

'The Millennials'
How Far Should The Church Go to Reach Them?
Has The Church Already Gone too Far?

Beverly J. Elliott
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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 is 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.

1Peter 2 affirms:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). KJV

2 Timothy 3 warns:

“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; ² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ³ For 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*; ⁴ And *they shall turn away their ears from the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵ But 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)

So, who are those known as millennials? They will be introduced them in the following pages.

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Introduction

Who are the Millennials?

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.”¹ 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, share 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 as The Greatest Generation... The term has been too maligned with insults like narcissistic, entitled and lazy to be accepted as neutral.”²

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.”³ 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, they might even be described as ‘some form of fantastic beast that cannot be understood.’ From

1. “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>.

2. Ibid

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

whatever your vantage point, the millennial is distinct in character, identity and in the way they view the world.

But there are others that argue what the Millennials are all about. Another author gives this generation of individuals a different name but the names will be reminiscent of the total package revealed. Author Jean Twenge suggests that ‘today’s young people speak the language of the self as their native tongue.’

The individual has always come first, and feeling good about yourself has always been a primary virtue. Everything from music to phone calls to entertainment is highly personalized enjoyed on a cellphone instead of with the whole family. This generation is unapologetically focused on the individual, a true Generation Me... They are sometimes called Gen Y or Millennials... The Gen Me title may not replace those other labels but it does nicely capture the group of people who grew up in an era when focusing on yourself was not just tolerated but actively encourage. Generation Me’s expectations are highly optimistic; they expect to go to college, to make lots of money, and perhaps even to be famous.⁴

So why would the ‘millennials’ be considered to be a problem or considered to have a problem when it comes to their religion, beliefs systems, how they think and how they receive information. .Has the world come to a time, in the present day in which people, mainly the millennials, 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.”⁵

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

4. Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled--and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (New York: Atria Books, 2014), 3

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

churches today. The situation appears crucial if not deadly and this research seeks out resolution to connecting the missing pieces, reconciling the true church and the ‘millennials’. Another problem that has to be dealt with is how did this generation in particular have so many negative labels, which has resulted in this present age having so much more turmoil? How do they have at their fingertips so much technology and many available tools in which to access this technology, making them fast paced, knowledgeable, confident, success driven, opportunist, expressive, empowered, and adventurers, and yet they are confused, frustrated, disconnected, disjointed, aggressive, miserable, a microwave mentality, impatient, sense of entitlement, late bloomers, narcissistic, liberal in attitude towards ie: (politics and economics), nonchalant in ethical matters and lacking foundational and traditional standards in personal and religion areas. In an interview with David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group who adds to the understanding of Jason Jimenez in his concern with the amount of confusion, hurt, and rejection issues many young people carry within. They seem to have ‘bits and pieces’ of the truth, but because they were never taught and disciplined in the Christian faith, they lack a biblical worldview and he outlined three major reasons why millennials are less Christian than their parents and grandparents.

At the Barna Group, our research shows correlations, and cannot definitively say what the reasons are for loss of faith among millions of millennials. We listen to their stories, their experiences and their perceptions and we can look at larger social changes that are taking place. Three things that are different than previous generations: 1) greater levels of access to ideas and worldviews, particularly through the Internet; 2) intensified degree of alienation from institutions and relationships; 3) more skepticism of authority, whether that is from the government, church or the Bible. These three conditions are creating the soil in which a more skeptical, post-Christian mind-set is taking root.⁶

6. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* (Carol Stream, IL:: Focus on the Family, 2017), pg. 26-7

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 this paper believes can be avoided. What if anything can be changed or what has changed and should be changed back. The view point of Twenge is different than that of Howe and Strauss who felt that the Millennials would bring in a return to ‘duty, civic responsibility, and teamwork.’ But as she points out further in her book that;

GenMe’ers enjoy unprecedented freedom to pursue what makes them happy and to look past traditional distinctions based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. Their high expectations, combined with and increasingly competitive world have led to a darker flip side, in which they blame other people for their problems and sink into anxiety and depression. Perhaps because of the focus on the self, sexual behavior has also changed radically: these days, sex outside of marriage is not the main story.. the focus is on hooking up, or sex without the benefit of a romantic relationship at all. There is little evidence that today’s young people feel such attachment to duty or to group cohesion and are significantly less civically engaged and less trustful of government and other large institutions than Boomers were in the 1970’s.⁷

Missing pieces

It is proposed by this paper that churches are bending over backwards to gain the participation and membership of these millennials, but they are not giving them the staying power to have a true relationship with Jesus, which would somehow hold them in the congregation. If the millennials could recognize the ‘real’ meaning of ‘the church’ and the authentic message of Jesus and His commandment and His commission, it is believed that no church, pastor, bishop or leader would need a gimmick to draw them in or keep them. So this research paper is on a journey in a quest of the missing pieces. Authors McFarland and Jimenez say that ministering to millennials is a ‘daunting task.’ Unfortunately Christian parents are trying to discover where they went wrong because their adult children want no part of

7. Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident*, pg. 9

Christianity. The church is however filled with pews of parents in pain over this issue. These authors say there is hope but the pain of this issue must be dealt with and not swept under the pew. The suffering in silence must stop and there is still hope for their return like the Prodigal son.

The shift in faith on the part of the millennial generation has captured the minds of experts and produced a ton of research. Many have sought answers to explain the decline of Christianity among millennials. What happened to them? Where did we go wrong? Will they ever come back? So far, the church has been generally unsuccessful. Attempts to ‘dumb down’ the message of the gospel have been a big mistake. There have been efforts to modernize and introduce loud, secularized worship music, played by people on stage wearing beanies, tight cut V-neck T shirts, and ridiculously skinny jeans. Fail. Some churches have attempted to create an atmosphere where everyone is right and no one is wrong. Total fail. Much of the church’s strategy is totally wrong.⁸

Every parent has some regrets and many of the Christian parents wish they hadn’t sheltered their children from cultural issues and constantly evaluating their choices, so that by the time they entered college they met with culture shock. If we take the time to look back at the stories of Moses and Samuel, we will see that giving your children back into the hands of God their creator will change history as you leave them in God’s hand and trust His guidance. This is the part that starts in the home as little children become the fabric of the home, the church will encounter the millennials at a different level. Another major problem that has been exposed actually started before the mass exodus of millennials from the church, “there was a mass exodus of fathers leaving their families. Their fathers had already stopped making church a priority. Before doubts took hold of millennials, fear and doubts were already embedded in their parent’s lives.”⁹ The parents become disconnected and they lose sight of their role as a parent.

8. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials* pg. 6

9. *Ibid.*, pg. 35

Young people have observed that the faith they grew up in was at times a cultural activity instead of a truly spiritual one. When Jason Jeminez moved his family from Arizona to North Carolina he noted that there were so many Christians in one place, but to his surprise most of the people claiming to be Christians were Christian in name only. They had religious and denominational affiliations, but very few had conversion stories as did the families who came from difficult backgrounds back in his home town.

This research will also seek to discover the challenges that face the church as they proceeded 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, or is the Word even preached, so that they are driven to make a proper decision that will affect their eternal living arrangement? Are the words and work of the church meaningless in their attempt to reach the millennials because of the activities and ministries only scratch the surface of what it really means to be born again?

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 beginning in the home life, what the parents have presented to these millennials, whether it was a one or two parent house, and then a disconnection 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. If the parents had stress in the home and did not live a Christian life before them, it was not likely that this young people would voluntarily attend church. It is more than conjecture that children become who they are going to be by the principles that have been instilled in them by the time they are five years of age.

