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# Engaging Millennials: The Quest to Revive their Participation and Commitment at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Gastonia, NC

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ENGAGING MILLENNIALS:  
THE QUEST TO REVIVE THEIR PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT AT  
EMMANUEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, GASTONIA, NC

A PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY  
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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
KIMBERLY DENISE MOORE

MAY 2017

APPROVAL FORM

ENGAGING MILLENNIALS:  
THE QUEST TO REVIVE THEIR PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT AT  
EMMANUEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, GASTONIA, NC

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I must begin by thanking my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'm thankful for God's sovereignty and seeing more in me than I have ever seen in myself. I am honored that He not only called me, but He also chose me to be a messenger of His Word and an example to His people.

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To the millennial and mature members of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, thank you for assisting me with this project, giving of your time, filling out questionnaires, and more importantly, giving me your honest opinions. To our mature members, you continue to prove why you are the foundation upon which this church was built. To our millennials, you have opened our eyes to a different world and it is because of you that we are better. It is because of you all that I am better.

To the entire congregation, officers, and staff of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church. Thank you for trusting me, accepting me, and allowing me to serve as your pastor and leader. Thank you for allowing me the space and time to pursue this level of education. Thank you for your patience and working with my schedule throughout this educational journey. Thank you all for believing in me.

To my grandparents, the late Eddie and Pecolia Moore, I miss you beyond words. My only regret is that you are not here to see the fruit of your labor of love. Thank you for the upbringing and the foundation you laid that influenced me to be the Christian and the leader that I am today.

To my parents, Eddie and Jacqueline Moore, I appreciate your support and encouragement throughout the years. You have always pushed me in every thing that I have ever set out to accomplish. Thanks for always being in my corner.

Although very thankful for every influence in my life, it has always been crystal clear to me that everything I am, it is God that made me. Everything I have, it is He who has provided. Everything that I have ever done, it is He who has given me the wherewithal to accomplish it and for this I give Him praise! To God be all the Glory for the great things that He has done!

## **ABSTRACT**

There are times when a church can have the look of success, but the zeal of that ministry is slowly diminishing. The older generation continues to do their best to keep ministry viable and moving, but there is a younger generation who does not see the importance of committing to anything beyond the Sunday morning experience. Through a series of Bible studies, sermons, outreach and moments of fellowship, this project engages the millennial generation and discovers ways to move them toward some level of commitment and participation within the Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Gastonia, NC. It is becoming more and more evident that we are dealing with a different generation of believers. This millennial generation loves God, but they do not care for tradition or routine. They are more tasks driven than program driven. Therefore, we must provide opportunities for them to serve based upon present need versus long-term desire.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The deterioration of a building takes place slowly, and it is inevitable if care for the building is not made on a consistent basis. It is the same for congregations. If it does not receive the care and attention necessary to keep it viable, the life of a church will deteriorate over the course of time. Unfortunately, the deterioration is not always noticed until it is too late. In his book, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, Thom Rainer notes:

It is rare for a long-term church member to see erosion in his or her church. Growth may come rapidly, but decline is usually slow. This slow erosion is the worst type of decline for churches, because the members have no sense of urgency to change. They see the church on a regular basis; they don't see the gradual decline that is taking place before their eyes.<sup>1</sup>

No one wants to think of his or her church as deteriorating. Unfortunately, it happens more often than we would like to believe. Over time, leaders burn out, congregants lose their zeal, and vision seems to be further and further away.

In my church setting, because growth is seemingly taking place and ministry seems to function well; there are some that will say there is no need for change or help. Meanwhile, a remnant of members is working feverishly to keep ministry running smoothly, while others have made it optional. I often describe our church as one encountering a beautiful cruise ship, in that many will see the beauty of the cruise ship up top. They see the glitz and the glamor that makes it a beautiful ride. Nonetheless, they do not see the crew that is down below who are sweating and working to make sure the ship stays afloat. Those who are impressed with the ship's beauty cannot see, or either they

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<sup>1</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 12-13.

choose to ignore the fact that there are only a few who are managing to keep the ship running sufficiently enough to keep functioning without there being any notice of deficiency. In the meantime, crewmembers are getting tired, and the new crew who has the ability to help would rather watch instead of work.

The goal of this project was to help us gain an understanding for the change of climate in our church and discover methods to increase activity. There is so much potential in this ministry, and so many wonderful things that could be done if we had everyone on board and willing to work. It is my desire to see our millennial members join forces with our mature members in an effort to get our church operating at optimum level.

### **Project Setting**

Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church was organized May 18, 1969 by twenty persons who were already a part of a Baptist church in Gastonia, but they had the desire to do more in ministry. That was when one of the associate ministers of that church, whom I will call hereafter, Founding Pastor, gathered a group of believers who were willing to step out in faith to begin a new ministry.<sup>2</sup>

I had the privilege of meeting with a couple of the original members of the church, and they shared their thoughts about those inaugural years. They shared with me that a special meeting was held with those who were interested in beginning a new ministry. They met at the Catholic Parish House on West Long Avenue. Although they were very loyal to the church that they were attending, there were a few that were beginning to feel the frustration of stagnation. Soon word began to get around that

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that the actual names of the former pastors and founding members are not revealed in this project for the purpose of protecting their privacy.

something new and different was on the horizon. They were both in agreement that it was a scary time, in the sense that none of them had ever done anything like this before. One of the senior ladies stated, “it used to be once you joined a church, that is where you stayed unless you moved away or married away.” She went on further to say, “back then, you just did not leave your church for anything.” Thus, this was a bit scary for them because of the unknown, but yet it was exciting at the same time because of the new possibilities.

On Friday, May 30, 1969 Founding Pastor, along with the congregation called a business meeting to sanction the establishment of the church, and Founding Pastor was inaugurated as the Pastor of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church. The next month, on Sunday, June 13, 1969 the congregation began holding worship services in the former Gastonia Gazette newspaper building. Three months after that, in September of 1969 land was secured, and Phase I of the church building began and was completed five months later in February of 1971. The ministry seemed to flourish from the beginning. Everyone was excited and had a mind to work.

Four years later, in 1975 Founding Pastor resigned as the Pastor of Emmanuel, and their next Pastor, whom I will call hereafter, Former Pastor, was named to succeed him as Pastor of the church. Former Pastor organized several auxiliaries, and additional deacons and trustees were added. Membership continued to grow and soon had outgrown the present worship facility. In 1978, another building phase was completed to accommodate the growing congregation. As God gave Former Pastor vision and direction, the membership outgrew another worship area. In May of 1996, Former Pastor

led the Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church into a third phase. This edifice would seat over 900 persons to accommodate the needs of the membership as it continued to grow.

In July of 2007, Former Pastor retired and ended his tenure as Pastor after serving 31 ½ years. Immediately, a pastoral search began. In the interim, one of the associate ministers served as interim pastor while the other associate ministers preached on Sundays and taught Bible study. The trustees and deacons of the church assumed the role of governance and administrators. The search went on for another year. During this interim, some of the members became discouraged and decided to leave the church in search for a church with pastoral leadership. The numbers in membership began to dwindle, numerically and financially.

After being without pastoral leadership for over a year, after an extensive nationwide search, and after much fasting and prayer, the members of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church made history on November 8, 2008 when they elected me, Reverend Kimberly D. Moore, as the Senior Pastor of Emmanuel. This election marked a historic event in the Baptist Association of Gaston County. I was the first female to be elected to the office of Senior Pastor. Once again, the members of this church made another leap of faith and dared to do something different in ministry.

During that sixteen-month interim without pastoral leadership, however, not only did the numbers dwindle but so did some of the enthusiasm. Those members who remained began to view working in ministry as a burden rather than as a joy and privilege. Although the church committed themselves to prayer, the enthusiasm of the ministry began to change visibly because there was a remnant of those members who were deeply hurt because they felt abandoned and there were others who were simply

burned out. When I took the position, I made the healing of the church my primary focus. The Sunday sermons and Wednesday Bible studies were catered toward the spiritual healing of the church, especially for those who were in leadership, and for the unity of the entire church family. The leaders seemed to be burned out and tired from trying to keep the ministry going during that interim. Now the church of old was not the same anymore.

In the meantime, the ministry began to attract and gain a new group of attendees. There were those who came to see how the church was progressing with this new female pastor. Others came to the services because they remembered my evangelistic ministry throughout the region. Soon, young adults and even families began to join the church membership. Souls were saved and baptized; countless babies were birthed and dedicated. Conversely, several of the new members were not church oriented and seemingly not very interested in programs and extracurricular activities within the church.

Fast-forwarding to 2016, there are close to 500 members on our membership roll. Nonetheless, we will receive an average of 325 to 350 attendees on Sunday mornings, an average of sixty participants in Sunday school, and an average of 125 adults, youth and children on Wednesday nights for Bible study. Prior to this project, I estimate that only thirty percent of those in attendance on Sunday mornings consistently participated in other areas of ministry.

Since the day of its birth, this church has been a church that enjoys the excitement of new and different things. Historically, they have been a church that adapts well to change. The vision of this ministry was made a reality by people who were dedicated, committed, faithful, and determined to see change take place. It was my prayer during

this project that they would see the need for change, get on board, and work to make a change within our church. It was my prayer that the spirit of those builders and boomer generations would resurface and have an impact upon the millennial generation that they would adopt the same dedication and determination as it relates to the participation and commitment of members at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church.

### **Statement of Problem**

I have served as Pastor of Emmanuel over the past eight years. Over the course of the past three years, I have witnessed what seems to be a decline of participation and commitment to the work of ministry. There seems to be a lack of unction and zeal for the work of the church. I have noticed the presence of many “Sunday” congregants, but participation in ministry seems to stop there. We do not see the same participation at other teaching opportunities; neither do we see great participation at other ministry programs. I am seeing leaders getting burned out again. I can see the remnant of workers getting tired of carrying the load. Keep in mind that we have over 500 congregants on the roll. Our membership is filled with residents from the surrounding community as well as some congregants who drive from Charlotte, North Carolina, Shelby, North Carolina, and even as far as Greenville, South Carolina. Our church is filled on Sunday mornings. We have an average of 325 to 350 per Sunday morning service, but on the average only one-third of that number in attendance is actually doing the work. There seems to be a disconnect that has developed when it comes to any additional opportunities for ministry.



Something has happened to the fire that was once very evident within the ministry. Something has happened to the overall zeal for the work of the ministry. Indeed, we still have auxiliary programs and successful moments of outreach, but the overall enthusiasm is not what it has been in previous years. And, I have to ask myself: Why has the desire to work in ministry seemingly diminished? What has changed over the last forty years that the drive and zeal for ministry work is no longer the same? Is it because the face of the ministry has changed? Is it because those hard workers who founded the ministry have either passed away or are past their years of labor? Although some of those older members may not have the ability to do the work, many of their children and grandchildren are still a part of the ministry. Nevertheless, the commitment of this younger generation is not that of the older generation.

Keep in mind that the church is located in the heart of a community of all ages and occupational demographics. Our membership ages range from 0 years to 94 years of age, with thirty percent of the membership within the age range of 19 years to 39 years of age, which is the millennial generation. It appears that this age group has a different perspective about the work of ministry that is different from the older generation. The primary focus of the older generation was to do all they could to develop their spiritual life. They spent most of their time working in the church as, for many of them, church was their only outlet. The older generation made working in church a major priority because it made them feel as if they were serving God Himself.

This new generation, however, has so many other options and outlets. Working in church does not seem to be a priority; it is only an option. I believe a large portion of the reason that we are witnessing a decline in extracurricular activity participation within our church is because this new generation views working and participating in ministry as a chore rather than an opportunity to serve.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> To gain a greater understanding of the mind, method, and ministry of the millennial, see A. Brooks, *Understanding Millennials: Tips and Tricks for Working with Today's Generation*, New York: Brooks Books, 2016; J. Fromm and C. Garton, *Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever*, New York: AMACOM, 2013; T.S. Rainer and J.W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*, Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011; R. Lee, *Stained-Glass Millennials: Coincidental Reformers*, Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2016.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **DETAILED PROJECT SUMMARY**

#### **Project Description**

Eight years ago, when I was initially elected as Pastor of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, like most new pastors, I along with the congregation was excited and ready for this new chapter in the life of the ministry. It was evident that they were ready for change by the mere fact that they went against tradition and elected a female to pastor. And for the first three years, it was clear that they were excited about the change. However, now that the honeymoon is over, it is as if the excitement has waxed cold. Keeping in mind that new members are consistently joining the church and come in with a certain level of enthusiasm, but those who have been there for a while have gotten comfortable and, in my opinion, somewhat complacent.

Over time, I began to notice that the zeal of many was diminishing. They were coming to Sunday morning worship. A portion of them would attend Bible study. However, there was a disconnect that had developed as it relates to any further forms of ministry. We continue to operate in ministry by helping others and serving our community with the remnant of those who consistently are willing to work. Nevertheless, I believe we have the potential to do so much more if we had the participation from the overall congregation. We have all of the ingredients to be an impactful force in the community without burning out the few who are consistently doing the work. It has come to my attention that this is not only an issue in the church that I pastor. In speaking with other pastors and leaders, it is a twenty-first century church issue. Other pastors complain that the members will come to Sunday service, but only a remnant are actually doing the

work needed to keep ministry viable. So, I became very concerned that many of the churches of this age, including mine, are becoming “Sunday ministries” only, and everything else ministry related seems to be optional.

As a result of this concern, I conducted a survey within my congregation on the first Sunday of 2016.<sup>4</sup> I wanted to know how the members were feeling about participation within the church. I wanted to know if they participated with other activities other than Sunday services, and if they did not, I wanted to know the reason for it. When asked whether they attended Sunday school, many gave answers such as “no, just lazy” or “would like to see more class options.” When asked his or her thoughts about the lack of participation within the church, I received answers such as: “things seem to run well, I didn’t think there was a need.” I also received answers such as: “millennial members need more to hold their attention, so maybe try providing more options for extracurricular activities and you may see a different outcome.” Some overall responses that I received were, “I love the Word that is preached every Sunday, but some of the people are just not that friendly.” Of course, these were responses that I did not want to hear, but they certainly were needed in order for me to get an idea of the climate of our congregation.

I know our church has the potential to operate at a greater capacity. Moreover, I believed that there was something that could be done to provoke a change and resuscitate the zeal of our congregation. Therefore, I organized a campaign that was designed to engage our young adult congregants and cause them to either connect or reconnect, and recommit to the work of the ministry. The slogan for our church is: “we’re helping to build the kingdom, one soul at a time.” It was my desire to get our church to understand

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<sup>4</sup> Survey found in Appendix A.

that this win for the kingdom goes beyond introducing new converts to Christ or welcoming new members into our church family. It was my desire to see them serving, becoming disciples, and being equipped to go and make other disciples. Accordingly, I knew it would take work, purposeful fellowship, consistency in showing the love of Christ, and it was going to mean making a sacrifice. This chapter discusses the means in which we attempted to begin the process of reclaiming committed participants within our church. It explains the goals of the project and the details of its activities.

