the participant's clarification of the problem, along with any subsidiary questions revealed by the questionnaire. The researcher will encourage the participants to share thoughts concerning the direction that the missions department should head to fulfill the mission of God. The focus group will culminate by reviewing the action plan proposed by the missions department to fulfill the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matt. 28:18-20 and the mission statement of the church. After the focus group is completed, the researcher will review the data given by the participants using the qualitative coding research method to identify relations between words and phrases.

The research facilitator will conduct the focus group. The ground rules will be given to all participants. The participants will be given the following instructions:

- The focus group will be video recorded for the purpose of revisiting the participant's answers to the questions.
- Each participant will be instructed to express their true feelings in their own manner when answering the questions.
- Each question will be shown on Zoom's shared screen and will be read by the research facilitator.
- Each question will be answered within five minutes by each participant. After each participant has been given an opportunity to answer, the group will discuss the answers. A group response will be recorded also. The researcher facilitator will ensure that the group stays on focus.

The researcher will ask the following focus group question

- Imagine that you are the Missions president, and you could design the millennial missions department. How would you design the age specific missions department to be the most effective?
- Which people groups do you feel would benefit from the church's missional activities? Should the church concentrate on short term mission trips within this country, or do you feel that short term trips are a waste of time? United States or another country?
- Are there any generational differences in the church that you consider an obstacle to you becoming active in the missions department? Please explain.
- Do you think that collaborating with the missions department can cause you to find purpose in your life?

- Do you feel that the church in general fails to connect with millennials in a meaningful way? If you agree, how can the church and millennials find common ground in relation to this topic?

The researcher will maintain a reflective journal which should prove vital in reminding the researcher of the experiences of the focus group session. The journal should help the researcher to reflect on questions, answers, and comments suggested by the participants. After the focus group session and the training sessions, the events of the session should be mentally reviewed in thoughtful examination and written down to retain a copy for future review.

The Action Plan: Training

The training portion of the action plan will consist of implementing a training outline, role-playing, and short videos. The training outline will begin with presenting a six-question framework to explain the dimensions of the missions training. The training outline will be given to the focus group to determine which aspects of the training appear to be more viable for the millennial learning style. Those questions will begin with these words— why, what, how, who, where, and when.¹²³ The answers will be discussed among the participants. An overview of the history of missions in the Bible as it relates to the *Missio Dei* (the mission of God) will be covered. The training will include special emphasis placed on covering Jesus' purpose for coming into the world, the Great Commission, and the mission statement of the Power of God Church. Role-playing will be used to provide a platform for the participants to become competent and comfortable when ministering to strangers. Videos of prior mission trips will be shown to acclimate the participants with the people group that the mission department will be

¹²³ Ernest Stringer, *Action Research*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), 169.

visiting. There will be a question-and-answer session interspersed throughout the training. The training outline will be implemented to spark conversation and ideas for suggestions for training conducive to the learning style of millennials.

The Power of God Church Missions Training Outline

The purpose of The Power of God Church missions training is ‘to equip millennials for going on mission with God.’ The expected outcome of the training is to become one on mission with God by equipping millennials to effectively and confidently go out and fulfill the mission of God. The mission is accomplished by spreading the good news of the kingdom as living examples of prayer, hospitality, teaching, blessing, fellowship, and social justice.

Training Outline

One on Mission with God

I. Overview of Missions

A. History of the *Missio Dei* (mission of God)

1. What is the mission of God?
2. Why study the mission of God?
3. How is the mission of God conveyed?
4. Who do we take the mission of God to?
5. Where is knowledge of the mission of God taken?
6. When is the mission of God spread?

B. The Gospel, the Great Commission, and the Kingdom of God

C. Group Discussion

II. The Diamond of Ministry Training¹²⁴

A. Incarnational Ministry Diagram

B. People of Peace

1. Disciples Chosen by Jesus (Luke 6:12-22; Mark 3:14-15; Acts 4:13)
2. Search for People of Peace (Luke 10:5-6)
3. Real Life Missions: Being Led to Witness ‘The Story of Dee’

C. Ministry of Hospitality

1. Invitation to Come and See (John 1:35-39)
2. Real Life Missions: Hospitality ‘The Story of Bob and Carol’

D. Expectant Prayer

1. Learn to Pray and Turn to God
2. Modeling Jesus in Prayer (Luke 4:42; Luke 5:15-16; Luke 6:12-15; John 17:1-2)
3. Expectant Prayer and Worship: A Catalyst to Mission

E. Social Justice

1. Seek Justice for the Oppressed (Isa. 1:16-17)
2. Jesus’ View of Racism (John 4:4-26)
3. Jesus’ Concern for the Poor, the Prisoners, the Blind, and the Oppressed (Matt. 25:44-45)
4. Like Jesus, Minister at the Points of Brokenness Within Our Culture
 - a. Real Life: Social Justice Initiative Examples
 - b. Real Life: Social Justice ‘The Story of Johnnie’

¹²⁴ Gailyn Van Rhee, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 396-406.

F. Kingdom Witness

1. Jesus Proclaims the Kingdom of Heaven with Authority (Matt. 4:17; 7:28-29)
2. Paul Proclaims the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-8; Rom. 1:16)
3. Relational Mission: Plowing, Sowing, Watering, Reaping, Keeping (Figure 2)
3. Relational Missions
 - a. Step 1: Plowing – Identifying People of Peace in Their Territory
 - b. Step 2: Sowing – Placing More Emphasis on Spiritual Conversation
 - c. Step 3: Watering – Allowing the Gospel to Sink into Their Hearts
 - d. Step 4: Reaping – Discerning Readiness to Receive the Invitation to Follow Jesus
 - e. Step 5: Keeping – Continuing Spiritual Growth

III. Video: Short-Term Missions and Discussion

IV. Role Play Scenarios

- A. Warm-up
- B. Role Play Using Real Life Examples
 1. The Story of Dee
 2. The Story of Bob and Carol
 3. The Story of Johnnie
 4. Improvisation: What Would You Do?

V. Wrap-up and Future Plans for Short Term Missions ministry

The Action Plan: Approval and Consents

The pastor of the church will need to give his approval for the research which will include millennials as participants in the research. He will have to approve training which will use the facilities and resources of the church. The most important aspect that the pastor will have to approve is the budget for the missions department. The mission trips, whether local or foreign, need financial support. This support will aid with transportation, housing, and food for those going on the mission trip.

One of the resources for the missions department that will be needed will involve using media players for some of the training modules. Chairs, tables, and video equipment should be available for viewing videos of mission trips. Personal preparation will involve scheduling the training on days when the researcher and participants are not involved in conflicting personal activities or church work. Planning for mission trips will normally occur at the beginning of the year.