Seven Major Reasons that Millennials Abandon Faith

Co-authors Geisler and Jimenez deal with some very interesting questions in their book and their answers should bring concern to the church. One of their questions was, 'why are so many young people abandoning the faith?' Their answers will shed some light on the issues as it relates to the dilemma of millennials and this paper is in agreement that their findings should move many into immediate action.

Many millennials (18-29) who claim to be Christians never had a true conversion to begin with. The pat Sunday school prayers that churches and revival have people recite don't guarantee salvation. Many never came to truly believe in Jesus Christ, repent from their sins, and give their lives to God. 2) The simple fact is that a large majority of Christian parents have done a poor job living out their faith and raising their children in the Bible (Eph. 6:4) Greater emphasis on rewarding good behavior than on being obedient to God's Word. 3) Doubts about the Bible often get the best of millennials. You would think that after being raised in Christian home and attending church for years, they would have a strong faith in the Bible but in fact they don't. They never really felt they could express their doubts and concerns regarding Christianity at home or in the church. This caused a level of intellectual skepticism to sprout up and choke any roots of faith they had left. 4) Millennials fail to see the connection faith has to culture Their lack of involvement in the church damages their ability to connect faith to day to day life. They grow up and have no idea the role faith should play in their careers, personal interests, or future lives. 5) Hypocrisy and compromise in the church play a significant role in many millennials abandoning the faith. They see the church as more concerned about money and membership than about teaching the Bible. 6) The majority of millennials are biblically illiterate. They neglected reading and applying the Bible. So when competing belief or religion comes their way they are unable to defend the Christian faith. 7) Millennial have never actually been taught about the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The focus has been more on the celebrity pastor than on the Savior, Jesus

Christ. More time and resources are devoted to launching satellite campuses than to training up the next generation in the Word of God. The result: Millennials never encounter Jesus.¹⁰

There are many more possibilities why the young people are leaving church, but what has been exposed already is serious and needs some tending to by believers. The situation appears crucial if not deadly and this research seeks out resolution to connecting the missing pieces, reconciling the true church and the ‘millennials’. As Christians it is known by believers the end result of not following Christ and living life as Jesus commanded and if one never accepts His principles the end result is deadly. That very factor would have scared straight the previous generations and it did for a season. However this generation of millennials is made up of a different fiber, a generation that questions everything, the good and the bad they receive, and almost take nothing at face value. This is not necessarily a bad thing. 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.

Problems With All Generations – Still He Called Disciples

Jesus knew there would be problems in every generation, but it challenged those that He chose to follow Him. What did He see in them to make them His choice? Doering says, “people are messy and sinful. This is a truth the Church has known for thousands of years; In fact, it’s a truth Jesus knew very well and embraced...His circle was full of people who should have hated one another on principle, tax collectors, prostitutes, religious zealots, the wealthy, everyday folks and perhaps they did. But Jesus called them together, one by one, and told them all the same thing: follow Me. Jesus is the point. He is the constant factor in the lives of all people. He is the

10. Norman Geisler and Jason Jimenez, *The Bible's Answers to 100 of Life's Biggest Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2015), pgs.271-72.

gatherer of His followers and the Shepherd of His people, no matter how apathetic or irritating or messy they may be...The leaders of His Church, learners of His law, and blessed receivers of His grace, ought to go and do likewise.”¹¹ “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ’ (1 Cor. 11:1)

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 in 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 3). KJV The millennials are in search and seeking something, those missing pieces of the puzzle, which is believed to be ‘sound doctrine,’ faith and relationship with Jesus the Christ, fasting and prayer in their daily lives, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit are the keys that reconnects them back to the church, back into the Kingdom and back into the arms of a loving Savior.

How Does The Contemporary Church Meet Millennial Needs?

The word contemporary can be described as existing, occurring, or living at the same time; belonging to the same time: and of the present time; modern: Therefore this contemporary meaning is generating synonymic words such as instant, modern, present day, current, latest, mod, and now. These words are hard pressed against the forms of tradition and its meanings which anchors on something be handed down or relating to or characteristic of the older style.

11. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial: Connecting Generations in the church*. (St. Louis, MO: ConCORDING Publishing House, 2017), pg. 29

The traditional is joined by words such as classic, common, conventional historic, old, and long established. We can certainly see a meaningful difference as it relates to those things, ordinances, lifestyles, and more particularly our everyday churches and church services which incorporates the people of the era, those that embrace the contemporary and those that shun the traditional. This includes the scope of our older generations and certainly the ‘Millennials’ as well.

Are the Millennials Participating?

In his book *You Lost Me*, David Kinnaman gives us his bottom line view of what millennials are thinking relationally, spiritually and intellectually. He says that “we have failed to help young people see that Christianity is a comprehensive way of living all of life. Millennials see no connection to what you believe spiritually and how you actually live. They’ve seen how spiritual things help on Sunday morning and Wednesday night, but don’t see how it translates into their everyday lives like how they compete on the field, or perform in school, or behave in their relationships. When they go off to university, their faith comes under attack. They are faced with different kinds of world view and moral challenges, and it’s extremely rough, if they have an undeveloped faith, so they disengage.”¹²

There is also something else that is noticed as it relates to Millennials and the church is not always willing to keep up with their pace. In the age of the information highway and Google if the message of the Gospel is not included and universally correct, it may be argumentative and dismissed. When everything is at the fingertips of the world, Millennials have ‘lost their ability to be bored.’ Millennials “constantly need to check in on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and

12. David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith*, Reprint ed. (Chicago: Baker Books, 2016), 91

Snapchat. Millennials never have a dull moment because of one word; smartphone. They always check in on something and if they have exhausted all options, they can always check LinkedIn. Communication with the opposite side of the world is as easy as touching a screen, and available anywhere there is a signal... Waiting seconds has become a Herculean task. When the amount of content is measured in gigabytes per second, ninety seconds feels like an eternity.”¹³ Many of the churches have not caught up to this fast pace and most of the millennials don’t have the patience to bring them up to speed. The church is left in a fog as they don’t always perceive the problem and many times when they get it they push too hard and both sides lose.

Our contemporary church is breaking to the traditional ties that bound them to the first century church. In an essay, written by Dr. John H. Armstrong he states that “the contemporary plan is plain... create a worship service (none dare call it liturgy) that is fast-paced, light on doctrine and very heavy on music and drama. We are preoccupied, with being “trendier-than-thou.”¹⁴ He notes that one church advertises, ‘Church like You’ve Never Seen It Before’ while another in which this author has observed advertises, ‘Changing the Way We Do Church.’ So we can ask why are we looking for a church likened unto one we have not seen before and or one that is not based on the principles, doctrines or standards that has been taught by Jesus. Did not Jesus proclaim that “upon this rock I will built my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18) KJV One question that prevails and in our race to have the biggest, and most captivating sanctuary, or church building that the churched, unchurched and millennials have ever laid their eyes on, is our thought as to what the church looks like to its Pastors and

13. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial*: pg. 43

14. Dr. John H Armstrong, “” “The Contemporary Church” - albatrus.org, www.albatrus.org/english/church-order/worship/contemporary_church.htm.

leaders and does it look any different in what Jesus says the church should be. Many questions come to the forefront as what is observed by those outside of the buildings in which many worship, and how the church which is not the building is being presented worldwide. C. Peter Wagner writes that ‘church growth thinking leads to a methodology that is “phenomenological” not “theological.”

