

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church**

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

by

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Millennial members' waning attendance and involvement at Simon Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a growing concern for the church universal. This project focuses on Simon Temple's ability to attract and retain millennials and draw on their church programs and leadership gifts. This study's purpose was to understand better why millennials do not become or remain active members at Simon Temple. If the church implemented a strategic evangelism and discipleship plan for millennials, could it help attract, retain, and involve millennials? This study evaluates the concerns of Simon Temple leadership and millennial members as they relate to millennial involvement or lack thereof. The goal was to increase millennial membership by twenty percent over eight weeks. The findings from this study can inform and assist churches in identifying concerns that may adversely influence millennial church attendance and participation.

Keywords: millennial, church, evangelism, discipleship, attendance.

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is that this body of work contributes to the much-needed discussion of how best to meet the spiritual needs of millennials and prepare them to lead our beloved Zion one day.

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## **Abbreviations**

AAR *After Action Review*

AME *African Methodist Episcopal*

CED *Christian Education Department*

LU-RSOD *Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity*

YACM *Young Adult Christian Ministry*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduces the importance of this study and provides a detailed description of the ministry context for Simon Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, this chapter encompasses an overview of the problem presented and the purpose statement for this study, followed by the project's basic assumptions. The author then lists relevant terms and definitions used throughout the research and the project's limitations and delimitations. The chapter concludes with the project study's thesis statement.

Compared to previous generations, millennials are not as committed to attending church and participating in the mission of Simon Temple. For this study, millennials are young adults between 25 and 40 years old (born between 1981 and 1996).<sup>2</sup> Within the past six years, the researcher has observed a significant decline in millennial church attendance, participation, membership, and leadership at her local church. In addition, the absence of millennial commitment to the church's discipleship and evangelism efforts has adversely affected the church's ability to grow and sustain its young adult ministry. Finally, the decline of millennial attendance and participation has impeded the church's ability to multiply and plant new churches.

Millennial participation is central to the church's ability to fulfill the Great Commission. Therefore, it is incumbent on church leaders to implement evangelism and discipleship strategies to attract and help millennials become spiritually mature disciples who remain and assist the

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<sup>1</sup> This research study focuses on Simon Temple AME Zion Church. Therefore, "Simon Temple" and "the church" are used interchangeably throughout the paper. If another church enters the discussion, it is referred to by name.

<sup>2</sup> The Pew Study Center defines millennials as individuals born between 1981 and 1996. Richard Fry, "Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (April 28, 2020). <https://pewstudy.org>.

local church in fulfilling its mission. Millennials view churches and denominations as institutions. As Sarah Guldalian argues, “Millennials are neither attracted to nor fond of institutions; however, they are not necessarily opposed to hearing about Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> As a result, church leaders should make Christ known to millennials and introduce them to church and denominational polity.

### **Ministry Context**

The church, formerly named Beaver Creek AME Zion Church, has over three thousand full connectional members.<sup>4</sup> On November 9, 1976, it received its current Simon Temple AME Zion Church designation. This name derives from Simon of Cyrene, an African male who assisted Jesus with carrying His cross to Calvary (Mark 15:21).<sup>5</sup> In addition, the church has had many stellar leaders that sought to propel and lead church members to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ (Matt 22:35–40; 28:16–20).<sup>6</sup> This researcher currently serves as an associate minister at the church.

During the fall of 2001, Reverend Dr. Brian R. Thompson, Sr., was appointed the church’s senior pastor. Guided by his leadership, the church has grown physically and spiritually over the past two decades. On March 6, 2013, construction began on a new sanctuary, and the building was finished in April 2014. On May 4, 2014, a dedication took place to commemorate

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<sup>3</sup> Sarah Guldalian, “The Millennials: Reflections on Reaching a Lost Generation for Christ,” *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (2013): 42–43, accessed April 13, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/eleu/vol21/iss1/5/>.

<sup>4</sup> Full connectional members are those who have completed three sessions of their new member’s classes, attend church regularly, and actively participate to fulfill the church’s mission by contributing their time and financial support.

<sup>5</sup> Brian R. Thompson, Sr., *Simon Temple A.M.E. Zion Church: A Guide to Church Membership* (Fayetteville, NC: Simon Temple Ministries, 2005), 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

the completion of the new building.<sup>7</sup> The new sanctuary seats 1,600 individuals. The leadership and members of the church consistently endeavor to help meet local community needs.

Since its inception, the church has had a Meals on Wheels program, which provides food items and meals to surrounding community members. The church's Meals on Wheels program provides weekly meals for over five hundred less fortunate and homebound individuals.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has continued providing Meals on Wheels and weekly food giveaways. In addition, the church has kept developing disciples who serve in many ways to fulfill the church's mission.

#### Church Office Staff and Volunteer Support Members

The church's office staff consists of seven employees. Each staff employee fulfills various administrative and logistical functions to assist and support the senior pastor, church members, and denomination. Some of the duties of staff members include (1) adding and maintaining new members' administrative and financial data using PowerChurch, (2) monitoring and updating the church's website and social media sites, (3) maintaining and updating the annual church calendar, and (4) scheduling and coordinating meetings and counseling sessions for the senior pastor, local church programs, and the AME Zion denomination. In addition, staff members also support 127 class leaders. A host of volunteers helps the church's office staff by assisting with typing, bulk mailouts, special events, and culinary and transportation requirements.

Youth and young adult members who require volunteer hours can donate their time to the church during the summer months. As they do, they gain personal knowledge of the inner workings of the church. As new members join the church, staff members ensure they complete

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<sup>7</sup> Thompson, *Simon Temple A.M.E. Zion Church: A Guide to Church Membership*, 10.

their new member classes and are assigned a class leader to help them integrate into the ministry. Church staff members work hard to provide service and support to the senior pastor and congregation. They also have the arduous task of providing administrative support for church boards, clubs, and auxiliaries. This seven-member staff performs various duties to ensure that the church's leadership, members, and new members are adequately supported.

### The Church's Use of Technology

Simon Temple's use of technology to promote and support its worship service has grown tremendously. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, members and nonmembers could view and listen to the church's worship services on various social media platforms. However, as with many churches, the pandemic has caused the church to rely heavily on technology and enhance its audiovisual equipment to ensure the quality of streamed worship services. Unfortunately, the lack of millennial membership has adversely affected the audiovisual staff's ability to keep up with the high demand for broadcasting worship services, Bible Studies, Sunday school sessions, virtual vacation Bible school, church meetings, and denominational events. Nevertheless, church members are becoming well-adjusted to using technology to view worship services, church programs, and church ministry meetings. Some millennials and young adults are implementing technology to remain active in ministry. For example, the church's youth department hosts monthly check-in meetings.

## Church Membership

The church's membership has grown from 300 members to over 5,000 members; however, it has approximately 3,980 active members.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, millennials make up less than five percent of the membership (4.54 percent). Each year, the number of millennial members continues to decline. This has adversely affected the church's outreach and evangelism initiatives. Lack of millennial religious engagement is a nationwide trend. The Pew Study surveys (2018–2019) reported a gap in the religious affiliations and attendance levels of older Americans (baby boomers and silent generation members) and millennials.<sup>9</sup> The church's membership includes 450 members (ages one to twelve), 358 members (ages thirteen to eighteen), 233 members (ages nineteen to twenty-four), 855 millennial members (ages twenty-five to forty), and 1,304 members (ages forty-one and older). The young adult ministry is an integral part of the church's ministry; however, there has been a high turnover rate for youth and young adult pastors. The church has experienced challenges hiring and retaining youth/young adult pastors for the past four years.

## Church Leadership

Most of the church's leaders are older than forty. As a result, the church has experienced challenges in selecting and retaining millennial leaders. The lack of millennial representation in leadership directly correlates with a decline in millennial membership. The church's leadership consists of many professions: active and retired military service members, veterans, judges, attorneys, educators, and business professionals. As a megachurch, Simon Temple requires

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<sup>8</sup> The PowerChurch database provided membership data for the specified age groups. Unfortunately, all membership numbers for Simon Temple are approximate because the database only captures data for members who offer their full birthdates. For example, some members did not provide their birth information, while others only offered their birth year.

<sup>9</sup> "Religion Among Millennials," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (February 17, 2010) <https://www.pewforum.org/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-Millennials/>.



organization, staffing, and the dedicated time of its boards, clubs, auxiliary leaders, and members. Retirees, business owners, and self-employed members have often had more time to dedicate to volunteering at the church than millennials, whose schedules may not be flexible. Still, the church has sought to identify meaningful ways to employ the leadership skills of its millennial members. Perhaps the appointment of at least two millennial members to the church's board of trustees would help broaden the scope of millennial leadership.

#### Young Adult Christian Ministry

The Christian Education Department (CED) of the AME Zion denomination provides oversight and programmatic guidance on the structure and operations of the church's young adult ministry. The church's millennial members also serve as members of the AME Zion denomination's Young Adult Christian Ministry (YACM). Each local church within the AME Zion denomination has a local YACM chapter, consisting of young adults ages twenty-two to forty. Millennials have shown great interest in participating in YACM activities. The YACM ministry provides a context that helps develop its members' spiritual lives, leadership skills, and spiritual gifts.

Unfortunately, former YACM leaders were active-duty military soldiers; thus, their military obligations precluded them from fulfilling their obligations as YACM leaders. As a result, the YACM ministry has not had consistent leadership for the past three years, and millennial participation in this ministry has waned. The church's leadership continues to search for viable candidates to serve as YACM leaders. However, inconsistent leadership has negatively affected millennial church attendance and participation in the church's outreach initiatives and discipleship program.

## Discipleship

The church uses *The Disciple's Cross: Master Life*, Avery T. Willis Jr., curriculum, to conduct six-month small-group discipleship training sessions.<sup>10</sup> This training is available to all the church's members; however, it is not required. Instead, members must elect to take the training. Historically, members over the age of 40 have opted to enroll in the discipleship training course. Unfortunately, all members that elect to take this discipleship training have not remained faithful throughout the process.

Schedule conflicts have precluded many members from completing the discipleship training. Members are only permitted to miss two sessions before being dismissed from the program. For the past three years, the graduation percentages for the *Master Life* discipleship training are as follows (1) in 2020, 5 percent of the graduates were millennials, and 95 percent were over the age of forty; (2) in 2019, 16 percent of the graduates were millennials, while 84 percent were over the age of forty, and (3) in 2018, 14 percent of the graduates were millennials, and 86 percent were over the age of forty. Members over the age of forty have remained committed to completing the program. Therefore, the graduation rate is higher for members over the age of 40 than millennials, as evidenced by the graduation rates.

The church does not have a discipleship and evangelism curriculum dedicated to educating millennial members. The local church needs to implement discipleship strategies that depict the depth of holiness found only in the triune God for its millennial disciples. Moreover, as John Thomas "JT" English, a pastor and author from Arvada, Colorado, argues, discipleship is

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<sup>10</sup> Avery T. Willis, Jr., *The Disciple's Cross: Master Life* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1996).

not merely a program; it helps to reorient one's very existence.<sup>11</sup> Discipleship training assists believers in learning how to live fully committed lives as followers of Christ. Therefore, discipleship is integral in helping millennials unite with other believers, mature in their faith, and prepare to share their faith with others.

### Evangelism

Evangelism and disciple-making are vital in the lives of all believers. Simon Temple has integrated evangelism in a myriad of ways. For example, the church has an evangelism team that provides breakfast meals and shares the gospel message with local community members every Saturday morning. In 2013, Simon Temple began a drive-thru prayer ministry. This ministry permits individuals to drive up to receive prayer and has an opportunity to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Many individuals who responded positively to these invitations have become members of Simon Temple and now serve as disciples within the local church. The church also sponsors a prison ministry that conducts worship services and Bible studies for inmates.

The church hosts annual Thanksgiving and Christmas outreach initiatives. The associate ministers preach sermonettes and pray for attendees during these events. In addition, assistant ministers extend invitations for salvation. The local church provides food boxes and clothing items to those in need. In addition, children are given gifts during the Christmas outreach event. These initiatives have resulted in individuals receiving salvation, visiting the church, and even joining the church. Young adult participation is highly encouraged; however, the involvement of young adults have not remained consistent.

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<sup>11</sup> J.T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 39. Except for his dissertation, "Thus says the Lord: A Trinitarian Account of the Authority of Scripture," John Thomas English III writes using his pen name of "J.T. English."

The church has traditionally used youth programs and events such as gospel concerts, seminars, vacation Bible school, and youth and young adult conferences to attract millennials. Young adults often supported these events because of the featured gospel artists. However, support for these events has waned. As millennials mature spiritually, the attractional elements of worship no longer draw them to these types of events. Instead, millennials are now searching for a sense of community through interactive online social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Clubhouse). The church's current use of social media does not aim to reach millennials specifically.

### The Status of the Problem at Simon Temple

The church's inability to attract and retain millennial members and leaders hurts the church in many ways. First, the lack of millennial members affects the numerical and financial growth of Simon Temple and its ability to multiply and plant new churches. Second, the lack of millennial participation hinders the church's discipleship and evangelism ministries. Third, it hampers the church's ability to fulfill the Great Commission. Fourth, it impedes the church's ability to prepare millennials to share their faith effectively with others. Finally, it shrinks the pool of members who can disciple other young adults outside the church.

### **Problem Presented**

This project seeks to address the church's inability to attract, retain, and involve millennial members to maintain its spiritual and physical health. The church has experienced a steady decline in millennial membership during the past three years. This researcher believes the reasons for this are multi-faceted. First, the church has not strategically implemented or invested (spiritually or financially) in attracting, developing, and retaining millennial members and

leaders. Second, the church does not currently have an intentional, comprehensive evangelism and discipleship strategy for millennial members that educates and equips them to participate in fulfilling the church's mission.

As stated above, the church has recorded a decline in millennial church attendance and involvement over the past three years. This decline has adversely affected the church's discipleship, evangelism models, and finances. Over the past five years, the church youth department has also experienced a high turnover of youth leaders. One possible explanation for the lack of millennial participation and leadership is that baby boomers are not receptive to millennials actively participating or leading in the church. This study will examine reasons for the church's inability to attract, retain, and involve millennial members in its mission. Failure to address this dilemma will hurt the spiritual and financial health of the church and its ability to plant new churches.

### **Purpose Statement**

This project aims to attract and involve millennial members to grow and revitalize the church. The church's membership is comprised mainly of seniors. Therefore, seeking viable means to attract and retain millennials and then draw on their gifts, talents, and finances is imperative to the current and future health of the church. To this end, this researcher believes that it is essential to develop strategic, comprehensive, and biblical evangelism and discipleship model that addresses the spiritual needs of millennials. Interviewing church leaders and laypersons of diverse demographics will help identify why millennials do not attend or remain church members. The findings from this study will encourage, educate, and empower church

leadership and laypersons on the best spiritual practices to attract and retain millennial church members.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The researcher's presuppositions informed the project in many ways. First, she estimated that the millennial attendees at the church could increase by twenty percent (from 855 to 1026 millennial members). This percentage is a concrete number. Were each of Simon Temple's millennial members to invite at least one of their friends, coworkers, college classmates, or young adult neighbors to church regularly, the church's millennial attendance and membership would increase by twenty percent rapidly. The goal of increasing membership by this amount was attainable.

Yet there were challenges to this goal. First, the researcher acknowledges that it would require time to increase the church's millennial membership, possibly more than eight weeks. The results for this study could be concluded before the allotted time for completion or well afterward. Second, the researcher had never surveyed this magnitude before. Third, the researcher must assume that the study group responses in interviews and questionnaires were unbiased. Fourth, there are many possible reasons why millennial members may decide not to invite their friends, coworkers, college classmates, or young adult neighbors to church. Perhaps these members do not believe their friends or acquaintances will find the church attractive. The lack of millennial attendance could result from the genre of music (traditional vs. contemporary), lack of parking spaces, church location, church decor, lack of programs for invitees, etc. Fifth, current millennial members may not choose to remain members of Simon Temple. Sixth, the researcher acknowledged that monitoring millennial members and participants might be easier in

a smaller church. Since the church has a large membership, it would be challenging to conduct and analyze the findings from this study. Each of these factors, as well as many others, could alter the overall results.

That said, the researcher hoped that this study would result in increased communication among millennials, church leaders, and other generational church member groups. She desired that the intentional engagement of millennial members at the church would increase. As millennials and church leaders work together, bonds of trust may form due to spending time and worshipping together. As relationships develop between millennials and other members, this may lead to greater participation and involvement by millennials.

### **Definitions**

The following terms appear throughout this study.

*Attractional church model.* The primary purpose of the attractional church model is to make Christianity appealing to non-believers and individuals who do not frequently attend church.<sup>12</sup> The attractional model uses engaging, emotional gospel presentations and relevant ministry environments to reach their intended audiences (unchurched individuals).<sup>13</sup>

*Baby boomers.* The generation of individuals who were born from 1946 to 1964.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jared Wilson, *A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo: The Prodigal Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 63.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Fry, "Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (April 28, 2020). <https://pewstudy.org>.

*Christian Education Department.* This department has the authority to cooperate with other boards of the AME Zion Church and other agencies to promote Christian education.<sup>15</sup>

*Disciple.* A term used to denote Jesus’s followers.<sup>16</sup>

*Discipleship.* A process that encompasses (a) discovering and winning the lost (non-believers), (b) assisting non-believers as they join a local church, and (c) helping non-believers grow in their faith.<sup>17</sup>

*Evangelism.* The ideologies and practice of making the gospel of Jesus Christ known to those outside the community of believers.<sup>18</sup>

*Members in full connection.* Members in full connection have completed (1) a preparatory period, (2) baptism, (3) recommendation for full membership at the Leaders’ meeting, (4) have been examined by the pastor before the church, and (5) have given satisfactory assurance of both their faith and willingness to observe and obey the rules of the AME Zion Church.<sup>19</sup>

*Millennials.* The generation of individuals born between 1981 and 1996.<sup>20</sup>

*Missional church.* A church whose programs and activities focus on fulfilling the mission of God (the Great Commission).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Book of Discipline of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* (Charlotte, NC: AME Zion Publishing House, 2016), 209.

<sup>16</sup> Cynthia A. Jarvis, and Elizabeth E. Johnson, *Feasting on the Gospels—Mark: A Feasting on the Word Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 65.

<sup>17</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 68.

<sup>18</sup> Martin J. Selman, Martin H. Manser, and Stephen Travis, “Evangelism,” in *MacMillan Dictionary of the Bible* (London, England: Macmillan Publishers, 2002), 237.

<sup>19</sup> *The Book of Discipline of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Dimock, “Defining Generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z Begins,” Pew Research Center, Washington D.C. (January 17, 2019) <https://www.pewstudy.org>.

<sup>21</sup> Robin Martin and Mike Barnett, *Discovering the Mission of God: Best Missional Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 12.



*PowerChurch.* A cloud-based church management software platform that helps manage church operations, including church memberships, accounting, event scheduling, contributions, and essential record-keeping functions.<sup>22</sup>

*Silent generation.* The generation of individuals that were born from 1928 to 1945.<sup>23</sup>

*Young Adult Christian Ministry.* This ministry provides an atmosphere where young adults are encouraged and motivated to develop and demonstrate their talents, skills, and abilities to help further their Christian education, maintain committed lives to Christ, and practice Christian principles.<sup>24</sup>

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations to this project study. First, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, accessibility to the sampled population and needed documentation may become problematic. Second, participants in this study may leave the church, and many may fear telling the truth. During this project study, the researcher could not control an individual's attitude, responses, and reactions. As a result, a person's willingness to participate may change. Third, due to individuals' availability, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, and the church's rules for the pandemic, there were limitations on how often and where the sampled group members could meet. The study group aimed to meet for eight weeks virtually and in person. Fourth, while the use of technology was imperative for this study, some group members may not have access to it or know how to use it. Fifth, the membership size of the church permits the use of a randomized selection of participants. This

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<sup>22</sup> "PowerChurch Software," accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.powerchurch.com>.

<sup>23</sup> Dimock, "Defining Generations."

<sup>24</sup> "Young Adult Christian Ministries," accessed May 24, 2021, <http://cedamezion.com>.

study focused on a convenient sample size of church leaders and millennials who volunteer at the church. Finally, there was an analysis of relevant literature and self-reported data. Therefore, there may have been data omissions, and the researcher and participants may have made errors.

### **Delimitations**

There were several delimitations to this study. First, this study sought to determine why millennials remain active church members. The researcher selected this topic and community as two of the primary delimitations for this study. Second, this study was limited to licensed and ordained elders, deacons, ministers, auxiliary leaders, and millennial members at Simon Temple AME Zion Church in [REDACTED]. The researcher hoped that this project could help the researcher inform the church's senior pastor about millennial attendance, retention, membership, leadership, and how crucial it is to attract and retain millennials to help grow the church. Fourth, with the senior pastor's permission, the researcher hopes to oversee the creation of a millennial-friendly comprehensive discipleship and evangelism curriculum. A final delimitation for this study was the availability of relevant and beneficial sources on evangelism and discipleship among millennials.