### **Project Goal**

Statistical evidence shows that each new generation becomes less and less interested in church. In his book, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, Thom S. Rainer writes:

Slightly over one-half (51%) of the builder generation (born before 1946) attends church in a typical weekend. But only 41 percent of the boomers (born 1946 to 1964) and 34 percent of the busters (born 1965 to 1976) attend church on a given weekend. The bridgers (born 1977 to 1994) represent the age group who understand the gospel and have accepted Jesus Christ, but they may or may not attend church. Of the bridger generation, less than 30 percent attend church. America is clearly becoming less Christian, less evangelized, and less churched. Yet too many of those in our churches seem oblivious to this reality.<sup>5</sup>

Then, when we see reports regarding the millennial generation, the findings are worse. In an article written by Timothy C. Morgan, published in *Christianity Today*, he states:

In 2010 the Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project released findings that millennials were the least religiously engaged generation in nearly 100 years. The report verified that most millennials believe in God. They believe in life after death, but this group of young adults was significantly more

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<sup>5</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 33.

disconnected from churches and other religious institutions than previous generations. About 1 in 4 millennials have no religious affiliation.<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to their religious beliefs, the majority of millennials have a negative perception of the Christian church. They very seldom will identify themselves with a religious denomination. They would actually prefer to be labeled as “non denominational.” Guldalian observes:

The term ‘denomination,’ is often a point of contention because the term represents the institution. This generation is neither attracted to nor fond of institutions. Millennials find present-day Christianity to be judgmental, hypocritical, and old-fashioned. It should be no surprise millennials are the most highly unchurched generation in recent history.<sup>7</sup>

This generation of believers could not care less about being a member of a church. They do not see the relevance or the need. Consequently, when that is one’s mindset, spiritual relationships and potential religious fellowships tend to suffer. Many believe that regular church attendance tends to provide opportunities to build spiritual and social relationships. G. Alexander Ross wrote an article about the impact of church involvement. And he says, “Church attendance inhibits social isolation, which, the literature shows, is a strong contributor to unhappiness.”<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, many do not appreciate the social benefits that come along with being connected to a church congregation. Once again, there are so many other options available in today’s society that the church is not the most likely chosen option anymore.

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<sup>6</sup> Timothy C. Morgan, “It Takes More Than a Coffee Shop,” *Christianity Today*, Volume 58 Issue 6 (July/August 2014): 52.

<sup>7</sup> Guldalian, “The Millennials,” 42.

<sup>8</sup> G. Alexander Ross, “The Impact of Church Attendance on the Decline in Female Happiness in the United States,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Volume 7 (2011): 4.

Many tend to avoid the social interactions of ministry because that lessens one's involvement in the work of ministry. They would rather not be involved or not be accountable to the business or the labor that comes along with being an active participant in ministry. Lisa Kiester writes:

It is harder in small congregations to remain anonymous and avoid recruitment into a more active role. In larger churches, people experience greater anonymity. In larger churches there are also more likely staff people performing time-consuming leadership functions, meaning that individuals with professional and/or managerial experience are less prone to be targeted for intensive volunteer positions.<sup>9</sup>

For these reasons and so many more, one will determine whether a large or a small church fits their lifestyle and/or personal preferences. Although the Word of God is important, in some churches, ministry participation is just as important. Many believe that ministry involvement is the tool that keeps the ministry fluid and a viable part of the community. Many believe that without the hands to the plow, the ministry will eventually die.

My church is one of those churches that has been accustomed to member participation, and it is my fear that we would literally be lost without the help and participation of our membership. For that reason, I embarked upon this study to gain an understanding of our church's status and determine what we should do to revive and maintain membership participation. In my opinion many of the answers would be found within our millennial generation who are young adults between the ages of 19 and 39. This group makes up thirty percent of our congregation and many of these young adults had not been active participants within our church. Thus, the goal of this project was to

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<sup>9</sup> Lisa A. Keister, "Religion, Work and Inequality," *Research in the Sociology of Work*, Volume 23 (2012): 302.

introduce some cultural changes to our church that would pique the interest of our young adult congregants with the hope of increasing participation among the members of our church.

Our millennials do not have a problem attending our regular Sunday morning worship. It is the additional programs and activities that the majority did not care to attend. What I have come to understand is that, although the millennial generation is not necessarily interested in the work of the ministry, they are not opposed to hearing about Jesus. In fact, those who I have come in contact with love the Word of the Lord. Therefore, Guldalian suggests, “as Christians we should focus on introducing them to Jesus Christ first and the church second.”<sup>10</sup> For years, we have made it our custom to do it the other way around. We have had the tendency to invite them to church first then introduce them to Jesus in hopes that if they fall in love with Jesus, they would be more apt to fall in love with the church as well. But Guldalian declares and I concur, “You must share the Gospel with this generation that is lost and moving toward destruction. And we must reach them in a way that is most familiar to them and that is through real relationships and the avenues that they love: tech media and pop culture.”<sup>11</sup> It is our job to find ways in which we can connect with this generation. We have to be willing to let go of our personal preferences for the greater good and that greater good is winning souls for Jesus Christ.

Hence, we endeavored to provide special ministry opportunities for our millennial members. It was my desire to make an impact upon the entire church family. However, I

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<sup>10</sup> Guldalian, “The Millennials,” 43.

<sup>11</sup> Guldalian, “The Millennials,” 44.



started with a group of volunteers from our millennial generation. We would begin by attempting to make an impact upon our Bible Study with the hopes of increasing participation and commitment during our Bible Study hour on Wednesday nights. This project also included an outreach component as well as a fellowship component.

First, it was our goal to create a Bible study class that would cater to the spiritual needs of the millennial generation. Three classes were held at the church, and one class was held off-site at a local restaurant. I taught two of the classes, another was taught by a millennial associate minister, and the other was taught by one of their peers. The goal was to determine if location of class made a difference in participation. I also wanted to know if having a particular teacher would make a difference in their attendance and participation.

My second goal was to monitor how the millennials of our church respond to the request to participate in an outreach project. This is an area of ministry that our older members are most familiar with so it was my goal to introduce this portion of ministry to our millennials with hopes that they would respond favorably.

My third goal was to encourage fellowship among the millennial age group. I have witnessed the millennials in my church come to worship on Sunday morning then not engage with anyone beyond that moment, only those in their circle of friends. I am convinced that moments of fellowship can assist in breaking down walls of division and help restore breaches created by various schisms found within the church. Thus, I incorporated this component of fellowship with hopes to create a sense of unity and cohesiveness among the millennials. In addition, I wanted to create an atmosphere to begin a conversation concerning the role the millennials could possibly play within this

congregation.

Finally, it was my goal to find a way to bridge the gap between our millennial members and our mature members. As I have previously stated, this millennial generation makes up at least thirty percent of our church, and we must find a means to reach them if we are to have longevity. The fact is, we need them just as much as they need us.

Timothy C. Morgan, who is *Christianity Today's* senior editor of global journalism, conducted an interview with Naomi Schaefer Riley, who is a weekly columnist for the *New York Times*. Riley answers some pertinent questions and discusses what will draw millennials to the Christian faith. In Morgan's article, "It Takes More Than a Coffee Shop," Riley says, "Savvy religious leaders are saying, we need to think about giving the next generation responsibility."<sup>12</sup> Many will want to say that millennials are selfish. Nevertheless, when they look at those who have been in the church for some time, they see the older generation as selfish and territorial. They get in position and stay in position, and the millennial generation does not feel needed. They feel that they have no place within the church. Riley says, "There is tension between priorities. Is the priority the people who are here every week? Or is the priority getting the people who are not here to come every week? Religious leaders are caught in a bind. If everybody in the congregation is over age 55, what's the future?"<sup>13</sup> Herein lies our dilemma. The older generation feels as if they still have life in them, and they still have a mind to work. They enjoy what they do and for many of them, working in the church is what they have done for most of their lives. Why should they be put out to pasture? It therefore becomes a

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<sup>12</sup> Morgan, "It Takes More Than a Coffee Shop," 54.

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, "It Takes More Than a Coffee Shop," 54.

challenge to cater to the congregation as a whole, and eventually the church gets stuck in a rut and participation begins to decline. Hence, it was my goal to find a way to bridge that gap. I believe the effort to do so begins with finding ways to draw and engage the millennial generation, which was the basis of this project.

### **Methodology**

In my opinion, there is no better way to understand the problems and issues of church ministry than to communicate with those who are a part of that ministry. Therefore, over the course of a four-week period our church made a concerted effort to engage our millennial generation through a series of Bible studies, a joint outreach effort with members of our missionary ministry, and an evening of fellowship with their peers. Surveys were distributed each week for the purpose of obtaining quantitative data measuring the opinions of each participant regarding Bible studies and all related activities during this period of time. These surveys were the primary instrument used for evaluation. (See Appendixes) The Bible studies were biblically based using the Scriptures that also served as the basis of the biblical foundation of this project (Acts 2, Hebrews 10, Joshua 5, Nehemiah 4, and Romans 12). After each Bible study, I relied on the participants to answer a series of questions with a numerical value ranging from 1 to 10; one being the least and ten as the greatest. In many cases, the number one would equal an answer of strongly disagree and the number ten would equate to the answer strongly agree. The survey questions gave me a sense of the participants' opinions and thoughts concerning the lessons studied, topics discussed, outreach effort and fellowship outing.

Every topic, teacher, and location of the Bible studies was intentionally chosen. The variations of location, staff, and day of study allowed us to determine if location or

staffing makes a difference in the millennial's level of interest in participating in Bible study.

I should also add that qualitative data was received from verbal discussions during and following the scheduled Bible studies along with comments written on surveys as well as comments derived from some of the participants' Facebook posts. Millennials spend a great deal of time on social media. I wanted to use that to my advantage. Therefore, after the first session I challenged a few of them to "ask Facebook" a question following our class. The responses they received were enlightening to say the least.

### **Detailed Description and Activities**

After receiving project approval from my supervising professor, Dr. Steve Harmon, and the Doctor of Ministry project approval committee, I immediately began to make plans for implementation. I already had Bible study lesson outlines prepared, surveys constructed, and a plan to recruit participants. The full ministry project timeline was as follows:

### **Ministry Project Timeline**

#### **Bible Study Series**

October 16, 2016 - Recruitment

On Sunday, October 16, 2016 an announcement was made to the congregation during morning worship concerning the upcoming project and the need for volunteers.

October 19, 2016 - Week #1 Bible Study

First millennial Bible study held with 27 millennials

Scripture: Acts 2:40-47

Teacher: Pastor Moore

October 26, 2016 - Week #2 Bible Study

Second millennial Bible study held with 22 millennials.

Scripture: Romans 12:1-8

Topic: "Knowing Your Place"  
 Teacher: Millennial Associate Minister

November 2, 2016 - Week #3 Bible Study  
 Third millennial Bible study held with 16 millenials. Study held off site at Golden Corral  
 Scripture: Hebrews 10:19-25  
 Topic: "Church Goers and God Pleasers"  
 Teacher: Millennial lay person

November 9, 2016 - Week #4  
 Mature versus Millennial Open Forum with 47 mature members and 28 millennials  
 Scripture: I Corinthians 12:12-27  
 Topic: "Are You a Part of the Team?"  
 Facilitator: Pastor Moore

November 30, 2016 - Post Project Bible Study  
 Scripture: Luke 10:38-42  
 Final discussion about the project and get the group's overall thoughts and opinion

### **Fellowship**

October 22, 2016 - Fellowship Component  
 Location: Dave & Busters in Concord Mills, NC

### **Outreach**

November 12, 2016 - Outreach Project  
 Event: Hot Meal and Clothing Give Away at Emmanuel

### **Sermon Series:**

January 4, 2017 – Sermon Topic: "I've Got To Do My Part" (Nehemiah 4:19-23)

January 11, 2017 – Sermon Topic: "Stop Sleeping on God" (Revelation 3:1-6)

January 18, 2017 – Sermon Topic: "What Have You Done With Yours?" (Matthew 25:14-19)

January 25, 2017 – Sermon Topic: "Are You a Part of the Remnant?" (Isaiah 10:20-25)

### **Ministry Fair**

Sunday, January 29, 2017 – Ministry Fair  
 Ministry fair designed to give exposure to all of the ministries/programs of Emmanuel which with the hopes to encourage participation and commitment of all members.

## **Recruitment**

On Sunday, October 16, 2016 an announcement was made to the congregation concerning the upcoming project. I shared my heart and desire to see our church operate at our greatest level of potential, but I would need their help. I shared that this project would focus on engaging the millennials of our congregation and was seeking volunteers to help me in this effort. I asked young adults from the ages of 19 to 39 who were interested in participating to join me in a brief interest meeting immediately following service. Once the benediction was given, I noticed a number of young adults migrating and waiting patiently to hear more about Pastor's project. More than 30 young adults remained after service that day. I explained further the purpose for the project, but wanted them to know that this was more than simply a project for me. I shared that I believed this project could be the spark needed to rekindle the fire within our church once again. I further explained that all I needed was a minimum of twelve, no more than fifteen, participants that would be committed to attending Bible study for the next four weeks. I explained in detail all of the components that would be included and that they would need to sign an agreement of commitment agreeing to be present and a willing participant in each area for the entire four-weeks. I asked them to think about the role they would possibly play in this project and to pray about this four-week commitment. If they were indeed on board with being a committed participant, they were to join me on the coming Wednesday night for our first Bible study that would be held in the fellowship hall of the church.

### Week 1

On Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, I prepared the fellowship hall for possibly fifteen participants for our first millennial Bible study. I honestly was not certain whom or how many would indeed show up. To my surprise, twenty-seven millennials poured in the doors with bright eyes and big smiles. I must say that I was just as excited as they were, if not more. At that moment, I was relieved, hopeful, encouraged, and nervous all at the same time. I knew at this moment this class could very well be the change our church has needed. On the other hand, I wondered if this was just another moment of excitement that would soon diminish or fade over time.

Nonetheless, everyone took a seat, and we began our time together with prayer. Afterwards, I explained once again that I only needed a minimum of twelve, and I stressed, committed participants for this four-week journey. I did receive questions from a couple of students wanting to know if they were not able to commit officially to every activity for the four-week period, could they still participate in the Bible studies and other activities when they were able to do so? I knew the question would come up and I told myself that I would stick to my guns and only accept participants who could participate for the entire four weeks. Of course, I did not have the heart to say no because the idea is to encourage them to participate, not turn them away. That is what I told myself. Thus, against my better judgment as it relates to the data needed for this project, I conceded and agreed that they could participate even if they could not be fully committed.