“That approach (i.e. phenomenological) may appear altogether too subjective to many traditional theologians...As a starting point, church growth often looks to the 'is' previous to the 'ought.'...What Christians experience about God's work in the world and in their lives is not always preceded by careful theological rationalizations. Many times the sequence is just the opposite: theology is shaped by Christian experience.”¹⁵

When we look at the contemporary church, there appears to be a disconnect in communicating the foundational truths of the New Testament to what is also known as a new age church that is in search of its own truth. Can there be a meeting of the minds, or does one point of view need be considered as right while the other is considered wrong? The Contemporary church seeks to be inclusive of all people, and finding new means of making all who enter into its doors, comfortable and finding their own niche into a newly developed spiritual environment that is lacking and is leaving out the teachings, preaching, and the moral and spiritual fiber of the Bible, and the practical principles cited in the New Testament? Are they thereby painting a very vague message for the ‘truth seekers’ of the Contemporary church to engage themselves?

The internal growth of the existing church and the apparent frenzy to plant new churches under some denominational title will be seen in positive light in regards to this research, if the outreach embraces the true Gospel message. Creativity in this outreach is healthy if the church

15. John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010), 79.

will base its foundational truth on the principles of the Scriptures. However it has been seen far too many times the quick establishment of the new movements will lack doctrinal truths.

Despite it being important that as the Gospel is spread to every nation and people, it should make sense that more locations should be acquired to accommodate the people that will be drawn to the faith.

But problems arise when there is confusion between the clarity of the Gospel message and the increased trending to overlay or set as priority the emphasis on building a mission for monetary gain and prestige with secondary emphasis on making disciples. The Scriptures establishes for growth, principle and order, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). KJV

There is a tendency, because of the technological age in which we live to compromise and restructure the Contemporary church and its worship service to focus on the culture of people with which we desire to attract otherwise they will take their business elsewhere. At the growing communities of Millennials fingertips are advertisements of many of the different menus of worship in which they might choose to fit their liking or that which appeals to their circumstances. As stated by one of the focus scriptures to this research that “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; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3-4a). KJV

Knowing this factor as it relates to the contemporary church, the traditional membership and this age of millennials, causes one to consider the message that is being put out there, locally, universally, socially and technologically. Meeting needs does not always satisfy needs; it often strokes further ones and raises the pressure of eventual disillusionment...Need is subject

to consumer fashion and become shallow, plastic and manipulative.”¹⁶ The drive to meet ‘felt needs’ can cover up the ‘real need’ that the truth of the Gospel from the New Testament which expresses in particular the Pauline writings, separation from God.

What is Happening to the Traditional Church?

From the days of Pentecost, with the eleven disciples and a few Apostles it has been seen how these men and women brought about a dramatic change in the world simply preaching and teaching about one Jesus. But today, Jared Wilson challenges the churches to action that “we ought to recover the roots of real Christianity before those who care are too few to do anything useful about it.”¹⁷ He provides six trends the real church might take into consideration which factor into the problems which Millennials will face in the Contemporary church. Four of them are listed here:

1. Pastors are increasingly hired for their management skills or rhetorical ability over and above their biblical wisdom or their meeting of the biblical qualifications for eldership. (They can be both great speakers and great students of Scripture; and they can both attract crowds and proclaim the gospel. The problem is that, while they are not mutually exclusive, the latter qualities in each contrast have lost priority and consequently have lost favor. We have not prospered theologically or spiritually when we emphasize the professionalization of the pastorate.) 2. The equating of “worship” with just one creative portion of the weekly worship service and 3. The prevalent eisegesis in Bible study classes and small groups. (One reason we have struggled to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus is that we incorrectly assign our terminology (equating worship with music only) and thereby train our people to think in truncated, reductionistic ways. In the process of examining the text and “drawing out” its true meaning, the application supplants interpretation in the work of Bible study, so it has become less important to see what the Bible means and more important to make sure the Bible is meaningful to us. 4. Biblical illiteracy. (Our people don’t know their Bible very well, and this is in large part

16. Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Hourglass Books, 1993),

17. Jared C. Wilson, “6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church,” biblestudytools.com, www.biblestudytools.com › Bible Study › Explore the Bible 6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church / Bible Study

the fault of a generation of wispy preaching and teaching (in the church and in the home). Connected to this factor is the church's accommodation and assimilation of the culture's rapid shifting from text-based knowledge to image-based knowledge.)¹⁸

There are some trends that are impacting the decline of Churches especially when it comes to the Traditional church across America. But those Contemporary churches are also not able to stand as strong because of the lack of foundational teaching. Here are a few reasons:

1. "The demographic remapping of America.
2. Technology. (Technology is changing everything we do, including how we "do" church. Instead of embracing the technology and adapting their worship experiences to include the technology, scores of traditional churches, mainline Protestant, and almost all Catholic churches do not utilize the very instruments that, without which, few Millennials would know how to communicate or interact. However, when I suggest to pastors and priests, that they should use social media, most of the ministers look at me as if I've lost my mind. What they should be more concerned about is why the Millennials have little or no interest in what they have to say.)
3. Leadership Crisis (clergy abuse, the cover-up by the Church)
4. Competition
5. Religious Pluralism
6. The 'Contemporary' Worship Experience
7. Phony Advertising"¹⁹

The complaints from this generation are seemingly accurate when it comes down to what 'truth seekers' are looking for when they attend church. You have to admit when we see the 'falling away' in all churches, that something is going wrong and in need of fixing. The problem is not bound by any certain community or denomination but it exists across America. What Millennials see when they enter the churches of this era, they are not comfortable with and are often repelled by what they see and hear when they get there. So many times they refuse to attend. This issue is in the small and the so called mega churches. The believers are in search of a good meal with which to feed their souls weekly and the unbelievers are just in search of truth,

18. Jared C. Wilson, "6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church," biblestudytools.com,

19. Steve McSwain, "Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore Huffpost, <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-mcswain/why-nobody-wants-to>. (accessed November 15, 2017).

which neither can find. It is sometimes not a wonder why Millennials are thrown off their game plan as they really do search for truth. They seek answers to their questions and they cannot find them. How and when will the Church begin to provide what the world is in search of? These are desperate days and the answer to this puzzle does not appear to be close at hand. But the church claims to have the answer. Still we ask, what are the missing pieces to the puzzle?

What Paul saw, he wrote in his letters. One of his purposes was to present a complete and detailed statement of the gospel message God had called him to proclaim. In his teaching he admonished, rebuked, encouraged and charged those who would believe, to live a holy life. He did not bring condemnation but the understanding of what it meant to mankind, he brought hope, instruction, and the standards held in righteousness through Christ Jesus.

We can't give up now as we've come too far and the end of time as the church knows it, that time is drawing to a close. So the church should know from a traditional stand point, that one of the keys is prayer. We need to prayer for the restoration of the real church, to bring us back to the place where God has called us.to be today and in the coming days. The question is, can the church Contemporary and Traditional become real in foundation and doctrine that the Millennials will have a desire to 'draw nigh'? Since the word prayer has been mentioned as key for the Millennials, we should look at what it is.

Prayer is considered to be an offering to God. David believed his prayers were offering to God "This is a central insight into prayer It's not enough to say your prayers in hopes God hears them. Prayer is so much more than that. It is an act of worship, a sacrificial offering. This image of prayer can change the way you look and think about prayer. Prayer is all about having the faith to say, not my will, but Your will be done. Anything less is a faithless prayer."²⁰ The

20. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith*), 208

Bible makes it abundantly clear that without faith it's impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) So prayer is an important part of the puzzle and like the disciples there is a need to learn what prayer is and how and what should be prayed for. Jesus was the Son of God and often times the Bible says that He would slip away to pray. If God Himself needed to pray, one must surmise that prayer is important and the church cannot make it without it. The Bible says that 'men ought always pray,' and then to "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). KJV Now would be a good time to ask "does your church pray.' Not the quick one two three prayer, but is there a time set aside either daily or weekly for a time of prayer. Is that prayer time attended by the believers and the leaders? If the church was honest they would answer, not really and not many people show up, maybe a few people from the mother's broad. You see this is one of the problems that the church has, they do not see the importance of prayer. Prayer is powerful and it is something Jesus said to do continuously, 'without ceasing.'