Selecting Participants

The consent of participants will be obtained before participating in the gathering of information. The consent form will explain that information obtained will be used as part of a research project to engage the millennials in the local church in missional activity. Their names will not be used in the project for anonymity. The participants will sign the consent form authorizing the researcher to use any of the research data in the research study and in any other media outlet as the researcher deems appropriate.

When the group goes on a mission trip, the consent form will also indicate each party's responsibilities, safety regulations, risk disclosure, and physical requirements. It should also contain a disclosure concerning medical and life insurance. The church could have the right to use any pictures, videos, statements, or paraphernalia that have been procured by the church's media department to be used in connection with the missions department. The local church will obtain its own consent forms, separate and apart from this study.

The Action Plan: Evaluation

The researcher determines that one month would be a fair trial period to evaluate the intervention. The problem has been stated. The intervention will begin by collecting information from millennials at the local church. From those screening questionnaires, the researcher will

select 10 participants for the study. This will occur after the information from the screening questionnaires has been reviewed by the researcher. A date will be given for the participants to individually answer a preselected questionnaire. The focus group will meet after the answers to the questionnaires have been reviewed. The participants will meet with the researcher, individually and with the focus group, on Zoom. The focus group will answer additional questions and discuss the training outline. It is hoped that the millennials will recognize the benefits of having missions training.

The criteria for evaluating a successful outcome in this intervention will be initially based on the data collected through the questionnaire and the focus group. The qualitative research method will be used to gather data and measure the effects of the intervention. This method will not use any numbers or mathematical calculations. It will be based on coding words and phrases which represent three to five major themes. The most important things will be derived from the answers to the open-ended questions given.

The visible effect of the intervention on the lives of the millennials will be observed. Many evaluations tend to focus on the activities engaged in by the participants. The focus should be concentrated on the activities' impact on the participant's lives.¹²⁵ The participants should be observed to determine if there is excitement when talking about missions and missions training. Are the participants coming to the meeting individually and as part of the focus group? Has anyone fallen off the program? Is anyone asking additional questions because they are hungry for missions knowledge?

The old approach implemented to attract church members to the missions program was not effective in holding the interest of existing millennial members or in attracting new

¹²⁵ Stringer, *Action Research*, 69.

millennial members. The training methods used were outdated for the younger generation of the church. The old approach is examined to get a clearer understanding of the methods that did not work. This examination will aid the researcher in uncovering an intervention that will be used in the successful engagement of millennials in the mission of the church. The new approach will rely heavily on computer technology. Instead of giving textbooks and hoping that the participants will read them, learning tools will be employed to help simulate real life situations, such as: role playing, interactive questions, and short videos with discussions after each segment.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This researcher realized that a problem existed within the Power of God Church. This researcher is also the mission president of the local church. The problem consists of the lack of participation exhibited by millennials in the missional activity of the church. At the culmination of this research project, the result should reflect millennials with an added desire to become active in missions, being willing to fulfill the commandment given by God to go to all nations to spread the gospel. The people that they touch will come to the knowledge of Jesus and the kingdom of God. An additional result would be that this project will serve as a guide for other churches experiencing similar challenges with engaging millennials in missional activity or any ministry in their church. It is imperative that this problem should be addressed and not ignored because millennials represent the future of the churches worldwide. If the church expects growth in the future; then, a viable solution to engage millennials in missions must be addressed now. This research employs this mindset while arriving at the solution needed to begin to address the problem.

The command to be missional was given by Jesus for all disciples present in the first century and through the t-first century. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 29) contained the command for all disciples to make disciples. The command has been accomplished by spreading the gospel to every nation. The Power of God Church is a missional church. To fulfill the mission of the church, all members should engage in missional activity. How does the church engage millennials in missions when they seemingly have lost interest? The researcher addressed the problem and to find the answer to this question. This researcher determined the results of the research by examining the data.

Research should be performed in a systematic manner using the feedback from the focus groups to assess the next steps in the research. This should generate a deeper understanding of the problem, millennials, and missional activity, which should yield the anticipated resolution of the problem. The feedback is “then organized into a framework of ideas or concepts that enables participants to better understand problematic features of the situation. These systematic processes of analysis should provide the means for a deeper or more extended understanding of the situation that will lead to a more effective and sustainable resolution of the problem or issue investigated.”¹²⁶ This researcher is striving to attain a deeper awareness of the interaction of the problem, millennials, and missional activity resulting in the anticipated results of the problem: to engage millennials in missions.

The goal of the research is to ascertain that the attitude of millennials concerning missions will improve through innovative and technological training. This training will be enhanced by learning more about the characteristics, attitudes, social behavior, and religious beliefs of millennials from the research. Engaging millennials in missional activity is the expected outcome of the data obtained by the researcher.

Several themes began to unfold as the questionnaires and focus groups were analyzed. The thesis of the project became the focal point of the information that was gathered to determine what was needed to engage millennials in mission trips conducted by the Power of God Church. All analyses were done using the qualitative research method. Tim Sensing quotes Sharan B. Merriam describing five characteristics that all qualitative research has in common, namely, “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and

¹²⁶ Stringer, *Action Research*, 135.

findings that are richly descriptive.”¹²⁷ This chapter will be composed of questions and answers for the interviews and the focus group. The researcher will be able to use the findings obtained by examining the answers to the questions provided. There were themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group. Those results were based on the questions from the interviews and focus group. The themes that were revealed were: missions outreach, missions training preferences, technology influence, generational conflicts, and disconnect with the church.

Interview and Focus Group Results

The first half of the results will review the results of the interviews that were administered to the 10 millennials that were chosen for the research. Each participant was asked 13 questions. The resulting themes are explained below. The 10 focus group participants were the same as the 10 participants for the interviews. They were asked an additional 5 questions. Answering these questions gave them an opportunity to discuss the answers as a group. The last two themes were taken specifically from the focus group meeting: generational differences, and church disconnect.

Missions Outreach

The millennials’ view of missions outreach was particularly different from the actual meaning and purpose of missions outreach. The millennials were asked to give their understanding of missions ministry. All of them conveyed an understanding that missions ministry consisted of reaching out to help someone. None of them mentioned that missions ministry included telling people about Jesus or the kingdom of God. None of them mentioned that missions ministry was synonymous with the mission of God. This was the first indication

¹²⁷ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 57.

that they needed retraining to be prepared to engage in missions. Joseph Boot states, “The *missio Dei* pertains then to the ‘sending of God’ and the universal ‘reign of God’.”¹²⁸ He also states the following.