Before beginning our first study, I gave each attendee an agreement of commitment to read over and sign.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-seven millennials committed to the process

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix B – Agreement of Participation and Commitment

of the project; twenty-two were female and five were male. The youngest in age was 21 years old and the eldest was 38 years. I wanted to know, of those present, the length of time that had been members of the church and if they were active members. Eight of the participants said they had been members of the church for more than ten years. Thirteen of the participants had been members between two and nine years and six of the participants had been members of the church for one year or less. I wanted to know if they had been an active participant in church functions and activities prior to this project. Thirteen of the participants said that they had been very active. Five of them said their participation was average and nine of them stated that they had not been active at all prior to this project. And lastly, I wanted to know how often they attended Bible study during the month prior to this project? 30% responded that they came every week. 26% said they did not attend at all. 18% said only once a month; 11% said just twice a month, and 15% said at least three times a month.

### **Bible Study #1**

After the initial surveys were completed, we then began our study from the Scriptures found in Acts 2:40-47. I wanted to begin the project with Acts 2 as the foundation. I wanted to take a look at the Early Church, how it began and obtained its growth. We discussed the results of Pentecost, salvation and the 3000 that were added to the Body of Christ. I asked the group was salvation important to the millennial generation? I told them they could answer from their own experience or from their knowledge of the peers in their circles. Their response was:

- To some of my peers, salvation is not important; the focus is jobs and family.
- Salvation is not thought of because church is not a part of their background.



- Salvation is synonymous with church and most do not care for church.
- Because most Christians come across as judgmental, some millennials have no desire to be connected to what they deem to be prejudice.
- Those who have church as a foundation are bold about their belief and their faith. However, they do not always know how to share their faith. They do not care for public displays or confessions of faith.

We discussed the fact that after Peter preached the word, according to Acts 2: 41-42, many were saved and in the days to come they continued in fellowship, breaking of bread, in prayers, and in the doctrine of the apostles. I then wanted to know their thoughts on fellowship with other believers and their opinion about the importance of prayer since these were components that were vital to the early church.

As it relates to fellowship, it was stated that anything centered around a meal, constitutes fellowship and it is usually not an issue. However, there were at least two of the female participants who were adamant about being in the “right” company. One of the participants stated that she prefers to fellowship only with those with whom she has a spiritual connection. Overall, it was the consensus of the group that when food is involved, it is a common denominator and fellowship is inevitable whether you really know the others in attendance.

I then wanted to know their thoughts on sharing space and working with those from other generations. One of the participants asked if our sharing was authentic or out of obligation or routine? She said, the older generation just wants peace and they just simply want everyone to get along. On the other hand, the millennial generation does not feel pressured to make peace or get along with anyone if they do not want to. She said if there is not authenticity, they normally do not care to be connected. She went further to

say, “it does not mean that we do not love others, we just prefer not to be bothered.” Her statement was met with a resounding “Amen.”

On the subject of prayer, this group had very strong opinions. I asked what were their thoughts about corporate prayer versus personal prayer? One of the female participants answered and said many of her peers will not normally gather for the sake of praying, but will only pray when there is a problem or an issue. Another followed up by saying that in her circle prayer is usually based upon need rather than desire. On the subject of corporate prayer, another of the female participants said many of her friends do not care for praying aloud for everyone to hear. She said, “for many of us it becomes distracting because we find ourselves trying to process what someone else is saying. So I just prefer my own quiet time of prayer.” On the other hand, there was another participant who differed in her opinion. She stated that she gained strength during times of corporate prayer. She admitted that she actually learned how to pray by listening to other ministers and some of the mature members of the church pray.

On my final question about prayer, I asked those of the group if they believed that prayer is as important as it used to be? Surprisingly, a few were in agreement that the generation before them fell by the wayside in regards to consistent prayer and teaching their children to pray. Consequently, this millennial generation is oblivious to and do not see the need or understand the importance of prayer.

I went further to ask their thoughts and opinions in regards to spiritual authority. Acts 2 speaks of the people following the doctrine of the apostles. They trusted the Word and the direction of the apostles. My question to the Bible study group was, “have we lost our reverence for those in authority?” The following was some of their responses:

- We've seen it done wrong for so long, it's hard to believe anyone is trying to do it right.
- There's an assumption or a stigma about leadership that they are not touchable or reachable to the layperson.
- This generation tends to hold on to offense. Once they are hurt by leadership, you don't get another chance.
- This generation does not like to be told what to do. The older generation has always been and are used to being under someone's authority. This generation has never had to submit to that kind of authority and we do not want to.

I followed by stating that there has to be restoration of respect for spiritual authority if the church is to move forward. One of the female millennials countered by saying, "we want to attach to somebody who is doing something and making things happen. But if leadership is not putting forth an effort to show they care or working for something greater, then there is probably not going to be a lot of respect." The tone of her response felt very personal, but because we agreed that nothing said would be judged, ridiculed or chastised, I did not counter with a response or rebuff. I simply filed it away and added it to my mental list of things of concern.

I ended this first session by reiterating that the early church had all things in common. It wasn't simply about everything being so fresh and new. Their commonality was all about their excitement for their new life in Jesus Christ. I stated that we could grow and be healthy as long as we maintain our love and excitement for Jesus Christ.

As we were saying goodnight, I challenged a few of the students to take the question of salvation to social media. Four of the students asked their contacts on Facebook how they felt about church and salvation. The responses were overwhelming, eye opening, and I would even venture to say troubling in some ways. I am listing a few

of their responses to give some idea of the thought process of the millennial on this subject matter. An exhaustive list of their responses can be found in the Appendix.<sup>15</sup>

The Facebook post asked millennials if they attended church and they were to respond stating why or why not. Some of their responses were:

- No. I grew up in a small AMEZ church. I got older and realized that it is a money hungry, power driven, community depleting, organization.
- I go to church for direction and guidance. Christ is the only thing I can count on and cleave to.
- I did when I lived down South. I honestly haven't found a church up here that I like or feel welcome and to me, that is really sad.
- Now, I go on occasion. My belief and trust in God has not swayed at all, but my trust in man has.
- I got church hurt at three different churches. There is just a little too much judging and not enough love.
- I do not. I was born and raised attending services with the Church of Christ (John Campbell reformation). When I came out of the closet I had to do a great deal of introspection. Being told I was abomination from the pulpit drove me to the brink of suicide. I poured myself into religious study, every credo and dogma I could find from Western and Eastern cultures. No. One. Agrees.... At the end of the day, He made me. He'll judge me. In the mean time, I study, I pray, and I treat my fellow man with charity flavored with wisdom.
- I went to church regularly growing up but I do not attend now unless it is a wedding or a funeral. I do not need church to know how to be a good person or to have a sense of community.
- We have church at home as a family.

These responses deeply concerned me. Although these were not the responses of members from my church, I was still bothered by the fact that there are young adults in

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix P – Facebook Inquiry and response from millennials as written by millennials from various denominational backgrounds in their own voice and vernacular to preserve their authenticity.

this world, connected to the young adults of my church who choose not to attend church because of what they have seen, what they have heard, or how they have been made to feel. What is even more troubling is that many Pastors do not know that their congregants and former congregants feel this way. This exercise has confirmed the need to pursue this project and discover ways to reach our millennial generation in a more definitive way.

## **Week 2**

On Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> we held our second millennial Bible study class. To align with one of the goals of this project, I assigned one of our millennial associate ministers to teach the class while I taught the adult class. I wanted to test whether it made a difference if I taught the class or would another minister be accepted in the assignment. Twenty-two millennials were present, which was five participants less than the previous week. There is no evidence to prove that the attendance lessened because of the change in lead teacher. It could be speculated that the first week's numbers were higher because it was something new and different and attendees came out of curiosity. Again, there is no proof of reasoning only speculation. I can be honest and say that this made me nervous and I wondered if this would be the trend over the next few weeks.

This week's lesson focused on the Scriptures found in Romans 12:1-8. Our topic of discussion was "Knowing Your Place." Although I did not teach the millennial class, there were some main principles that I wanted relayed to the class. I wanted them to have an understanding of how vital they are to our church and to the Body of Christ. I wanted them to understand that everyone has a part to play so that the body may function appropriately. It was my prayer that this lesson would be instrumental in helping to move

them from spectators to participators.

I was not privy to a lot of the additional discussions because I did not teach the class. I had asked the lead teacher to record the class discussion for me. She in turn asked one of the millennials to record and was told afterwards he was not able to forward the recording. Therefore, I had to rely on feedback from the lead teacher and the completed evaluations.<sup>16</sup>

### **Week 3**

On Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, we engaged in the third Bible study of this project. This week the millennial class was held off site at the Golden Corral and was taught by one of the millennial peers. It was a goal of this project to change location and staff to determine if those changes would make a difference in attendance and participation. The class met for dinner first, then shared in a time of study. Sixteen millennials were present at the off-site study. Five millennials were in attendance in the adult class. There were a total of twenty-one millennials and one person less than the previous week. Those that stayed with my adult class stated that they did not attend the millennial study because their children were involved in activities at the church and they opted to stay on site at the church for the convenience of getting their children after Bible study.

The lesson focused on Scriptures found in Hebrews 10:19-25 with the topic, “Church Goers and God Pleasers.” The class was challenged to ask themselves if they are merely churchgoers or truly God pleasers. I shared with my class as well as with the lead teacher for the millennial class that we are experiencing a time when many appear to

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix E – Bible Study #2 Survey

simply be churchgoers who go to church if they feel they "need it" at the time. Some will attend out of mere routine or they go to get their church "fix" for the week or the season. On the contrary, I believe that our motivation for fellowship with the people of God should be based upon our obedience to God, not whether we "feel" it or not, and certainly not just during times of crisis. So often we come to church to be encouraged when we really should be attending church with the hopes of encouraging someone who needs that spiritual uplift.

Hebrews 10 teaches us not to forsake that opportunity to come together. It tells us that we should not forsake that opportunity to be an encouragement and show the love of Jesus to someone who may need Him. Attending church is not just about coming to church and being a churchgoer. It is all about pleasing God with our actions toward one another. What a blessing it is when we all come together on one accord and boldly approach the throne of God concerning the same things. In my opinion, there has been a falling away that has taken place within the church and for those of us who still believe, Hebrews 10:23-24 tells us to "hold fast to our faith without wavering and trust He who is faithful. We are encouraged to gather together and exhort one another to love and good works." At the end of class, surveys were distributed to both groups.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Week 4** **Mature versus Millennial Open Forum**

On Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, we engaged in our final week of study for this project. This week, I decided to bring the millennials and the mature members together for an open discussion forum. There were 111 persons in attendance (47 mature, 28

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix F – Bible Study #3 (Millennial) and Appendix G – Bible Study #3 (Mature)

millennials, and 36 youth and children). This session was designed so that the mature members would be able to hear the thoughts and opinion of the millennial generation and visa versa. The youth and children were dismissed to their own class and I then opened up the forum.

I shared with the group what I felt about the state of the church. I told them I felt that we were not operating at optimum level. It seems that everything we do is average and I do not think God created this church just to be average. Nonetheless, that is what I have been seeing for the past few months; average attendance, average giving, average participation, even average worship. I shared that we have to do something about it because I do not want the Lord to look at us like he looked upon the Church of Sardis. I do not want us to think we are alive and God looks upon us as though we are dead.

Revelation 3:1-2 records the message to the Church in Sardis. It states:

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. (NRSV)<sup>18</sup>

I do not want this to be our testimony. But what do we do? How do we get from that place of stagnancy? What will it take to stir us to action?

Thus, I began our discussion by asking the question, in your opinion what is holding this church back from moving forward to the next level? One of the young adult members answered and stated that he was of the opinion that the older generation seems to have a fear of the unknown and seems comfortable with the status quo. One of the

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<sup>18</sup> Harold W. Attridge, *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books With Concordance* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), 1944. (All biblical references throughout the remainder of this document will come from this Study Bible).



mature members responded and said that there seems to be a lack of care or concern from our young adults. One of the mature associate ministers spoke up and said that he fears that many of our young adults are distracted and are being drawn away by a lot of the contemporary ministries along with other ministries viewed on television and social media. Then some of the senior mothers began to speak up with remarks that were filled with frustration. Senior Mother #1, who is 91 years old and a founding member of the church, stood and asked the question, “What are we doing? Have we done what God told us to do? Why aren’t we praying together like we used to? Yes we can pray individually, but it’s going to take us praying together and being on one accord in order for us to get corporate results.” Senior Mother #2, who is an 80 year old founding member said, “I get frustrated when it seems like the younger generation just sits around watching the older folks do all of the work. I’ve been on this journey a long time and I want to see someone else come behind me to carry on the work; but they just don’t seem interested.” She went on to say, “You are complaining about what the old folks are doing, but what are you doing? You’re sitting back looking at the rest of us do the work. From where I’m sitting, if we don’t do it, it won’t get done. But when is someone going to come and help us? When is someone going to step up and take on some of this responsibility?”

I followed up by compelling the younger generation to hear the hearts of the older generation. Up to this point, the millennial generation was relatively silent as the mature members voiced their concerns. I then asked the millennials what did they hear in the voices of the mature? Sporadically they began to call out terms describing what they heard.

- Fatigue
- Desperation
- Frustration
- Conviction
- Disappointment
- Urgency

For a brief moment silence fell over the room. I then told the millennials that I hope the words of our mature members had an impact upon them and would hopefully shake them into action. That is one of the reasons I chose to implement this particular project. I wanted to discover ways to influence our young adults to get involved in ministry. We are very unique in that we have five generations represented within our church. If this ministry is going to function at its greatest level, we need every generation actively participating in some way. We may differ in various ways and have a different outlook on life but a good team is one that is built on diversity, not adversity. That means we may have different gifts, different roles that we play, but we should have the same common goal and that goal is to win souls for Christ all the while pleasing God in all that we do.

John Maxwell writes of a former UCLA basketball coach by the name of John Wooden who once said, “individuals win trophies, but teams win championships.”<sup>19</sup> I told them that what I see most times is that we have individual people just working for a trophy when we should be striving for the championship as a team. There is no older generation team in competition with the younger generation team. We are all one team, going in the same direction, striving for the same goal. I used an analogy of a relay race. I shared that we have someone from the older generation trying to hand off the baton to

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<sup>19</sup> John C. Maxwell, “Leaders Who Celebrate Diversity Accomplish More,” *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 1429.

someone of the younger generation, but we do not have anyone from the younger generation in position to receive the baton. Therefore, our team is in grave jeopardy of losing the race because there is no one in position to receive the baton.

At this point, I posed five questions to the millennials and asked them to be open and honest in their responses.<sup>20</sup> Since the mature members had been so vocal over the course of the evening, I asked that the mature members give the millennials an opportunity to speak freely without opposition.

1. Do you feel that the millennial generation has a place in this church as it relates to working and serving in this church? The responses were as follows:
  - There has to be training in order for someone to be prepared to receive the baton. Yes, there is a place to work, but I'm afraid many are not prepared.
  - (Despite my request) Mature member: Many of the millennials do not want to listen to those of us who are trying to train them.
  - Male millennial: I feel that our opinions are not received. The mature must be more open minded, open to change, and willing to listen to suggestions from others.
  - Female millennial: I feel that some of the mature members are not as eager to release the baton. So the millennial does not always know if it is okay to step up.
  - Male millennial: Some millennials may not even know their gifts or how they could possibly fit in.
  - Mature member: I can admit that some of us are guilty of criticizing the millennials instead of teaching them.
  - Female millennial: Yes, there is a place for us. For some of us, our self-esteem has been bruised by the criticism of the older generation. Some of them have been very judgmental over the years.
2. Do you feel that the millennial generation has a voice in this church? Does your opinion matter?