Can Millennials Thrive or Survive in Today's Church

Whether the church is Contemporary or a Traditional one, most millennials find it hard to connect with them for a number of obvious reasons. One church may use all kinds of methods to entice church participation, increased activities, free feeding of the people, engaging in mixed secular functions, and relaxed sermons, but the church is met with minimal results. Another church may not even venture to step up to the technological table, in essence it will always feel like grandma's church and they may never meet the needs of this right now, trying to have it all together generation. Another issue that moves lack of church going to the fore front is that millennials had become alienated by the churches inability to remain relevant to their realities,

meaning the issues that they faced daily. Many times the church is afraid to face and converse about the things that are going on in society. They don't always feel comfortable talking about hard subject with millennials. Here is how one congregation stepped up their plan to bring in not only millennials but those who had slacked off going to church. After doing their own personal survey, these are the suggestions that moved them into relevancy.

- Authenticity – The number one reason people attend the is because they perceive it as an ‘authentic’ environment. Not only do leaders have to be touchable, but congregants have to be able to see themselves in their leader. Faith, in their eyes must be attainable. A leader doesn't have to be perfect, but must be transparent if they want to win the support of the contemporary faith seeker.
- Relevance – There is nothing wrong with variety and being creative if it leads to a modern awakening: otherwise you will produce people who are well versed in ancient stories, but ignorant to 21st century living. The ancient text and modern living can coexist, but it necessitates a commitment to relevance and learning to marry them effectively. 21st century. Faith has to make sense in the 21st century. The principles are timeless. A heavenly story told in a contemporary context, for the sake of relatability.
- Room for Individual Experience. – The Millennial Generation is called Generation Y because the ask questions and then they ask more questions. They do not commit to things simply because the former generation did. They are thinkers, they process information deeply and are wired to base everything they commit to upon their own experiences. 21st century church must make faith a conversation, not a dictatorship.
- Compassion – According to a report released in 2012 by Achieve, 83% of millennials give to charity. This generation is extremely compassionate and they are all about fighting for and standing up for the underdog. A growing number are relating more to Jesus, because He modeled love, compassion, confronted injustice and made it a point to include the outcast. These are the characteristics the church of the 21st century must lead with in order to thrive.
- Cyber Savviness – Unfortunately the broader church was slow to embrace this and is now playing catchup to where people live out a large portion of their lives. 21st century faith is transitioning from the mindset of mega-church to a more convenient ‘giga-church’ model. The way people receive and respond to faith has been digitized. Many search for their inspirational messages online and give donations online. To them faith can be found on iPhones and Samsungs, and encounters with God can be facilitated via computer screens and tablets. Any place can be turned into a sanctuary.²¹

21. 5 Ways Churches Can Reach Millennials - The Christian Post
[https://www.christianpost.com/news/5-ways-churches-can-reach.](https://www.christianpost.com/news/5-ways-churches-can-reach)

“This generation is under heavy sexual bondage. The church should be gathering parenting to talk about sex in the context of the Bible and marriage...Equipping parents, not stripping them of their responsibility to teach their children about the purity and beauty of sex in marriage.”²² It is difficult and many times embarrassing to have a conversation about sex with your children, but to avoid the path of sexual addiction the church and parents must face the facts and get involved.

Living on the Edge

As we live in this fast pace society, the Millennials have made themselves known as sought of an in your face presence and the church has had to reckon with them and has been trying to put a plan in motion to engage their presence It is knowing that without youth and young adults in the church it will perish. It is simply understood that in order to appeal to this high powered group of Millennials, the church must make Christianity attractive and palatable to this generation, while endeavoring to still link some traditional aspects of religiosity. The church world needed to incorporate its belief systems and interpret the Scriptures and its Biblical principles without damaging or compromising the Word of God. But it has been a task that has brought the church too close to the edge.

As the older members watched closely over this sensitive area they knew it would be a difficult task in ministry to distinguish and dialogue between their wisdom and the strength of theological liberalism. The Pastors, preachers and teachers have now the ominous task of setting the stage for these truth seekers to pattern. Developing a message that is not too strict for their public to hear and agree with, but then creating a methodology that also does not place the Word of God in true obscurity. They would have to be present with clarity a doctrine that reveals Jesus

22. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith*, 47

to unbelievers, so they make the decision “to come out from among them” and one that they can be “in this world and not of it.” This has not seemed to be the road they have chosen. Of sorts they have become trendy, looking to meet what is a ‘felt need’ and not the need that will be satisfied for an eternity. It is an edgy agenda that represents separation of a line of helpful and motivational talks that are inclusive of this generation and the convicting power of the Gospels and Pauline texts are not heard. It is a watered down gospel that bears no fruit. The Gospel will lead one to know they have been chosen and a price has been paid, and they should follow after Jesus. The Bible says, ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me’ (John 12:32) KJV “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). KJV

Webster writes “if we are serious about the power of the Holy Spirit, we are going to be living constantly on the threshold of God’s new and powerful work. We will not only have to live with change, ambiguity and opposition: we will want to just as the early church did in Acts. The church was not meant to be a stagnant, tradition-bound institution but a dynamic, Christ-centered household of faith.”²³ If the church wants to be powerful again they must stand up and stand out and then count the cost. This can be done when the church understands building a church on Christ rather than just being concerned with gathering church members and not the making of disciples, or the marketing aspect for monetary gain and deceptive agendas. Because of the powerful message of Jesus Christ the church should be aware that “it can make the gospel interesting without entertaining, and convicting without condemning...It is a place where peer

23. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus: What's Wrong with Marketing the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009), 11

pressure, self-centeredness, anonymity and affluence are resisted.”²⁴ The contemporary church cannot waiver in its course but must stand on the tenets of the faith in Christ Jesus. They must not remain lukewarm in their decisions, but stedfast according to the power that works inside of it. As the Scriptures clearly tell us:

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. ¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:11,13,15-16). KJV

The contemporary church needs to raise its consciousness taking us back to the faithful and what are the standards and the commands of Jesus. The church first needs to know what is required of them in order that they may bring the unbelievers into the realm of safety and out of the grips of Satan’s trickery and temptations and bring liberty in the Spirit. The author Barna notes that “oblivious to the deteriorating spiritual condition of our country, the church is losing ground to the secular alternatives. The “encroachment of secularism’ and the reversal of values from spiritual to material are catching us off guard.”²⁵ In his book he also discusses the kind of Pastors and leaders which should be leading the flock are accountable, discerning people of God who spend much time in prayer They should be bringing ‘impactful messages’ to the people which lead them not to edgy public opinions but to confessions about ‘who Jesus is’ and be compelled to follow Him.

When we understand that the drawing card to this fast paced group of Millennials and truth seekers is to preach Jesus and to bring the message that will lead them to the way of the

24. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus*: 13

25. George Barna, *The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know About Life in the Year 2000*(Ventura, Calif., U.S.A.: Regal Books, 1990), p. 22

cross. Following any other methodology than lifting Jesus out of the pages of New Testament Scriptures leads to a generation of limited and more confused and laid back people who cannot answer the same question Jesus asked of His disciples, “But Whom say ye that I am?” (Mark8:29) KJV Webster adds that “Biblical preaching was God-centered, sin-exposing, self-convicting and life-challenging the direct opposite of today’s light, informal sermons that Christianize self-help and entertain better than the convict.”²⁶ It tells us that many preaching styles are just simply motivational speaking and not Bible based sermons.