Moreover the New Testament picture of the church is that of a universal body (Eph. 4:4) of believers with many members but one head, Jesus Christ. So the church is a universal and organic (living and growing) body of regenerate believers (a new humanity or citizenry) who have been reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of Christ, called out to serve their king, finding regional expression in local assemblies (or embassies) of God’s kingdom people.¹²⁹

Believers, also known as God’s kingdom people and the church, have the responsibility to continue God’s mission. The mission of God must reach all people of the world. Believers have been commanded by God to spread the gospel to all nations. Christopher Wright states, “We see someone created by God, addressed by God, accountable to God, loved by God, valued, and evaluated by God. While we affirm the validity of reaching out in mission to all people everywhere, we must also think critically about the methods, attitudes, and assumptions with which we do so.”¹³⁰ It is with this mindset that the training for millennials will take form. Richard Noble acknowledges that “millennials and Generation Z are generally attracted to focused, shorter-term projects and to being personally involved with other cultures via hands-on activities and cross-cultural friendships. In terms of missions, they prefer to “taste and see” missions trips for the short-term before committing to the long-term.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ Joseph Boot, *The Mission of God: A Manifesto of Hope for Society*, Wilberforce Publications Ltd., Kindle Edition, LOC 629.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, LOC 9752.

¹³⁰ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God*. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition, 423.

¹³¹ Noble, *On Mission Together: Integrating Missions into the Local Church*, Loc 2340.

The millennials were asked if they were aware of the church's outreach program and if they knew what it was. All ten of them acknowledged that they knew that there was an established outreach program; however, they could not specifically describe the program. For example, Participant 7 (P7) says that "it is probably a program that will build relationships with people" and Participant 6 (P6) says that "it probably consists of help directed toward providing a youth center for extracurricular activities". Participant 5 (P5) expressed that "the outreach program was used to help the needy with finances and food." This again was in line with the characteristics of millennials. David Stark stated that there are "common interests of millennials: service and giving back are a big part of this generation and they want to be 'missionaries,' without the 'God-part' necessarily, by helping the needy all over the world."¹³² The participants were not aware of the actual reason for the mission department. The missions training will fill in many gaps to enable them to develop a closer relationship to God and those that will be ministered.

Millennials like to take part in 'causes.'¹³³ The 'cause' within the world is the necessity for the world to become introduced to the gospel. The training that will take place will introduce the gospel as a 'cause' in which millennials can become engaged. It is a cause for Christ. It is the hope that the mindset of the millennials can be refocused to come to the realization that those things that God has commanded them to do are the things that they are already passionate about. If that is the case, what is it that keeps them from readily becoming engaged in missions? There are three more themes to cover that should clarify this problem. When questioned concerning

¹³² Stark, David. *Reaching Millennials: Proven Methods for Engaging a Younger Generation*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 20.

¹³³ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Missions*, 81.

short term or long-term missions trips, all participants readily stated, “we would prefer short-term trips.”

They were then asked to give their reasons for choosing short term. The results are in the chart below. Their top two reasons were: time constraints and closer to home. Most of the participants were concerned with the length of time spent on a long-term mission trip.

Participants #2, #6, #7, and #9 chose ‘time’ as their main reason, participants #1, #4, #8 chose ‘closer’ as their main reason, participants #3, #10 chose ‘home/children’, and #5 chose ‘finances’ as the main reason for choosing short-term mission trips. It was a positive outcome for the participants to commit to being a participant with the next short-term mission trip. The trip will be scheduled after the training has been completed. The information is listed in Figure 1.

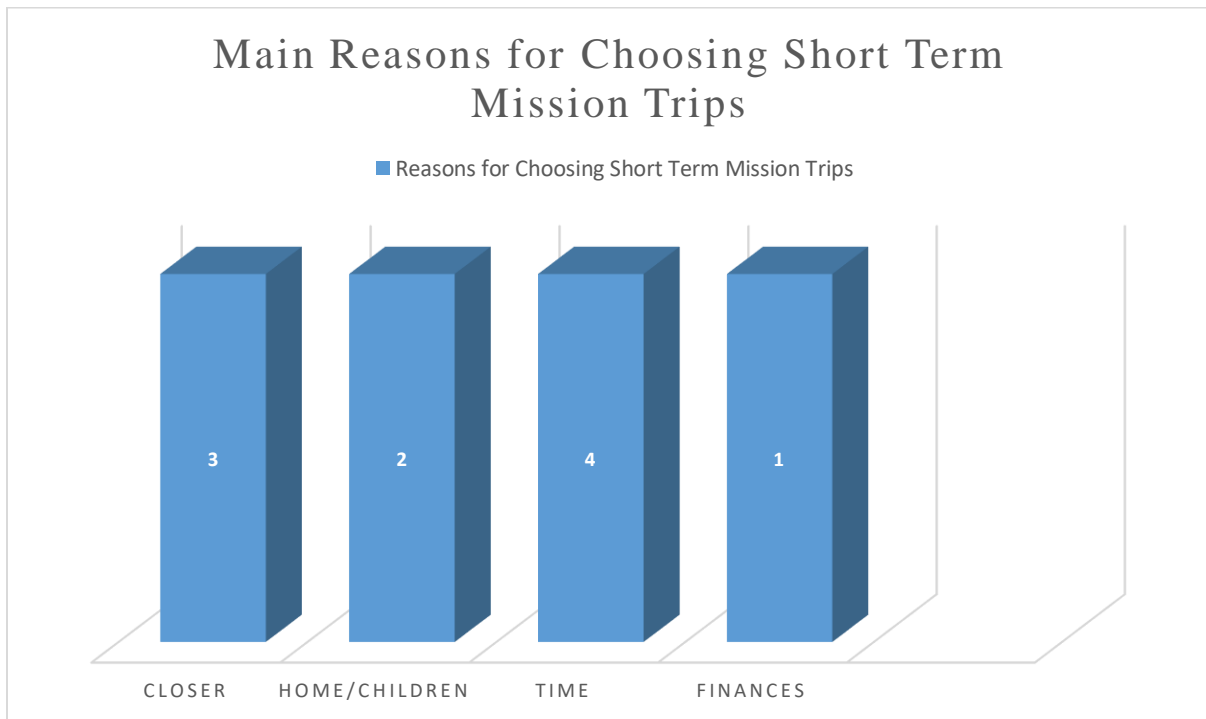


Figure 1. Main Reasons for Choosing Short Term Mission Trips

Mission Training Preferences

The millennials were asked questions about the training program that they would like to see implemented in the church that would be geared toward their learning style. Participant 1 (P1), Participant 4 (P4), and Participant 10 (P10) said that the training should be ‘hands-on’. They agreed that the training should be more physical and less lectures. They would like to see training that would better prepare them if they were to go on mission trips. The outline for the training class has been constructed to include role playing to give the millennials a feel of being on a mission trip. It is better to practice meeting people that you do not know by acting out scenarios with people that you do know. Each scenario can give the participant the opportunity to be the person being ministered to and the person ministering. In addition, within the training outline, social justice and relational missions have been included to indicate the relation between Jesus’ time on Earth and the present. This training outline is designed to captivate the attention of the millennials and to give them the training that they need to go on missions trips. The actual trip will teach them more than they can learn in a training session. Enoch Wan said, “I have laughingly said that one can learn missionary work in a classroom as successfully as one can learn to sky dive in a classroom. At some point, the environment needs to change so that the learner is doing the real thing in the real context.”¹³⁴ The training will get them ready for the mission trip.