### **Thesis Statement**

As previously stated, Simon Temple uses the discipleship curriculum entitled *The Disciple's Cross: Master Life* to conduct small-group six-month discipleship training sessions.<sup>25</sup> This training is available to all members but not required. The church does not have a discipleship and evangelism curriculum created solely for its millennial members. It is essential

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<sup>25</sup> Willis, *The Disciple's Cross: Master*.

to understand why millennials do not join or remain at the church. This researcher wanted to find out whether an implemented evangelism and discipleship plan dedicated to millennials could help attract, retain, and involve them as church members and leaders.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Literature Review

This chapter will include a literature review to understand better the social and economic influences that deter millennials from attending and participating in local churches. The researcher will consider the literature on millennials' perceptions of the modern-day church, including their views of (1) attendance and retention, (2) evangelism, (3) biblical instruction, (4) discipleship, (5) the church's mission, (6) the attractional and missional church models, (7) engaging the culture, (8) stewardship, and (9) the church itself. Also included are scholarly sources on a call for millennials to return to church. The researcher examines scriptural and theological foundations for the study.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of various ideologies that have arisen from the desire to see millennials become members of local churches.<sup>2</sup>

#### Millennial Church Attendance and Retention

Kenneth A. Moser and Malan Nel co-authored the article, "The Connection Between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches." They examine the struggle of North American churches to retain millennials, noting that millennials are not attending church and may not return to the church in their later years. Moser and Nel argue that the church cannot attract and retain millennials because of its programs that seek to evangelize youth outside the church at the expense of its

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<sup>1</sup> Liberty University School of Divinity, *Doctor of Ministry: Thesis Project Handbook* (Lynchburg, VA: LUSOD, 2020), 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

current millennial members.<sup>3</sup> They contend that entertainment and gimmicks to attract millennials to church do not produce long-lasting results.

In “Church Planting: Making Disciple-Makers,” Matthew Fretwell similarly argues that church attendance and growth are not about programs or defining the church.<sup>4</sup> He writes that many researchers see a growing trend of unaffiliated millennials that do not attend church. Moser and Nel’s assessment of the church’s focus on evangelizing those outside of the church to the detriment of the church’s millennial members provides insight into why young adults may feel disconnected. The attractional church model is not an effective evangelism method to engage millennials. The church may benefit by employing alternative approaches that appeal to millennials, such as social injustice and human rights.

Jaco Hamman, the author of “The Millennial Generation and the Church: Doing it Differently,” concludes that as the ecclesial tension built by traditions, baby boomers, and millennials has continued to evolve, the number of “unaffiliated” millennials has increased. Despite young adults sharing their parents’ and previous generations’ religious beliefs, Hamman concurs with Nel and Moser that millennials feel unattached.

Alvin Reid, author of *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Mission*<sup>5</sup>, also explores why millennials no longer attend church. He argues that although there are apparent ecclesial value differences between baby boomers and millennials, the more significant issue is that millennials value a public spirituality that emerges for social and personal

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth A. Moser, and Malan Nel, “The Connection Between Youth Ministry’s Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (2019): 2, accessed April 3, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/eleu/vol40/iss/1/4/>.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Fretwell, *Church Planting: By Making Disciple-Makers* (Castlerock, NIR: Timeless Publications, 2020), 79.

<sup>5</sup> This work is reviewed in the following subsection.

transformation alongside traditional religious practices.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, he contends that baby boomers love commitment, church traditions, polity, and ecumenism.

Hamman concludes that millennials deconstruct and challenge traditional ecclesial practices. They reconstruct new communities that permit them to be authentic (exploring sexuality, getting piercings, tattoos, etc.).<sup>7</sup> The church can use this disparity to engage the millennial culture to establish a transformative conversation. In contrast, Kit Carlson's "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud" observes that millennials may feel comfortable with congregations with a clear sense of identity, authority, and history. At the same time, these types of churches challenge millennial worldviews.<sup>8</sup> Hamman's argument confirms the church's need to discuss the generational challenges that preclude millennials from attending and joining local churches.

Yolanda Pantou is the author of "Ecumenical Movement for Millennials: A Generation Connected but Not Yet United." Pantou defines "ecumenism" as a uniting movement amid diversity.<sup>9</sup> Her explanation for why millennials no longer attend church differs from Moser and Nel's. She argues that millennials do not participate because they are not involved in their leadership and mission.<sup>10</sup> She believes millennials want to be actively engaged yet do not act because they do not feel intimately connected to their members and leaders.

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<sup>6</sup> Jaco Hamman, "The Millennial Generation and the Church: Doing it Differently," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 25, no. 3, (2012): 163, accessed April 9, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol25/iss3/4/>.

<sup>7</sup> Hamman, "The Millennial Generation and the Church," 163.

<sup>8</sup> Kit Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud," *Anglican Theological Review*, 98, no 4 (2016): 709, accessed April 2, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol98/iss4/5/>.

<sup>9</sup> Yolanda Pantou, "Ecumenical Movement for Millennials: A Generation Connected But Not Yet United," *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 73, no. 1 (2017): 1, accessed on April 13, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol73/iss1/4/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In comparison, in the article ““Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?”: The Impact of Responsiveness and Conflict on Millennials’ Relationship with Religious Institutions,” Richard D. Waters and Denise Sevick Bortree report that the rise of Internet churches and scandals involving religious leaders have greatly influenced the decline in millennial church attendance.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, they argue that millennials’ religious dispositions are not homogenous to their parents. Some millennials believe that faith and tradition are outdated, and the church could disappear without significant loss to the global community.<sup>12</sup> This view dramatically diminishes their desire to attend and participate in the local church. In addition, Pantou believes millennials’ stance on religion has shifted because of society’s rapid change, different parenting styles, and increased democratic decision-making in family life.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Pantou provides a social and philosophical understanding of millennial beliefs and how these views impact their church attendance and involvement.

### Evangelism

Alvin Reid, the author of the book *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional*, believes evangelism is diminishing within the local church. Like Moser and Nel, Reid contends that one of the leading causes of the church’s inability to attract and retain millennials is the integration of evangelism into its programs and departments. As a result, the church now depicts evangelism as an occasional endeavor in the lives of believers.<sup>14</sup> In addition, many

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<sup>11</sup> Richard D. Waters, and Denise Sevick Bortree, ““Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?”: The Impact of Responsiveness and Conflict on Millennials’ Relationship with Religious Institutions.” *Journal of Media and Religion* 11, no. 2 (2012): 200, accessed April 8, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol11/iss/2/5/>.

<sup>12</sup> Pantou, “Ecumenical Movement for Millennials,” 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2009), 47.

congregations focus on comfort rather than engaging the culture. However, he argues that churches can become more missional in attracting and retaining millennials by creating culturally-meaningful outreach initiatives to introduce them to Jesus. The church remains the primary place to teach millennials about Jesus and evangelism. In “Bringing Millennials Back to Church,” Katherine Parrish suggests that preceding generations are responsible for teaching, training, and mentoring millennials to evangelize and disciple others.<sup>15</sup>

Andrew M. Davis, the author of *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again*, concurs with Reid that evangelism is diminishing in the local church. However, Davis further argues that unhealthy and dying churches have almost turned away from bold and productive evangelism.<sup>16</sup> Carl F. George and Warren Bird agree that churches that do not prioritize evangelism will not sustain their growth.<sup>17</sup> Millennials want to participate in helping the church fulfill its mission (discipleship and evangelism); however, they are more sensitive about discussing their faith with others. Reid provides a biblical and missional foundation to solidify the importance of relating Scripture to God’s mission of engaging and reaching unbelievers with the gospel message.

Sharon R. Hoover is the author of *Mapping Church Missions: A Compass for Ministry Strategy*. She concurs with Davis that the attractional model of evangelism is not an effective way to reach millennials. Hoover maintains that churches can no longer assume that attendees subscribe to a Christian worldview. Instead, she argues that the church must follow Jesus’s

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<sup>15</sup> Katherine Parrish, “Bringing Millennials Back to Church,” (Ph.D. diss., Liberty University, 2021), 24, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew M. Davis, *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 39.

<sup>17</sup> Carl F. George, and Warren Bird, *How to Break Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017).



example as it serves and shares the good news with millennials.<sup>18</sup> For instance, Hoover suggests that the division between sacred and secular adversely affects the church's evangelizing efforts. She concurs with Moser and Nel that the church needs to exemplify its God-given identity to reach millennials. Hoover's evaluation of church leadership and congregations and their ability to work together to accomplish God's mission is relevant to the church universal.

Gary L. McIntosh is the author of *Growing God's Church: How People Are Actually Coming to Faith Today*. McIntosh contends that churches are "becoming more missional in their thinking; however, they are becoming less evangelistic in their practices."<sup>19</sup> He maintains that former evangelism methods are no longer as effective as they once were for reaching millennials and ensuring the numerical and spiritual health of the contemporary church. McIntosh contradicts Reid's argument that current church programs will suffice as evangelism models to reach millennials.

In 2010, McIntosh surveyed 1,093 individuals from forty-three states representing twenty-seven denominations. The survey examined the evangelism methods used to evangelize non-believers. The results revealed that the fundamental methodology of conversion is a conversation (between friends and family members).<sup>20</sup> Evangelistic methods are temporal; however, the necessity for communication (dialogue) and relationships is timeless and essential for every generation. Therefore, personal evangelism remains the most effective means of reaching non-believers.

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<sup>18</sup> Sharon R. Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions: A Compass for Ministry Strategy* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018) 28–29.

<sup>19</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *Growing God's Church: How People Are Actually Coming to Faith Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 17.

<sup>20</sup> Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 155.

Like Carlson, McIntosh also believes the church's paradigm for reaching millennials must evolve. However, he concurs with Reid and Hoover that though churches differ in their methodologies for training and equipping their members for evangelism, the Bible must remain the fundamental basis for teaching millennials about God and discipleship. Millennials want to know about God. They are currently seeking means to establish a relationship with God outside of traditional religious practices. McIntosh provides a comprehensive overview of the fundamental importance of personal evangelism and how not making evangelism a priority hurts churches.

### Biblical Instruction

Andrew M. Davis is the author of *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again*. He suggests that engaging millennials culturally and providing biblical instruction are fundamental in exemplifying the church's mission. Davis maintains that church leaders should not rely on techniques but rather the word of God to teach millennials about God. He believes that the more church leaders rely upon and trust the word of God alone, the more powerful their human efforts will become to reach millennials.<sup>21</sup> Teaching the Bible will allow millennials to learn about God and become productive disciples of Christ. Davis concurs with Carlson that millennials do not know how to share their faith with others. However, Carlson also notes that millennials from mainline religious traditions are just as inexperienced at sharing their faith as non-affiliated millennials.<sup>22</sup>

Davis also argues that millennials' lack of theological understanding hurts their spiritual growth and ability to share the gospel message with their peers. He affirms the importance of

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<sup>21</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, 79.

<sup>22</sup> Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud," 706.

having faithful leaders preach the Word of God, incredibly sequential expositions from the Bible, to help non-affiliated millennials learn about God.<sup>23</sup> He notes that preaching is essential for millennials to mature; however, they view it as being dull and unrelatable. Millennials despise preaching that is not engaging, challenging, and culturally relevant.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Waters and Bortree argue that although millennials agree with fundamental religious ideologies, church leaders should devise new preaching approaches for them. They say that millennials desire personal relationships with their pastors and not one-sided devotional proclamations.<sup>25</sup>

Nel and Moser contend that as church leaders examine their theology and apply it to their church ethics and spiritual practices, they will have the opportunity to provide biblical instructions in context to millennials.<sup>26</sup> Reid maintains that preaching should not be boring but effective in emphasizing biblical fidelity and faithfulness.<sup>27</sup> Davis writes that millennial church members who have not been biblically trained damage the church's ability to make spiritually mature disciples that help grow the church.

### Discipleship

John Thomas English, III, is the author of *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus*. English contends that the church's current self-centered discipleship strategy is not practical. He argues that self-centered discipleship is not rooted in a biblical knowledge of God but rather in knowing self.<sup>28</sup> He argues that since millennials are constantly attempting to discover their self-identity, they are often stereotyped as selfish. English contends

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<sup>23</sup> Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud," 706.

<sup>24</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 338.

<sup>25</sup> Waters and Bortree, "Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?," 202.

<sup>26</sup> Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud," 7.

<sup>27</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 26.

<sup>28</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 24.

that Jesus's depiction of discipleship is not selfish or self-centered; instead, it is about self-denial, humility, and love.<sup>29</sup> English reinforces the biblical mandate for the church to make whole disciples. He offers comprehensive discipleship strategies to help develop spiritually mature disciples. Perhaps the church's use of the Master Life's discipleship training model provides Christ-centered methods that help spiritually mature believers become committed to a God-centered vision of the church and its mission.

### The Church's Mission

Carl F. George is the president of the American Society for Church Growth, and Warren Bird is a notable researcher of mega and multisite churches. George and Bird are the authors of *How to Break Growth Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church*. They believe churches that do not attract millennials in their mission, discipleship, evangelism, and leadership roles will not sustain their growth.<sup>30</sup> They agree with English that the church is the only place for helping millennial church members accomplish their unique ministries in the world and church.<sup>31</sup> George and Bird maintain that the church needs to have a specific mission that supports God's mission. They note the importance of having a biblical church mission that is understood, inviting, and includes all its members' participation. In contrast, Moser and Nel argue that when churches fail to move beyond their mission (the desire to reach the unchurched) to develop their God-given identity, they may not exemplify their mission and Christian identity.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> George, and Bird, *How to Break Barriers*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Moser and Nel, "The Connection Between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship,"

## The Attractional and Missional Church

Andy Stanley is the author of the *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend*. Stanley is the founder and senior pastor of North Point Ministries. He leads his large congregations using an attractional ministry model. Stanley's approach to evangelism and outreach creates irresistible environments that draw individuals who do not attend church regularly or have never attended church. Stanley argues that creating environments with engaging presentations is fundamental to accomplishing the church's mission.<sup>33</sup> He also uses a practical preaching and teaching model that offers biblical teaching expressed in a palatable manner to believers and practical life advice to newcomers. While millennials may visit attractional churches, they may not remain members.

In contrast to the attractional model, Van Aarde contends that churches should strive to be missional. He defines a missional church as one in which it is not solely clergy members who work on behalf of all Christians to serve others. Rather, *all* Christians strive to live a life of active service. He maintains that this kind of lifestyle affirms one's conscious decision to proclaim the gospel.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the mission of God is the primary focus of the missional church. He notes that millennials want to be associated with churches that are meeting the needs of others globally. Wilson also staunchly supports the missional church model, which focuses on the believers' response to God's invitation to participate in the proclamation of the gospel. Wilson argues that the missional church uses the Bible to contextualize the gospel for its culture and time.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 174.

<sup>34</sup> Timothy A. Van Aarde, "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of all Believers (Ephesians 4:7–16) in the Light of the Inward and Outward Function of the Church," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 1 (2017): 2, accessed May 26, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol38/iss1/1/>.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson, *A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, 48.

## Engaging the Culture

Edward T. Hammett, the author of *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60*, examines the church's deficiencies in engaging the culture and addressing generational gaps between baby boomers and millennials. He concludes that the church is not reaching people younger than forty because it has sheltered itself from the broader culture. Older church members have tended to focus on comfort and what makes them feel good rather than engaging the culture.<sup>36</sup> As a result, a communication gap between preceding generations and millennials has arisen. In contrast, Hoover argues that the church's experiences rather than studies should influence its ministry models.<sup>37</sup>

That said, Hammett argues that churches often experience generational tension when implementing necessary changes to reach people younger than forty.<sup>38</sup> There are many reasons for this. First, local churches are no longer competing with other denominations. Instead, they compete with a secular culture (work, leisure activities, and a desire to stay at home) to get those who claim Christianity to attend and get involved.<sup>39</sup> Second, young adults tend to have negative impressions of denominations, churches, and Christians. Unlike preceding generations (baby boomers), millennials do not believe they must attend church to experience God. Third, baby boomers as a generation resist change since they are comfortable with the way things are. However, as time passes, change is inevitable.

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<sup>36</sup> Edward T. Hammett, *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2009), 45.

<sup>37</sup> Hoover, *Mapping Church Missions*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Hammett, *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

In comparison, Parish notes the importance of developing leadership that has been trained and mentored by more mature Christians to alleviate generational differences.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, it is vital to understand the generational points of tension to find a resolution that will benefit the church's mission and its members. The church needs millennials and senior members to ensure its growth and future. Hammett explains that generational barriers can preclude generations from working together to fulfill the church's mission. Millennials are integral to implementing much-needed change and providing financial support to revitalize the church's evangelism and discipleship models.

### Millennial Stewardship

Ann Fritschel, the author of "Beyond the Mission Trip: Millennials, Financial Stewardship, and the Congregation," argues that millennials believe the church's mission should occur globally, not inside the local church.<sup>41</sup> Millennials also want to be intimately involved in serving the church and local community; however, they do not like their time or resources to be misused. She maintains that they will not volunteer their finances, time, or energy unless millennials feel they are a part of the church's community and know their service and finances are genuinely helping those in need. Therefore, traditional models for developing stewardship may not work for millennials.<sup>42</sup>

Fritschel also notes that millennials want to give when they feel connected to the church and its mission. They want to give as they experience community.<sup>43</sup> In addition, millennials want

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<sup>40</sup> Parrish, "Bringing Millennials Back to Church," 22.

<sup>41</sup> Ann Fritschel, "Beyond the Mission Trip: Millennials, Financial Stewardship, & the Congregation," *Currents in Theology & Mission* 45, no. 2 (2018): 16, accessed April 3, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol45/iss2/5/>.

<sup>42</sup> Fritschel, "Beyond the Mission Trip," 17.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

to be a part of a financially accountable spiritual movement that makes a difference globally and not as an institution that seems to exist primarily for its own sake.<sup>44</sup> Due to the high level of non-affiliated millennials at Simon Temple, the church needs to reassess its financial practices, vision, and mission statements to ensure they convey that the church is financially accountable as it seeks to fulfill its global mission.

Fritschel notes that millennials believe the church's mission correlates with stewardship.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, their sense of belonging correlates with their ability to contribute financially to the church's mission. In contrast, Pomroy admonishes that, unlike past generations, millennials are not apprehensive about discussing financial matters openly.<sup>46</sup> Contributing financially to support the church is essential to millennials. At the same time, they want to know how their contributions are helping to fulfill the church's mission.

#### How Millennials View the Church

In an article on millennials and institutions, Richard D. Waters and Denise Sevick Bortree define millennials as anyone born during 1980 and the early 2000s.<sup>47</sup> They argue that although there has been a decline in millennial church attendance, millennials view their relationships with religious institutions favorably.<sup>48</sup> However, they maintain that millennials are not as observant of the church's authority as their parents. In contrast, Pantou argues that millennials doubt the church's power because they view it as an institution. Fritschel also offers

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<sup>44</sup> Fritschel, "Beyond the Mission Trip," 48.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>46</sup> Grace Duddy Pomroy, "Stewardship: What the Church Can Learn from Millennials," *Currents in Theology & Mission* 45, no. 2 (2018): 12, accessed April 6, 2021, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/elevol45/iss2/5/>.

<sup>47</sup> Waters and Bortree, "Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?" 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 201.



an opposing view. She suggests that millennials view the church as boring and conservative because of its focus on processes and structure.<sup>49</sup> Still, Waters and Bortree argue that leadership scandals have negatively impacted millennial views of church views. They discuss millennial perceptions of the church that may preclude them from attending and participating.

### The Call to Return to Church

“Bringing Millennials Back to Church,” written by Katherine Parish, provides insight into the requirements for engaging and attracting millennials to return to local churches. She argues that, for example, millennials are not inviting their friends and neighbors to attend church because they are not interested in attending buildings and institutions.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, she concurs with Pantou that millennials are preoccupied and involved in other things and need to be reintegrated into church life. Parish also discusses the impact of COVID-19 and its adverse effects on church attendance. She argues that the pandemic introduced challenges for churches to host worship services, fulfill their missions, and maintain budgets. However, with challenge comes opportunity. Many churches have discovered innovative ways to host worship services, achieve their tasks, and sustain their budget requirements. For example, before the pandemic, Simon Temple used technology to broadcast its worship services and reach millennials. However, the pandemic caused the church to enhance its use of technology by investing in new equipment and training its staff to publicize worship services.

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<sup>49</sup> Fritschel, “Beyond the Mission Trip,” 16.

<sup>50</sup> Parish, “Bringing Millennials Back to Church,” 10.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to help the researcher evaluate different arguments that examined millennial church attendance, retention, and church involvement. There has been much discussion on the lack of millennial attendance and participation in local churches, including cultural differences, negative stereotypes, money matters, the use of technology, lack of understanding of the church's mission, and ineffective discipleship and evangelism programs. However, the study does not substantiate the depiction of millennials as uninterested in the church or its mission. On the contrary, millennials are spiritual and want to visit and actively participate in missional churches.

In contrast to Hamman's argument that millennials share the religious beliefs of their parents and previous generations, Pantou believes millennials' dispositions towards religion differ in unique ways. Despite this, millennials want to actively engage by devoting their time and technical skills to make invaluable contributions to the church and its mission. Pomroy suggests that instead of stereotyping millennials and solely concentrating on the needs of the local church, congregations could greatly benefit by focusing on their need to learn from millennials.<sup>51</sup> In addition, unlike preceding generations, as they contribute financially, millennials wish to discuss money matters openly and know that their financial contributions reach those in need outside the church. Working to devise and implement innovative evangelism and discipleship models to connect with millennials is vital in safeguarding the church's congregational future and helping the church grow into an inviting and welcoming community for millennials to serve and worship. Reid, Davis, Carlson, Hoover, and McIntosh argued that Scripture must remain the chief source for teaching and equipping millennial members for

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<sup>51</sup> Pomroy, "Stewardship," 15.

evangelism and discipleship. That said, specialized evangelism and discipleship training programs may help.