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix H – Open Forum Questions

- Female millennial: Yes, this forum has been eye opening and has allowed me to see that I do have a voice and I should use it more often. Moments like these are needed more often.
  - Female millennial: I think it has taken you letting the mature generation know that we want to be more active and we need to be heard for them to finally be open to receiving us. I went to Sunday school for the first time in a long time last Sunday and for the first time in a long time I felt like I was truly welcome and my opinion mattered.
  - Female millennial: Sometimes we're heard, depending on the setting. In certain auxiliary settings, we often hear "this is not how we do it around here." We hear a lot about the former leadership and how it used to be done. After you hear that so many times, one does not feel the need to keep pushing the issue.
3. In your opinion, what would need to happen in order to bridge the gap between the millennial generation and the older generation?
- Male millennial: There has to be sensitivity to the desires / spiritual needs of others.
  - Female mature: I can agree that we have to be more open to change and suggestions from others.
  - Female millennial: There has to be more opportunities for classes, workshops, and training.
  - Male millennial: We can't continue to just talk. We must put some things into action.
4. What can we tangibly do to bridge the gap between the generations?
- Female millennial: There has to be more than just Sunday worship. We must create ways to get to know one another outside of the worship experience. We must activate and mobilize our fellowship ministries (i.e., Men, Women, Couples, and Singles ministries).
  - Male millennial: The teaching methods have to go both ways. The older generation has to be able to take some instruction from the younger generation. We may be able to show you a way to work smarter instead of working harder.
5. What are your thoughts about the state of our church? What is your overall opinion about our worship, Bible study, Sunday school, etc.?

- Female millennial: I can honestly say that I am growing and feel the need to be present for every ministry event. In fact, I hate it when I have to be away for any reason.
- Female millennial: Before becoming a member, I visited this church for some time. From that time until now, I can say that I see change taking place. Although it's baby steps, I believe we're going in the right direction.
- Male millennial: I travel for my job and have the opportunity to attend church just about anywhere on the east coast, but I have yet to find anywhere like Emmanuel.
- Female millennial: In my opinion, this church is very traditional. There seems to be a routine that we very seldom deviate from. Many of us don't really care for the fluff. We just want a little worship and the Word and we want to go home.
- Female millennial: In my opinion, we don't have enough excitement about God. If we all had a true excitement about God and desire to be in his presence, we would not get so caught up in the routine of service.
- Female millennial: I have been working with new members and I do not see people joining our church to be involved. I see them joining just to say that they are members of the church. I'm afraid we are going to end up with a church full of spectators.

I followed by saying God has blessed us in an amazing way. The difference between when the church began and now is that we are dealing with a different generation of believers. This millennial generation loves God. They do not easily settle for average and they do not care for tradition or routine. We have to allow space for diversity. Diversity does not have to be a bad thing; in fact it is healthy because we need all of the parts working so that the body functions as it was designed. It is clear that there is a diversity of need, gifts, and desires in this church. We have to be sensitive to the needs of all of our generations and endeavor to find ways for the mature and the millennials to intermingle and work together on a consistent basis.

### **Fellowship Component**

The fellowship component of the project was held during the second week of the project on Saturday, October 22, 2016. The fellowship component is a part of this project because small group fellowships were a vital part of the early church. House fellowships were very common during that day and some of those fellowships developed into house churches. They met for the purpose of common unity and to hear the Word of the Lord. We still have a need to connect with one another in fellowship, the breaking of bread, studying the Word of God, and prayers for one another. It appears that the element of fellowship is a very important component needed for healthy church growth and stability. Thus, the component of fellowship was added to the project with the hopes of promoting and/or developing a common unity among the millennials of Emmanuel. The millennials of this ministry consistently speak of doing new and different things. Hence, I encouraged the millennials to take this moment of fellowship outside the four walls of the church to gauge how they would respond to each other outside of the normal church atmosphere. Later, the following week, the Bible study group was given surveys and those who attended were asked to complete them.<sup>21</sup>

### **Outreach Project**

The component of outreach was added to this project because I wanted to monitor how the millennials of our church respond to the request to make the sacrifice to help someone other than him or herself. Outreach ministry requires one to be selfless and sacrifice your talent, time, and sometimes your treasures. This is an area of ministry that our mature members are most familiar with. They participate often in various areas of

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix L – Fellowship Evaluation

outreach throughout the community. It was my goal to introduce this portion of ministry to our millennials with hopes that they would respond favorably and agree to show the love of Christ in a tangible way. Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”(NRSV)

Being a part of a church goes beyond what you do within the walls of the church. Sometimes it means doing ministry outside of those four walls and showing the love of Christ. Being an active part of ministry has everything to do with what you do for others. Hence, it was my desire that the millennials of our church learn the importance of this area of ministry. I wanted them to go off site and take ownership of an outreach project so that they could use their gifts and see what they could accomplish as a young adult ministry.

### **Post Project Bible Study**

On Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, I met with the group to have a final discussion about the project and to get the group’s overall thoughts and opinion. In this class, we discussed having a passion for God’s presence. We studied the text found in Luke 10:38-42. I asked the millennials to tell me from the young adult perspective what is their definition of being in the presence of God? Before anyone answered, I shared with them that unfortunately, many will erroneously attempt to substitute the works they do in church and confuse those actions as being in the presence of God. It is true that we serve God by serving others. However, there must be a time of intimate worship and communion with God. Conversely, some millennials have their own interpretation of

what that looks like and feels like. Those millennials present expressed their frustration of feeling that when they do not express themselves in worship in the same manner as some of the mature members. I shared that there is no specific form, posture, or verbiage that one is mandated to use. Being in the presence of God is personal and everyone has to determine what that means for he and she individually.

At the conclusion of our study, we discussed the future of the young adult ministry and what they would like to see happen with the Bible study, worship and the overall ministry going forward. I concluded by sharing that the life and longevity of this particular part of ministry would be contingent upon their commitment and consistency.

### **Sermon Series**

There was a sermon series designed to provoke members to consider their position and status as a member. The series was implemented each Wednesday during the month of January 2017 during our series of New Year's Worship Wednesdays. It was my desire to influence our members to recognize the abilities they have and the part they have the potential to play in assuring that the body continues to function properly. It was my desire to help them understand that serving does not have to be a burden or a chore, but there is a privilege in serving. The sermons were designed to challenge us to move from ritual to relationship. We are living in a time when many are simply going through the motions. However, we have got to get to the place where we stop going through the motions and love Jesus enough to serve Him with our whole hearts. It was my desire to encourage the membership get out of the routine of doing church, embrace the true function of the church, gain an understanding of the part we all play and compel others to come and get involved.



## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

#### Old Testament Reflection

Throughout Scripture, there are a variety of references regarding the church, God's people, and the transitions they encountered in becoming who God had purposed them to be. When the children of Israel reached their destined place, they were in a different season, but they were accompanied by some of the same people. There was a generation who died in the wilderness because they refused to change their minds, and they continued to complain and rebel against God. God did not destroy the entire nation. He allowed a new generation to evolve as He led the way to Canaan. They still had strong leadership. The leadership was different, but yet very similar. Joshua was certainly a different leader than Moses, but Moses had trained Joshua. So Joshua knew the ways of Moses, but he adhered to the voice of the Lord, and he was mindful of the ways of God.

Once the children of Israel reached Canaan, their mindsets had to change. They could no longer operate as Egyptians, they had to learn how to adjust and function as Promised-Land people. Once they reached Canaan, there was a particular remnant of the men who were required to go through the process of circumcision. In order to participate in the Passover, the men had to be circumcised. Walter E. Rast records, "Since the Israelite males who had been in the wilderness for forty years had not been circumcised, a ceremony of mass circumcision was carried out at Gilgal. V. 8 states that, in this

representative act, ‘the entire nation’ was circumcised.”<sup>22</sup> This act was indicative of their preparation for their new beginning.

In my opinion, there had to be a cutting away of the old and familiar to give way to the new thing that God wanted to do in their lives. The same applies to us in this present day. Some of our older generations need to go through a circumcision of the heart. We are in a different season and dispensation. I believe God will do amazing things among us if we would release some of the traditions, ways, and mindsets of the past and make way for the new thing He wants to do for us and through us.

Another change that had to take place was the means by which the children of Israel provided for themselves. The text says that, after crossing over the Jordan, Israel ate of the fruit of the land. The Scriptures show that the day after they ate the food produced by the land, the Manna ceased to fall. Joshua 5:12 states, “The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year” (NRSV). Robert B. Coote says, “It is not clear whether the Israelites stole the grain or bartered for it, a gap that confirms that it functions mainly as a symbol here. The availability of grain rather than the lack of it is now to remind the Israelites of their dependence on Yahweh and the law.”<sup>23</sup> It was clear that the children of Israel were in a different season on their journey and what they once relied upon, they could not any longer. It seems that they were being pushed to another level of faith. Regarding this change of food supply, Lawrence O. Richards says, “This is

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<sup>22</sup> Walter E. Rast, *Joshua*, Harper Collins Bible Commentary, ed. James L. Mays (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988), 216.

<sup>23</sup> Robert B. Coote, *The Book of Joshua*, The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Volume II ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 609.

both a fulfillment and a challenge. God had brought them to a land where they would find plenty. Yet the manna that had given daily evidence of the Lord's care now ceased. From now on the people of Israel would have to walk by faith in the unseen, where before they had had visible evidence of God's presence."<sup>24</sup>

The adjustments that the children of Israel had to endure reminds me a lot of the transition and adjustments that my church has had to endure as they went through a change of leadership. I was able to witness how they functioned and did ministry under the leadership of my predecessor. He was male and much older than I, and he had a different style of leadership than I did. He was very stern, yet they respected him highly. On the other hand, I come across as not only a pastor, but also a friend. Not that either way is better than the other; I can see that sometimes the difference has produced a different level of accountability.

When the former pastor left the church, many of the older generation left also, and many of the others have since died. Many of those who remained were complacent and satisfied with the status quo. In fact, I can remember when I became Pastor, there was a former member who did not think that the church needed a pastor in place. They had gotten accustomed to the associate ministers preaching and teaching and were satisfied with the deacons and trustees handling membership needs and business matters. Therefore, in her opinion, there was no need for a new Pastor. On the other hand, there is a generation of believers who prefer new and different activities/programs. There is a generation who loves new programs and new adventures. They do not even care to hear about the days of old. Thus, it has been my challenge to bridge the gap between the two

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<sup>24</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, "Joshua 1-8: Victory Principles," *The Teacher's Commentary* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1989), 167.

generations. It has been my challenge to get the older generation to understand the needs of the new generation. By the same token, the new generation does not always understand why the desires of the older generation still matter. This new generation has so many other ministry and religious options that it becomes a challenge to hold their attention. For many of the new generation, they are not interested in Bible stories or what theologians have to say. They want to know what God is up to now and how is He going to help them. Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon wrote *Resident Aliens*. In this book the authors say, “When the modern pastor stands up to preach to a modern congregation, the pastor is the bridge that links the old world of scripture to the new world of modern people.”<sup>25</sup> I wholeheartedly agree. I am constantly trying to find ways to reveal modern revelation from the Scriptures so that the needs of all in attendance are met.

The authors of *Resident Aliens* describe today’s churches as colonies in the middle of an alien culture. They write, “We believe things have changed for the church residing in America and that faithfulness to Christ demands that we either change or else go the way of all compromised forms of the Christian faith.”<sup>26</sup> As the Pastor of Emmanuel, it is my challenge and continued goal to move the entire congregation toward change that will benefit our entire church and push us to a place of healthy growth.

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<sup>25</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), 20.

<sup>26</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 12.

### New Testament Reflection

This portion of the project was the foundation of its implementation. It was my goal to discover the elements that were instrumental in the growth of the Early Church and implement those elements through this project. I soon discovered through this ecclesiological study that it was not a simple application of two or three principles, but it would be a theological study on discovering the actual mission of God. Now, when one uses the term “mission” we find that it has various meanings. In his book, *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch states, “Traditionally, mission has been understood theologically as "propagation of the faith," "expansion of the reign of God," "conversion of the heathen" and "the founding of new churches".<sup>27</sup> But this understanding and its definition have been challenged over time. We see much of its definition outlined in the New Testament. Bosch argues that, “the New Testament has to be understood as a missionary document. Mission in the Early Church was more than merely a function of the church. It was a fundamental expression of the life of the church.”<sup>28</sup>

In my opinion the mission of the Church, the mission of God and His purpose are synonymous. It is my desire to see our church live out the actual purpose of the Church and in doing so, fulfilling God’s ultimate purpose and plan for us. We are a Missionary Baptist Church and there are some who believe it is our mission to reach out to and serve others. There are others who will not focus on the mission at all and just relegate it to a style of worship. Indeed, we are meant to worship together and reach out to others, but it goes further than that. The church is supposed to share their lives together, teaching

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<sup>27</sup> Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16.

God's Word, studying His movement so that we may live out His divine purpose. The Early Church began as a result of a few people being in one place and on one accord. As a result, the Spirit of God descended upon them, moved upon them and many were added to the Body of Christ, but the impact did not stop there. They continued to grow as a result of their common unity. Acts 2:46-47 records:

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all of the people. And day by day the Lord added to their numbers those who were being saved. (NRSV)

Luke records that the early church continued to grow as a result of the common unity they all shared. Demetrius K. Williams, who wrote an entry in *True to Our Native Land*, contends, "Luke's description of the early community may be a reflection of Deuteronomy 15:4-11, in which Israel is admonished to observe the law of God in such a manner that there 'be no one in need among you.' Luke operates with a prophecy-fulfillment scheme and, for him, the promise of Deuteronomy is being fulfilled in the early church."<sup>29</sup> Hence, there was a oneness of spirit created at the foundation of the church in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy which the members of the early church continued to build upon. It appears that the church continued to grow because of the care they continued to give to the new converts. Luke suggests in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that there is a need for follow-through care after the initial connection of a new convert or new member. The concept of "follow-through care" is a familiar theme throughout the book of Acts. Ajith Fernando states, "This is the first of at

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<sup>29</sup> Demetrius K. Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles," *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 221.

least eight summaries found in Acts that describe that life and say how it led to the growth of the word of God or of the church.”<sup>30</sup> The fact that it is mentioned as many times as it does is an indication of its importance and significance in the success and growth of the church. It is important to note that small groups were prevalent during this time. It is recorded, “House fellowships were common in the early church, later they developed into house churches. In Corinth there seem to have been times when the whole church met “probably ... in the large house of one of the wealthy Christians in the city.”<sup>31</sup> They met for the purpose of fellowship and to hear the Word of the Lord.