Participant #3 (P3), participant #8 (P8), and participant #7 (P7) wanted to make sure that they were not placed in a situation where they would ‘sink or swim’. They did not want to feel like they were being ‘thrown to the wolves’ or left to their own devices to try and work out the situation while they are in front of the person being ministered to. This is a situation that they

¹³⁴ Wan and Hedinger, *Relational Missionary Training: Theology, Theory & Practice*, 70.

found themselves in during past mission trips. For them, it only took one time to decide that they no longer wanted that type of experience.

They all agreed that they would participate in a two-day training session, provided the session was styled with their type of learning in mind. This researcher discussed with them individually and then, with the focus group specific items that would be incorporated into the training especially with them in mind. The training outline would be presented to them during the focus group meeting.

Mission training will be based on the master teacher, Jesus' mode of teaching. Jesus taught people in a way they were not accustomed. He taught in a wide variety to methods. When explaining Jesus' method of teaching, Mark J. Anthony states, "Object lessons, parables, dialogue, and puns helped people remember what he taught while hiding the truth from those who did not want to understand and respond to it."¹³⁵ The mission training outline will include the account from the Bible of the death and resurrection of Jesus, salvation, films depicting soul winning and past mission trips, role playing, true stories submitted by people who have received Christ as their Lord and Savior as part of a mission trip, and a spot for the questions, answers, and discussion throughout the 2 8-hour training sessions. It should be noted that most of the training will lean heavily on technology.

Technology Influence

This generation has been known to have grown up in a technological society. They were born in a time when technological advancements, as communication tools, were beginning to emerge. Jamie Domm states, "Digital technologies have made it easier than ever to get to know

¹³⁵ Michael J. Anthony, Ed., *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), Kindle Edition, Loc. 288.

the needs of our community, let people know they are heard and understood, connect with our neighbors, build relationships, and let them know we're here to help. With digital tools, we can accomplish these objectives quickly and implement them on a large scale for a relatively low cost, empowering churches to become more than the building up the street, but rather an active and engaged people who benefit the larger community through their care and relevant acts of service.”¹³⁶ Millennials could with their technological knowledge take the church missions ministry to another level.

When asked “what tools do you think the church needs to effectively do mission outreach?” their responses were similar. Participant #1 stated that “social media would be an excellent means to reach out to people their age, since implementing platforms like Facebook can reach so many people to present the gospel message.” Participants #3, #4, and #5 agreed that this was a workable option for contacting people in other countries. Participants #2, #6, and #7 agreed that “email would be useful in communicating with those that are overseas.” The remaining participants #8, #9 and #10 agreed that the digital tools are important; however, were not sure if it would aid the missions ministry.”

The participants all agreed that technology is essential to enhance most all agencies. Most workplaces have switched to using technology to enhance their services. The same can be said of schools, hospitals, merchandising, churches, and most other companies. They agreed that technology is a plus, but there were some participants that did not have an opinion on the worth that would be garnered by using it. The responses obtained are shown in the Figure 2.

¹³⁶ Domm, *Digital Discipleship & Evangelism*, 66.

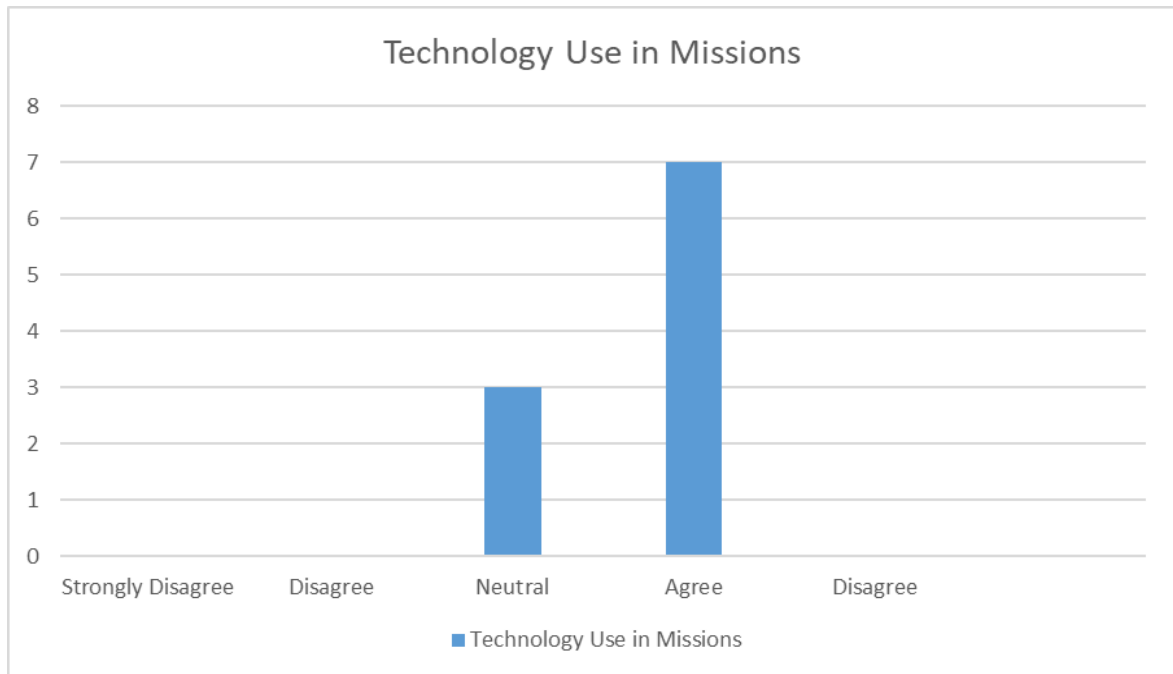


Figure 2. Technology Use in Missions

Generational Conflicts

The millennials thrive on establishing relationships. The participants all agreed that there were generational differences which presented a real problem for them at the church. When asking for clarification to the statement that they considered that there was a generational problem between them and the older church members, there were multiple responses. For example, participant #6 stated that “the older generation did not treat them as equals.” Participant #9 said that “they were never given any form of authority by the older generation.” Another response from participant #7 said that “the millennials were treated as if they could not be trusted to complete a task.”