### **Theological Foundations**

During the study, the researcher collected information about the Christian practices of millennials and how adept they are at sharing their faith with others. The purpose was to establish a correlation between these two variables for the church. The literature review indicated that the church's mission, disciple-making, and evangelism should integrate into the daily lives of believers and the local church.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, a biblical understanding of the church's mission, discipleship, and evangelism is meaningful to this study.

Jesus's assertion that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Mark 2:17) attests to God's desire for Christians to share the gospel message with unbelievers (those who are sinners and lost) in hopes of converting them to become Christians. Francis J. Moloney, the author of *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*, depicts how Jesus revealed a new understanding of the relationship between God and the human condition. Moloney denotes that, as with Levi and the remaining eleven disciples, those who sin or are sick can receive God's blessings through the person and words of Jesus (the gospel message).<sup>53</sup>

Cynthia A. Jarvis and Elizabeth E. Johnson, the authors of *Feasting on the Gospels—Mark: A Feasting on the Word Commentary*, note that Mark 2:17 emphasizes Jesus's authority to forgive sin.<sup>54</sup> Jesus's example of healing and restoring the sick, individuals outside of the law, reminds believers that He has “come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Mark 2:17e). Jarvis

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<sup>52</sup> Fretwell, *Church Planting*, 77.

<sup>53</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 24.

<sup>54</sup> Jarvis and Johnson, *Feasting on the Gospels*, 64.

and Johnson conclude that being a follower of Jesus requires engaging in the way of life that places one in the company of sinners.<sup>55</sup> As disciples of Christ engage in the church's mission, they encounter sinners. The Great Commission (Matt 28:16–20) establishes the New Testament church's mission.

Craig Ott and Gene Wilson argue that the Great Commission provides the standard for the local church to become and remain effective in fulfilling its God-given mission.<sup>56</sup> In *The Gospel of Matthew: Complete Bible Commentary Verse by Verse*, Matthew Henry highlights Jesus's command to "go ye." Henry states that Jesus's declaration to "go ye" is not simply a command to take the gospel to the doors of others but rather a word of encouragement to go out and not to be fearful because Christ has commanded believers to go.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, Christians have an active role in fulfilling the Great Commission. In this regard, *The Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible* defines evangelism as the ideologies and practice of making the gospel of Jesus Christ known to those outside the community of believers.<sup>58</sup> As Christians go and share their faith with others, the Holy Spirit empowers them. Only after God poured out His Spirit were believers equipped to take the good news to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).<sup>59</sup> The Great Commission accentuates each Christian's critical role in sharing the gospel with others.

The Great Commission includes an implied community. For example, as Jesus prepared and provided instructions for His disciples, He worked within a community. Jesus ate and lived

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<sup>55</sup> Jarvis and Johnson, *Feasting on the Gospels*, 65.

<sup>56</sup> Craig Ott, and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), vii.

<sup>57</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 138.

<sup>58</sup> Selman, Manser, and Travis, "Evangelism," 237.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

among His disciples as He prepared them to share the gospel with the world. Andy Stanley and Bill Willits, the authors of *Creating Community: Five Keys to Building a Thriving Small Group Culture*, argue, “While God made people for himself, He also made us with a unique and real need for one another.”<sup>60</sup> As Christians prepare to share the gospel message with others, they become equipped within a community of believers to impart the good news faithfully. D.H. Williams, the author of the commentary *Matthew*, suggests that Jesus sent His disciples to every sector: “that all of humanity might learn and study the teachings of Jesus (men, women, the rich and poor, and slaves along with their masters).”<sup>61</sup> Jesus promised His disciples that He would be with them continuously, and this promise extends to every believer (Matt 28:20b).

Williams also argues that when Jesus promises always to be present, He speaks to all believers, not as individuals, but rather the “believers as one body.”<sup>62</sup> Similarly, God establishes the human need for belonging to the community in Rom 12:4–5. Paul writes, “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”<sup>63</sup> The apostle Paul addresses the need for both Jews and Gentiles in Roman congregations (Romans 1–11).

Craig S. Keener, the author of *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*, draws attention to Paul’s passion for God’s call for believers to worship Him (Rom 12:1;15:9–11) as one body (Rom 12:4–5).<sup>64</sup> Every believer belongs to Christ and one another. Keener explains Rom 12:4-5

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<sup>60</sup> Andy Stanley and Bill Willits, *Creating Community, Revised and Updated Edition: Five Keys to Building a Thriving Small Group Culture* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2021), 14.

<sup>61</sup> D. H. Williams, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2018), 72.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>63</sup> Rom 12:4–5.

<sup>64</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2009), 170.

in this manner: each believer has gifts and makes distinct contributions to the body. Each believer submits to the will of God to devote and contribute their talents to building up the body of Christ in ways that God has equipped them to do (Rom 12:6–8).<sup>65</sup> God has graced every believer with diverse ministries. Keener believes that the apostle Paul’s fundamental point is that each believer has something to contribute for the body of Christ to function.”<sup>66</sup> This sense of community is central to Jesus’s command for the disciples to go and make more disciples.

In this regard, the local church is the central place for disciples to gather and grow spiritually in their belief in God and His love. English describes the local church as where believers are sanctified (1 Cor 1:2), built up in the faith (1 Cor 14:12), as well as the place where the gospel is proclaimed (2 Cor 8:18), and Christ reigns as the head (Col 1:18).<sup>67</sup> The local church is the primary place where God intends believers to be formed, equipped, and sent out to make more disciples (Matt 28:18–20).

In 1 Cor 12:14–16, Paul affirms the unity and diversity often found within the body of believers. Thomas R. Schreiner, the author of *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, believes Paul reaffirms in 1 Cor 12:12 that the church is like a body. As a body, it is one and therefore united.<sup>68</sup> The necessity for community amongst believers is undeniable. Schreiner believes God intended that there be many parts but one body.<sup>69</sup> As believers grow and develop spiritually, they demonstrate their love of Christ by laboring and sharing in ministry work as they seek to fulfill the church’s mission (the Great Commission).

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>67</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 52.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 266.

<sup>69</sup> Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 266.

All nations must be discipled (Matt 28:19a).<sup>70</sup> Jeannine Brown, the author of *Matthew Commentary*, expounds on the authority of Jesus found in Matthew 28:18 and argues that the church's mission is universal.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, she affirms the God-given authority believers have to share the gospel message of Jesus (John 14:12). In *Commentary on the Gospel of John: Chapters 13–21*, Thomas Aquinas maintains that John 14:12 refers to the work Christians accomplish through their faith in Jesus and sharing the gospel message.<sup>72</sup> As Jesus lived daily with his disciples, He trained and mentored them to effectively communicate their faith with others.

Elisha became Elijah's successor (1 Kgs 19:16, 19–21; 2 Kgs 5:8). Iain W. Provan, in *1 and 2 Kings*, argues that the prophetic mantle caused Elisha to leave his old life to follow his new teacher and mentor (v. 20).<sup>73</sup> Provan notes that at first glance, Elisha's request to bid farewell to his parents seems to underpin that potential disciples of Jesus must have a more significant commitment to service in God's kingdom than Elisha displayed. However, Provan believes Elisha's decisiveness in leaving his family and home, as well as burning his plowing equipment, represents a more significant commitment than Jesus's disciples, who merely left their nets (Mark 1:14–20), and later they returned to them (John 21:1–14).<sup>74</sup> Thus, Elisha departed his old life and became a servant (disciple) of God in his new life (1 Kgs 19:21).<sup>75</sup>

Jarvis and Johnson note how the gospel of Mark uses the term "disciples" to denote Jesus's followers.<sup>76</sup> The word "discipleship" does not appear in the Bible; however, the Great

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<sup>70</sup> Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 145.

<sup>71</sup> Jeannine K. Brown, *Matthew Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2015), 340.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John: Chapters 13:21* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 65.

<sup>73</sup> Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 117.

<sup>74</sup> Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 117.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Jarvis and Johnson, *Feasting on the Gospels—Mark*, 65.

Commission conveys its directives and purpose. Paul understood this and later encouraged Timothy to communicate God's concern to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15). Aida Besancon Spencer, the author of *1 Timothy A New Covenant Commentary*, observes Paul's admonishment to Timothy to communicate the gospel message to everyone, including men, women, rulers, believers, and non-believers (1 Tim 2:1–14). Third, Spencer also highlights Paul's warning to Timothy to remain mindful of his own biases and shortcomings of not knowing the truth of God's Word (1 Tim 4:16).<sup>77</sup> Finally, Paul admonishes Timothy to continue maturing in the faith as he seeks to disciple others (1 Tim 4:12).

Clint Clifton, a city missionary with the North American Mission Board and author of *Church Planting Thresholds: A Gospel-Centered Church Planting Guide*, emphasizes that local churches help make disciples, and disciples make more disciples.<sup>78</sup> The commission given to the first-century disciples by Jesus has not changed (Matt 28:19). Brown likewise suggests that Matthew's gospel invites individuals to respond to Jesus as Lord and Messiah by following Him in discipleship.<sup>79</sup> Discipleship tends to have more concern for advancing God's kingdom than for the numerical growth of local church congregations. However, Ott and Wilson argue that any semblance of fruitfulness for local church congregations must include the spiritual development of believers, spiritual and numerical growth by converting unbelievers, and the planting of new churches.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Aida Besancon Spencer, *1 Timothy: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge, EN: Lutterworth Press, 2014), 108.

<sup>78</sup> Clint Clifton, *Church Planting Thresholds: A Gospel-Centered Church Planting Guide* (Chattanooga, TN: New City Network, 2016), xvii.

<sup>79</sup> Brown, *Matthew Commentary*, 320.

<sup>80</sup> Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, vii.



As the local church seeks to fulfill the Great Commission, it bears the responsibility of teaching its members the significance of discipleship and evangelism. McIntosh defines discipleship as a process that encompasses: (a) discovering and winning the lost (non-believers), (b) assisting non-believers as they join a local church, and (c) helping believers mature in their faith.<sup>81</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, a senior professor of pastoral ministry at Dallas Theological Seminary, writes that the local church requires a process that assists people in growing and developing from pre-conversion to the new birth and growth and maturity of Christians.<sup>82</sup> The ultimate goal of discipleship is to help Christians grow and mature in their faith (Col 1:28–29; Heb 5:11–6:1).

In *Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman argues that “one must decide where he wants his ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he is gone. It is a question of which generation we are living for.” then he writes, “what counts in the ultimate perpetuation of our work is the faithfulness with which our converts go out and make leaders out of their converts, not simply more followers.”<sup>83</sup> The Christian concern must not rest with programs that may or may not reach the multitudes but with men and women who will seek to lead others to follow Christ.

Thus, the spiritual practices of discipleship and evangelism are essential to the church fulfilling the Great Commission and securing its future growth. Mark 2:17 and Matt 28:18 are two vital passages of Scripture that firmly support and theologically strengthen the significance

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<sup>81</sup> McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 68.

<sup>82</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 138.

<sup>83</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming Revell Company, 1964 edition), 37, 110.

of this project. They identify the need for the study. The church must share the gospel with millennials. Their discipleship will influence the church's ability to fulfill its God-given mission.

This researcher's purpose in this section was to bring awareness to the declining millennial membership at Simon Temple and propose a developing discipleship curriculum and evangelism plan to attract and retain millennial members and leaders. The literature review depicted how critical the project is to the church's current and future church growth. Second, the biblical support for this project affirms why completing this project is vital spiritually.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Many scholars have investigated why millennial church attendance has declined and how necessary it is to attract and retain them. Scholars point to a lack of stewardship, discipleship, community, and evangelism regarding waning attendance. As a result, Kit Carlson, Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in East Lansing, Michigan, argues that reaching and guiding millennials through sermons and traditional church courses is becoming difficult. Carlson argues that evangelism training through online classes and curricula is crucial for reaching millennials.<sup>84</sup>

Moser and Nel have suggested another theory. They indicate that churches examine their theology to ensure they apply it to their church ethics and spiritual practices. They believe that doing so will facilitate the opportunity to provide biblical instruction to millennials.<sup>85</sup> Hammett surveyed the hindrances to church participation and growth resulting from generational tensions between baby boomers and millennials.<sup>86</sup> However; scholars have not thoroughly investigated

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<sup>84</sup> Carlson, "Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud," 706.

<sup>85</sup> Moser and Nel, "The Connection Between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches," 7.

<sup>86</sup> Hammett, "Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60," 48.

whether specific points of generational tension preclude millennials from attending and participating in the local church.

Some argue that millennials do not feel a sense of community and connection to the local church. As Stanley and Willits contend: “We flourish and are simply happier when we [feel] connected with God and people.”<sup>87</sup> Millennials thrive on climbing the corporate ladder, repaying student loans, and establishing families. They are hesitant about committing to local churches that may not understand how best to meet their spiritual needs. Carlson suggests that millennials do not feel a connection to God as they attend church.<sup>88</sup> Connecting with millennials in a manner that conveys the love of God may foster viable relationships with them. As church leaders seek to attract and retain millennials, preaching and teaching the gospel in ways that resonate is vital.

Several theories about millennials and church have been minimally researched or remain uninvestigated. For example, (1) what precisely can a church do to attract and retain millennial attendees and members, (2) what specific measures can churches employ to increase and involve millennial leadership in the church, (3) is the lack of millennial leadership at the church directly correlated with the high number of baby boomer members at the church, and (4) is the attractional or missional church model more appealing to the church’s millennial members? This researcher theorized that if the church creates and uses a comprehensive discipleship and evangelism curriculum, it may help attract and retain millennials as members and leaders.

This study is needed. First, there is a lack of millennial participation and support in church activities and outreach initiatives at the church. Second, there has been a continual decline in millennial church attendance and involvement. For example, the church’s senior pastor

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<sup>87</sup> Stanley and Willits, *Creating Community, Revised and Updated Edition: Five Keys to Building a Thriving Small Group Culture*, 24.

<sup>88</sup> Carlson, “Equipping the Next Generation to Speak Their Faith Aloud,” 39.

often requests the support of millennials for special projects and church events. However, young adult support has been minimal. Also, the church holds monthly young adult church events that encourage the participation of millennials (programs and concerts that feature millennial guest speakers and gospel artists). Gospel concerts and young adult activities have been used for over nineteen years. Yet, the effectiveness of these events in encouraging and maintaining the church's millennial membership and active participation has diminished.

The church has also tried other methods of engagement. The church, the AME Zion CED, and YACM host monthly and annual meetings, programs, seminars, conferences, and conventions to encourage the participation of millennials. The AME Zion CED has worked in this way for 134 years.<sup>89</sup> The YACM department has worked with the CED to promote millennial practices and models for thirty-one years.<sup>90</sup> Millennial speakers and presenters actively participate in these initiatives.

In addition, some activities and practices occur weekly and monthly among millennials. For instance, a young adult Sunday school class provides millennials with an environment to learn about Scripture and its importance to their daily lives and an opportunity to fellowship with their peers. Church leaders also invite millennials to assist with the vacation Bible school each year. However, asking millennials to plan these church initiatives may garner greater church involvement and support. As a result, church leaders will add additional activities to the church calendar and include millennials in the planning process for these events. In addition, these events will be featured in church announcements and placed on the church's website and social media platforms so young adults can become aware of them.

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<sup>89</sup> "The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Denomination Website," accessed on June 3, 2021, <http://www.amez.org/>. The AME Zion CED department was founded in 1887.

<sup>90</sup> "Young Adult Christian Ministries," accessed on May 24, 2021, <http://cedamezion.com/>.

There is a vital need to enhance discipleship, leadership, community, and evangelism with the church's millennial group. Developing a group to assess and address these areas could be accomplished by joining the efforts of millennials, clergy, and lay leaders. Group members would need to be committed to providing their time and input to resolve these concerns as they help encourage millennial involvement. In addition, communication and fellowship between millennials and other generational groups are missing at the church. As an associate minister who works with the church's young adult ministry, the researcher hopes to facilitate more events to help bridge the generational gap. Planning and hosting virtual events such as "let's talk sessions" may help foster communication and interaction between millennials and other church member groups, such as seniors and youth.

As previously stated, the church has experienced a decline in millennial membership in recent years. The senior pastor has encouraged the attendance and participation of young adults. He has also encouraged them to invite their friends, neighbors, college classmates, and coworkers. While the church has experienced exponential membership growth in the past few years, it has been challenging to retain and actively involve millennials. The researcher hopes to help address this problem by implementing new approaches to drawing and maintaining young adults at the church.

The church will host a month-long campaign that encourages millennials to invite and bring their friends, coworkers, young adult neighbors, and cohorts to church (Sunday worship services, Bible study, and Sunday school). The millennial member who brings the most individuals to church will receive a \$100 gift card. This campaign aims to teach millennials about the importance of sharing the gospel with their peers and encourage them to invite their friends to church. The increased use of social media to solicit the support and participation of

millennials in this project and during the church's millennial attendance drive should garner awareness and support.

The church is not currently using social media specifically to attract millennials. This study will help millennial members realize how essential their participation is for helping to fulfill the church's mission of sharing the gospel with others. Reaching unbelievers, millennials, or those who may no longer attend church is vital to the church's mission (the Great Commission) and future church success. Discipleship and evangelism training will occur as young adult members observe and invite others to attend worship services. The church's mission supports this project.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces and describes the methodology used to address the study problem stated in Chapter 1. Additionally, this chapter comprises an overview of the intervention design and a detailed timeline for its implementation, followed by an explanation of the study sample and the instrumentation used. This chapter then explains the data collection process and how the researcher analyzed the data. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary, in which the researcher restates the study process statement.<sup>1</sup>

### Purpose Statement

This project aimed to attract and involve millennial members to help grow and revitalize the church. Simon Temple's membership is comprised mainly of senior members. Therefore, seeking viable means to attract and retain millennials and draw on their gifts, talents, and finances is imperative to the church's current and future spiritual and physical health. This researcher believes that developing a strategic and comprehensive biblical evangelism and scriptural discipleship model designed to address and meet the spiritual needs of millennials is essential. Interviewing church leaders and laypersons of diverse demographics helped identify why millennials do not attend or remain church members. The researcher hopes that the results of this study will encourage, educate, and empower church leadership and laypersons on the best spiritual practices to attract and retain millennials.

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<sup>1</sup> This project was undertaken as a quality improvement initiative at Simon Temple AME Zion Church and was not formally supervised by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board.

## Intervention Design

The purpose of the project plan was to: (1) inform the church's leadership about its lack of millennial members, (2) increase communication between church leadership, millennials, and other generational groups (young adults and seniors), and (3) increase millennial involvement in the church's discipleship and evangelism ministries. The objective was to increase millennial attendees at the church by twenty percent in eight weeks. The church leaders and members participated as stakeholders for this project, including the senior pastor, ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, lay leaders, and millennial members. Stakeholders participated in interviews surveys and helped develop and implement the millennial attendance drive. All study activities occurred at the church or by phone or Zoom. The researcher maintained a reflective journal and took field notes to help capture personal biases, stakeholders' reactions, and other helpful observations during interviews and the attendance drive.

Before beginning the project, the researcher requested approval to conduct this study from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). She received IRB approval on August 5, 2021. The researcher began the stakeholder recruitment process and data collection after receiving authorization from IRB, Liberty University, and the senior pastor. After receiving permission, the project started within two weeks.<sup>2</sup> The researcher aimed to complete the trial period and evaluate her intervention within eight weeks. She required six weeks to compile, analyze, and synthesize the results. Therefore, the total project time was fourteen weeks, including the trial period, intervention, and analysis.

Before initiating the project, the researcher met with the senior pastor to request permission and written consent to complete the study using the church's resources and church

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<sup>2</sup> The recruitment process for this project began on August 29, 2021.



facility (Appendices C and D). The researcher required the written consent of stakeholders who participated in interviews (Appendix A). The researcher also needed to write permission to record interviews. Therefore, interview participants signed and returned their consent forms to the researcher. Since the researcher collected survey data anonymously, she did not require survey participants to sign or return consent forms.

After the researcher received approval from Liberty University, the IRB, and the church's senior pastor, she coordinated with the church's media director to create and broadcast video announcements to advertise the study, stakeholder recruitment, and millennial attendance drive. The purpose of the videos was to inform church members and millennials about the survey and solicit their support as participants in the study and millennial attendance drive. The researcher worked with the senior pastor to announce and inform the church's leadership and church members about the study. The media director placed the study's advertisement materials on the church's website and social media platforms. The researcher provided a copy of the stakeholder sign-up sheet to a staff member at the church administrative office for stakeholders to sign up to participate in the study project (Appendix N). Signed consent forms, data, and study records were stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's residence and will be shredded and disposed of following the defense of the study.

The researcher used Zoom, email, and phone calls to communicate directly with the participants involved in the study.<sup>3</sup> She used two videos: an announcement for the project study and recruitment for the project's stakeholders and the millennial attendance drive information. The video advertising the research and recruitment for stakeholders was aired four Sundays before the project's start date. The media director broadcasted the millennial attendance drive

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<sup>3</sup> The Zoom login credentials provided for the first Zoom meeting remained the same throughout the study.

video for seven Sundays (four Sundays before the start date of the project study and three Sundays while the drive was occurring). The church media director aired the video announcement during the 8:30 am and 11 am Sunday morning worship services.