The church should seek to cause it’s participants to gather to worship a ‘sovereign’ God who is worthy not based on how we feel or on our personal experiences whether they are good or bad, but find the need to communicate to this generation that God requires us to worship Him in spirit and truth of Who He is and what He has done. Scripture says, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”²⁴ God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). KJV As the contemporary church seeks to be tolerant of all lifestyles, they have also come too close to crossing the line where its members find no difference or separation to living a holy lifestyle. Their they tend to gain members that are clueless regarding the evangelical movement and believe in this palatable gospel which has no Apostolic doctrine to follow, nor heritage, standards, foundations or tenets of the faith.;

Jesus Commandment to His Disciples

The Commandment Stands

It was 40 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ that He was to ascend back to His Heavenly Father. But He did not leave His chosen disciples in the dark and without instruction.

26. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus*: p.48

This was a difficult transition for the disciples who had walked with Jesus for three and a half years to now face persecutors of Christians, and still be unsure as to what they were to do next.

As Jesus visited with them and showed Himself a few times to His followers, He would tell them with clarity all they would need to do for their survival and to continue to carry the Gospel message and that of the Kingdom that He had already laid out for them. After all the suffering and the mission was now complete, but now the real work would need to be accomplished. Jesus tells these shaken apostles not to leave Jerusalem, but before they could ‘go,’ they had to ‘wait’ there because of the promise given by His Father. The Scripture tells us in Acts, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5) KJV

But as the disciples questioned Jesus concerning the Kingdom, He replies, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1: 7-8). KJV As the Gospels bring to light Jesus instructions, we can see more clearly that Jesus command still stands today. Those disciples had to remain there in Jerusalem, in one place and on one accord until they received the power to accomplish this new assignment.

In the Gospel of Matthew we do not see the event of Jesus ascension take place but we do however hear His final charge to the disciples before He leaves them giving them what we know today as the ‘Great Commission.’ “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”

(Matt. 28: 17-20). NIV So we understand that this Great Commission was not only meant for the 11 disciples who were His constant companions, but the commission is left for every person that calls themselves a Christian or follower of Christ, to take hold of this final directive, which was not meant to be a casual suggestion, but a command to be obeyed. The Great Commission applies to every disciple of Christ in every and all generations.

As the Christian takes heed to this word to ‘go’ and ‘make disciples’ and to ‘baptize’ and to ‘teach,’ they will fulfill the assigned commission. This command is the central purpose for everyone who believes in the plan of salvation, and because of faith in Christ and His work, each Christian will begin to work in the Kingdom to make more disciples. Jesus promised that His presence and authority would be with His followers every day and every step of the way. As He made His first followers ‘fishers of men,’ He has called His new followers to do the same and gives the same promise. The power of the Holy Spirit will enable each witness to continue to make disciples in His absence and until He returns.

As this paper lays more foundation in the Word for Millennials there is a question as to what does this command mean to the church today. All of those who profess to be Christians have been assigned to become ministers of reconciliation. As the church becomes disciples it is a responsibility to continuously make more disciples. Reproduce yourself and bear fruit. It is not enough just to make the disciples and then leave them out there on their own to fend for themselves, but continue the assignment to teach them and nurture them as Christ did the first disciples and the men and women that followed Him. Here is the assignment for the church as it relates to millennials. They have got to be taught and Jesus was the prime example of a teacher. He didn’t call the disciples and leave them. As a matter of fact the book of Matthew it tells us that God has always been with us. His name Immanuel spoken of in chapter one means ‘God

with us.’ He continued throughout Matthew to walk with those that followed Him, and then Matthew ends his book with the promise that He will always be with those who believe and follow Him.

When Jesus called His disciples He walked with them three and a half years and He taught them and they grew in knowledge, even if it did not appear to be so, or quickly. However what knowledge they grasped, they changed the world with it. What an example the world has and without an excuse to follow. It would seem that the Millennials and future generations will still have a fighting chance to get to know Jesus, if the church, the older ones, the mature ones in the ways of Christ, could reach them and would get busy and teach them. The church can show their love for Christ by keeping His commandments and their love will also be reflected by their obedience in doing what is required. They will not only learn, but will become followers in doctrine and in conduct of life.

We can always find a reason to not engage the lost, but at the end of the day, excuses don’t win souls. But in all of those things what we find is people have to find courage, obedience, willingness, to take the step and to use those means. Use the tools or don’t. But share the Gospel.

On the other side people say, “Culture is too resistant. People don’t want to hear the Gospel.” Yet the reality is the opposite. Our studies show that younger adults are more willing to have spiritual conversations than older adults. They’re turned off by the church, but not by spiritual conversations. “So rather than making our primary focus inviting younger adults to church, let’s first seek to tell them about Jesus and the good news of the Gospel that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and in our place. When they grasp that, they’ll get the church part.

They'll understand they can't love Jesus and despise His wife. They'll get that. But let's first bring them Jesus.”²⁷

The truth of the Gospel must be presented in its fullness that is the responsibility that should not be taken lightly. God will handle the rest. Mark tells us again in his Gospel the words of Jesus, “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” (Mark 16: 15-16). KJV The job of the church is to follow the instructions and when the people respond to the Gospel, the good news, they will be open to be taught. Their confession of Christ is what we look for and their baptism, a onetime event is good, but that is only part of what is necessary to becoming a disciple. It is the teaching part that could take a lifetime and is a life changing process for the individual. We are talking about the change that make one a ‘new creature’ in Christ, where ‘old things’ are passed away and they have a newness of life. Once the Millennials, our target group gets a glimpse of whom Jesus is and what He has done for them individually, crucified on the cross and resurrected then they will want to know more of how to connect with Jesus and His bride.

It is the will of the Father that ‘all’ men be saved, even though our focus today are the Millennials, everyone has “to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). KJV This means the assignment of the church is to preach the Gospel to the whole earth and it looks as if technology will allow the church to do so, meaning no one will escape the hearing of the Word. The church however must come with it.

What that Commandment means to the Church Today?

Is the Commandment Relative/Relevant

27 . "Aspiring to the Great Commission Is Not Enough: . . .," Christianity Today., www.christianitytoday.com/...great-commission-is-not-enough-knowing

Paul's ministry also reveals the need for contextualization, perhaps most notably in his sermons recorded in Acts. Paul intentionally addressed his Jewish listeners one way but addressed pagan philosophers differently. When he addressed Jews, Paul began with Scripture. When he addressed Gentiles, he began with general revelation." The focus of Paul's sermons remained the same—the Gospel. However, Paul shifted his presentation of the Gospel to fit the worldviews of his listeners.

"Contextualization, then, is simply about sharing the Gospel well. Those who deliberately practice the process of contextualization desire to have an element of intentionality in their Gospel sharing; they desire to share the Gospel in way that is most relevant to the culture they are addressing."²⁸

How God added to the First Church

On The Day of Pentecost in the book of Acts we see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and then Peter going forth of the word of the Lord and the Scripture says in Acts 2: 37 "they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2: 38-42, 47). KJV

28. "What is Contextualization? Presenting the Gospel in Culturally Relevant Ways," Christianity Today, May 4, 2017, www.christianitytoday.com/ct/topics/g/great-commission.

For the Lord to add to His first church, it was just His spoken Word. The disciples were in one place with a singleness of mind, no glam, no glitz, and no game. God simply did it and He can do it again if the church would allow Christ to be the focus for the people. Now they built up their local church, but God commanded them to not only preach in Jerusalem but in Samaria and other parts of the earth. It was only through them being persecuted that put a fire under them and made them move to other places. And as the apostles went about preaching and teaching they encouraged the new converts to strengthen them in their faithfulness to Christ.