The Power of God Church has within its membership additional generations: the Silent Generation (1928-1945), the Baby Boomers (aka Baby Boom Generation) (1946-1964), and Generation X (aka the 13th Generation) (1965-1980) and Gen Z (1995-2012) The question was posed to the participants: There are three generations older than you within the church, which

generation do you think conflicts with the millennial generation? As can be seen on the chart below, the majority felt that the Silent Generation was more in conflict than any of the other generations. This information is shown in Figure 3.

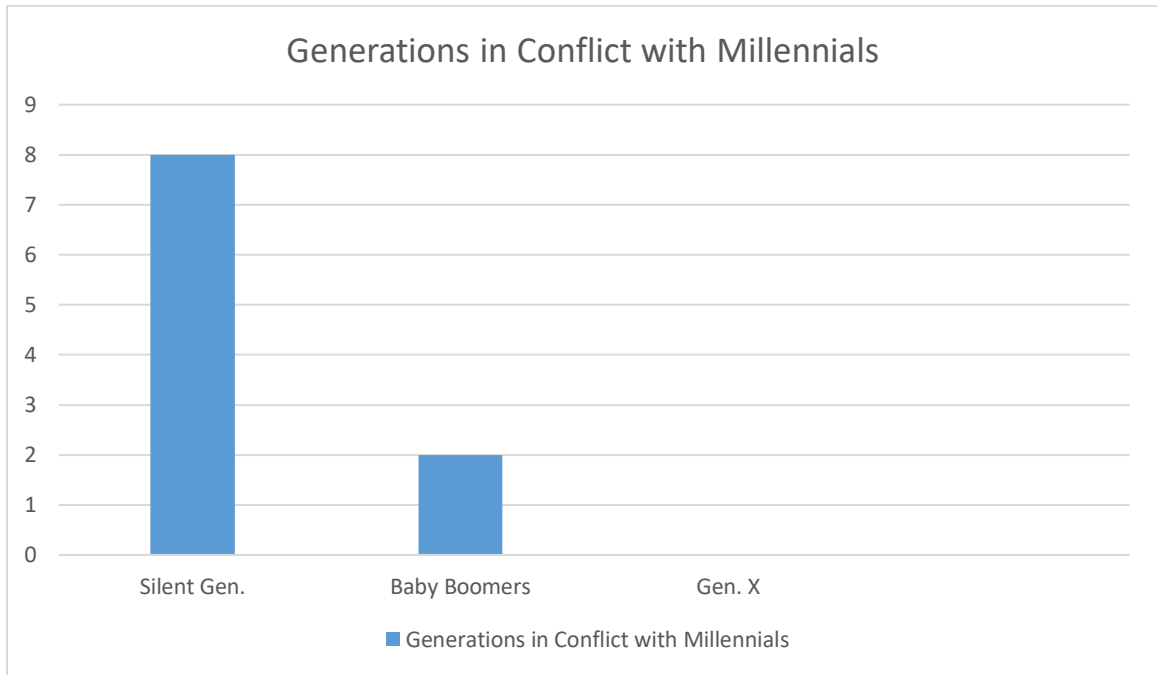


Figure 3. Generations in Conflict with Millennials

Church Disconnect

At times millennials have found themselves disconnected from the church. The previous chart indicates that there is some type of conflict or perceived conflict between the Silent Generation and millennials. A few of the millennials found that there was a conflict with the Baby Boomers. The youngest members in the Silent Generation in the church would be in their late 70's. For this generation, the period that they were nurtured in has been totally different from the millennials. They possibly feel that because of their age, they have much to tell the younger generation. The youngest of the Baby Boomers would be in their late 50's. Many of the Baby Boomers were young enough to experience the technological advances and are comfortable with the tech and the other changes of the twenty-first century. Many of the Silent Generation find it

difficult to catch up with technology. This is referencing technology, but it points to the fact that there are visible differences between the generations.

Survey research indicates that millennials are leaving the church. The survey revealed that 59% to 70% of millennials are no longer attending church in the United States.¹³⁷ These are the statistics that the Power of God Church wants to address before it becomes a problem locally. Kinnaman points out the following when considering the responses of the local church leaders to the young parishioners. He said that “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.”¹³⁸ The lines of communication must remain open and there must be open minds that are committed to engaging millennials in missions ministry. The participants were asked the following question as part of the questionnaire: “Do you feel that the church in general fails to connect with millennials in a meaningful way? If you agree, how can the church and millennials find common ground in relation to this topic?” They were asked a similar question with the focus group: “Millennials claim that the church is disconnected and irrelevant to today’s culture, and thus cannot relate to their generation in a meaningful way. Do you agree with this statement?” This statement was posed on both occasions because of the significance that it will play in the spiritual life and well-being of the millennial. To engage the millennials in missions ministry, there must not be anything conflicting with the millennial’s attention toward missions.

¹³⁷ Puffer, “Protestant Millennials, Religious Doubt & the Local Church”, 8.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 9.

Subsequent to training millennials in missions ministry, there should be a dialogue opened to begin conflict resolution between the generations. The participants were asked a follow-up question to determine the ease of being able to settle any conflict between the parties. The question asked was “Will you be willing to come together to discuss your complaints or issues with the church leaders and members from the other generations?” The results of this question are presented in Figure 4.