Once the researcher selected the stakeholders, she gave them a written introductory informational sheet that provided an overview of the purpose of the project's intervention (Appendix E). The disseminated information included an operational statement that explained the purpose and nature of the project study and the importance of the stakeholders' participation in the project intervention (surveys, interviews, and millennial membership attendance campaign). The researcher explained that the project aimed to attract and involve millennial members to grow and revitalize the church. Finally, she sought the recommendations and feedback of her stakeholders and availed herself to answer any questions or concerns participants had about the project. During the interview sessions, the researcher used the grand tour question framework to neutralize, asking non-leading questions to minimize questions that adversely affected interviewees. General grand tour questions permitted interviewees an opportunity to freely describe their perceptions and experiences of the stated problem without undue influences.<sup>4</sup> Specific questions posed in surveys and interviews aimed to determine why millennials do not attend Sunday worship services, Bible studies, and Sunday school at the church.

The meetings for this study occurred using Zoom and the cell phone. The researcher did not require additional resources or personal preparations to conduct the interviews or surveys. During in-person gatherings held at the church, participants, including the researcher, utilized personal protective equipment, including masks, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, and a forehead

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<sup>4</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Study*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 107.

thermometer. The church's custodial staff ensured the cleanliness and sanitization of the church premises after each worship service, Sunday school, and Bible study in-person gathering. Finally, due to the Delta variant of the COVID-19, the State of North Carolina implemented changes requiring the church to limit the number of attendees gathered in person for each service.

### Intervention Timeline

#### *Week One*

The researcher emailed the study group participants during week one to inform them of the first study group meeting. Next, the researcher developed and purchased the supplies for the project study and the millennial membership attendance drive. She emailed flyers for the project study to the media director (Appendix B), and she purchased pens, note pads, a journal, a \$100 visa gift card, and a recording device. The researcher stored these supplies in a secured filing cabinet at her residence for the duration of the study. The initial stakeholder meeting occurred during the first week using Zoom.

During the initial meeting, the researcher provided stakeholders with copies of the following documents: (1) consent forms, participants read, reviewed, and signed, (2) the study's operational statement, (3) survey questionnaire, (4) interview questions, and (5) study overview design. This study includes these documents as Appendices A, E, F, G, and H. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The stakeholder group did not meet in person. The study group participants were required to adhere to the CDC and the church's COVID-19 protocols (Appendix K) when they attended worship services, Sunday school, and Bible studies.

The researcher discussed the project study and the intervention overview design (Appendix H). The interviews and surveys focused on identifying why millennials do not attend

the church and increasing millennial attendance, participation, and church membership. After the meeting, the researcher sent emails about the project study's activities and a schedule to church leaders and stakeholders (Appendices M and O). In addition, the church's administrative staff began publicizing the project study, stakeholder recruitment, and millennial membership attendance drive by placing the flyers on the church's website and social media platforms.<sup>5</sup> As church members learned about the study and millennial attendance campaign, increased interest and communication occurred between church leaders and members. The researcher communicated weekly with stakeholders via phone calls and emails. The researcher improved communications between her and the stakeholders and established trust.

### *Week Two*

The second study group meeting occurred via Zoom in the second week. This session's focus aimed to discover if participants had noticed a decline in millennial membership and participation at the church. First, the researcher inquired why stakeholders believed a decrease in membership had occurred and sought recommendations to resolve this problem. Second, the researcher discussed and continued to plan for the millennial membership attendance drive, which aimed to increase millennial attendance and involvement at the church. Third, stakeholders were asked to support and assist the researcher in various ways, for example, by completing interviews and surveys and helping with the millennial membership drive. Finally, the researcher began scheduling interviews with church leaders, including ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, and lay leaders. The researcher wanted to have all interviews and surveys completed by week four. However, completing surveys and interviews took five weeks

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<sup>5</sup> Two flyers were used for the study (a project study announcement and stakeholder recruitment, and a millennial attendance drive).

due to schedule restraints. She emailed and telephoned stakeholders to remind them of their need to finish and submit surveys and the dates and times for their interview appointments.

### *Week Three*

During week three, the researcher ensured stakeholders completed the surveys. She allotted thirty minutes for each interview; however, the average time for conducting interviews was fifteen minutes. The researcher emailed participants their interview transcripts for review, approval, and signature after each interview within seventy-two hours. The researcher recorded each interview, took field notes, and journaled during each interview session. The researcher turned the recorder on before the discussion began (before introducing herself). She turned the recording device off after the respondent answered the last interview question and made final comments. She thanked them for participating in her project study.

The third stakeholder meeting occurred via Zoom as well. This meeting aimed to continue planning the millennial attendance drive to attract and encourage millennial attendance and participation at the church. The researcher monitored the completion of the surveys and interviews and addressed and answered any concerns or questions. The researcher telephoned and emailed church leaders to remind them of their scheduled interview appointments and remind millennial stakeholders to complete and submit their surveys.

### *Week Four*

The researcher received all twenty completed millennial surveys during week four. Since interviews were still being scheduled and completed during week four, a meeting to discuss the survey and interview process was postponed and rescheduled for week five. The researcher discussed and finalized all plans for the millennial attendance drive, slated to begin in week five. She continued sending email reminders to all stakeholders, reminding them of their scheduled

interview sessions. The researcher emailed interviewees copies of their transcripts to review, approve, sign, and return to her via email.

#### *Week Five*

The millennial attendance drive began during week five on October 17, 2021. During the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services, the researcher used a video announcement a kick-off for the drive. The church's administrative office assisted the researcher and stakeholders with tracking millennial attendance for church worship services, Sunday school meetings, and Bible studies. The researcher observed minimal attendance at these services by the church's young adult members. The millennials who participated in services did not bring guests. Once the millennial attendance drive commenced, the researcher used virtual stakeholder meetings to obtain suggestions and feedback on improving the attendance drive. The virtual meetings did not last more than thirty minutes.

#### *Week Six*

During week six, the researcher finalized all interviews. She provided stakeholders with electronic copies of their transcribed interviews to review and verify. The researcher made revisions for the interview transcriptions as required. As the researcher monitored the progress of the millennial attendance drive, she checked the sign-in sheets to ensure the church's young adults signed their guests in. On November 6, 2021, the researcher received an appointment to serve as a pastor at a new church during week six.<sup>6</sup> The researcher emailed stakeholders to inform them that she would not complete the millennial attendance drive due to her appointment as a pastor. She thanked each of them for their support and participation in the research project.

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<sup>6</sup> The researcher could not complete the millennial membership drive because she received an appointment as a pastor during week two of the millennial attendance drive.

As a result of the researcher's appointment as a pastor, she only conducted the millennial attendance drive for two weeks. Since the researcher's pastoral charge preempted completing the millennial attendance drive, she could not identify and award the millennial membership attendance campaign winner the \$100 visa gift card.<sup>7</sup> The researcher initially allotted eight weeks to complete this project; however, the study concluded in six weeks. The researcher thanked her church leadership and research participants for their support and participation in the project study. Finally, the researcher evaluated, analyzed, and compiled all collected data and illustrated the information in charts and graphs to capture the findings and results from the interviews, surveys, and millennial attendance drive. The millennial attendance campaign did bring awareness to the lack of millennial attendance at the church. The researcher, senior pastor, church leaders, and project participants observed minimal millennial attendance and participation during weekly worship services, Bible studies, and Sunday school meetings. This lack of millennial attendance and participation showed how declining involvement could adversely affect the church's ability to make millennial disciples that help grow the church spiritually and numerically.

### Sample

A purposeful sample of twelve church leaders, including ordained deacons, elders, licensed ministers, and lay leaders, were interviewed individually for the study. Interviews occurred by telephone, and the researcher used a Sony recording device to record them. In addition, the researcher used Happy Scribe software to help transcribe the interviews.<sup>8</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Since the researcher could not complete the four-week millennial attendance drive, she was unable to determine a winner and award them with the \$100 visa gift card.

<sup>8</sup> Happy Scribe is a web-based software designed to transcribe recordings.

researcher clarified and proofread the interview transcripts and provided electronic copies to respondents for their review for accuracy and approval. A sample of twenty millennial participants (ages 25 to 40) participated in the online millennial survey.<sup>9</sup> Thematic analysis, which used (1) familiarization, (2) coding, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing and writing up the analysis of the participants' survey responses, and (5) recommendations of millennial stakeholders, was instrumental in capturing this study's central themes. In addition, the researcher kept track of how many millennial attendees signed in during the millennial membership attendance campaign.

#### Instrumentation

The researcher used data triangulation (surveys, interviews, and reflective field notes) to gather data for this study. Data triangulation permitted the researcher to use various data sources to compare the data in the study. The stakeholders' participation in surveys and interviews provided data and feedback that assisted the researcher in ascertaining factors that could attract, help retain, and encourage millennials to become involved at the church. Survey data taken from millennials and interview data from church leaders reflected generational differences since most church leaders are not millennials.

The three angles used for this project were the insider, outsider, and study angle (Appendix I). The insider angle represented the twenty millennial survey participants and twelve interview participants (church leaders) who assisted the researcher in this study. The outsider angle came from the senior pastor, an independent expert. The study angle came from the

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<sup>9</sup> The Google forms database was used to conduct the online survey.



researcher's use of field notes.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the six stakeholder meetings, the researcher maintained a journal to observe millennial behaviors, interactions with peers, and participation at church events. In addition, the researcher used reflective field notes to capture evidence to produce meaning and understanding of the millennial culture and social situation at the church.

### Data Collection

The researcher collected qualitative data from ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, lay leaders, and millennials at the church. She used a survey and interviews to measure the following activities: (1) millennials' likes and dislikes about the church, (2) how their likes and or dislikes influenced millennial attendance or nonattendance to church, (3) how the senior pastor, ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, and lay leaders perceived the stated problem, (4) what church leaders believed the stated problem's underlying areas of concern were, (5) the interaction of church leaders with the church's millennial members, and (6) church leaders' perspectives on how to resolve the lack of millennial attendance and participation at the church (Appendix G). Lastly, the researcher assessed the effects of encouraging millennial discipleship and evangelism during the millennial attendance drive (Appendix J).

The researcher used a reflective journal throughout the project study to bracket out biases and denote emerging ideas and concepts. She used the reflective journal to distinguish and detect preferences, maintain information in a single document, and chronograph the data. The reflective journal also included the researcher's observations on the study's methodology. For instance, the journal captured the researcher's thoughts on the sample, sample techniques, personal beliefs about interviews (before and after), and justification of the method.

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<sup>10</sup> Pastor Brian R. Thompson has served as the senior pastor of Simon Temple for twenty years. In July 2021, during the 51<sup>st</sup> Quadrennial Conference of the African Episcopal Zion Church, he was elected the 106<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession in the AME Zion Church.

Throughout the study, participants maintained the right to withdraw at any time. None of the participants decided to start the project. The researcher did not have to return any related data to participants who dropped out of the study. She was honored to work with her stakeholders and was grateful for their decision to participate in her project.

### Data Analysis

The data was drawn from personal responses in individual interviews and survey questionnaires, both open-ended and focused, field notes, on-site observations, and digital recordings. These diverse sources served to be instrumental in establishing data triangulation. Michael Quinn Patton describes the qualitative data analysis process as examining a story, collecting field notes, a reflective journal, or a set of survey responses or interviews (a phenomenological study).<sup>11</sup> This study's primary focus was to understand better the lived experiences of ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, lay leaders, and millennials at the church and implement evangelistic and discipleship practices that support attracting and retaining millennial church members. The researcher used graphs and tables to capture and synthesize the collected data. Finally, she used the ATLAS.ti software to measure the effects of the interventions used during the study.<sup>12</sup>

The researcher observed and used quantitative data to plan and implement the millennial membership attendance drive. She used: (1) field notes to observe and interpret the pragmatic working theories participants used for explaining their experiences during the millennial attendance campaign drive (observation), (2) significant features that arose from survey questionnaires and interviews that made up the perceptions and experiences of study group

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Study, and Evaluation Methods* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015), 570.

<sup>12</sup> ATLAS.ti is a web-based qualitative data analysis software.

participants (categorizing and coding), and (3) a review and analysis of stakeholders essential experiences and feedback to critically identify three major themes. Data analysis identified possible reasons why millennials are not attending the church. The millennial attendance drive did not yield a twenty percent increase in millennial attendance and involvement at the church. As a result, it did not demonstrate a successful outcome.

### Summary

This chapter describes the methodology that the researcher used to conduct this study. The researcher aimed to understand better the influences that preclude the church from attracting, retaining, and involving millennial members. The data collected during the interviews and surveys identified specific challenges. The methods used by the church to generate millennial attendance and support are based on an attractional church model strategy and include gospel concerts and young adult social activities.

This study's intervention, based on a missional strategy (discipleship and evangelism), aimed to attract and retain millennial attendees. Stakeholder involvement, input, and feedback in planning and implementing the millennial attendance drive were instrumental to this study. They generated a frank conversation regarding the decline in millennial attendance and participation. The two-week millennial membership attendance drive confirmed a lack of millennial attendance at the church. The focus of the millennial attendance campaign was evangelism and discipleship, and the researcher aimed to increase attendance to worship services, Bible studies, and Sunday school meetings.

### Implementation of the Intervention

This study began on September 26, 2021, and concluded on November 6, 2021. During week one, the dates and specified times of the events were coordinated and scheduled with the approval of the senior pastor. Before starting the project study, the recruitment video aired between 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday morning worship services for four consecutive Sundays. The millennial attendance video aired for six Sundays during the same time slots.<sup>13</sup> The researcher recruited and identified a stakeholder group that helped identify and address the decrease in millennial attendance and participation. The stakeholder group improved millennial attendance and involvement through honest feedback and collaborative planning, encouragement, and monitoring.<sup>14</sup> The researcher altered the scheduled timeline for the implementation and completion of interviews. She conducted interviews in person and over the phone.<sup>15</sup> All ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, and lay leaders completed and returned their IRB consent forms in person or by email before scheduling and completing their interviews.

The completion of interviews took six weeks instead of the projected four weeks. Due to scheduling conflicts and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, some stakeholders felt safer conducting their discussions over the phone instead of meeting in person. All in-person interviews complied with the CDC and the church's COVID-19 guidelines. The stakeholders who participated in interviews signed and returned their IRB consent forms before scheduling and completing their interviews. The researcher also provided a copy of the IRB consent forms

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<sup>13</sup> The recruitment video was aired August 29–September 19, 2021, for four Sundays. The millennial attendance drive videos were aired from September 26, 2021–to October 31, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> The researcher used the terms “stakeholders” and “participants” synonymously throughout Chapter 3 of the thesis project.

<sup>15</sup> Some stakeholders were not comfortable with meeting at Simon Temple to conduct their interviews in person due to the increases in individuals diagnosed with COVID-19.

to each millennial stakeholder who participated in the survey; however, millennials did not have to sign and return their IRB consent forms.<sup>16</sup> The shareholder group did not meet weekly. Since the interview process took longer than expected, the shareholder group met biweekly using Zoom and email.

### Church Leaders Versus Millennial Interaction and Feedback

The researcher sought equal representation from church leaders, including ordained elders and deacons, licensed ministers, and lay leaders. Church leader stakeholders were very supportive of this researcher and the project. Church leaders seemed divided on whether the church has experienced declining millennial attendance and participation. Yet, Bishop Thompson, the church's senior pastor, was highly candid and transparent during his interview. He acknowledged that the church had experienced a decline in membership. If time permitted, he noted that he would have ensured more resources (including millennial leaders and finances) were in place to teach, lead, and guide the church's YACM millennial members. Unlike millennials, church leaders seemed hesitant in providing answers to the interview questions. Church leaders were reserved and guarded as they answered the ten interview questions. However, most agreed that YACM needs a multi-cultural board to ensure the ministry remains active and vibrant. There was also significant overlap in their recommendations of improving the YACM ministry at the church.

Initially, millennials were reluctant to voice their opinions and thoughts about the church. However, as time progressed, they became excited, appreciative, and joyful about having a survey they deemed a "safe place" to express their opinions anonymously about their lack of

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<sup>16</sup> Since the researcher used an anonymous survey, the requirement to collect signatures was waived to protect the participants' privacy and identities.

attendance and participation at church. Many of them felt that a study of this magnitude was long overdue. Millennials believed that their voices did not matter regarding worship services, the selection of worship music, financial stewardship, and the types of ministries conducted at the church. While they reported wanting to learn about God and actively participate in the church's mission, they said they are increasingly at ease with attending church services virtually versus in person.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

Chapter 4 will show that the church's attractional church model is not effective in helping to reach, retain, and involve millennial members. Instead, the church must deliberately adopt her discipleship and evangelism ministry paradigms to attract, educate, and encourage millennials to share their faith with their peers and others effectively. This chapter will also demonstrate that the millennial attendance drive brought awareness to millennials' integral roles in the church's mission. Young adults will spiritually mature as they invite and encourage their peers, cohorts, young adult neighbors, and coworkers to attend church each week to receive biblical preaching and teaching. The Great Commission implies the biblical principles of discipleship and evangelism.

Millennials are searching for comprehensive ministries that are Christ-centered, Bible-based, and ministry-focused. They want to be prepared to make a difference in the world and share their faith with others. As millennials join and become active members of the church, the church bears the responsibility to help them spiritually mature. Having church leaders who provide sound biblical instruction and exhibit personal, spiritual, and financial integrity is vital for millennials. They believe the church's mission correlates with stewardship, which is global in scope.

### **Millennial Survey**

The survey supporting this study was electronically disseminated to respondents ages twenty-five to forty to ascertain their perceptions of the church and why millennials are less likely to attend and participate than previous generations. Church leaders cannot resolve the

growing despair of declining millennial church attendance cannot be resolved without the perspectives, views, expectations, and concerns of millennials themselves. Any structured research that omits their input will serve no purpose in addressing the lack of church attendance and participation. Without the involvement of millennials in research studies, the growing trend of unaffiliated religious millennials will continue.

#### The Goal of the Survey

The survey used in this research sought to validate and confirm millennials' views about Simon Temple that dampen their desire to attend and participate in church activities. Additionally, the survey sought to discover millennials' spiritual and physical needs who attend the church. The study's goal was to obtain the support of twelve to fifteen millennial respondents to participate in the survey. After receiving completed surveys from twenty respondents, the qualitative data was analyzed, collated, and imported into excel spreadsheets used to produce the graphs and tables for this study. Additionally, the researcher drew trends and patterns from the responses.

#### The Research Process

Surveys were electronically collected using Google Forms. Participants were highly encouraged to provide honest, detailed answers. However, not every respondent answered every question. As a result, the graphs and tables reflect only submitted responses. The researcher does not identify respondents by name. The researcher asked each respondent to read the IRB consent form before taking the survey, and she reminded them that their responses would remain completely anonymous.



## Analysis of Millennial Survey Questions

### *Question 1: What is your gender?*

Figure 1 reflects the responses for questions one and two of the survey. Fourteen females and six males (73.7 percent females and 26.3 percent males) participated in the survey, reflecting the disparity between females and males in the United States. For instance, in 2020, the United States Census Bureau indicated more females than males in the US (168.63 to 161.37).<sup>1</sup> Also, females outnumber their male counterparts as members of religious organizations.<sup>2</sup> According to the Pew Research Center, females, are more religious than men.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the PowerChurch database that the church uses for membership information does not track the number of male and female millennial members. So that information is unavailable for this study.

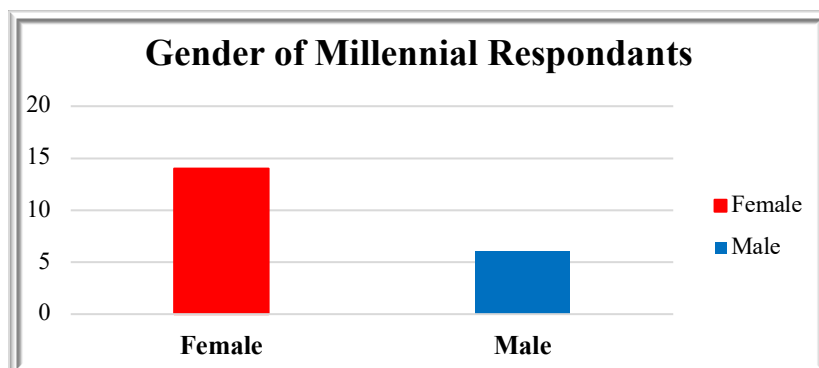


Figure 1. Gender of Millennial Respondents

<sup>1</sup> "Total population in the United States by Gender from 2010 to 2025," *Statistica.com*, Accessed November 1, 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/737923/us-population-by-gender/>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World: Women are Generally More Religious Than Men, Particularly Among Christians," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (March 22, 2016) <https://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/22/the-gender-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlia Fahmy, "Christian Women in the U.S. are More Religious than their Male Counterparts," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (April 6, 2018) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/06/christian-women-in-the-u-s-are-more-religious-than-their-male-counterparts/>.

*Question 2: What is your age?*

The average age of female respondents was 37.7, while the average age of male respondents was 25.1.