Here we have the beginning of the New Testament church. A small number of men sent out by God to preach the gospel throughout the world, and they did it, even in the face of persecution. Even with their zeal, they depended totally on God “Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed... The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19,21). NIV God’s power and wisdom was key to them being successful as they continued to preach the Word and their only tool of evangelism that they employed was the Gospel.

So here is the fatal mistake of the church. They do not depend on the organization and the power of God, His message, guidance, and protection to bring in the loss. Ephesians gives us the answer to the power which we seek, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21). KJV They apply their own methods, which now leads the church into a denominational method of madness.

Therefore the church lays in their own mess without a clear and biblically supported message with which to attract Millennials and the lost at large. They do what comes to their own

minds and do not allow the Holy Spirit, who is the guide, to give His direction. The church always opens the doors to the church, but when will the church open its eyes to the issues that seem to be plaguing the church every day? Jesus left hope for the world, He told the disciples as He taught them therefore it is up to the church to ‘keep hope alive.’

How Did Jesus Describe the Church and It’s Purpose?

The word "church" as rendered in the New Testament comes from the Greek term *ekklesia* which is formed from two Greek words meaning "an assembly" and "to call out" or "called out ones." This means the New Testament church is a body of believers who have been called out from the world by God to live as his people under the authority of Jesus Christ:

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

At the same time, all believers are members of the universal church. The universal church is made up of every single person who has exercised faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, including members of every local church body throughout the earth:

“This group of believers or ‘the body of Christ’ began in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost through the work of the Holy Spirit and will continue to be formed until the day of the rapture of the church.

The purpose of the church is two-fold. The church comes together (assembles) for the purpose of bringing each member to spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13).

The church reaches out (scatters) to spread the love of Christ and the gospel message to unbelievers in the world (Matthew 28:18-20).

This is the Great Commission, to go out into the world and make disciples. So, the purpose of the church is to minister to believers and unbelievers”²⁹

The church, both in the universal and local sense, is important because it is the primary vehicle through which God carries out his purposes on earth. The church is the body of Christ—his heart, his mouth, his hands, and feet—reaching out to the world.

29. “The Church (the Body of Christ),” Doctrine.org, doctrine.org/the-church-the-body-of-christ.

Has the Church Changed its Message?

A few questions should be asked of ourselves, as it relates to the original message of Jesus. Begin with, ‘what has happened to the strong calls for repentance that would bring so many running to the altar crying ‘what must I do to be saved?’ ‘Has the cross where Jesus died, lost its power to save?’ ‘Where has the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gone?’ ‘Do we tarry for the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus commanded His disciples to be in one place and on one accord when the power fell?’ Is it just a fable that when Peter preached that day 3,000 souls were added to the church?’ Once a person received Christ there was the ‘Great Commission’ to ‘go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’ (Mark 16:15). KJV Did Jesus actually mean that the church should do that today? ‘What happened to the miracles we saw as Jesus and His disciples do as they moved about from place to place, or doesn’t the Contemporary church have that kind of faith? Were the play by play narratives of the Gospels and the encouragements, teachings, and corrections from the Pauline texts not relative for this generation? Is the power of God and the love of Jesus not meant for Millennials? Did God give Millennials itching ears and a stony heart? What is really wrong with the Church and why is the Word not reaching this generation with the power of the Holy Spirit?

At times when it was thought that the Gospel message was too harsh and not being well received, some decided to make changes. “Where once the church emphasized God’s perfect holiness, now they emphasized His abundant love. Where the church emphasized obedience, now they emphasized success. Where the church emphasized sin, now they emphasized happiness. Where they focused on God’s demands, now they emphasized man’s specialness and

abilities.”³⁰ As this was done people began to come to church again but as years went by, they began to see that people were ‘not growing’ deep in their faith and disciples were not being made.

Getting the message out there, Wilson cites S. Morgenthauer who says, “worship is witness and witness is worship. The theological point is sound; when believers are engaged in the worship of God this worship communicates to a lost world who God is and what He has done.”³¹ The message of this worship becomes evangelism, which is a desired effect.

As this research has been observing from the many writings, we can almost see the consensus leads one to believe that the message is the same, but the manner in which the message has been delivered has been altered. The emphasis of the message seems to have shifted into a negative light. Not only has the message been altered, but the attitude and the agenda of the deliverer has also been replaced by greed, the pride of life and by blasphemers.

Interviews

This section includes some brief interviews with approximately eleven people ranging in age from twenty one to seventy five. The question asked was based on the title of this research. I asked the question and they responded for the most part in writing. Here are those interviews.

Interview One

Most Millennials don’t like to associate with most churches because they feel they are scams, and only interested in money. This is why they are turned off. They don’t think religion is a scam, just the churches. They are looking for something real and authentic. They have some roots in the church because of parents or grandparents, but usually they are connected to God

30. Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: a Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), p 32

31. Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: p. 10*

when they are in need. Kids usually wait too late to turn to God, it's usually when the situation is way out of hand that they go to God. They need to have a reason to pray. Most churches don't bother to keep up with technology which is why Millennials don't usually go to church. I enjoy my church because I think they are cool. For instance they text you and there are other young people there to connect to, it's not just older people. I feel like the present the truth their messages and they present options. You can make your choice if you want to go to Heaven.

When I visited a church in upstate NY where I go to college, it was different than my church. I didn't go back because I didn't like the experience. Everybody could be okay there, it was inclusive you just had to know God. I didn't feel comfortable.

I think my Pastor lets us know right from wrong and we have to make our own decisions. Sometimes I listen to music that I probably shouldn't be listening to, because it's not Godly. But I could probably explain why it's not so bad to listen to, if I were asked.

I think the church should not stay in the dark ages or be stuck in a time zone, and come up to the technology that we are using if they want the young people to be part of their churches.

Lay member Alex. Senior in College (Male)³²
Age 21

Interview Two

Author noticed her because she was tall, pretty, had a couple of tattoos, a nose piercing and attending a Pastors and Leaders conference in Atlanta

I believe that Millennials don't go to church because they always feel like they are being looked down upon or being judged. I believe they love God and just want to serve Him in ministry in their own way which is not necessarily wrong, it just may be different. I feel there is a whole culture of young people that would love to be part of the church if they weren't so judgmental and the church people would want them to be put into their mold which may not be what the Bible says. I work with the youth at my church, but it is hard to keep them interested because they are always having issues and being judged for their decisions. The church is not always as helpful as they pretend to be. (Her Dad happened to be passing and I mentioned how pretty his daughter was and that I stopped to chat with her because she had the same piercing as my daughter. He said I've tried to tell her she didn't need it, he put his head down, shock it and walked away) The conversation continued about her assignment in her church. I feel that the older church people are too settled in their way and don't want to even hear the ideas of the youth. I think if they would listen, it would not be so hard to keep them coming.

Lay church member Sis Kim – Her Dad is a Pastor attending a conference together (Female)³³
Age 28

Interview Three

32. Alex. Interview by author. (24 November, 2017). Telephone interview.

33. Kim. Interview by author. (2 November, 2017). Personal interview.

I think the church is trying to keep up with the Millennials by offering them the glitz and the glamor of the world. Sometimes they look too much like the world. I believe they are offering more of their services online in order to stay connected to the young people. But I am not sure they can tell who is actually connected to them. Their management of technology would have to be the key.