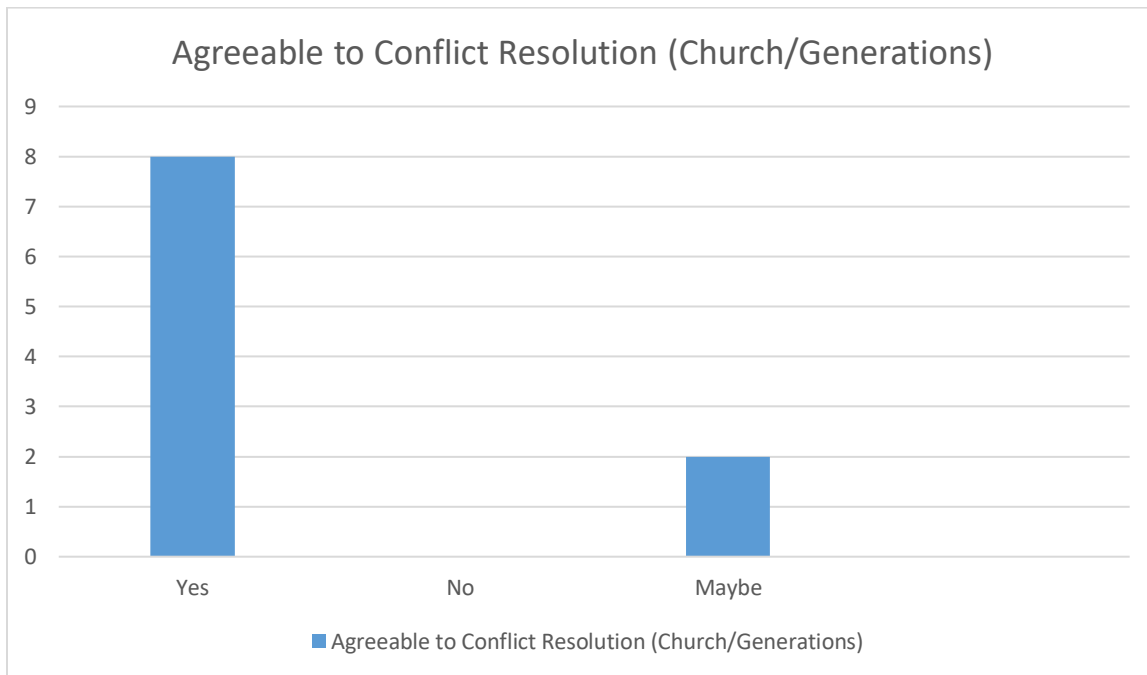


Figure 4. Agreeable to Conflict Resolution (Church/Generations)

Background Information

When considering the background requirements for the participants, the researcher focused on two main qualifications for the research study: the participant must be within the ages of 20 and 38 years of age to be classified as a millennial and the participant should want to be instrumental in revitalizing the missions ministry. In addition to those qualifications, a pre-qualification questionnaire was sent via email to the participants prior to the beginning of the research. Those questions are listed below. The potential participants had to answer all questions

‘yes’ before being accepted in the research program. It was important to the research project for the participants to answer the following questions from the questionnaire.

- Do you believe that an individual should be trained before participating in short term missions ministry?
- If selected for this research, are you willing to answer a 10-minute questionnaire relating to millennial views of missions and missions training?
- If selected for this research, are you willing to participate in a focus group (40 minutes via Zoom) relating to millennial views of missions and missions training?
- If selected for this research, would you be willing to participate in an 8-hour training session (via 2 Zoom sessions) for short term missions?

Results of the Research

The Power of God Church (sending church) realized that a problem had arisen because of the lack of participation of the millennial community in the missions ministry. The researcher, as mission president, proposed that the missing millennials could be engaged in missions ministry by altering the training program that has been used by the local church for the last 50 years. The training could be revitalized to become attractive to the digital native, the millennial. The participants have been instrumental in fine tuning the training outline to be used in the actual training session. While the questions were being answered, another problem was discovered. There appears to be an existing conflict between the millennials of the local church and some of the older generation, specifically, the silent generation. This will be addressed within the local church. Any problems that arise should be addressed so that the church does not lose any members because of neglect.

The millennials were forthright when answering the questions and were eager to change the training program. They were excited about having input in revitalizing a training program that was instituted before they were born. They were happy to know that their concerns would be finally heard and acted upon.

The themes that were revealed from the interviews and the focus group were: missions outreach, missions training preferences, technology influence, generational differences, and disconnect with the church. All the information obtained from the interviews and the focus groups were taken from one specific generational group: the millennials.

The millennials were no longer participating in the missions ministry. It had been a couple of years since they went on a missions trip. The time factor would require that they go through training again. It was proposed that a revitalization take place with the training program. This would be changed to incorporate modern techniques, which should entice the millennial community to become active in missions. The results of this study were able to bring the millennials to the table to use their expertise with technology to devise a new training program. By including the millennials in this process, they were able to feel that their opinion mattered. The millennial participants have all committed to attending the training sessions and the upcoming short term mission trip. The unexpected result realized from the research shines a light on the conflict between the millennials and the older generational members in the church. These findings were shared with the pastor who has agreed to bring the generations together to work through these issues to find common ground.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the project, the researcher reflects on the initial problem that was considered that prompted this research. The Power of God Church began to see a decline in the missional activity of the church when millennials began to show a lack of interest in participating in the missions trips of the church. This lack of interest was moving toward a point of no return. It was not just a passing phase. Over the preceding two years, the problem had gotten progressively worse. It was of the utmost importance to determine the nature of what was keeping the millennial community from the mission trips.

The Great Commission was given by Jesus to His disciples and to all subsequent people who accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, 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.” Jesus’ words were also recorded in the Mark 16:15, 16 “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” This was the gospel message, the message of salvation. Most mission statements for Christian churches are based on the Great Commission. These brief statements provide the church with the task the church must fulfill. The Great Commission was a commandment for the people of God to fulfil during the time that Jesus walked on the earth. It is still valid for those that believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Through the Power of God Church’s mission department, the local church fulfills the commandment.

The mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the act of God in sending His agents out into the world to spread the gospel and the news of God’s kingdom. The church is the instrument that

takes that message to the world. This is a vital task that God has entrusted to the church. It becomes of great importance that the church is fulfilling its task. Observing a group of people in the church that have decided to give up their God given task, calls for immediate action to get them back on track. What would compel millennials to become energized and excited about sharing the gospel? The Power of God Church sought to answer that question to save the future of the missions ministry. Millennials are the next generation that will be commanded to take the gospel to the world.

This researcher believes that millennials could be engaged in missions by modernizing the training sessions to arouse their interest. Becoming knowledgeable concerning the millennial community would serve to give answers to reveal the best action plan to attain the goal of the project. It became important to the outcome of the project to meet millennials in their cultural realm by becoming familiar with their characteristic behavior and mindset. Understanding their feelings concerning missions, and the manner of communication between them and the older generations in the church could not be neglected. This would be accomplished by conducting research using previously authored books, journals, and other written texts on the millennial generation to inform this researcher.

The action plan involved implementing an intervention design, which contained an interview, focus group, developing a training outline, and evaluating the results to determine the effectiveness of the project. The focus group would offer the information needed to understand the experiences that influence the mindset of millennials relative to missions and interaction with others. The training outline was prepared to give the participants in the study a birds-eye view of the way the training sessions would be structured. The outline was discussed with the millennials to obtain feedback concerning the viability of the training program. The training would be

implemented to present a relational and exciting option to understand the gospel, including role play illustrating how to present the gospel to the lost. The evaluation involved examining the data and interaction with millennials to verify that the updated training program could draw them back to the mission ministry. The action research aided the researcher in determining if the problem could be alleviated. The totality of the study helped the researcher, with the help of the participants, to redesign the training process that will be implemented to attract and sustain permanent engagement of millennials in the mission field.