We still have the same need to keep us viable and growing. We have a need to connect with one another in fellowship, the breaking of bread, a consistency in the Word of God, and prayers for one another. It appears that the element of fellowship is very important and a necessary component needed for healthy church growth. This need cannot be fulfilled if we continue with this disconnect that I am seeing and sensing within our church today. We have a tendency to allow differences of opinion and preference to divide us and discourage our sense of unity. Therefore, we want to encourage fellowship. We want to assure that we stay connected as a Church “family.” Each congregant should be made to feel like he or she is more than a number, but a part of a family of like believers.

Steven Lawson wrote an article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. In his study, he says, “As these new believers grew in the truth, they grew in the Lord, and in turn they grew closer

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<sup>30</sup> Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 422.  
(Please note, the other areas that this theme is mentioned can be found in Acts 4:32-35; 5:12-16, 6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 19:20)

<sup>31</sup> Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary, 423.

to each other. Forged together on the anvil of God's truth, their relationships in Christ were shaped and molded through their commonly held commitment to the teaching of the apostles.”<sup>32</sup> Lawson says that the Word being taught by the Apostles caused the believers to grow closer together and hence their fellowships became more meaningful and impacting.

Fernando points out that according to v. 46, their means of fellowship included a meal. He asserted, “the breaking of bread included both the Lord’s Supper and fellowship meals. That there were such meals in the first church is confirmed by the statements, “they ... ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”<sup>33</sup> However, Robert W. Wall differs in his explanation and states, “The reference to the joyful practice of ‘breaking bread at home’ (κλωντές ... κατ’ οίκον ἄρτον), the perfect evidence of life in the Spirit, should not be interpreted as a Christian sacrament (i.e., the Lord’s supper) or some other distinctly Christian discipline.”<sup>34</sup>

Hence, there is a clear difference in interpretation of whether their meals together referenced the Lord’s Supper. The two commentators agree, however, on the importance of community coming into fellowship together, and those fellowships usually revolved around meals. We see this same practice of fellowship in many of our churches today. Many gatherings would not be complete without sharing a meal. There are Sunday evening fellowship dinners, Wednesday night fellowship suppers, Women’s Ministry

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<sup>32</sup> Steven J. Lawson, “The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (April-June 2001), 213.

<sup>33</sup> Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary, 423.

<sup>34</sup> Robert W. Wall, “Acts,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Volume X (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 72.



Brunch, Men's Ministry Breakfast, and the list goes on. Those gatherings are an expression of true and meaningful fellowship. The author says that the believers had sincere hearts when they gathered together. Fernando notes, "The word translated 'sincere' can mean single-minded devotion, the absence of pretense or simplicity and generosity. While it may be difficult to decide on the exact meaning here, we can confidently say that it signifies an openhearted attitude, where there is no pretense and performance in the way the believers behaved."<sup>35</sup> That is our desire when we come together to fellowship. There should be no pretense. It is my desire to provide a pure atmosphere of fellowship for our young adults that they may embrace and enjoy the blessing of Christian fellowship. It is my prayer that they will be able to understand and appreciate its importance and potential impact it can have upon their connection to the church. According to Fernando, "True fellowship focuses on God and helps people to remember the good things he has done, which, in turn, causes praise. Such fresh and powerful community life would win the admiration of people outside the church."<sup>36</sup> True fellowship has the propensity to draw the attention of the unchurched and has the potential to reconnect the disconnected back to the church.

Steven Lawson further states in his article that the Apostles' teaching was the primary driving force behind the growth of the early church. Even though the component of fellowship was vital, he states that the teaching of the Word is what caused many to believe, convert, and ultimately become a part of the Body of Christ. Lawson suggests that biblical teaching will do the same for our churches today. Hence, it is clear that all of

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<sup>35</sup> Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary, 423.

<sup>36</sup> Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary, 423.

the components, consistent biblical teaching, prayer, and fellowship are vital to the church that desires to succeed and live.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, I do understand that if growth begins to take place and those from the outside commit or recommit themselves to the work of the ministry, those presently working will have to make room for them, and that is where the challenge lies. Many of the younger members feel that the older members are territorial and will not make room for them. On the other hand, the older members feel that the younger members lack initiative and concern for ministry. Hence, they would rather continue doing the work than allow it to fail because of lack of participation from the younger generation. I feel that it is my job to show them that there is a need for both generations to work together for our church to continue to grow and function properly. Conversely, I found that sometimes when one comes to larger ministries, they feel that there is already enough doing the work, and he or she is not needed. But, little do they know, “*the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few*” as recorded in Matthew 9:37 (NKJV). Thus, we made the attempt to challenge each member to either commit or recommit him or herself to the work. Paul stated in Romans 12:4-5:

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. (NRSV)

Everyone and every gift are needed so that this Body of Christ may function as it was designed to function. Paul lets us know that we are all part of a whole and our common ground is Jesus Christ. Even though we are individuals and there are diversities of gifts, we should still be able to function as a whole since our gifts are derived from the

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<sup>37</sup> Lawson, “The Priority of Biblical Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158, 213-214.

same source. It does not matter the size of a church, those who have joined in covenant fellowship with that church have a role to play.

In this text, the Apostle Paul uses the term “body” to indicate a whole unit. It seems that Paul was intentional in using this term for those he knew would be reading this letter. James D. G. Dunn says:

Using this term would give his readers a sense of coherence and identity which could sustain them over against the larger body politic in which they lived and worked, without that depending on a sense of national or racial solidarity. At the same time a too narrow concept of civic politics: they are one body in Christ; only “in Christ” do they function as a body; the “in Christ” provides a counter-model of social identity no longer reducible to merely ethnic or cultural categories.<sup>38</sup>

So, Paul is very deliberate in his usage of the word, giving his Christian readers a sense of identity that was indicative that although they were different, they were still mutually interdependent of each other. Brendan Byrne states, “The image serves to illustrate the diversity of gifts operative within the overall oneness of a community. Each human person lives within a body that is recognizably a unit. Yet this one body has many members or limbs (*mele*), each one exercising a different function (*praxin*) for the common good.”<sup>39</sup>

Paul causes us to look closely at those brothers and sisters who labor among us as well as the contributions they make toward ministry. In this particular text, Lawrence O. Richards suggests that there is a natural tendency to compare or measure one’s abilities against another, but instead of competing and/or thinking of oneself better than the next person, we are to consider ourselves as one body. Senior Editor, Lawrence Richards,

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<sup>38</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Romans 9-16,” *The Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 733.

<sup>39</sup> Brendan Byrne, S.J., *Romans*, Sacra Pagina, Volume 6 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 371.

points out that the individualistic or competitive mindset should not be the case when it comes to participation within the church. He says:

God views us as members of a body. In the body relationship we do not compete, we cooperate. “In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (v. 5). Each of us has a different function, but our differences do not make anyone better or worse than another. The reason is that, whatever our gift (function), each of us contributes. Each of us is necessary.<sup>40</sup>

John Maxwell teaches in the *Maxwell Leadership Bible*, “every resource God provides should be in use and every believer is a steward of the abilities he or she has been given.”<sup>41</sup> It is the responsibility of each church leader to encourage each member to utilize and maximize his or her God-given gifts. All of our gifts are needed, and all can be used for the greater good of the church. It is my desire to see all of the gifts within Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church working together so that we may function at our full capacity and potential. In order for that to happen, we need everyone doing his or her part so that this “body” can function as it was designed. Therefore, it has been my task to revive the participation and commitment of members within our congregation by encouraging them to gain an understanding of their spiritual gifts and discover how they fit within our church and congregation.

Paul lists seven spiritual gifts that are used by members within the body of Christ. This particular list of gifts is vital for the survival of any church, but especially one in decline or one that has reached a plateau. Maxwell says:

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<sup>40</sup> Richards, “Romans 12-16: A Righteous, Loving Church,” *The Teacher’s Commentary*, 834.

<sup>41</sup> John C. Maxwell, “Leaders Are Brokers of Gifts,” *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 1408. (Please note that while this is not considered a scholarly commentary, I am referencing it because of the relevance of Maxwell’s comments as a practitioner rather than scholar for thinking theologically about congregational leadership.)

The list of gifts in Romans 12 is not exhaustive. Those gifts are commonly called “motivational gifts, which means they are central to our lives, the hub of the wheel around which our particular set of gifts revolve. Paul’s lists includes:

- 1) Gift of Prophecy: to challenge others by declaring God’s truth and calling for action.
- 2) Gift of Service or Ministry: to serve others and meet their needs.
- 3) Gift of Teaching: to explain truth so that others can understand and apply it.
- 4) Gift of Exhortation: to encourage, strengthen and inspire others to be their best.
- 5) Gift of Giving: to generously share what God has given.
- 6) Gift of Leadership: to govern and oversee others so that the group moves forward.
- 7) Gift of Mercy: to empathize with cheer and show compassion to those who hurt.<sup>42</sup>

When I look at this list, I realize that much of the responsibility lies with me to encourage, exhort, teach, lead, and even show mercy as we continue with this project of revitalization. By the same token, I believe that an equal amount of the responsibility will rest with the congregation to do the same one with another. It will take everyone using his or her gift in order for the church to operate at optimum level.

In addition, and most importantly, the congregants have to be present and willing to give of themselves and participate. It seems that we are living in a time when church attendance is inconsistent. In previous years, there was no question whether or not one would be attending and participating in the work of the ministry. In recent years, we have discovered that there are so many other options that attending and/or participating in church are not at the top of that list of options. There are those who will opt to stay home and watch ministry programs on television or on his or her computer. There are others who will use their weekend to travel or vacation and while away, they are able to tune in to a ministry that is streaming their services live on the Internet. These are the people

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<sup>42</sup> Maxwell, “Leaders Are Brokers of Gifts,” *Maxwell Leadership Bible*, 1408.

who are not concerned about what they can offer the ministry; they are only concerned with getting the Word that they need for their own personal growth.

The author of Hebrews suggests that this is not the attitude that one should have toward ministry participation. He states in Hebrews 10:24-25:

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NRSV)

During this time of the text, the people had gotten discouraged, and they were so discouraged that they were getting slack in their fellowship during a time when they really needed it. During this time, Christians really depended upon each other for encouragement in the faith, but because they were not assembling together anymore, there was a lack of encouragement within this Body of Christ. It appears that some in the community were abandoning their gathering together for worship for what they believed to be good reasons. George Guthrie states in the *NIV Application Commentary*:

They may have been discouraged from Christian gatherings by the threat of persecution, by the delay of the Parousia, by continued connections with the Jewish synagogue, or by mere apathy. Whatever the reason, the author sees their discontinuance of common fellowship and worship as fatal for perseverance in the faith. Encouragement cannot take place in isolation. Thus, what they must do is gather for mutual encouragement. Christians are to display a deep care and concern for one another, expressed not only through positive support and reassurance but also through reproof and warning. Both consolation and encouragement to spiritual alertness are to be given in light of the great “Day” of Christ’s coming. Believers must remind one another that we live from day to day in anticipation of that Day at the end of the age.<sup>43</sup>

According to this commentator, it was the element of discouragement that kept the people away from the Temple during a time when they needed it the most. We see the same thing happening during this dispensation. Even more, I see the same thing

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<sup>43</sup> George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews, The NIV Application Commentary*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 345-346.

happening in my church. Members become discouraged because they do not feel a part of the ministry. They become discouraged when they feel that they are not getting what they desire in regards to social fellowships. They become discouraged when they feel that their gifts are not appreciated, accepted, or respected. They simply become discouraged because of the lack of encouragement from others and they slowly drift away.

William Lane suggests that during this time there is no definite reason given for the lack of participation in the house church meetings, which has caused a variety of speculations. Some commentators believe that, because this was during a time of persecution, many of the Christians were afraid of being recognized and persecuted as Christians. Some believe that it was simply a preoccupation of business affairs that caused them to be neglectful. Hence, Lane states:

Whatever the motivation, the writer regarded the desertion of the communal meetings as serious. It threatened the corporate life of the congregation and almost certainly was a prelude to apostasy on the part of those who were separating themselves from the assembly. The entire community must assume responsibility to watch that no one grows weary or becomes apostate. This is possible only when Christians continue to exercise care for one another personally.<sup>44</sup>

Alan C. Mitchell goes further to suggest, “Any community that has endured the suffering this one has should not squander its inheritance by eroding the support they have offered to one another in the past.”<sup>45</sup> They should take advantage of every opportunity to gather together, not just at difficult times of persecution, but at all times as they await the Day approaching. The same rings true in the church today. We have a

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<sup>44</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary: Volume 47b (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 290.

<sup>45</sup> Alan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Sacra Pagina: Volume 13 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989), 215.

tendency to band together during difficult times, but the need for unity is at all times. The author suggests that each member shares responsibility for the consistency of the cohesiveness within the congregation.

Fred B. Craddock points out that the word “consider” is used to drive home the responsibility of the believer. V. 24 says, “let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.” Craddock points out:

This is now the second time the writer has called on his readers to “consider,” to think mutually about a matter” (3:1). What is to be considered are ways to “provoke” or “irritate” one another. The word *παροξυσμός* (*paroxysmos*) can also be translated “pester.” Provocation can have a negative sense, but the word also had a positive use in the sense of disturbing the apathetic or fearful person into activity. Such is its present use: to produce love and good works. The expression is strong but necessary for a community earlier characterized as inattentive, neglectful, and drifting.<sup>46</sup>

Conversely, Guthrie has a concern in regards to the writer’s statement, “not give up meeting together (10:24).” He suggests that this exhortation has been used manipulatively in many churches in an effort to provoke members to support every program of the church every day of the week. But Guthrie further states, “The principle behind this part of the author’s challenge, however has to do with consistent involvement in the life of the church rather than frenetic activity in all of the programs of the church. We as Christian leaders must not burden people with a guilt trip if they are not at the church five nights a week.”<sup>47</sup>

I must say that this statement alone was very helpful to me. Guthrie states that we must be more concerned about their spiritual connection and whether their connection to

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<sup>46</sup> Fred B. Craddock, “Hebrews,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Volume XII (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 121.

<sup>47</sup> Guthrie, “Hebrews 10:19-35,” *Hebrews*, The NIV Application Commentary, 348.



the body is a healthy one. We should be more concerned about whether they are getting the Word that they need in order to grow. Are they being taught about the gifts of the Spirit and given an opportunity to use those gifts? Guthrie suggests that we should be more concerned about assuring that our congregants obtain the principles of healthy Christian living.

Thus, it has been my goal to impact our congregation in a fresh and innovative way. I have been on a mission to rebuild the walls of ministry support and participation within Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church and create a healthy atmosphere in which congregants are encouraged and want to take part in the ministry. The walls of ministry support are a lot of where our strength lies. The participation is what I believe will keep the ministry alive and vibrant. Hence, it now becomes my objective to continue to reinforce the need for continued support to the ministry and, more importantly the support and encouragement for one another.