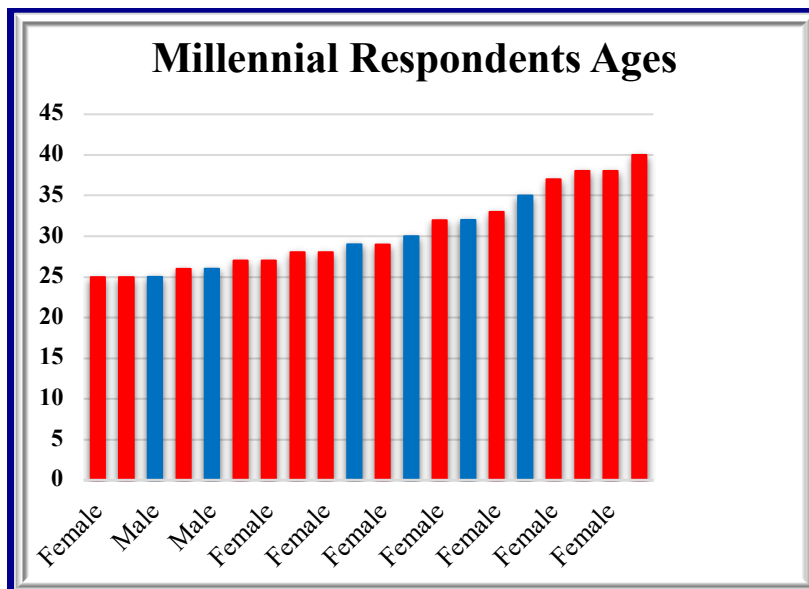


Figure 2. Millennial Respondents Ages

*Question 3: How does your faith in God help you make decisions in life?*

Millennial respondents reported their faith as foundational to their ability to make decisions in life in that it helps them differentiate between right and wrong. Amazingly, many millennials attributed their religion as the basis for their belief and trust in God. Two millennial respondents reported that their faith had no role in their life decision-making process. Compared to baby boomers, fewer millennials say that religion is vital in their lives.<sup>4</sup> Simon Temple's millennials' responses regarding their faith depict religion's important role in their lives.

<sup>4</sup> "Religion Among Millennials," Pew Research Center.

Table 1. How Millennials' Faith Influence Life Decisions

Age	How does your faith in God help you make decisions in life?
27	My faith in God is the foundation for anything that I decide to do in my life. I seek Him first before I commit myself to do anything.
25	My faith is a moral compass, and it provides me with the guidance to navigate life.
29	My faith in God allows me to trust Him and His ways, knowing He knows what's best for me. My faith will enable me to trust God more and seek Him first before making any decisions.
32	My faith in God helps me make decisions in life because it provides confidence and security that God knew that I would choose before I did. That gives confidence and guarantees that God will be with me no matter the outcome of the decision.
33	My faith keeps me focused and causes me to worry less, knowing that God is in control.
26	When I have trouble choosing, I ask God to help me make decisions. If I am worried about a decision I am making, I also ask for peace of mind.
29	My faith in God doesn't help me make decisions in life.
28	My faith in God has a positive influence on my decision-making. As a result, I can differentiate between right and wrong, treat others, etc.
25	My faith helps me to seek God for everything that I do.
38	None
32	My faith allows me to think twice when making decisions.
37	By believing that he will still work things out even if I mess up.
25	My faith keeps me from doing foolish things that I know I shouldn't do.
38	I can trust him to direct my path, even when I'm unsure of what to do.
35	My faith keeps me even when I don't want to do right. My faith in God is all I have.
30	My faith is the basis of every decision I make based on my belief in God.
26	My faith in God helps me to believe in Him.
27	My faith leads me in the right direction as I pray before making any decisions.
28	I try to base my decisions on my faith in God, and the outcomes of my choices let me know if it was God or just me.
40	My faith is a blueprint, the foundation, and guide in life.

*Question 4: What do you most enjoy about attending services at Simon Temple?*

Participants reported they enjoyed the following aspects of services: preaching, biblical teaching, and the church’s praise and worship experiences. Overwhelmingly, forty-five percent of millennials thoroughly enjoyed praise and worship. In comparison, thirty-five percent indicated they liked the preaching, thirty percent enjoyed the biblical teaching, and fifteen percent reported they did not like any aspect of the church’s services.

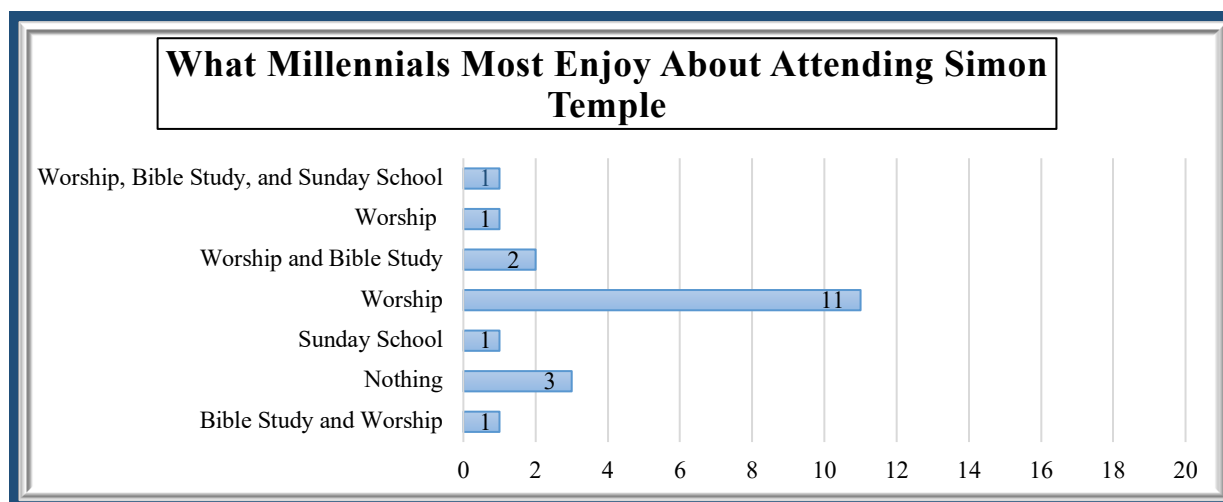


Figure 3. What Millennials Most Enjoy About Attending Simon Temple

*Question 5: What do you least enjoy about attending services at Simon Temple?*

Millennials least enjoyed the “unkind demeanors” of older church members and unwelcoming behavior that made them and others feel excluded. Millennial respondents also cited the “unrighteous” behavior of praising team members as they least enjoyed attending church. Other items mentioned included: parking, repetitive sermons, the growing ministry size, musical selections, the standard components of the worship service, the attention to timing versus the Holy Spirit’s leading of the worship services, and the lack of intimacy in a “mega-church.” Four respondents reported there was nothing they least enjoyed about the church’s worship services.

Table 2. What Millennials Least Enjoy About Services at Simon Temple

Age	What do you least enjoy about attending services at Simon Temple?
25	I least enjoy the cliquish behavior and unkind demeanors of older members.
25	I least enjoy the praise team and their unrighteous behavior.
25	I least enjoy the megachurch commercialism that it has become. It is a business, it is no longer personable.
26	Before COVID-19, finding parking was problematic.
26	Nothing
27	Nothing
27	Nothing
28	I least enjoy the repetitive sermons and the constant unchristian-like behavior of older members.
28	I least enjoy the musical selections for worship services and unkind interactions with others.
29	The traditional parts of the church and services.
29	Simon Temple is more like a social club rather than a gathering of believers. Individuals that are not a part of the “in crowd” are considered less important than others at Simon Temple.
30	I least enjoy feeling as though I must go to a building to experience God.
32	It is challenging to list something I “least enjoy” as I equally enjoy just about everything. The only thing that may come to mind at times is, pre-COVID, during special events or holidays, the down-home feeling is missing amongst those attending only for the famous artist or person who is the guest. I know that is not a Simon Temple issue as I genuinely have enjoyed these guests and am grateful that they attended Simon Temple.
32	The number of people attending had grown so much that I do not feel as close to everyone as I previously did when I was younger.
33	There is not anything that I least enjoy.
35	The music is strictly traditional and repetitive.
37	Worship has become a performance. It is no longer authentic.
38	The AME Zion traditions are old and too traditional.
38	None
40	I least enjoy the programmatic and rushed feel of the Sunday morning worship services. I love my church; however, I feel we are quenching the Spirit to stay in alignment with the program.

*Question 6: If you were not attending Simon Temple, what church might you identify with, and why that church?*

Respondents listed a host of churches they would likely attend if not Simon Temple. One respondent listed Word of Faith Ministries because “the church is welcoming.” Two respondents listed True Vine Ministries because their members are “cordial” and “free to worship.” One respondent listed Manna Church because of its outreach ministry. Two millennials identified a Baptist church (Arran Lakes Baptist) because they grew up as members of Baptist churches.

In contrast, two respondents said they would continue attending an AME Zion church (The Rock AME Zion Church) because the pastor preaches much like Bishop Thompson. One respondent listed a non-denominational church, while seven respondents were indecisive. One respondent said that watching the online services for Transformation Church and New Birth would be an option since this respondent “loved how the pastor taught the Scriptures and made them ‘relatable to everyday life.’” One respondent no longer attends church.

Table 3. Other Churches Millennials Would Attend

<b>Age</b>	<b>If you were not attending Simon Temple, what church might you identify with, and why that church?</b>
25	Word of Faith Ministries. The church is welcoming.
25	I would attend any non-denominational church. I’m weary of the traditional doctrinal dogma.
25	I don’t know because I have not researched other churches. I just listen online.
26	I live in Raleigh. I would probably attend an AME Zion church because it is the same denomination.
26	I would attend True Vine Ministries. The people are so cordial at that church.
27	I have been attending since I moved to Fayetteville, so I don’t know of any other churches to attend.
27	None.

Table 3. Other Churches Millennials Would Attend (continued)

28	Manna Church. They are constantly doing outreach within our local community.
28	Arran Lakes Baptist because the church family is living and inviting, and their members get involved in the ministry.
29	I would attend a Baptist church because I grew up attending Baptist churches.
29	I no longer attend church.
30	I'm not sure which church I would attend.
32	I would be fellowshiping at The Rock (Rock Spring AME Zion Church). I have attended some services there, and their pastor reminds me of Reverend Thompson in his rawness in delivering the word and being relatable or "keeping it real."
32	I am not sure.
33	I enjoy streaming services from Transformation church and New Birth. I love how they break down the Scriptures and make them relatable to everyday life.
35	All Nations Worship Assembly, because of the ability to worship freely.
37	I would attend True Vine Ministries because their worshippers are free to worship.
38	None.
38	I'm not sure.
40	I haven't thought about not attending Simon Temple much.

*Question 7: What objections do your friends most often raise about Christianity?*

Millennials reported that their friends object to: (1) the impure motives and intentions of church leaders, (2) individuals having a religious attitude versus a relationship with Christ, (3) the judgmental and hypocritical actions of some Christians, (4) doctrinal differences, (5) the traditions of the church which they view as "rules and lies," and (6) lack of openness to the differing beliefs of others. Eight millennials had friends who objected to some Christians' hypocrisy and judgmental postures. Two respondents reported their friends questioning if God is real and "why God allows terrible things to happen." Two millennials did not respond.

Table 4. Objections Millennials Friends Have to Christianity

Age	What objections do your friends most often raise about Christianity?
25	They're not objecting to Christianity but the intentions and motives of leaders in the church.
25	Is God real?
26	Some of my friends think it's more of a religion than a relationship. Religion is what they are hesitant about.
26	No response.
26	Christians are too judgmental and hypocritical.
26	Christians that are judgmental that insist their beliefs are right. They fail to permit others to make their own decisions.
36	My friends usually object to the aspects of Christianity pertaining to the differences in the Bible between the Old and New Testaments and that several things seem "far-fetched" that occurred in the Bible compared to what happens/has not happened in our lives or family's life.
28	No response.
28	My friends don't believe in the idea of needing to go through a man to get to God.
29	How do you know God is real?
29	The hypocritical and judgmental spirits.
30	How "church" people can be the most judgmental.
32	My friends object to the judgmental and hypocritical attitudes of some Christians.
32	The hypocrisy of some Christians.
35	People stuck in old traditions for tradition's sake.
37	They ask, if God is real, why do such bad things happen?
38	The traditions (the rules), the lies, the lack of transparency.
38	The hypocrisy. Christians do not often practice what they preach or teach.
38	That it's a blessing and curse when it's used the wrong way versus to God's glory!
40	They feel that pastors take money from the ministry. They feel that many members are hypocrites. They feel that church is boring.



*Question 8: What ministries would you like Simon Temple leadership to implement for members of your age group?*

Respondents would like to see the church implement ministries, programs, and classes such as college ministries, young adult Bible study, mentorship programs, courses about the core denominational beliefs about the Bible, worship services solely for their age group, virtual yoga, physical fitness training, mental health, as well as support groups for single mothers, people undergoing a divorce, and battered women. Millennials want the church to keep the young adult ministry “active and consistent intentionally.” Four millennials chose not to respond, and two respondents reported the church as “having enough ministries” and “being somewhat satisfied” with the programs the church offers. One respondent wants church leaders to “hear the younger generation out more.”

Table 5. Ministries Millennials Would Like to See Implemented

<b>Age</b>	<b>What ministries would you like Simon Temple leadership to implement for members of your age group?</b>
25	I am somewhat satisfied with what they currently offer.
25	An active young adult and college ministry.
26	College ministry.
26	I would like Simon Temple to develop a consistent young adult ministry.
26	I would really like for Simon Temple to start a class about our core foundational beliefs, where the beliefs are found in the Bible, and the history behind it. I want to learn and grow more comfortable with my faith and denomination.
26	I would like for church leaders to just hear the young generation out more.
36	I would like Simon Temple to implement a young Adult Bible study. In college, one of the things that kept me going and I looked forward to weekly was a young adult Bible study that was at a church in the same town as the university. The leader was a young man in school for divinity and ministry, but also topics were tailored for our generation. It was an instant fellowship and connection that may not be felt sitting in the traditional Bible study with those more elderly who were not only unfamiliar, but some against discussing topics relevant to our generation.

Table 5. Ministries Millennials Would Like to See Implemented (continued)

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28	An active young adult ministry.
28	I don't have anything I would like to contribute.
29	No response.
29	A millennial led Sunday worship service with nothing but current music and a "right now" message that speaks to us (millennials).
30	A consistent and active young adult ministry.
32	Mentorship programs and Mental health discussions and training.
32	No response.
35	Just more activities and group sessions for this age group with leaders that are relevant to this age group.
37	Virtual yoga and physical fitness training.
38	Age-appropriate (millennial) Bible studies that are focused on studying the Bible.
38	I have no clue really because my desire isn't at Simon Temple anymore.
38	Simon Temple has so many ministries. I believe that Simon Temple has more than enough ministry departments. Just beautiful!
40	Single mother's advocacy and support group. A divorce support group. A battered women's advocacy and support group.

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*Question 9: Are you spiritually maturing (developing/growing in your faith) as a Simon Temple member, and why do you feel that way?*

Twelve millennials stated they were spiritually maturing, developing, and growing in their faith as church members. They said this was because they have "learned not just to be a hearer of the Word of God but a doer also." They have witnessed the biblical teachings manifest in their life, and they have learned to study the Bible for themselves. Some millennials attributed their spiritual growth to "good leadership" and the "teaching of the Word [of God]." One millennial reported that they were maturing, but not as much as possible, mainly because of "what I am or am not doing." Seven respondents said they were not spiritually developing. One

millennial stated, “I want to learn more so that I can become a more faithful Christian. However, I don’t know where to get accurate information from and whom to ask for help.” Additionally, one millennial stated they were not growing “because I have yet to find my place in my church.” Two millennials did not respond.

Table 6. Spiritual Growth and Development of Millennials

<b>Age</b>	<b>Are you spiritually maturing a Simon Temple member, and why do you feel that way?</b>
25	Yes. I have learned to not just be a hearer of the Word of God but a doer also.
25	Yes. I’ve literally seen what’s been taught play out in my life.
26	Yes, I like how the Word is presented. You must think and do your own research of what is being spoken of. I read before and ahead of the Scriptures just so I can get the full picture.
26	No, Simon Temple is not developing nor helping me to grow my faith.
26	No. I am at a point where I want to understand more about Christianity—the core beliefs, the history, the differences between denominations. I want to learn more so that I can become a more faithful Christian, but I don’t know where to get accurate information from and who to ask for help.
26	Yes, I am.
36	Yes, I feel that I’m maturing somewhat, but not as much as possible, mainly because of what I am or am not doing. This is not necessarily due to anything Simon Temple is or is not doing.
28	No response.
28	No, I am not. I no longer attend church.
29	Yes, I am developing because of the teaching of the Word.
29	No; however, I search the Scriptures daily to obtain my own understanding and not someone else’s interpretation.
30	Yes, I am developing because of good leadership.
32	Yes, due to different classes Simon Temple host. Classes such as Master Life and of the preached Word, these things make me want to go and fact check or study the Word more.

Table 6. Spiritual Growth and Development of Millennials (continued)

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32	No Response.
35	Yes, I am developing because the teaching and preaching of God's Word helps me to grow.
37	Yes, I am developing because I feel my spiritual growth.
38	Yes, I am growing spiritually; however, it has nothing to do with Simon Temple. I am studying on my own and with others that don't attend a church.
38	No. I am at a point where I want to understand more about Christianity – the core beliefs, the history, the differences between denominations. I want to learn more so that I can become a more faithful Christian, but I don't know where to get accurate information from and who to ask for help.
38	Yes, I am growing daily as I continue developing and growing in my faith. I'm operating in a space of isolation, where I am ridding myself of people and things that no longer benefit me and cannot assist me where God is trying to guide me to.
40	No, because I have yet to find my place in my church.

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*Question 10: Would you feel comfortable inviting your peers, coworkers, young adult neighbors, and cohorts to visit Simon Temple?*

Of the twenty survey respondents, eighty-four percent reported being comfortable inviting their peers, coworkers, young adult neighbors, and cohorts to visit the church. In contrast, 15.7 percent said they were not pleased. Millennials did not provide specific reasons why they did or did not feel comfortable inviting their peers to church.

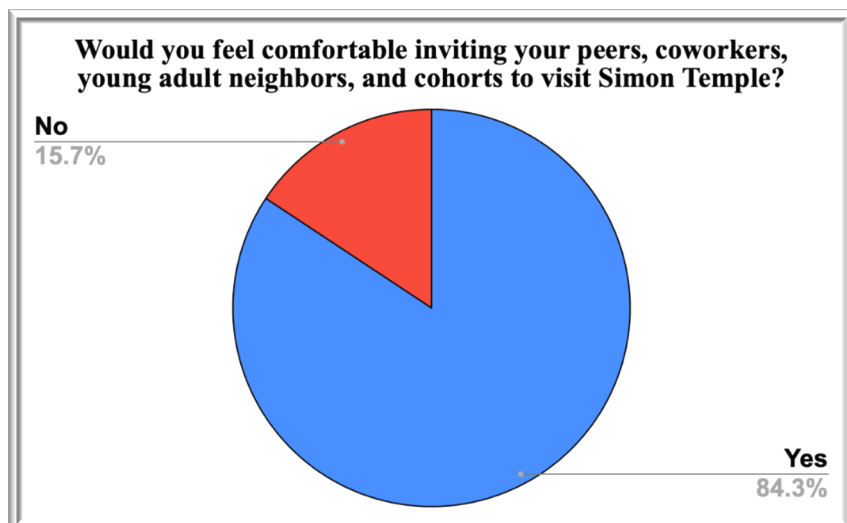


Figure. 4 Millennials Comfort About Inviting Others to Church

*Question 11: What efforts and events have you seen Simon Temple sponsor to increase millennial attendance and participation?*

Only eighteen of the twenty millennials responded to this question. Twelve reported that they did not observe the church sponsoring any activities to increase millennial attendance or participation. Other respondents noted community events, the singles ministry, and the resurrection choir (praise and worship team) as ways the church seeks millennial support and participation. Most of the church's resurrection praise and worship team members are millennials. However, some respondents do not believe the church sponsors activities that encourage and promote their participation and attendance. They said that many of the activities that the church sponsors "seem to focus on kids under thirteen versus teens and young adults."

Table 7. Simon Temple's Efforts to Increase Millennial Attendance and Participation

<b>Age</b>	<b>What efforts and events have you seen Simon Temple's sponsor increase Millennial attendance and participation?</b>
25	Community events
25	None
26	Single ministry, praise and worship team

Table 7. (continued)

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26	None
26	I can't point to anything. They seem to be focused on kids under the age of thirteen versus teens, and young adults.
26	None
28	That's a difficult question to ask. Again, my schedule is hectic with school, work, then work again with the Army reserves, so Simon Temple may have events I miss. I see events for single ministry, but not necessarily for the millennial group as a whole.
28	None
29	None
29	None
30	None
32	None
35	Concerts singles functions and the Resurrection choir
37	None
38	Very little to be honest
38	Youth Sunday school and service, graduation recognition, skating ring meets
38	None
40	I've seen great efforts made by our church and major ideas from our Pastor/First Lady.

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*Question 12: When you attend Simon Temple, what are your expectations of the following: worship service, music style, Bible study, and Sunday school?*

Millennials want to have “an experience with God.” They reported they would like to have music that includes traditional and contemporary musical selections played during services. During Bible and Sunday school sessions, they want age-appropriate topics discussed and opportunities to ask questions. They commented that worship services, Bible study, and Sunday school sessions should be engaging and thought-provoking. Seven respondents did not respond

to this question. Two respondents stated they are “learning to manage their expectations about the services at Simon Temple.”