Research: What Is Next?

The research for this project took a small church that had been in its comfort zone too long, doing the same thing for too many years, changing its training process to keep church members active in missions. By default, the millennial congregation's characteristics have nudged the church into the twenty-first century. With the advent of COVID-19, the church had to be ready to make radical changes to engage the church members. The older generations, who had nothing but negativity to express concerning social media, began to see that it was becoming a vehicle for change and would be the medium for most sermons heard when the world was on COVID-19 lockdown. The millennials, being 'tech savvy,' were right at home in their natural environment. Many millennials were teaching the older generations how to access Zoom and Facebook. The research opened the door for the expertise of the millennials to show through. In the past, their expertise may have been looked down upon because of assumptions and not reality.

The results of the research were positive. Allowing the participants in the study to have a stake in revising the training outline which will be used for classes now and in the future and gave the church members a view of the millennials that they had not seen. No one in the church

should forget that the millennials were instrumental in doing something constructive for the church and the missions department. Jamie Domm said “Beyond meeting the spiritual needs of church members, digital technologies can be used to mobilize a congregation for community and service in the digital space. What starts in the digital space is not necessarily, nor ultimately, confined to the digital space. These tools and technologies can create impact in the real world and be leveraged to meet the real physical needs of the community.”¹³⁹

These same tools that have been given to us can be expanded for the church to do greater things in the name of the Lord. Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He said to His disciples “Truly, truly, I say to you, 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). The church can reach more people with the message of Jesus Christ by using technology to connect around the world. The research will continue to look for new and innovative ways to do ministry.

Comparing Results to Other Works

While researching the topic, minimal books were written on engaging millennials in missions. This researcher discovered numerous books on millennials in the workplace, books that mention millennials on a page or two in the book, and several books on missions. Most findings did not compare to the problem encountered at the Power of God Church. This researcher reviewed other thesis projects at Liberty University, and the ones that included millennials did not include missions. The focus was on getting millennials to return to the church, not to the specific work of missions. Most books written about millennials had a similar direction. One author recognized that millennials are leaving the church. This was important to this research because there was a possibility that it could occur in the Power of God Church, if

¹³⁹ Domm, *Digital Discipleship & Evangelism*, 264.

the study failed to engage millennials. Todd Allen in his book *Real Christian* describes a dire situation in the church today that involves disturbing trends for the younger generations. He states that “the numbers in evangelical Christianity in North America are dwindling according to the data that has been studied.”¹⁴⁰ He has painted a picture of millennials that illustrates churches with empty pews because the churches have no plan to bring the younger generations back. Compared to the study completed by this researcher, it offers no hope. This study devised a plan to engage millennials to keep them in the church and, if needed, the next step would be to go to the millennials that have left the church and compel them to come back.

A book that comes closer to comparing with this research is a book that began as a Doctoral Dissertation by James Raymo. In his book, *Millennials and Mission*, much of the information described the millennials and their character in differing situations. Raymo did include data describing the millennial’s attitude toward ministry. He said, “They take a cooperative, collaborative approach to work and ministry, and are interested in learning from others—especially, on the field, from local leaders and other local people.”¹⁴¹ They are also interested in justice and helping others. To further indicate this, Raymo included a millennial’s point of view:

Growing up in the American church, we have seen a lot of people talk about Jesus and His love for the hurting, but we failed to see it lived out in our families or in the community. Christians are known for talking, for their political opinions, for their stance on abortion and marriage (which are important issues), but not for taking tangible steps outside their comfort zones to minister to actual people with real pain and real needs. SF, Millennial Blog¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Allen, *Real Christian*, 18.

¹⁴¹ Raymo and Raymo, *Millennials and Mission*, 108.

¹⁴² Ibid., 110.

This book did not indicate that there was a problem with millennials no longer going on mission trips, but it did stress that there was a generational conflict between the way the older generation and millennials viewed ministry.

In comparison, the result of this study reflects millennials agreeable to committing themselves to short-term missions. In addition, through this study, the church will open the door for them to prepare their mission outreach. They will be able to go and minister to the millennials that have left the church. Since both groups are millennials, they share common ground. They will already have a dialogue because of their shared interests. This research aims to get millennials back to a place where they can continue to do the work of God. Jesus commanded all believers to go and spread the gospel to let those still in the dark know about the kingdom of God. Spreading the gospel is a concerted effort. The church is on a mission for God.

Researcher's Insights

The characteristics of millennials were witnessed by this researcher as the interview and focus group unfolded. It is one thing to read about characteristics and still another to witness the transparency of a person. The participants were candid about their feelings concerning missions, the church, and the older generation. This researcher found it insightful to have a group of people on one accord about their feelings towards specific subjects. Most generations think somewhat independently. Everyone has a different idea about the topic. This researcher has observed that even if people of the older generations had the same idea, they would change it to appear different. This researcher was thinking, "how refreshing to have people on one accord about something." If people are on one accord, there is no room for conflict.

Jesus encountered many people that attempted to cause conflict. The Pharisees were always attempting to catch Jesus in some type of word play. Jesus had some strong words for

them in Matthew 23:13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven in front of people; for you do not enter *it* yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” Jesus was straightforward. His words were synonymous with truth. He never allowed anyone to cause Him to shy away from the truth. If a person believes in something and there are people that do not believe, remain steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58). This the insight realized from observing a generational conflict.

Application in Other Settings

The results from this project can be applied to another setting. Within the setting of the ‘missing millennials from missions,’ there was another setting which was the ‘millennial/older generation conflict.’ This researcher began to think about the ways that this conflict could be resolved without needlessly affecting the feelings of all concerned. The church has always had Sunday school classes broken down into grade levels. Why not have the mission department broken down into at least two levels? The millennials could have a missions ministry and the older generation could have a missions ministry. They both would be under the leadership of the missions president. They would have two vice-presidents that would manage each group.

The millennials would be able to minister more readily to younger people. They seem to be able to identify with the younger age group when it comes to life issues. Millennials will not be too far removed from their own age. This group would be able to plan their mission trips after getting approval from the mission president. The harvest is ripe, and no laborers can be lost. There is enough harvest for all.

