

**HOW FAR SHOULD THE CHURCH GO TO REACH
'THE MILLENNIALS'?**

HAS THE CHURCH ALREADY GONE TOO FAR?

Beverly J. Elliott
Capstone Course for MA Students ATh698
Professor Dr. Iria L. Abram
Beulah Heights University
Fall 2017

Abstract

This research paper will take a look at the state of this new generation known to us as ‘the Millennials.’ It will try to seek out according to the Bible, if the church is reaching this core group of people, by taking information first from the foundation of truth, which we based on the Scriptures, the Word of God. Secondly it will gather scholarly writings and then get more information from interviews with millennials, Pastors, leaders and lay members to find out if this target group really effectively been sought out.

One of the main questions in this study will be “Has the church gone too far to reach the millennials” and or how far should the church go using present methods? In short, this research seeks to evaluate if the plan of the church is in accordance with the Word of God?

This research is driven with purpose as it seeks to expose the problem of the missing pieces. Something is missing and before this missing piece grows deeper and darker, this research will endeavor to bring together the puzzle.

The focus scriptures for this research paper will be the following, as this research will base all investigations, questions and findings on these foundational truths.

2 Timothy 3 affirms:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent,

fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” 2 Timothy 3:1-5). KJV

2 Timothy 4 declares:

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ³For the ***time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine***; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, ***having itching ears***; ⁴And ***they shall turn away their ears from the truth***, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (KJV)

Has the world come to a time, in the present day in which people live according to their own standards and unable to endure the precepts and doctrine of God’s Word? The word *endure* means according to dictionary.com, “to hold out against; sustain without impairment or yielding; to support adverse force or influence of any kind, and to suffer without yielding, suffer patiently.”¹__

This research maintains that people, especially millennials will not endure sound doctrine not only because they have ‘itching ears,’ but sound doctrine is no longer presented in many churches today. The situation appears crucial if not deadly and this research seeks out resolution to connecting the missing piece, reconciling the true church and the ‘millennials’. The end result of not receiving and or taking hold of what is known to be ‘sound doctrine’ will bring about an eternity problem, which is believed to be avoided. What if anything can be

1. Dictionary.com, accessed October 2, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/>

changed or what has changed and should be changed back. So, who are those known as millennials? They will be introduced them in the following pages.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Abstract
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Introduction
 - A. Who are the millennials?
 - B. Missing pieces
- IV. How God added to the First Church
 - A. How did Christ describe the Church
 - B. Jesus Commandment to His Disciples
 - 1. What that Commandment means to the Church Today
 - 2. Is the Message being passed down to this Generation
 - C. Is the Commandment Relative/Relevant

INTRODUCTION

This research will bring its focus mainly to the young adults of this 21st century, also known as ‘millennials.’ Since this title is given to them, it is imperative that this key title is defined and explained. What or who is a ‘millennial?’ The historians, Neil Howe and William Strauss coined the term ‘Millennial’ in 1991 and introduced the phrase in their book ‘Generations.’ These authors foresaw ‘huge changes’ in those reaching teens and 20’s in 2000. “They predicted the crime rate would go down, families would be closer and these 20-somethings would be more risk averse.”² How did these millennials fair as it related to their religious beliefs and upbringing and what traits and behaviors had been passed to them by their parents, a previous generation known today as ‘Baby Boomers?’

Howe and Strauss both “demonstrated a predictable cycle where generational personalities form in opposition to their immediate predecessors but share significant traits with groups they may never meet. People born between around 1980 and 2000, for example, shares many traits with the group born from around 1900 to the mid-1920s. Howe and Strauss called this the G.I. generation but it's more commonly known at The Greatest Generation... The term has been too maligned with insults like narcissistic, entitled and lazy to be accepted as neutral.”³

Again Dictionary.com defines it as “a person born in the 1980’s or 1990’s, especially in the U.S.; a member of Generation Y.”⁴ Others explanations include those who have become the first generation to come to of age in the new millennium. From the book Myth of the Millennial,

2. “What Is A Millennial Anyway? Meet The Man Who Coined The Phrase,” Forbes Business, accessed October 3,

2017, <https://www.forbes.com/.../what-is-a-millennial-anyway-meet-the-man-who-coined-th>.