Table 8. Millennials Expectations of Worship Services, Sunday school, and Bible study

Age	When you attend Simon Temple, what are your expectations of the following: worship service, music style, Bible study, Sunday school?
25	The worship services should consist of traditional and contemporary music and traditions. Sunday school should be interactive, interesting.
25	To have an encounter where God meets His people. Where you leave different saying, “I felt God in the room.”
25	The worship services should have you learn and experience more about God. Sunday school and Bible study should permit opportunities to ask questions and give feedback to the lessons.
26	I expect the worship service to be loud and entertaining (as the music is loud and the style of music is up-to-date). I hope Sunday school is good depending on who’s teaching, and I expect Bible study to be alright.
26	I am learning to manage my expectations about the services at Simon Temple.
27	I expect a vibrant service that has contemporary music.
27	The worship experience should be good every time and not a hit or miss.
28	No response.
28	I don’t have any expectations.
29	No response.
29	No response.
30	No response.
32	No response.
32	No response.
33	I expect the pastor to teach sound doctrine, engaging worship services, and music that varies in style.
35	I expect high energy, relatable services, lively music, and age-appropriate youth services.

Table 8. (continued)

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37	Worship service needs to be more spiritual and less religious; music needs to be more spiritual and less performing, and Bible study needs to be more interactive (question and answer).
38	All the services at Simon Temple need to be more personal again. It's too mega and commercial.
38	My expectations and hopes are that there's a flow where we're able to still manage time by somehow still respecting and welcoming the power of God that's present or even lingering when we gather each Sunday.
40	Worship should be a time to be intimate with God. Music should include as many styles as needed to reach all congregation members, even if it means Christian rap or urban gospel Bible study. Sunday school should be interactive and enjoyable.

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*Question 13: I understand that music is a significant attracting aspect for a church. Is it essential for Millennials? Please explain why or why music is not vital to Millennials.*

Nineteen millennial respondents felt strongly about music as an attractive aspect for a church. Only one millennial did not respond to this question. Respondents shared that they believe music is a required component of the worship service that “helps draw them to God and set the atmosphere for worship.” The music should somehow relate to the pastor or speakers’ sermon. One said, “music is vital for helping millennials enter the spirit of worship” and helps to capture their attention or reminds them of being around their grandparents as a youth. One respondent reported that music is instrumental in one’s decision as to why they join a church. As church leaders seek to reach the members of their congregations, they should use a variety of song selections and musical genres to appeal to the masses. Millennials view music as a means of self-expression. Respondents thoroughly enjoy song selections that appeal to their age group. When musical selections appeal to them, it helps keep the church worship service “upbeat and lively.”



Table 9. Why Millennials Believe Music Is Essential

Age	<b>I understand that music is a significant attracting aspect for a church. Is it essential for Millennials? Please explain why or why music is not vital to Millennials.</b>
25	Music helps millennials enter the spirit of worship.
25	Music is essential to millennials, but it needs to have a purpose related to the sermon.
25	Yes, music is essential to millennials. A song can set the atmosphere for the preaching of God's word.
26	Music is essential to millennials. I have visited churches with a different music style, and it was hard for me to feel connected to the church. I was able to focus on the sermon. Still, it felt like attending a lecture because the music ministry did not integrate the music into the entirety of the church service (i.e., praise breaks, minor riffs when the pastor makes a good point). It was also challenging because it was just unfamiliar music, so it did not feel inviting. (My perspective when visiting a new church).
26	No response.
27	Yes, I like the variety. I grew up in a small town, so it was always slow hymns.
27	The music draws us in because it is personable and helps lift our spirits.
28	Music is an essential part of the worship service for millennials. Many of us expect to hear upbeat and up-to-date music.
28	Music is vital to millennials because they see it to express themselves.
29	Yes, music is important to millennials because it allows them to express their feelings. Earnestly listening to the musical lyrics and associating them with the preached message helps millennials enjoy worship services. When they cannot speak how they think, the music speaks for them. Music is a safe alternative form of expression.
29	Music is essential as it can uplift one's spirit.
30	Most youths relate better to music, especially when it is telling a story.
32	It is essential. Since our generation enjoys electronics that can deliver music/sound in many ways (i.e., phone, tv, radio, Alexa, etc.), music is a part of our routine with studying, driving, and working. Hence, at church, we have the same expectation, a high one, to hear good music because we consciously or subconsciously compare it to the music we listen to throughout the rest of the week.
32	Yes, because it captures their attention or reminds them of being around grandparents when growing up.

Table 9. Why Millennials Believe Music Is Essential (continued)

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33	I do not know if it is essential for all millennials, but it is for me because I am musically inclined.
35	Music is vital because it shows that the church is willing to adapt to accommodate the younger generations.
37	Music has a freedom to it. It helps usher you into a place of worship. Music allows you to focus on the surroundings and draw them to God.
38	Yes! Music is a good part of why people choose a church. It keeps the time at church exciting and lively.
38	Music is universal, and it speaks to you sometimes when you cannot understand the words of the sermons
40	Music is life. It sets the atmosphere. It even aids the main speaker when the music has entered a spirit of worship.

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*Question 14: If you do not attend worship service, Bible study, or Sunday school, please explain why not. (Please be specific.)*

Respondents provided myriad reasons why they do not currently attend worship services, Bible studies, and Sunday school at the church. Respondents said they do not participate because of work, school, family functions, and COVID-19. However, even though millennials are not attending services in person, they watch services online. One respondent no longer attends church services because “the church does not feel the same, and they have witnessed too much at the church that does not sit well with them spiritually.” One respondent stated, “they have faith; however, they don’t believe in God or religion.” Another millennial reported they no longer attend the church “because [church leaders] cannot increase their knowledge (they have spiritually outgrown Simon Temple).” Two respondents reported they attend these services; however, two millennials did not respond.

Table 10. Reasons Millennials Are Not Attending Worship Services, Bible Study, and Sunday School

Age	If applicable, please explain why you do not attend worship service, Bible study, or Sunday school.
26	I'm usually at work on Sundays.
26	Lately, it has been difficult to attend because of work and school, but I watch it online.
26	I do not attend church physically due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
26	I did not previously attend because I found it challenging to find a new church home when I moved to Raleigh. I didn't know what to look for in a church home, and every church I visited felt uninviting. When I found out that Simon Temple streamed their service on their website, I started watching the Sunday sermons and Bible study sessions, especially when they started posting videos on YouTube.
28	I do not attend because of work and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I do watch online.
28	Currently, I don't attend Bible study as often as previously. My family has events that do not allow me to participate during the week. I could log on and listen, obviously, so no excuses.
29	I attend these services.
29	I don't attend church because I dislike its theatrics and the message it sends. I don't believe that we should solely rely on an entity to do what we are not willing to do for ourselves.
30	I just don't attend.
32	No response.
32	No response.
35	I attend worship service but not Sunday school or Bible study. I am usually at work or providing other services in the church during Sunday school and Bible Study.
36	I have faith; however, I don't believe in God or religion.
37	I attend.
38	I do not currently attend in person due to COVID constraints.
38	I currently do not attend Simon Temple because they cannot increase my knowledge. I have spiritually outgrown Simon Temple.

Table 10. Reasons Millennials Are Not Attending Worship Services, Bible Study, and Sunday School (continued)

38	It does not feel the same at the church. I have witnessed too much at Simon Temple that does not align with me.
40	I'm at church several days/hours throughout the week, preparing for Sunday. I can make attempts to make more time for something as important as Bible study. Especially during this season of expeditious growth.

*Question 15: Why do you believe millennials are not regularly attending Simon Temple?*

Millennials no longer attend the church because 1) “the church is not structured or organized with their age-group in mind,” 2) church attendance is not scriptural, 3) there are fakeness and drama from church members and some ministers, 4) they are too tired from attending work and school, 5) they no longer have their parents convincing or insisting that they must attend church, 6) as members they feel disconnected from the church community and believe that all that matters is their [personal] relationships with God, 7) they feel judged by others because of their lifestyles, and they are not as knowledgeable about the Bible as others, 8) the church has dated traditions, and it cannot devise new concepts to draw and retain millennials, 9) the church feels more like a social club and inauthentic, and 10) there is the inconsistency of the YACM department and ministry. Respondents reported that they do not feel that church leaders try to plan programs for their age group.

More importantly, respondents said that the church’s traditions hinder the millennials’ ability to relate and associate themselves with the church. One millennial said, “the vibe the church gives is more of a social club and less a church.” [Another respondent stated, “it’s more about what you can do for them and not what they can do for you.”] Fear of contracting COVID-19 was also a deterrent for millennials. Respondents said they are apprehensive about attending

because of the “cold and unkind” mistreatment they encounter and experience from other (older) members. Two millennials did not respond.

Table 11. Why Millennials Are Not Attending the Church

Age	Why do you believe millennials are not regularly attending Simon Temple?
25	Simon Temple’s ministry is not formed and operated with millennials in mind. Older church members serve as leaders of the various ministries at Simon Temple.
25	Because they know no Scripture in the Bible says we must attend church. Attending church is a manmade doctrine, and we don’t like that false doctrine.
25	Millennials are not attending because of the fakeness and drama from members and some ministers.
26	Millennials are tired to attend church on Sunday morning because of work and school. They do not feel connected to the church community, and they believe all that really matters is their relationship with God. We are experiencing uncertainty about our beliefs and the beliefs of the church. Personal conflicts within the church. I know many people who stopped attending church because they did not like a few people.
26	No response.
27	Millennials feel judged by others because of their lifestyles and are not as knowledgeable about the Bible as others.
27	No response.
28	Millennials are not attending because of the inconsistency of the YACM department and ministry.
28	Too much traditionalism and some members can be cold to visitors
29	Millennials are not attending because of the dated traditions and lack of new concepts to draw and retain them.
29	I believe millennials do not regularly attend Simon Temple because of inauthenticity. As mentioned previously, the vibe Simon Temple gives off is more of a social club and less of a church. It’s more about what you can do for them rather than what they can do for you.
30	Most millennials cannot relate because it’s an older generational thing still.

Table 11. Why Millennials Are Not Attending the Church (continued)

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32	Millennials are probably not regularly attending because there are no groups or services (i.e., young adult bible study/group session) tailored to our generation. I even recall in high school attending a church that had a step team for young adults. A Kappa fraternity member who serves as a soldier is not essential, but he took time to have practices sometimes as part of Bible study or after a Sunday service. We even traveled to perform at local or neighboring town events to boost morale and inform others about our church.
32	COVID fears.
33	Society would have them believe that church attendance is no longer critical.
35	Because there isn't an outlet for us, and it's more traditional when we as young adults aren't traditional at all
37	The realness and connection are lost. Our church has lost the ability to meet the needs of the young adults, the younger crowd and is more tailored or catering to the older crowd while losing the connection of the now crowd, which is the future.
38	The older generation is dying off, and we no longer have religion being shoved down our throats and forced to attend church. We are now free to choose what and who we want to believe.
38	Millennials do not feel that the church leaders are focused on their generation.
40	I can't speak for others, but we need time carved out for our breakthrough.

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*Question 16: Do you feel comfortable sharing your faith with your peers and others?*

Despite the experiences and perceptions of millennials regarding their attendance and membership at the church, fourteen respondents reported that they feel comfortable sharing their faith with others. In comparison, six respondents said they do not. Astonishingly, each female participant reported feeling comfortable sharing their faith, while each male respondent said he was not comfortable doing so.

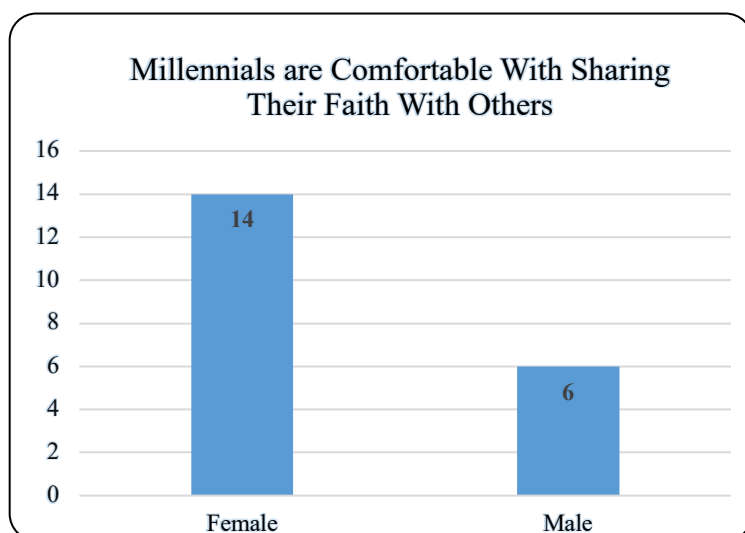


Figure 5. Millennials are Comfortable Sharing Their Faith with Others

#### Church Leadership Interviews

Interviews involved the senior pastor and eleven ordained elders, deacons, ministers, and lay leaders. The church leaders were insightful, candid, and openly shared their experiences and perceptions of the church's role in attracting, involving, and retaining its millennial members.

Note-taking was fundamental in organizing the themes and remaining unbiased during interviews. Field notes permitted opportunities to denote the attitudes of leaders who have worked with the church's youth and young adult ministries versus those who have not. There is remorse, regret, and disappointment amongst church leaders who have worked directly with young adult members. Yet they remain hopeful that, with God's help, they can work to regain the interest and trust of the church's millennial members.

#### Years of Service for Church Leaders

Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr., has served as the church's senior pastor for twenty years. Other church leaders have served in many positions as they interacted with millennials. They

serve as class leaders, youth pastors, Sunday school and Bible study facilitators, a Sunday school superintendent, and the Christian education department director. The average years of service as a leader at the church varied. For example, twenty-five percent of the church leaders had twenty or more years of service, while 33.3 percent had served at the church for more than ten or more years. Twenty-five percent had five or more years of service, while 8.33 percent had one year of service as a leader at Simon Temple.

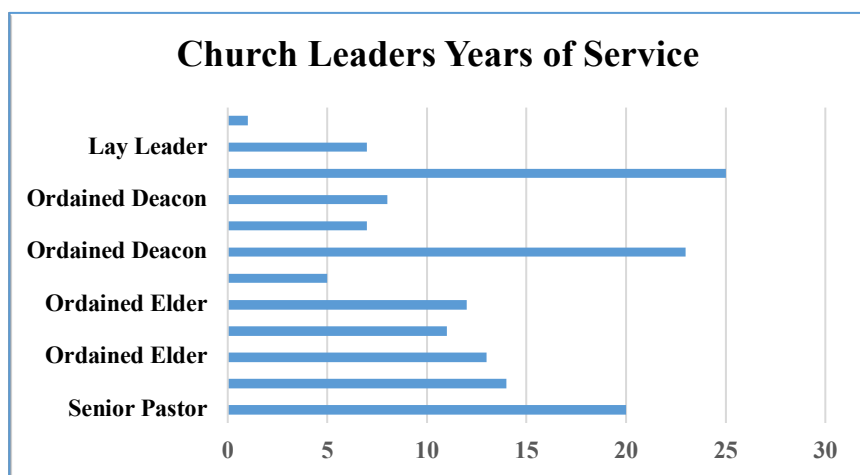


Figure 6. Church Leaders Years of Service

#### Purpose of the Church Leaders Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to assess the level of involvement of leaders with the church's millennial members and ascertain their awareness of the health of the YACM program and the decline of millennial attendance and participation at the church. Their evaluations were based on their involvement and observances before COVID-19 and during the pandemic. Church leaders varied in their knowledge and roles of involvement with the church's young adults. Most agreed that a decline in millennial attendance, participation, and membership had occurred. The senior pastor conceded the church's "need to attract, cultivate, and help disciple millennials at



the church.” Learning why millennials are not participating or attending is vital to church leaders.

### Reasons for the Lack of Millennial Participation

Church membership is more than placing names on a roll. The expectation is that a member will make a difference through the church’s ministries.<sup>5</sup> The church’s “traditions, lack of age-appropriate biblical instruction for young adults in its Bible study and Sunday school training, and its inconsistency of YACM leadership” are significant factors why millennials feel disconnected. A lack of continuity of leadership was attributed to the transient context in which the church is located. Fayetteville, North Carolina, is the home of the Fort Bragg Army installation. Fort Bragg is ranked the most extensive military base in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Young soldiers and their family members constantly deploy and relocate. As a result, many join the church and remain members for a short period. Short tenures of members and leaders of the YACM department hurt its stability. The executive pastor noted that when leadership changes constantly, young adults are affected. As leaders, our God-given desire should be to help develop and grow millennial members to become genuinely effective disciples for Christ.

### Church Leader Perspectives

#### *Strengths of YACM*

Church leaders noted that the strengths of the church’s YACM directorate are its structure, leadership, and the participation of millennials. Participation is encouraged by the

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<sup>5</sup> Thom S. Rainer, “Four Principles for Membership Retention,” *Christianity Today*, July 2007. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2007/july-online-only/thom-rainer-four-principles-membership-retention.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Everett Bledsoe, “5 Top Largest Military Bases in the World by Population and Area,” *The Soldiers Project*, accessed on February 8, 2022. <https://www.thesoldiersproject.org/largest-military-bases-in-the-world/>.

ministry's specific functions and activities that promote young adult involvement. In contrast, one interviewee felt that the ministry could become formidable because there is an immediate need for a young adult ministry at the church. Interviewees also agreed that a strength of the YACM program is that the church has one. However, most leaders acknowledged that the inconsistency of leadership is problematic and requires immediate attention.

#### *Weaknesses of YACM*

Often, the church can become so engaged in the spiritual aspects of religion that it fails to notice millennials' disinterest in traditional forms of worship. The generational gap between the church's older and millennial members hurts the attendance and participation of young adult members. One interviewee believes that the church's inability to identify and relate to the needs of millennials is detrimental, as is its failure to provide age-appropriate biblical instructions for millennials during its Sunday school and Bible study sessions. Also, it was observed that since the church has not maintained a means to assess and determine the types of social events and activities that interest millennials, it has not built a sense of community amongst its young adult members. Lack of knowledge about what kinds of events draw millennials has also hindered the church from creating opportunities for millennial-aged members to fellowship with one another and intergenerationally.

Another noted contributing factor for the lack of millennial participation at the church was that leadership has not remained intentional about staying closely connected to its graduating high school students that attend college, join the military, get married, etc. Assimilation and relationships are integral in building trust, cohesion, and respect amongst church leaders and millennial members. Relationships have been strained since the church's young adult ministry has not remained consistent. Millennials' trust in the church's leadership

has waned. If young adult members do not become involved in the YACM or other church ministries, their chances of not attending and participating at church increase dramatically.

### Diversifying the Church's Leadership and YACM Program

As the church seeks to diversify its boards, clubs, and auxiliaries, it must intentionally create opportunities for different generations to serve together. One interviewee, a former church youth pastor, recommended establishing an intergenerational board of directors to address the lack of consistency of YACM leadership. Millennials should serve as integral members of the church's leadership and the YACM program. A diversified group of leaders could give clear guidance on how to provide age-appropriate biblical instruction that helps millennials develop spiritually, participate and serve within the local church context and surrounding community, and have the resources (monetary and personnel) to do ministry. The senior pastor and staff members must emphasize the YACM program. Appointing a group of core leaders for the ministry could help address the lack of continuity and show millennials that the church leadership fully supports its young adult ministry.

### Millennial Attendance Drive Results

The researcher experienced significant challenges during the millennial attendance drive. Accurately tracking millennials and their guests were problematic because there were no prescribed parameters for accounting for millennials and guests who attended services virtually. Also, there was no way to verify the names and ages of Simon Temple's millennial guests who participated in church services using the Simon Temple App, Zoom, or social media. Because of rising hospitalization and infection rates due to COVID-19, many Simon Temple members opted to attend services virtually or not at all. Attendance of millennials to the church's Sunday school

and Bible study sessions has significantly diminished. There were no in-person millennial attendees to Sunday school during the two weeks of the millennial attendance drive.

The two millennials who attended Bible study were church employees. Because of fear and precautions, many members opted not to participate in in-person services. Thus, the researcher was unable to capture data for the millennial drive.

### Summary

The millennial survey, attendance drive, and interviews obtained by church leaders were instrumental in providing insight into why the church is not attracting and retaining its millennial members. Participants reported that relationships, worship experiences (contemporary music selections), age-appropriate biblical instruction, and a sense of belonging are essential to young adults. One of the most important ways to engage millennials effectively is cultivating meaningful relationships.<sup>7</sup> Young adults are highly conscious and concerned about how older members treat them and others as they attend church. They are interested in attending a church that exemplifies the love of God.

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<sup>7</sup> Richard J. Krejcir, "The Relational Church," *Church Leadership.org*, accessed February 14, 2022, <http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=47969&colmnid=4541>.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The study's results revealed that the church's use of an attractional church model has failed to garner significant support because millennials require a more intimate and meaningful worship experience. They seek 1) age-appropriate biblical instruction, 2) a church that values their input, 3) biblical teaching that addresses the issues and challenges they face in life, and 4) a community that reinforces their trust in God and humanity. To perpetuate and sustain growth for its millennial members, the church must address their current distrust of the church and its members, revitalize the worship experience, and transition from an attractional church model to a missional model. This chapter will consist of an in-depth synopsis of contributing factors that preclude the church from attracting, retaining, and involving millennial members. It will also prescribe an eight-week young adult discipleship training curriculum.