Now many of the young adult at my church are connected by family so they keep coming back and become active in the ministries. The church stays pretty relevant and I know it is partly because there is a young Pastor. He inherited the membership from his Dad recently who passed away. His mother is still there and was the Co-Pastor of the church. So there is a respect and a connection of old and young. They preach the truth and they do not sugar coat the Gospel. The young people are very involved and I see the sincerity in their service. It may not be that way in most churches. My mother goes to a church and I keep asking why does she continue there when what they do is so up and down. It's a big church with not a lot of connected young people and I think it is because they don't have a Godly standard. They bring too much of the worldly things into the church. I don't believe Millennials are looking for worldly agendas because that's what is in their face every day.

Lay church member Sis Kimberly D. Mother of four (Female)³⁴

Age 42

Interview Four

The Millennials are in trouble because ain't nobody preaching the good ole gospel truth no more. The church seems to be playing with the lives of the people that they are supposed to be feeding the real Word of God. They are padding their pockets and leaving the people out in the cold when it comes to preaching. It is scary. The church needs help

Church Minister Demetria (Female)³⁵

Age bet 40 - 45

Interview Five

It is amazing how times have changed. The church □ was a place where you did not mix secular with sacred. You didn't mix what was ordained to be offered to God with that which was profane and ungodly. How times have changed. The church has always been haunted by heresy. Even in the early church in the book of acts and the epistles of Paul there were some that came in to subvert the gospel. Jude 4 explicitly speaks of this. How some have crept in unaware. They have come in to mix and mingle while knowingly or unknowingly paving a road to hell for the believer as well as the nonbeliever. My former pastor used to say black sheep 🐑 feel more comfortable when white sheep 🐑 turn gray.

The Millennials are facing an unsure future because the church has gone too far left to try to appease them. To see where the church has come from and the direction it is going, I won't be

34. Kimberly D. Interview by author. (13 October, 2017). Telephone interview.

35. Minister Demetria. Interview by author. (28 August, 2017). Email interview.

surprised if we are unable able to tell the difference between the world and the church 20 years from now.

Former Youth and Young Adult Pastor -New Members Pastor J. (Male)³⁶

Age bet 45 and 50

Interview Six

I believe that Holiness is still right and the church has become lukewarm and they don't stand up for the real gospel. It seems as if no one is taking the word of God seriously. If we pay close attention to what is happening now in the church you can see that everybody including the Millennials are in a lot of trouble. What can I say expect we really need to pray for the people and for the church to get it right.

Youth Minister B (Female)³⁷

Age bet 45 – 50

Interview Seven

I believe that we must keep preaching the truth to draw the Millennials. We that serve the true God have to keep preaching the truth. It's amazing that Pastor don't preach the Word as they know it should be preached because many of them have person agendas. This is what is happening to our youth right now! They are not getting the Word of truth spoken to them in order to change the way they are living. It is if we are trying to please them to keep them and it's not working. We have to stand for holiness no matter the cost. I am from as they say ole school we know how to live and act. God has not changed his standards nor His Word. I don't know why the church thinks it's okay to change.

Associate Pastor G (Female)³⁸

Age 52

Interview Eight

We first need to get back to the basics of the Word and be true/real doers of it in order to be more effective and efficient in winning the loss. So, if we "conform" to the world and invite all of this in the sacred house of God then we have failed God in my eyes; we have failed the Millennials, no other way to put it. For the word tells us not to conform to the world but seems like we are giving in more and more so that we can bring in and keep people in numbers rather than win their souls and give them new life they can have in Christ. What also has to happen is that we must remember their blood is on the hands of us that know to do better - doesn't matter your title, but rather your obedience unto God and not man. Therefore, you can't allow any and everything to come in the church "ruling" the church in his/her own way that is not fitting or lining up with

36. Pastor J. Interview by author. (28 August, 2017). Email interview

37. Youth Minister B. Interview by author. (30 August, 2017). Email interview

38. Associate Pastor G Interview by author. (28 August, 2017). Email interview.

the word of God. All things that are wrong they are just that wrong and there's nothing right about it. Now we can try to remedy the wrong and bring something good out of it. If we preach only the Word of God to the young people, I believe God will turn their life around and He will get the glory. But it will take true believers of God's word to be willing to work with this thing to make it come to pass and be about God's business then the Millennials you have asked about won't be lost.

So, I won't go on and on but I feel that we are responsible for some of the things we allow to go on/take place in God's place! Get it right and go back to the old landmark I believe that is what we truly need and stop fitting in when He clearly tells us we are a 'peculiar' people set apart. God is still God and His word says He's the same yesterday today and forever; we should want to be just the same as we strive and walk to get closer and closer to Him.

Lay member with COG background. Sis D. (Female)³⁹
Age 50-55

Interview Nine

The church needs to get themselves together and get right with God before they can think about helping the Millennials. When you get to hear real preaching of the Gospel, the kind of Word that causes men and women to come to the altar, it is a breath of fresh air. This Word of God is so needed and the church has fallen so far away from the truth and they are only speaking what is popular, not just to the Millennials but to the church as a whole. The message is about getting more members and more money. They can't fix the Millennials until they fix what is wrong in the church. They are preaching a watered down message and it doesn't seem like anyone is paying attention. They are spending their hour in church just to say they have been there. The church is definitely not helping the Millennials who seem to be turned off to the church anyway. I don't think they are doing enough if they are doing anything to seriously attract the young people and God will hold them responsible for not bringing them the truth. There is nothing wrong with giving them the Word like we got it, straight and to the point. There is only two places a man can go, Heaven or Hell and one way to get there. Get right church and let's go home.

Elder J (Female)⁴⁰
Age 55- 60

Interview Ten

The church is letting the Millennials down. Titles have become too important to the leaders and to church people in general, but it is not what God is calling us for or to. It is time for the church to do some soul search. The church is not helping this generation of young people because they are not letting them know that they can't get to heaven with their sin on. Enough is enough and the church itself will have to answer to God for their lack of concern for the youth. I just feel like God is saying enough is enough. What's going on in the church today is like in the days of

39. Lay member Sis D. Interview by author. (29 August, 2017). Email interview.

40. Elder J. Interview by author. (29 August, 2017). Email interview

Noah and I feel like God is not gonna take to much more of what's going on now in the church. There has got to be change. It seems to me that church people are not interested in people anymore, they are not interested in Holiness, just interested in titles and money.

Lay member Sis D (Female)⁴¹

Age: 72

Interview Eleven

What is happening in today's world is that these things will come to pass, that there would be hypocrisy and all kinds of abomination going on in the Church, but in Matthew the 13 Chapter Jesus lets us know that the Church will not be perfect until He returns the second time, there will never be a prefect Church in this life, He let us know that the Church will be mixed, and it is our responsibility to make sure we are doing what He required for us to do. We can only get wrong results when we do wrong and we cannot save the whole sinful world when the church is wrong. He is letting us know that there will be much sin even in high places until He finally comes to bring judgement. We have to let the wheat and the tare grow together in the end Jesus will do the separation", we are never to get so focus on judging the wickedness, that we damage our relationship with God. One theologian said," The Church is a hospital for the sick sinners a place where they are suppose to get well. The Millennials don't even want to come to the church house to get mixed up with the church foolishness. The church should be able to show these Millennials God's Grace so they can see God's love but the Church should not agree with their sin but show them in love that we serve a great and wonderful savior who is able to triumph over every sin, Now this message in Matthew 13 Chapter, that's talking about letting the wheat grow with the tare is not telling us that God overlook sin, but it is telling us that judgement is coming, and it is going to be frightening and hard time so we need to encourage the Millennials, as a matter of fact everybody including church members who are not right, to run from sin and run to Christ so they can be saved. I hope this will help.