3. Ibid

4. Dictionary.com, accessed October 2, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com>

they might even be described as ‘some form of fantastic beast that cannot be understood.’ From whatever your vantage point, the millennial is distinct in character, identity and the way they view the world.

This research will also seek to discover the challenges that face the church as they proceed to include millennials in their worship service, and seek to understand the adjustments churches are willing to make to include them. How does this stand up against the primary source of this investigation, the Word of God. Does the impact of the Word affect the millennials? Are the words and work of the church meaningless in their attempt to reach the millennials?

What is being seen today as it relates to millennials even attending church services is that their attendance is slack and inconsistent. This research will attempt to discover what is the cause for their lack of connection to the church? Is it that the church is not handing down the doctrine, the tools, the understanding and the seed of the Word of God to assist the millennials in living a pure and holy lifestyle which is necessary and required for entry in the Kingdom of God? Therefore it appears that there is a disconnect between the church disseminating the true Gospel of Jesus Christ to millennials and their being drawn into assembling for worship and service or becoming disciples of right living, thereby meeting God’s standards.

The situation appears crucial if not deadly and this research seeks out resolution to connecting the missing piece, reconciling the true church and the ‘millennials’. The end result of not receiving and or taking hold of what is known to be ‘sound doctrine’ will bring about an eternity problem, which is a problem to be avoided. Therefore what if anything can be changed or what has changed and should be changed back. The task of this research is to discover why there is such disconnect between the church and the millennials as this research will question if the face of the church is showing the true face of Christ in order to reach every generation. Has

the church sacrificed the real Gospel Message and presented this generation with no substance and offering simply fluff. The second task would be to expose the rituals of the church which may be different from the commands of Christ which He put in place to reach the masses from generation to generation. Then to challenge the church to get back the message of the church which Christ is the head, the risen Savior and servant leader, in order to restore this generation and the ones that will follow a place in the church, and ultimately the Kingdom. The scripture spoken by Jude stressed “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). KJV The millennials are in search and seeking something, that missing piece of the puzzle, the key that reconnects them back to the church, back into the Kingdom and back into the arms of a loving Savior.

Bibliography

"59 Percent of Millennials Raised in a Church Have Dropped ..." Accessed September 3, 2017. <http://www.bing.com/cr?IG=9B0832CF763C4CA0862572897F9F2AEE&CI,5064.1>.

Dictionary.com. "." Accessed October 2, 2017. <http://www.dictionary.com/>.

Doering, Ted, and Chelsey Doering. *Myth of the Millennial: Connecting Generations in the church*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2017.

Forbes Business. "What Is A 'Millennial' Anyway? Meet The Man Who Coined The Phrase.." Accessed October 3, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/.../what-is-a-millennial-anyway-meet-the-man-who-coined-th..>

Holy Bible, King James Version.

Howe, Neil, and William Strauss. *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. New York, NY: Vintage Books., 2000.

Littles, Jessica "Gospel Artists Address Why Millennials Are Leaving The Church ." Essence.com. September 08, 2017. Accessed September 09, 2017. <http://www.essence.com/entertainment/gospel-artists-address-why-millennials-are-leaving-church>

McFarland, Alex, and Jason Jimenez. *Abandoned faith: why millennials are walking away and how you can lead them home*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017.

Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation." Time. Accessed September 05, 2017. <http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation>

"Who Are Millennials " Millennial Marketing Accessed September 03, 2017 <http://www.millennialmarketing.com/who-are-millennials>

Written by Natasha Sistrunk Robinson on March 6, 2017, and Written by Natasha Sistrunk Robinson on March 6, 2017. "Millennials are Leaving the Church, Who Cares?" Missio Alliance. March 05, 2017. Accessed September 03, 2017. <http://www.missioalliance.org/millennials-leaving-church-cares>.