In the past, many have said that the church would not make it under female leadership. Many have said that there are a number of young people joining the church, but those are not the type of people who will give in the offering, and the church will not be able to survive. So it has been and will continue to be my task to be a positive influence and encouragement to the members of the church. Prayerfully my encouragement will be contagious, and others will become an encouragement to those in with whom they will come in contact with as well.

### Historical Reflection

In approaching this topic of conversation regarding the decline in church participation, to my surprise (or maybe not), I found that the more things change, the more things stay the same. During my research, I found that the decline in church participation is not a recent fad or occurrence. History shows that this is a problem that dates back to the 1800's. In 1991, G. Alexander Ross wrote an article about the decline of church participation. He observed that many of the younger generation who once attended mainline churches and grew up in mainline denominations were no longer interested in the churches that they grew up in, and it is probable that they have given up on church altogether. Ross states, "Defection, or at least a maddening casualness among young adults about formal church attachment, has been a major concern among church leaders over the centuries, one that has always been voiced with special anguish when particular churches have experienced relative decline or dislocation."<sup>48</sup>

Hence, he writes this article about the concerns of church leaders and the decline they were experiencing in the mainline churches of their time. He records:

During the early nineteenth century in England and the 1850's in America, one of the major initiatives in modern Christianity, the Christian Association movement, arose out of the need to lure the youth back to formal religion. By the late nineteenth century in this country, both rural and city pastors worried vocally about the aging of their congregations—not only about the failure of the young to seek membership, but about their failure to attend services. Country folk were dismayed because the young people had migrated to the wicked cities, while urban adults fretted when the migrants then found other uses for their Sunday mornings.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> William R. Hutchison, "The Decline of Mainline Religion in American Culture," *Religion and American Culture*, 1 no 2 Sum (1991): 133.

<sup>49</sup> Hutchison, *Religion and American Culture*, 134.

This was much like our concerns of church participation today. We see our millennial generation members following this same cycle. They have so many other options and find other things to do on Sunday morning. They now settle for worship via the television or live streaming via the Internet while vacationing. The older generations, as well as many church leaders, question whether the church can survive if there is not a turn around and a change of heart and mind.

In times past, many believed that during times of crisis that churches would fill because of the disparaging times. Quite the contrary, Ross reports:

In the 1930's, after the onset of the better-known Depression, dismay about the decline of mainline religion became tinged with special disappointment. Though hard times were supposed always to produce religious revival that seemed not to be happening. At the end of the decade, *The Missionary Review of the World* decried the continuing crisis in the churches—‘their income from gifts has decreased, their membership has dwindled’—and managed a brighter outlook only by projecting, a church that has served chiefly aged saints, may well begin to reach out to meet the growing needs of youth.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, years later the same problems still exist. Church participation is still on the decline. It seems that trouble will draw people to the church, but the trouble does not prove troublesome enough to keep them in the church. Bob Altemeyer found, “after September 11, 2001, the United States Gallup Poll (Gallup & Newport, 2001) found that reported church attendance jumped from 41% to 47% right after the attack, but by early November, attendance had returned to its pre-9/11 levels.”<sup>51</sup>

After a few weeks of non-violent activity, it is life as usual. Church attendance is back to low numbers and participation virtually none existent. We see this behavior

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<sup>50</sup> Hutchison, *Religion and American Culture*, 134.

<sup>51</sup> Bob Altemeyer, “The Decline of Organized Religion in Western Civilization,” *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, Volume 14, Issue 2 (2004): 88.

today. With the rash numbers of shootings that have occurred around the country, we see a rise in individuals wanting to pray and have prayer vigils, but not many are drawn to the church for any length of time. The church does not appear to be of any real significance to this generation of believers. Behavior of this nature seems to follow those who have virtually abandoned their religion. They have lived most of their adult lives away from the church with no real desire to return. Because the parents walked away from the faith, their children have been raised without any religious training. Hence, the decline of organized religion seems to be inevitable and will more than likely continue.

Altemeyer conducted a study in 2002 with those parents who were no longer attending church regularly. He conducted this study with 756 parents and, of that 756, most of them had not attended church regularly for most of their adult lives. When asked if they would become active in the future, the findings were as follows:

Only 21% thought they probably, or definitely would return. Most (54%) thought it unlikely they would ever do so. I asked, "What would be the biggest thing that could happen, or the biggest thing your home religion could do, that would make you more active in it?" The most common answer was some form of, "There is nothing that would bring me back." However, others said they thought a personal crisis, or severe illness-death in their family, or just old age would bring them back. Less theologically, some said more flexible hours for services, or having a church closer to where they lived, or a different job would bring them out.<sup>52</sup>

Altemeyer encountered some of the same answers that we are still encountering today. Those who prefer not to participate in organized religion choose not to because it is too boring, or there are no age appropriate activities, or the teachings do not seem to be relevant of the times, or simply do not make sense. I have even encountered persons who will ask, what is the use? Religion or going to church does not seem to change anything. Many will even go as far as to say that they are spiritual, but they are not religious. They

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<sup>52</sup>Altemeyer, *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 85.

believe in a higher power, but they do not care for church. Many found themselves working hard to meet their needs and taking advantage of the weekend to rest from and enjoy the fruit of their labor. Subsequently, church becomes an option and no longer a priority.

For years, various writers and researchers have reported that the pulse of North American churches has weakened. Statistics not only show that participation is on the decline, but membership numbers are declining as well. Peter Wagner states in his book, *Leading Your Church to Growth*, “In the ten-year period from 1965 to 1975 the Episcopal church lost 17 percent of its membership or 575,000 persons. The United Presbyterians lost 12 percent or 375,000 members. The United Methodists lost 10 percent or 1,100,000 members, and so on.”<sup>53</sup>

Studies show that, in the recent years, evangelical churches have begun to show more and more of a decline. In his book *Vision America*, Aubrey Malphurs claims, “much of the perceived church growth in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s was actually due primarily to the redistribution of believers, not genuine church growth. It appears that the problems of the church in the 1980s carry over into the 1990s. The church as a whole continues to experience decline and the unchurched increase.”<sup>54</sup>

There are some that may not agree with that assessment because their membership rosters say otherwise. More than likely these churches show growth due to transfer growth where members are being transferred from one church to another. This is not

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<sup>53</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), 31-32.

<sup>54</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Vision America: A Strategy for Reaching a Nation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 62.

considered healthy growth because it does not enlarge the Kingdom of God. This idea of “redistribution” seems to be a problem across the board. Most churches are not seeing new converts, they are seeing members who have come from another church for various reasons. And this “swap-meet” is not considered healthy church growth. This redistribution problem is not a denomination issue. It is simply a church issue that tends to add to the problem of church decline.

### **Theological Reflection**

It is our job to find ways in which we can connect with this younger generation. It is our job to show them the love of God and the part they play in helping to build His Kingdom. We have to be willing to let go of our personal preferences and be open to an alternative way of thinking and serving. If that means becoming a bit more tech savvy, integrating technical devices and social media into our services, then that is what we will need to do. In his article on the World Council of Churches, John St. Helier Gibaut uses an analogy that speaks to this very idea. He states:

An image or metaphor that I find helpful in introducing ecclesiology and why it is so vital for the ecumenical movement is drawn from the world of computers and smart phones. Most of us are very interested in programs, applications, and "apps." Most of us are probably not so at ease in the world of operating systems. Yet, we know that if our computers or smart phones are using incompatible operating systems, then we cannot communicate with each other, work with one another, or even recognize each other. That is what ecclesiology is, the operating systems of Christian communities, the ecumenical question is whether we have compatible ecclesiastical operating systems and can recognize "church" in the other and can receive from one another and, indeed, receive one another as Christ has received us.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> John St. Helier Gibaut, “The Church: Towards a Common Vision,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (January 2015): 222.

Although Gilbert is speaking of the universal church, this thought is equivalent to my thoughts about our millennial and mature generations and their ability to work together as one operating system. If our church is to survive, we must find a way. The more seasoned, traditional generations must find a means to communicate and connect with the newer generations. The Apostle Paul describes in his letter to the Church of Corinth that he became like them in order to win them. Paul stated in I Corinthians 9:19-23:

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings. (NRSV)

Paul lets the reader know that he is free to do anything and live anyway that he wanted. But, Paul made the choice to devote his life to winning others to Christ. He did not necessarily take on their way of living, but he made the effort to look at life from their perspective. Through this text, Paul encourages us to connect with this new generation in such a way that we gain access to their world and make the attempt to see ministry from their perspective. In doing so, we will have a greater chance of winning over this millennial generation. It does not do us any good to sit back and judge millennials because of their differences or criticize them for their lack of interest. We must learn to embrace their difference and give them opportunities to use those differences for the greater good of the ministry.

When one reads the account of Nehemiah and how he led the people to victory in completing the building project, we find that the attitude of the people eventually changed. Prior to that change of heart, however, they were scattered and in desperate

need of leadership and organization. Nehemiah was grieved at the state of the city of Jerusalem, and he therefore made himself available to lead the people in rebuilding the walls and thereby fortifying the city. Nehemiah saw a need, but he knew that he could not complete the job alone. He knew the success of the project would be dependent upon everyone working together collectively to get the job done.

In this case, I like to compare myself to Nehemiah because, just like he, I have the best interest of the people and the overall church at heart. I want to see them strengthened and secured in such a way that will be long lasting for years to come. I have seen the need and made the attempt to address the need, but I understand that I cannot do this alone. This project was designed to join forces with a group of young adults who could possibly work on that wall alongside me. It has been my prayer that the people would have a mind to work as in the days of Nehemiah. Nehemiah 4:6 records, “So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work.” (NRSV) When I began this project, I believe that the people had a mind to work. However, through the process of time it appears that minds changed.

This is a work in progress, and I was not foolish enough to believe that the wall was going to be built in four-weeks. I believe that it is going to take the people joining together with determined hearts and minds on a consistent basis to get this job done. There are many that do not see a problem because a portion of the wall is standing. However, in my opinion, the wall is still not at its full potential, and it will be my on-going challenge to get the young adults of my congregation to understand that the work has begun, but the work is not complete. There is still some building and rebuilding that needs to take place. There are some areas that have been damaged over the years, and



there is some restoring that needs to occur and it is not going to happen overnight. I have noticed that there are those who have been discouraged by the negativity of others and have taken on a negative attitude. The same thing happened during Nehemiah's time.

After half of the wall was built, the people became discouraged because of the amount of work as well as the opposition and criticism from their enemies. Ralph W. Klein suggests that there was an internal problem going on at the same time that affected a certain sect of people. He points out:

There was a threat that "came from those Jews who lived near the enemies (v. 12). Although the NRSV and the NIV emend the text of v. 12 in different ways, plausible sense can be gained from the Masoretic Text: "When the Jews who lived near them came to us, they said to us ten times from all their places, 'Won't you return to us?'" That is, the people living near the border of Judah feared that enemy attack would hit them first and so begged their colleagues to desert the wall-building project and come home. "Ten times" is a conventional way of saying "time after time."<sup>56</sup>

Jacob M. Myers goes further to say, "Those who kept Nehemiah and his workmen informed of the plans and movements of their enemies rendered both service and disservice. They "told us ten times" shows that they often relayed information to the Jews at Jerusalem. Perhaps that was just what Sanballat wanted them to do – it was a kind of psychological warfare intended to keep them off balance and so to delay progress as much as possible."<sup>57</sup> So not only were they being threatened physically, but they were threatened mentally as well. And the mental threat may have been the worst threat of all. They had to consistently listen to the negative things their enemies said. Nehemiah records, "But Judah said, "the strength of the burden bearers is failing, and there is too

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<sup>56</sup> Ralph W. Klein, "The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume III (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 774.

<sup>57</sup> Jacob M. Myers, "Ezra-Nehemiah," *The Anchor Bible: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), 126.

much rubbish so that we are unable to work on the wall. And our enemies said, “They will not know or see anything before we come upon them and kill them and stop the work” (4:10-11). But then Nehemiah speaks up and encourages Judah and tells them, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your kin, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes” (v. 14). Nehemiah takes the stance of a real leader and dispels the negativity and provokes the people to continue the work by reminding them of what they were fighting for and who was on their side. They were to remember that God was with them, and they were to continue to fight for their families.

In this ministry setting, it is not the negative reports that have been detrimental to us; it has been the constant talk of “the grass being greener on the other side.” A number of our young adults contend with other young adults reminding them that there is something more to be offered outside of Emmanuel. Thus, as the pastor and leader of Emmanuel, I simply remind them of the role they play within this body of Christ. I have learned that I cannot coax and prod, but I remind them of their purpose. I reiterate that their gifts are needed so that this body may function as it was designed to function according to the Word of God.

As in the days of Nehemiah, the tenth chapter of Nehemiah shows how they gathered together to hear the reading of the Scriptures. Ezra the scribe read and interpreted the Book of Law of Moses, and the people wept as they gained understanding. They were so moved by what they heard, and their hearts were so uplifted due to their accomplishment of rebuilding the wall, that they willingly recommitted themselves to caring for the things of God. Lawson explains:

The Jews recovered their sense of identity as God's people. And they went on to express fresh commitment by a written covenant, which the leaders of the people signed. This covenant reflected the specific areas in which the people had drifted from God—and expressed their intention to observe the commands of the Lord that they had previously ignored.<sup>58</sup>

The people of Judah declared, “Because of all this we make a firm agreement in writing, and on that sealed document are inscribed the names of our officials, our Levites, and our priests” (9:38).

It seems that not only did the minds of the people change, but their hearts changed as well. They had repentant hearts and to further show their intent, they signed a formal agreement. Ralph W. Klein states:

The community entered into a covenant to walk in God's law and to do all his commandments. A number of the areas identified as in need of correction required Nehemiah's direct actions later in the book: mixed marriages, the Sabbath, the wood offering, first fruits, Levitical tithes, and proper care of the Temple. It seems that after Nehemiah's efforts to reform, the community as a whole resolved to put these abuses to an end permanently.<sup>59</sup>

Hence, the need was about more than the wall. The rebuilding of the wall was representative of the reform that was needed across the board. And fortunately, Nehemiah was the leader that they needed to reignite the zeal of the people and lead them to total victory and recommitment.

I believe it is every pastor's desire to be able to ignite that type of energy and commitment within their church. It would be heavenly to see hearts and minds change for the greater good of the ministry. Until that happens, I take my lead from Nehemiah and lead by example. It is my responsibility to pray and seek the Lord for the strategy needed

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<sup>58</sup> Richards, “Nehemiah: Rebuilding,” *The Teacher's Commentary*, 308.