Be bless.

Church Mother M. (Female)⁴²

Age 75

What is the Plan of Action

In the Home – In the Church - In the Community – Among Millennials

Parents and the church will need to keep reinforcing Biblical truth into the lives of the children and Millennials. 1 Thess. 2: 3-20 is one of the richest and most intimate expressions of Paul in all his epistles. "Here we see the love of a true shepherd, Paul loved the people he was called to minister to so much that he referred to them as his children. He didn't just encourage

41. Sis D. Interview by author. (29 August, 2017). Email interview

42. Mother M. Interview by author. (28 August, 2017). Email interview

them and tell them to be more like Jesus. He likened his love for the Thessalonians to that of a nursing mother and protective father. What love Paul had for the church.”⁴³

An old study concludes that ‘congregational outreach programs provide a national, personal network of human services extending to virtually every community.’ The survey found churches that ‘uphold high standard of personal morality were the most alive and had the most support and growth.’ Churches that have ‘explicit, specific definitions and goals for their members and high standards for personal morality and communal justice’ report greater vitality as well as growth in participation and financial giving, says Carl Dudley co-director of a Faith Communities Today.”⁴⁴

This Gospel has the same power to save the loss today as it did two million years ago.

The real mark of the health of the church is not the size of the budget, the size of the staff, the beauty of the choir, the glory of the music, the wonder of the architecture, or any of the worldly measures we like to use. The real mark of the church in Jesus’ eyes is a church that is 100 percent dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission. Getting in the parade and bringing others into the parade and sending them back up into the stands to get some other people and bring them back down and send some others back into the stands who will bring some others back down. That’s a good standard for evaluating all our ministries. Are they equipping people to do this? Are they somehow involved in the disciple-making process. If our ministries are not doing that, we ought to change them or adjust them to bring them back into line with what Jesus was talking about two thousand years ago.⁴⁵

43. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* pg. 238

44. Tony Carnes, “New Study Reveals Which Churches Grow,” *Christianity Today* (April 23, 2001), Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

45. Dr. Ray Prtichard, “The Great Commission: Does It Still Matter?,” Jesus.org, www.jesus.org › Early Church History › Great Commission

Methodology

Many church leaders are recognizing a heartbreaking reality. We have received the good news of the Gospel but we're not actually communicating that good news. Paul writes to the church in Corinth that we are compelled by love in particular because we know if Jesus died for all, then those who live should no longer live for themselves but for the One who died for them. "Research shows that Protestant churchgoers in the United States and Canada as a whole are not telling this good news message. According to Paul, part of our new life is that we have been commissioned by God to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ. In the Transformational Discipleship study, we asked 3,000 protestant churchgoers how many times they had personally shared with another person how to become a Christian. Sixty-one percent said that they had never shared their faith, zero times. Forty-eight percent said they hadn't invited anyone to church during that period of time. Evangelism has become an afterthought for many believers. They invite their friends to church at a better rate. But inviting friends to church is not evangelism. Evangelism involves us telling people about the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."⁴⁶

Statics Show

Millennials and the Bible was a study from Barna Group conducted in partnership with the American Bible Society and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Dynamics when it comes to millennials' perception of the engagement with the Bible

- Most millennials believe the Bible to be the actual (21%) or inspired (44%) Word of God."
- The gap is widening between millennials who are engaged with the Bible (10%) and those who are considered Bible skeptics (25%)."
- Approximately one-third of millennials have positive feelings when they see someone reading the Bible in public."

46. "Aspiring to the Great Commission Is Not Enough: ...," Christianity Today., www.christianitytoday.com/...great-commission-is-not-enough-knowing..

- Non-Christian millennials believe the Bible teaches forgiveness (70%) patience (62%), generosity (64%) and social justice (41%).”⁴⁷

“In 2015, the American Psychological Association (APA) dubbed millennials the most stressed-out generation in America.”⁴⁸

- Millennials are turning to Xanax (prescription drugs) in order to cope with stress. More and more of them are slipping into unsafe patterns that will only do more harm than good.
- Millennials say that stress has a very strong impact on their physical and mental health.”
W. Travis Stewart, “Xanax and the Millennial Generation,” Addiction Hope, <http://www.addictionhope.com/Xanax-ambuse-among-college-students/Xanax-and-the-millennial-generation>.

Conclusion

A Wake Up Call to Believers

Kinnaman states that his nation’s population is increasingly resistant to Christianity, especially to the theologically conservative expressions of that faith. “The critics of the faith are becoming bolder and more vocal and the aversion and hostility are crystallizing in the attitudes of millions of young American. If we don’t wake up to these realities and respond in appropriate, Godly ways, we risk being increasingly marginalized and losing further credibility with millions of people. Despite their frustrations they are still working hard to believe the best about the faith.”⁴⁹ As we can tell from all the events that are taking place in this country and around the world the church is in trouble as they have been asleep. It is time to do our due diligence as we

47. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith*), pg 40

48. W. Travis Stewart, “Xanax and the Millennial Generation,” Addiction Hope, <http://www.addictionhope.com/Xanax-ambuse-among-college-students/Xanax-and-the-millennial-generation>.

49. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters*, Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 39.

can see what is working and what is not. The souls of the millennials are at stake and the parents, the church, the body of Christians must get on one accord and preach and teach Jesus in a way that millennials will understand.

Law and Gospel helps as Peter writes In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3:15) "The whole point of connecting well is to be able to share that hope that is in you and Jesus gives the Church this model in Matthew 18 where He explains how to seek after an unrepentant brother."⁵⁰

Millennials want to be mentored, but your purpose cannot be simply to get them to church. You must be intentional, not to up church attendance, but instead build a relationship. Millennials can spot that a mile away. "Here is the millennial secret. The message we receive from media and those older than us is that millennials are nothing but basement dwellers in our parents' homes. The accusation has somehow wormed its way into our identity. Therefore be a coach, a teacher, a mentor. It might change the way you view Millennials. This is a process that will be rough around the edges. Coaching, teaching, or mentoring a Millennial is simple. Just do it. But it may be one of the hardest things you ever do."⁵¹

"Millennials want to serve and be involved, but if your response is to either drown them out because they aren't experienced enough or only tell them why their idea is bad, you will be tearing down the next generation of the Church. Channel their energy, find places for Millennials to lead, walk them through failure. The church has an incredible opportunity to mentor. Remind

50. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial* pg. 49

51. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial* pg 51

them constantly of the identity they have in Jesus. The enemy will seek to make them forget that identity.”⁵²

Relationship is Key. Proclaiming the truth of Jesus to those outside the Church takes investment, relationship-building, and knowing your story. Don't think that you can walk up to a struggling Millennial and simply ask whether they know where they're going if they die tonight. You have just shut down any chance of connecting with them. Instead seek out a Millennial God puts in your way and invest in them with your time, your talent, and a bit of your treasure. They can tell when you are trying to sell them something as they have grown up with a marketing culture that sold them everything for bubblegum to cars.⁵³

It is the firm belief of this research that if the message is presented with the love that Jesus would bring, the Word of God still cannot lie, Jesus will draw the millennials. It does not appear that their hearts have been hardened so there is hope. The Word of God can and will co-exist with every generation. Every generation remains the creation of God, and He knows every thought and moves the people of this world will make. It is the belief of this paper that God will call them from every nation, but the church has a responsibility to bring the Gospel message as Jesus gave it. It is not up to us to fix up the message to suit the world, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, the words of the church will be guided in wisdom and the Kingdom of God will be prepared for what things are going to happen in these last and evil days.

52. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial* pg 68

53. *Ibid.*, pg 73

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