### Improvement Plans

#### Recommendations to Increase Millennial Attendance and Participation

##### *Address the Distrust of Millennials in the Church*

Miriam-Webster defines distrust as “a lack of confidence.”<sup>1</sup> A preponderance of millennials in this study perceived the church's (older) members as hypocritical and judgmental. From their perspective, the “unkind” attitudes and judgment they often experience appears to be the church's greatest hindrance. Sadly, members of the church tend to examine and judge the flaws of others while choosing to remain oblivious to their faults. Unfortunately, forming negative perceptions and opinions of others is a societal problem. Jesus addresses this in Matt 7:5

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, “distrust,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mistrust/>.

when He says, “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus clarifies that one should acknowledge and resolve one’s faults before judging others. People do not have the authority to judge others because we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Rom 3:23). As millennials express their perception of church members, their concern warrants the attention of church leadership. When judgmental attitudes are prevalent, they hinder others from attending and remaining members of God’s church.

Additionally, in Matt 7:1–2, Jesus says that as we judge others, He will judge us the same way we think of others. If church leaders choose to ignore this phenomenon, it will likely have a catastrophic effect on their ability to grow numerically and spiritually.

Creating a survey to assess millennials’ issues, concerns, and recommendations will be instrumental in addressing the distrust that millennials have regarding the church. Including millennials in the decision-making process for ministry will help them feel connected and included. An intergenerational YACM directorate appointment will help facilitate young adults’ mentoring and coaching paradigm. An intergenerational board of directors will provide oversight, continuity, and opportunities to fellowship with other generations within the church.

As believers share their salvation experiences, faith testimonies, and spiritual gifts with others, they form relationships and share the love of Christ. Mims believes that “fellowship is the intimate spiritual relationship Christians share with God and other believers through their relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Fellowship means we belong to each other in a relationship because we are communal in our desire and efforts to share life and the enabling grace of Jesus

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<sup>2</sup> Matt 7:5.

<sup>3</sup> Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles: For Church Growth* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2001). 36.

Christ. The Holy Spirit in our lives gives us vision, unity of purpose, and love for one another.<sup>4</sup> Meaningful ministry occurs when believers serve in the spirit of love, unity, compassion, empathy, and humility. Jesus's life depicts the kind of training for ministry the church must prioritize.

### *Revitalize the Worship Experience*

Worship refers to the meaningful, spiritual, and transforming ways one encounters God. God is the sole object of one's worship. Worship permits a time of hearing from God and being changed by God's Word, presence, and Spirit. As Mims acknowledges, "worship results from God's commands in Scripture and the grateful hearts of the redeemed, who long to come before the Lord to praise Him and to acknowledge His presence." The Holy Spirit provides believers the liberty to worship God in Spirit and truth (John 4:24). Preaching is central to public worship; however, Millennials believe music "sets the atmosphere" for preaching God's Word.

Even though COVID-19 has caused the church to revitalize its worship services, leaders should consider meeting the needs of millennials by allowing them to share their thoughts and ideas. Millennials want to attend worship services that include contemporary music relatable to their age group. To address the spiritual concerns of young adults, the church should consider reverting to small group Bible study and Sunday school contexts. The biblical curriculum should address and meet the spiritual questions of its young adult members. Permitting millennials opportunities to share in the planning of the church's programs and services will ensure that they are a part of the ministry and that their input is valued and considered in making ministry

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<sup>4</sup> Mims, *Kingdom Principles: For Church Growth*, 48.

decisions. The church's leadership goal should be to understand better and access the practices and worship traditions that appeal best to millennials.

Millennials would welcome an opportunity to select contemporary musical selections that align with the pastor's sermon. Since music greatly influences a young adult worship experience, seeking their input would foster a sense of belonging and enhance the worship experience for young adults. Millennials want to hear music that is meaningful and rich in content as they reflect on the theological and biblical truths that resonate with them. Young adults want to experience an authentic worship service that incorporates a balanced approach to traditional and contemporary music.

#### *Implement a Missional Church Model Approach*

The missional church views the church as an institution established by God. As a result, the mission of the church belongs to God. As Wilson argues, "the missional church contextualizes the gospel for its time and culture using the Bible."<sup>5</sup> God's efforts are not contingent upon the actions of humankind. In 1 Cor 3:16, Paul says, "I planted the seed, Apollos, watered it, but God has been making it grow."<sup>6</sup> Paul assigns total credit to God. Millennials desire to grow spiritually, and they want to feel connected as church members. As church leaders provide biblical instruction to grow, develop, and equip young adults to become disciples of others, they will help the church remain a visible sign of God's coming kingdom.

A viable discipleship program is essential for any church's vitality as it seeks to fulfill the Great Commission. As Malphurs observes, "Your church will need to set up a process whereby it assists people in moving along a continuum from pre-birth (pre-conversion) to the new birth

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<sup>5</sup> Wilson, *A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, 48.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor 3:6.



[conversion] and on to growth and maturity. The ultimate goal is the spiritual maturing of the saints (millennials) (Col. 1:28–29; Heb. 5:11–6:1).<sup>7</sup> Sound biblical instruction assists the spiritual well-being of young adults. Clifton notes, “Churches make disciples, and disciples make churches.”<sup>8</sup> Ensuring the church develops an age-appropriate discipleship and evangelism program will help millennials learn and build their faith as they grow spiritually and share the gospel message with others. They can help increase the church numerically. A church that believes people will join because of the size of the congregation, the attractiveness of the church, or a denomination may attract persons who will not stay because the church is not meeting their spiritual needs.

Disciples demonstrate maturity as they respond to preaching and share their faith with others. Numerical growth primarily occurs through witnessing and evangelizing new converts. As Mims notes, “evangelism is not just a belief; it is spiritual interaction between saved persons and lost persons.”<sup>9</sup> Millennials must possess a biblical understanding of what evangelism is and what it is not. On Pentecost, God added 3,000 converts to the church (Acts 2). Preaching and teaching the word of God is paramount in assisting millennials to transform their lives and in converting new believers (1 Tim 4:13). As we proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior and convert people to become His disciples and responsible members of His church, we must provide a comprehensive discipleship program.

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<sup>7</sup> Malphurs, *Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, 138.

<sup>8</sup> Clifton, *Church Planting Thresholds*, xvii.

<sup>9</sup> Mims, *Kingdom Principles*, 36.

*Implement an Age-Appropriate Millennial Evangelism and Discipleship Model*

A missional church model that considers millennial input in planning and developing a curriculum will attract young adult participation. As millennials become more involved in the church's mission, they will become integrated active members and create a sense of purpose. Creating diversified opportunities for millennials to communicate and fellowship with other generational groups (youth and seniors) is also instrumental in preparing millennials to become active members of the church. The researcher recommends that the senior pastor conduct a quarterly town hall meeting to monitor these newly implemented measures with millennial members. Developing a comprehensive millennial-oriented discipleship and evangelism curriculum is a practical solution for resolving the church's declining millennial attendance and participation. As the church attracts, involves, and retains millennials in its ministries, it will preserve its future posterity and ability to plant new churches.

There is a dire need for millennials to feel heard and connected to the leadership and members of their local church. Involving them in church activities is not enough to fulfill these needs. Millennials want to know that they matter and are valued members of their church communities. Implementing a mentorship program for millennial disciples that facilitates relationships with members of the baby boomer generation and other generations will assist in addressing their needs. It will also help to prepare them for leadership roles in the church. Having millennials take a spiritual gifts assessment coupled with sitting and speaking to them to assess better their gifts, talents, and needs can help establish viable relationships.

As connections with millennials deepen, they will form bonds of trust with others, becoming more open to discussing their concerns. As the church universal strives to teach millennials how to share their faith with others effectively, the church's discipleship model will

better align with Scripture. As Jesus called each of His disciples from their vocations, families, and lives, He did not neglect their natural and emotional needs or the present sin. Instead, Jesus accepted, loved, embraced, and mentored His disciples. Jesus's provisions of love and acceptance are evident in His relationships with His disciples. For example, His love, mentorship, and forbearance are apparent in the lives of Peter, the one who denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:54-62), and Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus (Luke 22).

The church may attract, retain, and involve millennials by developing a discipleship course curriculum that consists of church history, the AME Zion denominational history, and a biblical foundation that promotes spiritual maturity amongst young adults. Millennials want to better understand the AME Zion faith tenants, what they mean, and how they align with Scripture as they migrate into the church and develop spiritually. The church's young adult discipleship training team should consist of millennial and multi-generational members. A diverse discipleship team will foster camaraderie and a sense of trust amongst millennials and other generations as they learn and grow together. Before implementing the Millennial discipleship course, the church leadership should survey its millennial members to seek recommendations on how best to address their needs.

Focusing on young adults and making disciple-making and evangelism the top priority will result in numerical and spiritual growth. As McIntosh acknowledges, "The most excellent resource in a church is its people."<sup>10</sup> Church leaders have the responsibility of equipping others to do ministry. This plan consists of an eight-week discipleship course that draws from the *Grow Group Adults and Young Adult Small Group Curriculum*. The program focuses on building relationships and spiritually developing church members using small groups. The curriculum

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<sup>10</sup> McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 111.

costs less than a thousand dollars. The discipleship-making training focuses on the importance of small groups and stirring participants' passion, boldness, and compassion.

### Goals of Millennial Discipleship Training

The stated goals of the curriculum are for participants to read and meditate on biblical passages, teach the importance of disciples serving inside and outside of the local church, and highly encourage participants to promote the development of future disciples as they share the gospel with others. The goal is to see a minimum of fifty percent of attendees grow in their biblical understanding and commitment to disciple other disciples. The program will help spiritually grow and develop millennial members and build cohesive young adult teams that provide knowledge of the importance of faith in God, the church's history and mission, and the vital need for Christian fellowship and evangelism.

### Team Building

As young adults become spiritually mature, they will encourage and walk alongside other millennials. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two to share the gospel. Clinton argues, "Having a ministry partner is both biblical (Mark 6:7) and practical."<sup>11</sup> Building cohesive young adult teams has many advantages: 1) burden sharing, 2) understanding which results from group members trusting and communicating with one another, 3) increased opportunities to share the gospel and 4) accountability. Inviting and building teams will also biblically train and prepare millennials to assist others in becoming evangelistic. Everyone, whether a church leader or young adult member, needs the eyes of others to see themselves with clarity and challenges as

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<sup>11</sup> Clifton, *Church Planting Thresholds*, 27.

one seeks to fulfill the church's mission.<sup>12</sup> Church leaders must appoint a dedicated and invested YACM leader.

### Role and Duties of the YACM Director

A YACM director must be interviewed, vetted, and appointed. This person will serve as the direct liaison for the discipleship program. The director will be responsible for recruiting teachers and participants, introducing and training teachers on the curriculum, monitoring the program's progress, and coordinating graduation for participants. The director will also be responsible for completing the advertisement and announcements for the young adult discipleship training program. Information about the program placed in the church's bulletin and social media accounts will introduce the discipleship course to the church and local community members. The program should be open to all new millennial converts, church members, and anyone who desires to take the course (non-members). There should be no cost to participants.

### Course Syllabus

The program would consist of weekly biblical reading assignments, written and scriptural memorization assignments, and a copy of student expectations. All participants should receive a course syllabus and handbook during the first session of the course. Millennials would meet in person at the church and virtually using Zoom. The YACM director should place the course schedule and login credentials for Zoom sessions in the syllabus. Each participant should be appointed an accountability partner to walk alongside them for the class duration. The assigned partner would be a church member who is not a millennial. The accountability partner's role would be to provide prayer, encouragement, and spiritual and emotional support for the young

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<sup>12</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 26.

adult participant. This partnership should foster a sense of community and connection between different generational groups within the church.

### Course Registration

Enrollment for the course will be through an online registration page on the church's website. All young adults desiring to participate in the training must register online. The church's administration office would monitor registration. The office would provide the director with all registered participants' names and contact information. The church's administrative office would manage all registration concerns.

### Training of Discipleship Facilitators and Young Adult Students

A one-week training seminar should take place for all discipleship teachers and facilitators. Course facilitators would provide instructions on how to implement the discipleship curriculum. Discipleship facilitators would conduct weekly reviews during the eight-week training sessions to ensure learning and application. At the end of the course, the YACM director should evaluate students to receive feedback on their experience, the study's strengths, and areas that need improvement. The senior pastor would then designate a Sunday worship service to acknowledge and present each student with a certificate of appreciation for completing the discipleship training and a gift bag physically and virtually. This course could help develop and grow millennial disciples.

The results for this research project depict similarities and dissimilarities compared to the scholarly sources examined in the literature review. One similarity is Hamman's argument that millennials deconstruct and challenge ecclesial practices, as stated in this project's survey, which is a proposed reason for millennials no longer attending church. When young adults' worldviews are challenged, they view this as disparaging, and it can also influence their decision to not

attend or associate with a church. Another similarity is Hammett's assertion that there is an apparent generational gap between baby boomers and millennials at the church. Hammett argues, "baby boomers tend to focus on comfortability ([traditionalism,]) and what makes them feel good rather than engaging the culture."<sup>13</sup>

Millennials still believe they do not have to attend church to experience God. Yet, they want to feel needed as they serve as leaders within the church. However, the church competes with the secular culture to get millennials to attend.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, scholars make little or no mention of the impact that traditional music during worship services has on millennial attendance. In this study, many young adults expressed that not having contemporary and traditional music blended in worship services affects their ability to "experience God."

The researcher learned many things implementing the project. As a result of COVID-19, communicating and meeting with others has become even more challenging. As she implemented her research, she quickly learned that certain circumstances were beyond her control. The intervention plan for this study was detailed and structured; however, the pandemic affected much of the intervention design. For example, all in-person meetings were changed and conducted virtually (using Zoom). The stakeholders' schedules conflicted with the scheduled time for the surveys and interviews. Stakeholders needed additional time to complete and return surveys, IRB consent forms, and interview transcript approvals.

The ever-changing CDC mandates, coupled with the concerns of the project participants regarding the pandemic, made it challenging to implement and complete the intervention design. The researcher learned that one's process could and will become unpredictable at any given time.

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<sup>13</sup> Hammett, *Reaching People Under 40: While Keeping People Over 60*, 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

The millennial attendance drive illuminated the difficulties of accurately accounting for the attendance of young adults and their guests in online church services. There were no measures in place to have millennials account for their ages or the names of their guests. The researcher could not verify millennial members' names or ages since many attending online services prefer to keep their cameras turned off.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a lack of in-person attendance and participation. Declining participation and attendance may impact the church's ability to fulfill its mission and meet its budgetary requirements. This study has shown that it will require more than an eight-week project to increase the number of millennial members at the church. A year or longer may be necessary to see an increase in millennial attendance, participation, and consistent growth.

Future research needs to address the negative influences of the pandemic and how best to plan and conduct research during a pandemic. Studies on how best to adhere to the CDC guidelines as one conducts research during a pandemic and how best to implement an intervention design during a pandemic would greatly assist researchers. Seeking ways to track a church's diversified membership during virtual services would also be helpful. The development of a software feature embedded within Zoom, MS Teams, YouTube, and FaceTime Live that would permit church leaders to assess, and account for their members demographically could assist pastors and researchers alike.

The results of this project can be used in other church settings to bring awareness to the ongoing decrease in millennial attendance and participation in local church congregations. This project and its recommendations will enhance communication between church leaders and millennial members, increase young adult participation and attendance to worship services, and spiritually develop and grow millennial church members. The goal is for millennial disciples to



produce other disciples while benefiting from trusting relationships with believers of different generations. Young adults want to participate in small groups that offer biblical instruction appropriate for their age group. They want to discuss and share their faith with others openly.

### Conclusion

Based on data collected, this research concludes that church leaders are aware of the decline in millennial attendance, participation, and membership at the church. However, they do not have a defined plan to address the problem even though they are aware. A noticeable shift has occurred in what millennials expect as they attend church compared with their parents. Worship experiences based on entertainment do not influence young adults. However, church contexts that address their spiritual needs and environments that welcome their age group are attractive. Millennials value trustworthy relationships over church membership and need to understand church history and denominational beliefs better as they seek to know and serve God in the local church.

God has promised His church's numerical and spiritual growth (Matt 16:18). Church leaders must proclaim Christ as God and Savior and persuade millennials to become His disciples and responsible members of His church.<sup>15</sup> As leaders strive to reach and connect with millennials, they must remain mindful of the Holy Spirit's role. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit facilitates the efforts of church leaders to remain faithful stewards in preparing and equipping millennials to witness to the lost and grow the church (Phil 2:13). The early church fulfilled its mission as they practiced the disciple-making task of adding members to the church by worshiping God, teaching, growing in their faith, and evangelizing others (Acts 2:42–47). The

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<sup>15</sup> McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 82.

Spirit of God continues to guide and empower His disciples' efforts, resulting in spiritual maturity and numerical growth.

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## APPENDIX A

**SAMPLE IRB CONSENT FORM**

**Title of the Project:** An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church

**Principal Investigator:** Reverend Jonette L. Camp, Liberty University DMIN student

<b>Invitation to be part of a Project study</b>
---

Rev. Jonette L. Camp is inviting you to participate in a project study. To participate, you must be a young adult at least 25 to 40 years of age, or an ordained elder, deacon, licensed minister, or lay leader at [REDACTED]. Taking part in this project study is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this study.

<b>What is the study about, and why is it being done?</b>
---

The project study aims to attract and involve Millennial members to grow and revitalize Simon Temple's young adult ministry. Seeking viable means to attract, retain, and employ Millennial members' gifts, talents, and leadership is imperative to the current and future spiritual and physical health of Simon Temple.

<b>What will happen if you take part in this study?</b>
---

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

1. Participate in an eight-week study group. During the first four weeks of the study, participants (ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, lay leaders, and millennials) will participate in recorded audio interviews. Millennials will participate in an anonymous online survey.
2. Study participants will help further develop and implement a millennial attendance drive. Participants will be asked to monitor Millennial attendance during the millennial attendance drive and participate by providing feedback during virtual meetings (Zoom online meetings) of their observations and recommendations on improving the millennial attendance drive.
3. Participants will meet in person and virtually via Zoom for eight weeks during the project study. The initial and final meetings for the study will occur at Simon Temple in the new fellowship hall.

<b>How could you or others benefit from this study?</b>
---

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are: (1) personally assisting in identifying reasons why millennials are not attending and remaining members of Simon Temple, (2) assisting in discovering means to encourage current millennial members to become more active in the church's discipleship and evangelism ministries (the

millennial attendance drive), and (3) serving as conduits to stimulate communication between church leaders, lay members, and millennials.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

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

#### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Project study records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the documents. The researcher may share data collected from you for future project studies or another research. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and codes. Interviews will take place in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and used in future presentations. After three years, the researcher will delete all electronic records.
- The researcher will record all interviews, transcribe them, store all recordings on a password-locked computer for three years, and then erase them. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- The researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality in focus group settings (project participant meetings). However, while discouraged, other project participants may share discussed matters with persons outside the group.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

The researcher will not compensate participants for participating in this study.

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

**Anonymous Survey:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation and not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

**All Other Research:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact Rev. Camp at the email address or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, data collected from you, apart from the focus group data, will be destroyed; however, the researcher will not include your contributions in the project study if you choose to withdraw.



### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

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

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

Suppose you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher. In that case, **you are encouraged** to contact the [REDACTED]

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects' studies will be conducted ethically as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### Your Consent

Millennial participants, please ensure that you understand the study before participating in the anonymous survey. You will receive a hard copy of this document for your records, and you may also print a copy of the form for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact Rev. Camp using the information provided above.

By signing this document, church leaders (ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, and lay leaders) agree to participate in the recorded interviews for this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. Participants will receive a copy of this document for their records. The researcher will retain a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

The researcher has permission to audio-record me to participate in this study using a recording device.

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Signature & Date

## APPENDIX B

## SAMPLE THESIS PROJECT RECRUITMENT FLYER

Are you 25-40 years of age or older?

Are you interested in helping to attract and retain millennial members at Simon Temple?

Would you like to see more millennial participation and involvement at Simon Temple?

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



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**Research Participants Needed**

**“An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church”**

This research study aims to attract and involve millennial members to grow and revitalize Simon Temple. Seeking viable means to attract, retain, and employ millennial members’ gifts, talents, and leadership is imperative to the current and future spiritual and physical health of Simon Temple.

This study is being conducted at:

Reverend Jonette L. Camp, a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Ministry, Evangelism and Church Planting, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Reverend Camp at :

**Liberty University IRB—1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845. Lynchburg, VA 24515**



## APPENDIX C

**SAMPLE PERMISSION REQUEST TEMPLATE**

August 6, 2021



Dear Bishop Thompson,

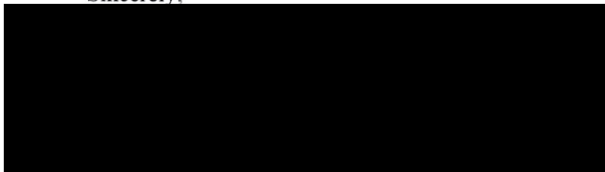
As a graduate student in the Evangelism and Church Planting department, School of John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, as part of a Doctor of Ministry degree requirements, I am completing a project study. The title of my project study is “An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church,” and the purpose of my research is to attract and involve millennial members to grow and revitalize Simon Temple’s young adult ministry. This researcher believes that developing a strategic and comprehensive biblical evangelism and spiritual discipleship model designed to address and meet the spiritual needs of millennials is essential to attract, retain, and employ their gifts to fulfill the church’s mission and preserve future prosperity of the church.