<sup>59</sup> Ralph W. Klein, “Nehemiah,” *Harper Collins Bible Commentary* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 350.

to promote healthy church growth. The Early Church grew because they had all things in common. They did not grow because they had church transfers, but the church grew because they shared the love of Jesus and encouraged unity among the body of believers. That was the goal during that period time and that goal remains the same for this dispensation of time. Gibaut stated:

Since the goal of the ecumenical movement is to recover the visible unity of Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, there needs to be a space to discuss the issues that divided Christians and keep us apart, that is what Faith and Order has provided for over eighty years: a forum to dialogue about divisive issues of the "faith" and the "ordering" of the churches... The methodology is informed, open, and respectful dialogue on the divisive theological issues in order either to seek their resolution or to limit their capacity for being church-dividing.<sup>60</sup>

In an effort to maintain, restore, revitalize unity within my church, I have sought to create an atmosphere for healthy conversation so that we may discover those issues that promote division and causes separation to take place. I am a firm believer that if unity is to be obtained and maintained, authentic conversations must be a priority. The lines of communication must remain open so that we may connect in fellowship and develop relationships that mirror the heart of God. Concerning the aspect of fellowship, Gibaut wrote, "The church is the sign and servant of the triune God's design of *koinonia* for the whole of creation. As such, *koinonia* impels the churches to strive for healing and reconciliation, justice and peace, and the integrity of creation, together with all people of good will."<sup>61</sup> This idea of peace, reconciliation, healing, and fellowship has been at the foundation of this project and I believe are some of the elements needed for healthy church growth.

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<sup>60</sup> Gibaut, "The Church: Towards a Common Vision," 218-219.

<sup>61</sup> Gibaut, "The Church: Towards a Common Vision," 228.

It is my desire to see our church grow and maintain healthy growth by continuing to share the love of Jesus with those that come through our doors and with those in our community. I have always heard that people do not care until they know how much you care. So it will be my duty to encourage our congregation to be authentic and share the love of Jesus Christ with those they come in contact with. I will endeavor to encourage the millennials to stay focused on our/their purpose and continue the work that has been set before us. And most importantly, it will be needful to keep the Word of the Lord before the entire congregation, making sure they understand what God's Word must say concerning our lives and ministry. In Thomas Rausch's article, "Toward a Common Vision of the Church: Will it Fly?" he concluded and I concur that, "What the churches most need to do is to begin taking the steps toward re-establishing bonds of communion in life, witness, and worship that would point to and encourage a common ecclesial life. That might involve dialogue, working together and learning from one another, and sharing educational resources."<sup>62</sup> These sentiments describe what this project has endeavored to accomplish.

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas P. Rausch, "Toward a Common Vision of the Church: Will it Fly?," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (January 2015): 284.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CRITICAL EVALUATIONS**

#### **Final Evaluation**

This project has required the assistance of the members of the congregation at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church on two major levels. The two groups featured in this project are members of our millennial generation and our Wednesday night Bible study group, whom I refer to as our mature members. At various times throughout the project, the two groups were given evaluations/surveys to complete for the purpose of comparing the opinion of the millennial generation against the opinion of the mature generation.

One major problem realized throughout the process of the project was the inconsistency in committed participants. I began the process with twenty-seven millennials committing to the four-week process. Unfortunately, by the end of the project we had a total of fifteen committed participants representing the millennial generation. Recounting my initial meeting with the group of millennial volunteers, fifteen volunteers is the maximum number of my original request of participants.

I have many regrets concerning that particular part of the process. I regret that I did not stick with my original plan of the smaller committed group. I regret that I was not a bit more definitive in identifying my core group. I was adamant about not having their names, but I should have assigned them numbers for the purpose of evaluating them specifically throughout this process. Even though I am certain that I have evaluations for a consistent fifteen participants, there is no absolute proof. If there were anything I could change about this entire process, I would have definitely changed the manner in which I

enforced the agreement for commitment. Although my rationale for doing otherwise is very genuine, the decision to include all who desired to participate has hindered the capability of obtaining absolute data.

The movement of this project was based upon four different ministry components. Those components were Bible studies, series of sermons, fellowship outing, and an outreach opportunity. Throughout the course of the project surveys were given to each participant and evaluations were made based upon the opinions of those attending the various events. This chapter includes the results of all evaluations obtained for each component of this ministry project.

### **Pre-Project Evaluation**

Our millennial and mature participants were given a pre-project survey so that I could gain an understanding of their thoughts on some of operations of the church and rights as a member.<sup>63</sup> The mature members were given the same survey for comparison. Comparison graphs can be found in the appendix to give a visual of what those results look like.<sup>64</sup> Those questions and responses were as follows:

1. When asked the question, as a millennial how important is it to be an official member of the church? 59% said it is very important; only 1% said it is not important; 40% were in between.

Of the mature members, 68% said that it was very important; 21% agreed with options 8 and 9; 5% said that it was not important.

2. When asked, as a millennial is it important to be an active participant in church ministry? 19% said it was very important; 1% said it was not important; the other 80% met in between.

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<sup>63</sup> Appendix C – Pre Project Survey

<sup>64</sup> Appendix Q – Pre Project Results with Comparison Graphs

Of the mature members, 61% said that it was very important; in addition 31% agreed with answers 8 and 9; the lowest response was 6.

3. As a millennial, how important is it to attend Sunday services regularly? 63% said it is very important. There was not a person who said it was not important, but one person each answered 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Of the mature members there were only two choices. 76% said very important and the remaining 24% answered with a 9 and I conclude that attending Sunday service is important to them as well.

4. When asked, as a millennial, what is your overall opinion of our worship service? 41% said excellent; then one person each answered 3, 4, and 5.

Additional comments on that question were: Praise and Worship is fine, the word is always on point, but many of us can do without all of the other stuff.

Of the mature, 26% says that it is excellent; the next 60% answers favorably with an 8 or 9. The lowest score was a 5.

5. When asked, how likely are you to invite someone to worship, 59% of the millennials said very likely; 15% answered with an 8 or 9. The lowest score was a 2 from two persons.

Of the mature members, 47% said they are very likely to invite someone; another 32% answered with an 8 or 9. There was one person to respond with the answer, not at all.

6. As a millennial, do you agree that the Word received on Sundays is relevant to your personal needs? 81% said they strongly agree; one person answered with 2 and another gave it a 3. So there were two people out of the 27 that did not really agree.

Of the mature members, 68% said that they strongly agreed. The remaining 32% responded favorably with a 7 being the lowest response.

7. How important is it for millennials to support the ministry financially? 66% said it was very important. One answered with 2 and the other answer with a 3; the other 26% are in between.

Of the mature members, 84% said it is very important. The remaining 16% answered favorably with a 7 being the lowest score.

8. To the millennial, how important is it to have an understanding of the business matters of the church? 44% said it is very important; 11% said it is not important at all.



Of the mature members, 55% said it is very important. The remaining 45% answered favorably with the lowest score being 7.

9. How important is it for the millennial to have a voice concerning the business matters of the church? 18% said very important; 15% said is it not important at all; 19% answered 9 on the scale.

Of the mature members, 45% said it is very important; 34% answered favorably with an 8 or 9; of the remaining 21%, 4 persons answered 6, which was the lowest response.

### **Results Of Pre Project Survey**

The responses from these surveys and their comparisons were relatively as I expected. The questions regarding the traditional involvement and participation in the institution of church were more highly scored by the mature members. The questions regarding the worship experience at the church were more highly scored by the millennial members. These numbers are consistent with the stereotypical millennial and mature congregant. Most of our millennials love the Word of God, but could care less about the business matters of the church. Conversely, the mature members of our church pride themselves on having a handle on the business matters of our church. Some of them are founders of the church, and they have always had to be concerned about the business of ministry. Many of the millennials are oblivious to this thought process. Many of them are simply satisfied with the Word and the worship.

### **Bible Study #1 Evaluation**

The first Bible study for the millennials focused on the growth and development of the early church. Much of what was accomplished in the early church was possible because of the foundation of prayer, the teaching of the Word, and fellowship with fellow

believers. Following the class, I distributed evaluations to each participant.<sup>65</sup> Those survey questions and answers were as follows:

1. The question was asked, how important is salvation to the millennial? 44% said very important; 4% said not important at all.

Additional comment: Many feel that because they have a job and seemingly living comfortably, there is no need for God and therefore no need for salvation. Many will say that they are “spiritual” and believe that there is a higher power. But as for as salvation is concerned, they do not see the need.

2. On the question, how important is fellowship to the millennial? 52% said it is very important and 4% says not important at all.
3. How important is corporate prayer to the millennial? 33% said it is very important and 11% said it was not important.
4. How important is personal prayer to the millennial? 52% said it is very important and 4% said it was not important to them. There was no one that gave a 1, but one person answered 2 and one person answered 3.
5. Even though we are all Christians whose common denominator is Jesus Christ, yet there still seems to be a lot of division. Agree or disagree? 70% agreed and the lowest number chosen was 7. The majority agreed that there is division, but 30 % did not see it as strongly as the other 70%.
6. Is there a decline in respect/reverence for spiritual authority? 55% strongly agreed, with only one person strongly disagreeing. Everyone else’s answers ranged from 4 to 9.
7. The statement was made that most millennials participate in ministry out of some sort of obligation. Agree or Disagree? 37% strongly agreed, while 15% answered with an 8 and the other 48% was a 6 and above in agreement.
8. When asked directly if they participate in ministry out of obligation, 11% said they strongly agreed; 37% strongly disagreed. The other 52% answers ranged from 3 to 8.
9. There are certain elements that were at the foundation of the early church. As a millennial are you interested in establishing those foundational elements in this church? 45% is very interested and 11% are not interested at all. The lowest answer give was a 3 from three persons.

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<sup>65</sup> Appendix D – Bible Study #1 Questionnaire

Following that first class, I followed up with a core group of six millennials to ask their opinion of our first session and how well it went. It was their consensus that everything went well. There seems to be a new energy and everyone seems to be excited about the possibilities. But they questioned if this class was only going to last for the duration of this project. They believe that other millennials are watching to see what I am going to do with this class going forward and curious about how much energy I will put toward its success.

### **Bible Study #2 Evaluation**

The second class was taught by one of our millennial associate ministers to determine whether the person teaching makes a difference in attendance and participation. The lesson came from Scripture found in Romans 12:1-8. It was my desire for each member to leave with an understanding of how important he or she is to the church. At the conclusion of the class, each participant was given surveys to complete. The adult class was also given evaluations for this lesson to compare with the millennial class. Those questions and answers were as follows:

1. When asked if they felt as if the millennial generation of the church was copying the behavior of the world? Of the millennials, 18% said they strongly agreed; 23% answered 5, which means some were on the fence in their opinion; two people (9%) said they totally disagreed.  
  
Of the mature members, 18% strongly agreed; another 31% agreed answering 8 and 9; 11% answered with a 5; and the lowest answer was a 3 by one mature member.
2. When asked do you think millennials would be more apt to participate in church activities if the church were not so “churchy.” 23% of the millennials said they strongly agreed; 23% gave the question a 9. 18% gave the question a 5. There was no one to completely disagree.

Of the mature members, 13% strongly agreed; another 26% agreed with responses 8 and 9; 50% of the mature members answered with 5, 6 or 7 on the grid. There was only one person to totally disagree.

I concluded from this response that the mature members are not really certain what the millennial desires from a church service.

3. Do you personally feel that you are accepted as a part of this church? 32% of the millennials said they strongly agreed; no one totally disagreed, but two persons answered with 3.

Of the mature members, 39% strongly agreed while 32% agree answering with an 8 or 9. There was only one person to totally disagree.

4. When asked if they were an “active” part of the church? 23% said very active; 31% of the millennials said they were in the middle; and 9% (two persons) said not at all.

Of the mature members, 45% said that there are very active; 26% answered with an 8 and 9 response; two persons said not at all.

5. When asked if they had a full understanding of their role/function within the church? 18% of the millennials said they had a full understanding; 18% were in the middle; one person said not at all.

50% of our mature members said they had a full understanding; 32% said they agreed with an 8 and 9. The lowest answer was a 5 from two persons.

6. Presently, how often do you use your gifts within THIS church? Only one millennial said very often. 27% answered not at all.

26% of our mature members said they used their gifts very often in this church; 28% agreed with an answer of 8 or 9. 32% were in the middle with their answers ranging from 5 to 6. There was one mature member that said they did not use their gift at all.

7. To follow-up the previous question, when asked how willing would you be going forward to use your gifts within THIS church? 36% of the millennials said more than willing. 9% was in the middle with their answer.

Of the mature members, 47% said that they were more than willing; 24% answered favorably with an 8 or 9; 26% were in the middle with their response. Of the remaining 3%, one person responded with not at all.

8. The group was then asked, do you honestly feel that there is a place for you to use your gifts at this church? 45% of the millennials said they strongly agreed. One person answered with a 3 as the lowest answer.

Of the mature members, 39% strongly agreed; 34% agreed answering 8 and 9. The lowest response was a 5 from five mature members.

9. Then finally, how comfortable are you with a young adult minister teaching the class rather than Pastor Moore? Of the millennials, 59% said that they were very comfortable. Only one person said that they would not be comfortable at all.

Of the mature members, 18% said that they were very comfortable; 55% responded with an 8 or 9; 22% were in the middle; and the lowest score was a 3 from two mature members.

### **Bible Study #2 Results**

These responses lead me to believe that the millennials are a bit more comfortable with someone other than me teaching their class than that of the mature members. These results are really not surprising since I have been primarily the sole teacher since becoming Pastor of the church. Those younger members enjoy change and the feeling of being able to express themselves more openly without the watchful eye of leadership.

The next day I followed up with the core group of millennials to discuss their thoughts on the class. It was their consensus that some participants were excited to see another minister teaching the class. One commented that they enjoyed the teaching of this minister as they could see her growth and was proud of her. Another stated that they enjoyed the freedom of the class when one of their peers would teach, but would like for me to teach the class periodically as well. When asked to elaborate on “freedom” in the class, she stated that it did not mean they were in bondage when I taught, only that they were more apt not to say certain things in my presence. Some of them feel that they do not say what they really mean sometimes while in my presence. She followed by saying,

“that’s not a bad thing; it just means that they respect your presence.” I concluded from this study that their attendance and participation was not contingent upon who was teaching the class. The attendance did not vary much and the level of participation remained virtually the same if not better.

### **Bible Study #3 Evaluations**

The third week of study was held off-site at a local restaurant. The class was taught by one of our millennial laypersons, again to determine whether the designated teacher has any influence on the attendance or level of participation. The Bible study focused on “church goers and God pleasers.” It focused on the need to please God with our actions toward others rather than attending church for the sake of attending because of routine or ritual. At the end of the class, surveys were given to both the millennial and mature members. The questions asked and the corresponding answers are as follows:

1. The first asked of both groups, if they felt that the importance of attending church had changed over time? Of the millennials, 28% strongly agreed. 24% agreed (answering with a 9); then there was an additional 29% that answered with an 8. The lowest selection was a 3 by one person (5%). There was no one that completely disagreed.

Of the mature, 41% strongly agreed; nine persons (20%) answered with a 9; five persons answered with an 8 (11%). There was one mature member who totally disagreed.

Hence, overall the mature members and the millennials agree that church attendance has changed over time. Many feel that as the generations come and go, so does the wave of church attendance.