Future Research

Knowing that so many generations are still alive, this researcher has contemplated that this research would be a steppingstone to any future research for any given age. Learning about people is information that should be tucked away in the sticky side of your brain and never forgotten because there will constantly be interacting with people. When going on missions trips, it is a good idea to be ready for all types of people. People are fascinating, and if a person is in ministry, people will always be near that need to hear the gospel.

Conclusion

The research began with a problem that needed a solution. The church needs every member of the congregation to be involved. God has given everyone in the church the commandment to go and tell the world about Jesus. This project started with a group that had lost interest in the missions ministry because the same soul-winning methods had not changed in 50 years. The participants introduced new ways to train millennials, fast-paced and creative. The church can draw other millennials to the church with new ideas and innovation. A plan can be started to draw Gen Z and future generations to carry the gospel message. The church's future depends on the communication and relationships established between the younger generations. The local church will see that change can be productive and refreshing in the long run.

Not only will the church continue to experience satisfactory results from the project will address a potential problem also. The conflict festering in the church between the millennials and the older generations can find a resolution as they come together to discuss and work out their perceived differences. The hope is that bringing the generations together will come to an amicable conclusion.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval

July 15, 2021

Annell James

Brian Moulton

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-859 Engaging Millennials in Missions

Dear Annell James, Brian Moulton:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review.

This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Research Participants Needed

- Are you 20 to 38 years of age?
- Do you want to become instrumental in revitalizing the missions department?

If you answered **yes** to either of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a missions research study.

The purpose of my research is to create a missions training program for millennials, promoting interest to engage them in missional activities. I am writing to invite **eligible participants** to join my study.

Participants must be 20 to 38 years of age. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a questionnaire (10 minutes) and 10 people will be chosen to participate in a focus group (40 minutes via Zoom).

The participants of the focus group will take part in an 8-hour missions training session (via 2 Zoom sessions, subsequent to the research).

The study is being conducted via (interview) and Zoom (focus group).

Annell James, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact [REDACTED] for more information.

Appendix C: Pastor Permission Letter - Sample

April 4, 2021

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is “Engaging Millennials in Missions,” and the purpose of my research is to create a missions training program for millennials, promoting interest to engage them in missional activities.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of the church to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to participate in a questionnaire and follow up by participating in a focus group. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

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

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Appendix D: Prequalification Letter - Sample

June ____, 2021

Participant's Details:

Name: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Email Address: _____

The work of missions consists of humans who are in relationship with God introducing other human beings to Him and to salvation attained through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The church is the primary instrument of God, in this time-period, to bear witness to His kingdom. This is accomplished through missional activity.

Directions: Place a circle around the number or option that best describes your answer. For the 1-10 scale responses, let 1 represent 'totally agree' and 10 represent 'totally disagree.'

Directions: Place a circle around the number or option that best describes your answer.

Questions	Yes	No
Are you within the ages of 20 to 38?		
Do you believe that hospitality should be practiced as a Christian?		
Do you believe that hospitality will give you the opportunity to supply the needs for the needy, including ministering the gospel?		
Do you believe that an individual should be trained before participating in short-term missions ministry?		
If selected for this research, are you willing to answer via a 10-minute questionnaire relating to millennial views of missions and missions training?		
If selected for this research, are you willing to participate in a focus group (40 minutes via Zoom) relating to millennial views of missions and missions training?		
If selected for this research, would you be willing to participate in an 8-hour training session (via 2 Zoom sessions) for short-term missions?		

Appendix E: Participant Letter – Sample

April 4, 2021

Dear Participant#1:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to create a missions training program for millennials, promoting interest to engage them in missional activities and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 20 to 38 years of age. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a questionnaire (10 minutes) and participate in a focus group (40 minutes via Zoom). If the training modules for the Power of God Church are approved, the participants in the focus group will take part in an 8-hour training session (via 2 Zoom sessions). This will be scheduled subject to the research.

Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form - Sample

Title of the Project: Engaging Millennials in Missions

Principal Investigator: [REDACTED], Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be between 20 to 38 years of age and a member of the Power of God Church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to create a missions training program for millennials, promoting interest to engage them in missional activities. It is proposed that if a missions training program is developed to meet millennials within the digital realm in which they thrive, then seasoned members in the church will be able to institute a training program that will promote education and interest in missions.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Once consent has been received, I will send a questionnaire to you via email which should be sent back to me via email or mail within two weeks.
2. After receiving the completed questionnaires, all participants will meet in a focus group to further discuss the questions to determine the best method to engage millennials in missional activity. This meeting will take place using the Zoom platform and will be audio and video recorded.
3. The participants will consider taking part in an 8-hour training session via 2 Zoom sessions.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are a better understanding of missions and the comprehensive training essential to engage millennials in missional activity.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will your personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of participant number codes.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations or in published books or manuals. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher[s] will have access to these recordings.
- 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.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Power of God Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Annell James. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?

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

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix G: Questionnaire Questions - Sample

As an element of my Research Thesis, the questionnaire is used to solicit responses that reveal the views of the participants as it pertains to increasing missional activities among millennials in the Power of God Church.

1. What is your general understanding of missions ministry?
2. Do you think that the church has an established missions outreach in the church? If so, can you describe the outreach program?
3. In your opinion, what would constitute an ideal missions outreach program?
4. What tools do you think the church needs to effectively do mission outreach?
5. Why do you think there has been a decline in the attendance of millennials in the church?
6. How would you explain the importance of having millennials involved in missions?
7. What knowledge do you think you would need to effectively minister to people on mission trips?
8. What type of missions training would you like to see implemented in the church?
9. Once you have been adequately trained, would you feel comfortable going on short missions trips?
10. What do you think is the advantage of going on short missions trips?
11. Which way, in your opinion, can growth and attendance of the millennials in the church improve?
12. In your opinion, what recommendations do you have for the church that will increase interest in the missions department?

Appendix H: Focus Group Questions - Sample

As a follow-up to the questionnaire, the same questions asked in the questionnaire will be further discussed in the focus group. In addition to those questions, the following questions will be asked to seek to obtain a more in-depth response from the participants.

Additional Focus Group Questions

1. Imagine that you are the Missions president, and you could design the millennial missions department. How would you design the age specific missions department to be the most effective?
2. Which people groups do you feel would benefit from the church's missional activities? Should the church concentrate on short term mission trips within this country or do you feel that short term trips are a waste of time? United States or another country?
3. Are there any generational differences in the church that you consider an obstacle to you becoming active in the missions department? Please explain.
4. Do you think that working with the missions department can cause you to find purpose in your life?
5. Do you feel that the church in general fails to connect with millennials in a meaningful way? If you agree, how can the church and millennials find common ground in relation to this topic?