Participants will be asked to (1) complete the attached survey, (2) participate in interviews, and (3) assist in further planning and implementing a millennial attendance drive to understand better why millennials are not attending, becoming active members, and actively participating in the church’s discipleship and evangelism ministries at Simon Temple. Participants will receive informed consent information before participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

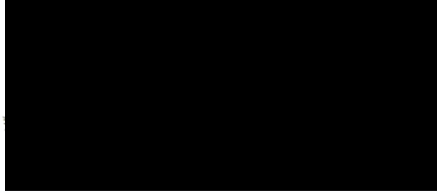
Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. I have attached a permission letter document for your convenience.

Sincerely,



APPENDIX D

**SAMPLE PERMISSION RESPONSE**



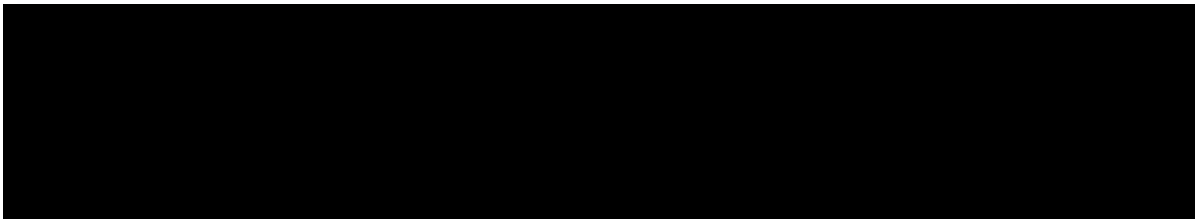
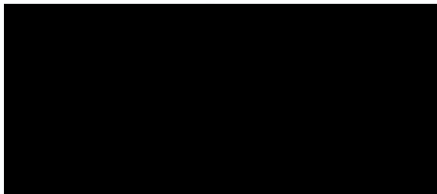
August 10, 2021



After careful review of your project study proposal entitled "An Assessment of the Millennial Body in the Local Church," I have decided to permit you to conduct your study at Simon Temple, contact our church leaders, members, contact our staff and utilize our church members archival data for your research study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- I will provide our membership list to Rev. Jonette L. Camp, and Rev. Camp may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in her research study.
- I grant permission for Rev. Camp to contact Simon Temple's church leaders (ordained elders, deacons, licensed ministers, lay leaders) and millennials to invite them to participate in her project study.
- The requested data WILL NOT BE STRIPPED of identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.



## APPENDIX E

**THE PROJECT STUDY OPERATIONAL STATEMENT**

Thesis Project Title: “An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church”

Doctoral Candidate: Reverend Jonette L. Camp

School: Liberty University John Rawlings School of Divinity

Program: Doctor of Ministry Evangelism and Church Planting

**Problem Presented:** This project seeks to address Simon Temple AME Zion Church’s inability to attract, retain, and involve millennial members to maintain the ministry’s spiritual and physical health.

**Synthesized Purpose Statement:** This project aims to attract and involve millennial members to grow and revitalize Simon Temple.

**Thesis Statement:** If Simon Temple AME Zion Church implements a strategic evangelism and discipleship plan for millennials, it may attract, retain, and involve millennial members and church leaders.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The intervention plan for this project includes a millennial membership attendance drive, interviews (church leaders), and survey questionnaires (Millennial church members).

Thank you for participating in this study project. Your participation will be beneficial in attracting and retaining millennial attendance and involvement at [REDACTED]. Please feel free to contact [REDACTED] with any questions or concerns you may have.

APPENDIX F  
MILLENNIAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Date:

An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church.

1. What is your gender?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Male

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Female

2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How does your faith in God help you make decisions in life?

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4. What do you most enjoy about attending services at Simon Temple?

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5. What do you least enjoy about attending services at Simon Temple?

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6. What objections do your friends most often raise about Christianity?

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7. What ministries would you like Simon Temple leadership to implement for members of your age group?

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9. Are you spiritually maturing (developing and growing in your faith) as a Simon Temple member?

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10. Would you feel comfortable inviting your peers, coworkers, young adult neighbors, and cohorts to visit Simon Temple?

- a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No \_\_\_\_\_

11. What efforts and events have you seen Simon Temple sponsor in hopes of increasing millennial attendance and participation?

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12. When you attend Simon Temple, what are your expectations of the following (Please be specific):

Worship service:

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Bible Study:

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Sunday school:

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13. If you do not attend worship service, Bible study, or Sunday school, please explain why not. (Please be specific.)

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14. Why do you believe millennials are not regularly attending Simon Temple? (Be specific.)

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15. Do you feel comfortable sharing your faith with your peers and others? \_\_\_\_ Yes or No \_\_\_\_  
Please explain why or why you do not feel comfortable sharing and discussing your faith with your peers and others. (Please be specific.)

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16. Thank you for submitting this survey. Your participation will be beneficial in attracting and retaining millennial attendance and involvement at [REDACTED]. Please forward all written responses to [REDACTED].



## APPENDIX G

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ordained Elders, Deacons, Licensed Ministers, and Lay Leaders

An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church.

1. What is your role and position at Simon Temple?
2. How many years have you served as a church leader at Simon Temple?
3. Describe your role of involvement with Simon Temple's millennial members?
4. What do you believe are the strengths of the Simon Temple YACM ministry?
5. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the Simon Temple YACM ministry?
6. Have you noticed a decline in millennial attendance and participation at [REDACTED]?
7. If so, describe what you believe are possible reasons why a decline in millennial participation has occurred?
8. Describe the recommendations you would make to address the lack of millennial members at the church.
9. What do you perceive Simon Temple's most significant challenges to attracting, retaining, and involving millennial members?
10. Describe methods you would employ to attract, retain, help involve millennials in church activities.

## APPENDIX H

**PROJECT STUDY OVERVIEW DESIGN**

<b>Study Project Overview and Design</b>	
Step 1	Meet with the senior pastor to discuss and receive approval and written permission to conduct the project study at Simon Temple (Appendices C and D). Take field notes and journal. Develop promotional advertisement materials before the launch date to be aired.
Step 2	Meet with the media director to have the advertisement for the project study pre-recorded. Advertise the project study (pre-recorded videos), recruitment flyer for stakeholders, and millennial membership attendance campaign (Appendix B) for four weeks before the study begins. Have the media director broadcast the millennial attendance drive video for seven weeks of the eight-week study project. Make study advertisement materials available on the church's website and social media platforms. Meet with office staff members to ensure Covid-19 PPE supplies are readily available for use during the study. Take field notes and journal.
Step 3	Communicate with stakeholders via Zoom, phone, and email throughout the study.
Step 4	Week 1: Host the first researcher and stakeholder meeting at Simon Temple (New Fellowship Hall) (in-person). Distribute the study's operational statement, survey questionnaire (millennials), interview questions (ordained deacons, elders, licensed ministers, and lay leaders), and purchase supplies (Appendices D, E, F). Have stakeholders read, review, and sign consent forms (Appendix A). Obtain input from stakeholders for administratively planning the millennial attendance drive and the schedule of events for the project study. Take field notes and journal.
Step 5	Work to complete the revisions for the schedule of events per stakeholders' feedback. Email a copy of the revised schedule of events to church leaders, stakeholders, and millennial participants. Take field notes and journal.
Step 6	Week 2: Host the second researcher and stakeholder meeting via Zoom. Discuss how the survey completion and submission process is going and check to see how stakeholders are doing. Develop a schedule for in-person interviews and discuss any concerns stakeholders may have. Continue planning for the millennial membership attendance drive (identify logistical requirements). Communicate via phone or email weekly with stakeholders. Take field notes and journal.
Step 7	Initiate interviews. Work to complete the interview questionnaires (weeks two, three, and four). Send email reminders to stakeholders regarding their scheduled interviews. Continue to monitor the progress of the millennial membership attendance campaign. Take field notes and journal.
Step 8	Week 3: Host the third meeting for the study via Zoom. Discuss the millennial membership attendance drive, monitor the completion of surveys, and address and answer any concerns or questions stakeholders may have. The researcher will work to conduct and complete all in-person interviews. Take field notes and journal. Communicate via phone or email weekly with stakeholders.

Step 9	Week 4: Host the project study meeting via Zoom. (1) Finalize the collection of surveys and interviews, (2) Conduct an After-Action Review (AAR) the stakeholders. (3) Finalize the plans for implementing the millennial attendance drive. Ensure stakeholder volunteers know their roles of involvement for the millennial attendance drive and have a copy of the schedule of events for the campaign.
Step 10	Week 5: The millennial attendance drive will begin. A stakeholder volunteer will be present to ensure millennials are signing their guests in. The researcher will ensure millennial attendance sign-in sheets are available for the millennial attendance drive, and she will place additional copies in the church's administrative office. (Appendix J). She will take field notes and make notes in her reflective journal during the stakeholder meeting.
Step 12	Week 6: The researcher will meet with the stakeholders to monitor the progress of the millennial attendance drive to discuss their observations, concerns, questions, and recommendations about the millennial attendance drive. She will provide stakeholders (church leaders) with copies of their transcribed interviews for their verification. The researcher will email the stakeholders to inform them of the upcoming stakeholder meeting via Zoom.
Step 13	Week 7: The researcher will meet with the stakeholders to continue monitoring the progression of the millennial attendance drive. She will discuss the implementation of changes if any need to be made. The researcher will seek feedback from the stakeholders about their observations for the millennial attendance drive. The researcher will email stakeholders to inform stakeholders of the upcoming meeting via Zoom.
Step 14	Week 8: Host the final project study meeting (in-person at Simon Temple) in the new fellowship hall (November 28, 2021). Conduct an AAR review of the project study intervention with stakeholders, collect the sign-in logs for the millennial membership attendance drive, and distribute thank you notes to stakeholders and participants.
Step 15	Synthesize the millennial membership attendance campaign rosters to determine the millennial winner of the \$100 gift card. Provide the name of the winner to the senior pastor. The senior pastor will specify a date to announce the winner and give the award to the winner.
Step 16	Assist the senior pastor with awarding the millennial membership attendance drive winner their \$100 visa gift card and thanking the Simon Temple family for their support and participation in the study project.
Step 17	Begin transcribing, analyzing, coding, and synthesizing themes from the surveys, interviews, field notes, and reflective journal.
Step 18	Analyze data and synthesize themes visible in the previously created surveys, interviews, the millennial attendance drive results, and stakeholder group (field notes and reflective journal).

## APPENDIX I

## PROJECT STUDY DATA TRIANGULATION CHART

Intervention	Insider's Angle	Outsider's Angle	Researcher's Angle
<b>Millennial Membership Attendance Campaign</b>	Stakeholders are integrally involved in planning, developing, and implementing the millennial attendance drive. Millennial members are encouraged to invite others to church (millennial sign-in rosters)	Independent-expert Liberty University assigned mentor	Field notes as a participant observer
<b>Millennial Survey <i>Identifying the Disconnect</i></b>	Survey-Millennial Response Questionnaire given to millennial stakeholders	Independent-expert Liberty University assigned mentor	Field notes as a participant observer
<b>Church Leadership Survey Questionnaire</b>	Individual Interviews	Independent-expert Liberty University assigned mentor who will read and review the transcripts	Field notes as a participant observer

## APPENDIX J

**SAMPLE MILLENNIAL ATTENDANCE MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SIGN-IN ROSTER**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>Name (Please print.)</b>	<b>Guest of: (Please provide the name of the Simon Temple member that invited you.)</b>	<b>Contact Information: (Please provide an email address.)</b>	<b>Service Attended: Please list which service you attended?</b>
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## APPENDIX K

**SIMON TEMPLE'S COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS, PRECAUTIONS,  
& RESPONSE PLAN**

**2021 SIMON TEMPLE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION  
CHURCH COVID-19**

**Preparedness, Precautions, & Response Plan**

Under The AME Zion denomination, Simon Temple AME Zion Church and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention developed a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan consistent with recommendations in [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) developed by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.

An operation's plan must be readily available to leaders, members, guests, and visitors, whether via the website, internal network, or hard copy.

**This plan does not need to be submitted to a state or local agency for approval.** However, it must be retained on the local church premises or entity and made available by the AME Zion National Task Force.

Simon Temple is continually developing its COVID-19 guidance and requirements.

**COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan**

**Name:**

**Local Church:**

**Cell Phone Number:**

**Age:**

**Date of Safety Training:**

**Name of Project Researcher:**

**COVID-19 Workplace Coordinators**

**To ensure the Simon Temple leaders, members, visitors or guests, or entity complies with COVID-19 requirements, we will do the following:**

Always designate one on-site member to implement, monitor, and report COVID-19 control strategies.

***List names of designated COVID-19 worksite coordinators:***

*Reverend Jonette L. Camp*

## **Physical Distancing**

**To ensure individuals comply with physical distancing requirements, we will do the following:**

Ensure a 6-foot distance between personnel unless the safety or core function of the service activity requires a shorter length. For example, individuals are less than 6 feet apart, and personnel must wear acceptable face coverings.

Post social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 feet of spacing commonly used and other applicable areas on the site (e.g., clock in and outstations, health screening stations).

Limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Facebook Live- or video conferencing whenever possible. Church leaders, auxiliary, board, and club directors should ensure essential in-person groups (e.g., meetings) are conducted in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.

Establish designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

***List everyday situations that may not allow for 6 feet of distance between individuals. What measures will you implement to ensure the safety of your employees in such cases?***

*When lighting the candles*

*Serving the pulpit*

*Vesting before service*

*Sanitizing for Communion Service*

***How will you manage engagement with the congregation and clergy?***

*Congregation: Sanitizing for Communion Only*

*Clergy: Serving water and if the Pastor in Charge needs to send a message*

***How you will manage physical social distancing***

*Simon Temple Ushers and greeters will mark and distinguish the seating areas.*

*Even if they live or ride together, they must socially distance themselves.*

## Screening, Exclusion, and Notification

**To ensure the Simon Temple members and guests exclude potentially infectious individuals, we will do the following:**

Implement mandatory health screening assessment and temperature check) before training begins each day. and asking about:

*What type of screening will you implement? Will the screening be done before individuals arrive at training or on-site? What will PPE be required for the parties conducting the screening if on-site? Who will be responsible for performing the screenings, and how will those individuals be trained?*

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**To ensure Simon Temple's members, visitors, and guests are appropriately protected, we will do the following:**

First, supply appropriate PPE to workers. Second, at a minimum, Simon Temple personnel must provide individuals with an acceptable face covering at no cost to them. CDC-approved face coverings include cloth masks, as surgical masks and N95 masks should be reserved for the healthcare industry.

*What type of PPE will you supply? What quantity of PPE will you need to ensure that you always have enough? How will you obtain and replenish these supplies?*

*Mask, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes have been purchased and are available for members, visitors, and guests that require them. In addition, gloves are available upon request.*

Any individual able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear a face covering their nose and mouth, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief, when in any enclosed public space.

*How will you ensure individuals will wear face coverings?*

Simon Temple will purchase and provide them.

Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be appropriately stored or discarded.

*How will you ensure that PPE is appropriately cleaned, stored, and discarded?*

*The Simon Temple Covid-19 training team will*

## Hygiene and Cleaning

**To ensure individuals comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements, we will do the following:**



Post signage throughout the site to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.

***Where will hand hygiene products or stations be located? How will you promote good hand hygiene?***

*Sanitizing items (wipes and hand sanitizer) are readily available throughout the church campus, including the new fellowship hall.*

*Rev. Camp will monitor sanitizing procedures for the study group.*

Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at least after every shift, daily, or more frequently as needed. Often clean and disinfect shared objects (e.g., tools, machinery) and high-touch surfaces, such as door handles and push bars, light switches, restrooms, and common areas.

***How will you ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of your worksite and any shared objects or materials, using products identified as effective against COVID-19? If you use a cleaning log, who will be responsible for maintaining the record that documents the date, time, and scope of cleaning?***

*We will clean behind ourselves, and the local church cleaning crew will disinfect the church.*

Limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces. Ensure surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between uses. Or sanitize or wash hands before and after contact.

## **Policies & Training**

**To ensure members, guests, and visitors are aware of COVID-19 safety measures in place at our facility, we will do the following:**

Provide COVID-19 training to All Church leaders, board, auxiliary leaders that covers, at a minimum:

- Workplace infection-control practices.
- The proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Steps the members, guests, and visitors must take to notify the church or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Establish how to report unsafe working conditions.

**Who will conduct the activity?**

*Rev. Jonette L. Camp will conduct the study meetings.*

*The new fellowship hall will hold the Millennial Project study meetings at Simon Temple AME Zion Church on October 3, 24, 2021.*

*All study group participants will read, review, and sign this document. This document will be signed by the project study participants and maintained by the Simon Temple Administrative staff office for the project's duration and ninety days after completing the project.*

Encourage study group participants always to use personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer on church premises.

## RESOURCES

Simon Temple will remain abreast of CDC guidelines and requirements updates and local, state, and federal guidance issued in response to COVID-19.

National: [cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the above policies and procedures in their entirety and the in-person training and agree to abide by them.

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Millennial Project Study Facilitator

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Date

## APPENDIX L

**SAMPLE INTERVENTION LOGISTICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLY LI**

<b>Logistical Supplies</b>	<b>Administrative Supplies</b>
Pen	1-Flyer (Advertising the study and recruitment for study group participants) 1-Flyer (Advertising and Announcing the Millennial Attendance Drive)
Note pads	2 Pre-recorded video announcements (Project study announcement and stakeholder recruitment and the Millennial attendance drive announcement)
Journal	Stakeholder sign-up sheets and Millennial attendance drive sign-in sheets
\$100 Visa Gift Card	Ink-Jet printer cartridges
Recording device	
Masks	
Sanitizing wipes	
Hand sanitizer	
Forehead Temporal Thermometer	
Copier Paper	

## APPENDIX M

**SAMPLE STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTICIPANTS MEETING SCHEDULE**

The stakeholder and participant schedule accounts for the group meetings during the eight-week intervention plan.

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Time of Meeting</b>	<b>Location of Meeting</b>	<b>Focus of Meeting</b>
Sunday, October 3, 2021	1:30 PM	Simon Temple, New Fellowship Hall	Identify reasons why millennials are not attending church and how to increase millennial attendance, participation, and membership at Simon Temple.
Sunday, October 10, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Discuss if participants have noticed a decline in millennial attendance and participation at Simon Temple and plan and identify administrative items required for the millennial attendance drive. Initiate the scheduling of interviews and collect and check on the completion of millennial surveys.
Sunday, October 17, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Continue planning for the millennial attendance campaign, discuss the logistical requirements for the millennial attendance drive. Monitor the completion of surveys, continue working to complete the church leaders surveys, and address/answer questions or concerns stakeholders may have.
Sunday, October 24, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Plan, coordinate, and identify the stakeholders roles of participation in the millennial attendance drive. Ensure all administrative and logistical requirements have been identified and procured. Ensure all surveys have been submitted and all interviews have been completed. Complete all requirements to kick off the millennial attendance campaign.
Sunday, November 7, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Meet to discuss the millennial attendance drive. Identify/address any issues or concerns pertaining to the millennial attendance drive.
Sunday, November 14, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Meet to discuss the millennial attendance drive. Identify/address any issues or concerns pertaining to the millennial attendance drive.
Sunday, November 21, 2021	3:00 PM	Zoom	Meet to discuss the millennial attendance drive. Identify/address any issues or concerns pertaining to the millennial attendance drive.
Sunday, November 28, 2021	1:30 PM	Simon Temple, New Fellowship Hall	Review the findings for this study, collect millennial attendance sheets from the church's office, conduct an AAR with stakeholders.

## APPENDIX N

**PROJECT STUDY STAKEHOLDER SIGN-UP SHEET**

NO.	Name: (Please Print)	Project Study Participants: (Elder, Deacon, Licensed Minister, Layleader, Millineal)	Contact Information: (Please provide an Email Address)	Contact Information: Phone Number
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## APPENDIX O

**SAMPLE MILLENNIAL ATTENDANCE DRIVE SCHEDULE**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<b>Millennial Attendance Drive Church Services</b>	Bible Study: (Nov. 3, 2021) Sunday Worship Service: (Nov. 7, 2021), Sunday School: (Nov. 7, 2021)	Bible Study: (Nov. 10, 2021), Sunday Worship Services: (Nov. 14, 2021), Sunday School: (Nov. 14, 2021)	Bible Study: (Nov. 17, 2021), Sunday Worship Services: (Nov. 21, 2021), Sunday School: (Nov. 21, 2021)	Bible Study: (Nov. 24, 2021), Sunday Worship Services: (Nov. 28, 2021), Sunday School: (Nov. 28, 2021)
Bible Study				
Sunday worship service (8:30 am)				
Sunday worship service (11:00 am)				
Sunday school				

## APPENDIX P

## IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 5, 2021

Jonette Camp  
Fred Smith

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-84 An Assessment of the Millennial Body and Its Place in the Local Church

Dear Jonette Camp and Fred Smith,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

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

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**