2. The next question asked of both groups concerned the status of the church within the community. In times past, the Church was considered the cornerstone of the community. The groups were asked if they felt whether this thought remained the same. Of the millennials, there was not anyone that strongly agreed with this statement. Three millennials (14%) answered with a 9; four persons (19%) answered with an 8; another four persons (19%) were in the middle with a 5; and of the other millennials, the lowest response was 2 from one person (5%).

The mature members' response was a little different as I suspected. 33% strongly agreed with the thought that the church is still seen as the cornerstone to the community. One person responded with a 9 and four persons answered with an 8 (11%). Seven persons answered with 7, an additional seven people answered with 6 that accounts for 30% of the class. 9% were in the middle with a 5. Of the remaining class, only one person totally disagreed. Although their answers vary, overall there are more in agreement than those who do not agree.

3. The next question asked of both groups was whether they enter into Emmanuel each week for the purpose of experiencing the presence of the Lord? Of the millennials, 44% strongly agreed, one person answered with a 9 and five people (31%) answered with an 8. Of the remaining class, the option 5 was the lowest chosen by two persons (13%).

The mature members answers differ considerably. 67% said that they strongly agreed; another 20% answered with an 8 or 9; of the remaining mature members, only one person said they totally disagreed. The mature members make it clear that their purpose for coming to church is majorly about a God experience; the millennials, not so much.

4. In keeping with the previous question, the next asked if they felt that they had opportunities to experience real worship at Emmanuel? Of the millennials, 57% said that they strongly agreed; another 23% answered with options 8 and 9. The lowest answer was a 5 from one millennial.

Of the mature, 59% said that they strongly agreed; another 20% answered with 8 and 9; of the remaining class, the lowest option chosen was a 4 by one person.

The answers from this question were almost identical in both groups. Therefore, we can conclude that they all agree that there is opportunity for true worship, but whether they embrace the opportunity is something totally different.

5. Then they were asked if this church was equipped to help them develop their relationship with Jesus Christ? Of the millennials, 57% said that they strongly agreed; another 19% answered with the options 8 and 9; of the remaining millennials, the lowest answer was a 3.

Of the mature members, 61% strongly agreed; another 22% agreed answering 8 and 9; of the remaining class, only one person totally disagreed.

Once again, their responses are very similar and one would have to assume that both groups overall feel that this church is capable of helping those of our congregation develop their relationship with Jesus Christ.

6. The next question was whether they felt that it was necessary to attend church service on a regular basis. Of the millennials, 57% strongly agreed; 28% agreed with options 8 and 9; the lowest answer was a 3 from one millennial.

Of the mature, 78% strongly agreed; 12% answered with options 8 and 9; the lowest answer was a 5 by two mature members.

The difference in these answers were not surprising in that most members from the older generation come from an era where attending church was a priority and very seldom an option.

7. They were then asked how willing they would be to encourage someone else to attend church service. Of the millennials, 62% said they were more than willing to invite someone; another 28% agreed with 8 and 9 as answers; the lowest answer was a 3 by one person leaning toward not inviting anyone at all.

Of the mature, 65% said they were more than willing; 29% answered with options 8 and 9; the lowest answer was a 5 by one mature member. The answers from the two groups were very similar in their responses.

8. Then finally, they were asked if attending church had personally made a difference in their lives. Of the millennials, 86% strongly agreed and the remaining 14% answered with options 8 and 9.

Of the mature members, 89% strongly agreed; 7% agreed with 8 and 9; the lowest response was a 6 by one mature member.

### **Week #3 Results**

Once again, both groups answered similarly and favorably. The majority of both groups strongly agreed that attending our church had made a difference in their lives.

On Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, I followed up with the lead teacher and the core group.

It was their consensus that the fellowship was good and the interaction from those in attendance was consistent with previous studies. However, other activities transpiring in the restaurant were distracting at various times throughout the time of study. Once again,



I concluded that their participation is not contingent upon the teacher or the location. The numbers and level of participation remained virtually the same in both locations.

### **Millennial Bible Study Evaluation**

We started the project with a great number of participants who were excited about the new possibilities. My initial question was, would they participate because this is something new and different or would they participate because it is something they wanted and needed? We started the bible studies with twenty-seven participants. Six weeks later, we had a total of fifteen participants in attendance. Again, I am disappointed in the final attendance, but it proved my theory that this church loves new and different. They have to be pushed when the newness wears off. I can admit, I did not push. I humbly asked that they come, but I did not go over and beyond beseeching them to come. I honestly hoped that they would just want to be a part of the new thing we were trying to accomplish at our church. On the other hand, the mature members were ecstatic and encouraged by the conversations and the hope of what could come from it all.

The only thing that I think I could have done differently would be to have been a bit more intentional in pushing the bible studies via social media and video announcements within the church. I verbally announced it during my pastoral observations, but I did not necessarily push the issue. My reasoning is because I did not want them to think that this was all about me. I earnestly desired this project to be the fuel that our ministry needed to spark a new fire and energy within our church. So I took the emphasis off of my project, and myself. I tried to convey that this was truly something for our church. At this point, I feel that my humility worked against me and I did not get the support needed to support this project in the manner that I originally

desired. Going forward, I know if this Bible study is to continue successfully, I am going to have to be more involved in its promotion and lesson plans.

### **Millennial vs. Mature Open Forum Evaluation**

For our final week of study, I chose to bring our millennial and mature members together for an open discussion. I wanted to provide an atmosphere to engage in healthy conversation regarding the differences among the generations. Following the discussion, the millennials were given one set of questions and the mature members were given another set of questions in a survey.<sup>66</sup> Those completing the surveys ages ranged from 20 – 90 years.

1. The millennials were asked if they felt their voices had been heard during this session?

43% strongly agreed; 39% gave a favorable response of 8 and 9. Only one person said that they disagreed.

The mature were asked if they felt that they understood the needs of the millennial a little better? 38% strongly agreed; another 36% were very favorable in their response answering 8 or 9). The lowest response was two persons responding with a 4.

2. The millennials and the mature were asked if they felt the gap was bridged in any way during this session? 32% strongly agreed and an additional 32% gave a favorable response of 8 or 9. Of the millennials, there was only one person that said they disagreed.

Of the mature, 28% strongly agreed and an additional 47% gave a favorable response of 8 or 9. There was one mature member who disagreed.

3. Both groups were asked if they felt the forum was impactful in any way? 57% percent of the millennials strongly agreed; 32% gave favorable response of 8 or 9. The lowest response was a 5 from one millennial.

Of the mature, 41% strongly agreed; 40% was also favorable with an answer of 8 or 9. The lowest score was a 3 from one of the mature members.

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<sup>66</sup> Appendix I – Open Forum Survey (Millennial); Appendix J – Open Forum (Mature); Appendix R – Millennial vs. Mature Comparison Graphs

4. The millennials were then asked if they felt they were a part of the overall “team.”  
29% strongly agreed and an additional 29% were favorable in their response with an 8 or 9. There were two persons (7%) that disagreed.  
  
Conversely, of the mature, 62% strongly agreed; 25% answered favorably with an 8 or 9. The lowest answer was a 3 from one of the mature members.
5. The mature were asked if they felt the millennials clearly expressed their thoughts about ministry and how they see it?  
30% strongly agreed; 34% gave a very favorable response of an 8 or 9. The lowest answer was a 4 from two mature members.
6. The millennials were asked if they felt accepted by the mature generation?  
21% strongly agreed; 18% gave a favorable response of an 8 or 9. 29% answered with a 7. The lowest score was a 4 from two millennials.
7. The millennials were asked, after sharing this time with the mature, if they had a better attitude toward ministry?  
25% strongly agreed; 29% gave a favorable response of an 8 or 9. The lowest response was a 3 from two millennials.
8. The mature were asked if they felt that their eyes were opened in some way after this forum with the millennials?  
38% strongly agreed; 39% were favorable in their response with an 8 or 9. Only one mature member totally disagreed.
9. The millennials were asked, after this forum, if they would give working in a ministry a chance?  
68% strongly agreed; 18% gave a favorable response of an 8 or 9. The lowest score was a 5 from two millennials. I must say that this response gives me hope.
10. Then the mature were asked if they better understood their role of helping the millennial to get involved in ministry a bit more or assist to acclimate them into ministry?  
45% strongly agreed; 34% gave a favorable response of 8 or 9. The lowest response was a 4 from one mature member.
11. Finally, both groups were asked if they would make an effort to connect with the other?  
Of the millennials, 57% strongly agreed; 36% gave a favorable response of an 8 or 9. The lowest response from the millennials was a 5 from one millennial.

Of the mature 60% strongly agreed; 30% gave a favorable response of 8 or 9. The lowest response was a 5 from one mature member. The responses from the two groups were very close, but very promising.

### **Results from the Millennial versus Mature Open Forum**

After this session, it was evident that forums of this kind are very needful. Going forward, it is my hope that we would learn to hear the hearts of the others. I pray each party has heard the other. If we do not take the time to hear each other; if we will not take the time to train or allow ourselves to be trained; we will never reach that level of potential that we desire. We've got to move forward and we have to find ways to intermingle and get to know each other a bit more. The millennial generation has to find their way to the older generation and the older generation must be careful not to scare them away when they come.

### **Fellowship Component**

The core group decided to go to Dave & Busters in Concord Mills on Saturday, October 22, 2016. I decided to allow the millennials to choose the location of their fellowship outing. I wanted to be sure it would be a location that would appeal to the millennial. Therefore, they chose this location because of the lively atmosphere. One can get a meal, play games, and have group interaction all under the same roof. On the night of the event, eleven persons attended, which is half of the original group that agreed to participate. I will admit that I was disappointed because I thought this would have been the event that would have been supported the most.

To my understanding there were a few to inquire if I would be in attendance. I chose not to attend because I wanted to give them the space and opportunity to enjoy a time of freedom, while setting their own standard for outings. When I am present, I tend

to take on the leadership role no matter who is in charge. Thus, I wanted to give them the opportunity to create their own event flow and activities without the pressure of trying to do things they think would appeal to me. Hence, I did not attend and had to depend upon the report from the members of the core group and the surveys to gain an understanding of how the evening went. For those who did not attend, there was an area on the survey that allowed them to list his or her reasoning for not participating. The questions asked and the corresponding answers are as follows:

1. For those who attended, the question was asked if they agreed that fellowship is a needed component that all age groups should embrace? 80% strongly agreed; the remaining 20% were in the middle, answering with a 5.
2. How important is the location of the fellowship? 46% said it is very important with 27% in the middle with a 5.
3. When asked what kind of impact, if any, did this fellowship have on you? 46% was extremely impactful; one person said not at all; all others were in between.
4. Do you think if the fellowship were held at a different location, it would have been a different response? 18% said they strongly agreed; three persons answered at 7, three persons answered at 5. There was no one to completely disagree.
5. Then when asked how willing they were to participate with the fellowship, from those that attended, 73% said more than willing. One person answered with a 2, which means that person went along reluctantly.
6. For those who did not attend the fellowship, these were some of their reasons:
  - Bad experience from the past with a couple of young adults and I can't seem to trust that group just yet.
  - I had to work late.
  - I'm a single mom and I had to attend another function with my daughter.
  - I had a busy day and I had to prepare for Sunday responsibilities.
7. When asked what are some of the benefits of engaging in fellowship with your peers?

- It's a great way to connect and get to know others on another level.
  - It is good way to meet people and interact with people that you rarely talk to.
8. When asked what are some the apprehensions of engaging in fellowship, those answers were:
- Apprehensive because people do not always feel accepted by other church members.
  - Apprehensive of starting strong and not continuing the fellowship long term.
  - Apprehensive because there seem to be a lot of groups and clicks already established.
  - Apprehensive and wondering if the outing is going to be worth one's time.
  - Apprehensive and concerned that the other young adults will not be authentic.
  - It's just not enough time to do the extra activities due to work, family, etc.
9. When asked what would be their suggestions for activities going forward, their response was:
- Would love to have game night, go to movies, or go out to a real dinner.
  - Continue meeting and have outings so we can continue to grow as a ministry.
  - Holiday party
  - Weekend mountain retreat
  - Bowling
  - Conferences and/or mixers that relate to young adults
  - Laser tag
  - Small gathering and/or study at some place like Starbucks
  - Attend a comedy show
  - Tailgate
  - Concerts
  - Painting

### **Results from the Fellowship Component**

Again, I was disappointed by the lack of participation. I honestly thought this portion of the project would have been the most appealing. One of the core members stated in our follow-up that a few of the attendees asked if I were going to be attending the outing along with them. She said she responded by saying that I would not be attending because this was an evening designed for the millennials only to gauge how we

interact with one another. In speaking with members of the core group, it was their consensus that the fellowship was “just alright.” For some, the interactions were natural, but for others it was visibly forced, but everyone did their best to intermingle as much as possible. I cannot help but wonder if they were given activities to participate in or a task to accomplish while at the event, would that have made the outing a little more than “just alright?”

My conclusion from this meeting was that much of what will be done within this ministry will be because of what I ask them to do rather than because they want to. Nevertheless, it is my hope that the millennials of this church will learn to engage in activities simply because they want to be a part of the activities taking place within this ministry.

### **Outreach Component**

The millennials participated with the Hot Meal and Clothing Give Away at Emmanuel on Saturday, November 12, 2016. Two weeks prior to this event, the young adult Bible study group discussed possibilities for an outreach project. Since it was in my original plan, I suggested that they work together to provide a meal to serve at the local Salvation Army. Unfortunately, the hours that the Salvation Army had available did not fit the majority of the group’s schedule. The next suggestion from one of the millennial associate ministers was to assist an organization in Charlotte with stuffing gift boxes for children for Christmas. The stipulations were that they had to have committed participants to volunteer from 10am – 3pm on either of the following two Saturdays. Needless to say, no one wanted to commit to that length of time in one place on what they called “their only day off.” Keeping in mind that over the past week we discussed

the importance of outreach and how important it is to serve others. However, what they displayed was that outreach is important as long as it is convenient and fits within their schedule.

Finally, the last option was to join with the missionaries of our church to assist with our annual fall food and clothing giveaway. This is an event that our missionaries sponsor three times a year to serve our community with a hot meal and clothing for their families. The millennials chose to serve during this event. I had one of the core group leaders to make contact with the coordinator for the event and they were given the options to assist with serving the food, assisting with the distribution of clothing, or they could assist with the evangelism portion of the event where they could help sing for the service and/or pray with those seeking prayer. From the twenty-one millennials who said they would participate, only eight millennials assisted with the food and clothing event. Three persons assisted in the area of clothing. Four persons assisted with the preparation and serving of the meal and one person assisted with the evangelism portion. The amount of time volunteered equaled approximately three hours. A few who served that day has served previously, so it was not a stretch for them. Those who served for the first time saw the opportunity as humbling and rewarding. Those who did not serve gave reasons such as, “I had previous plans; I was obligated to do something with my daughter; I simply forgot; something came up.”

Following the event, when I followed up with the group I found that there was mixed feelings about the experience. There was one who served, who was initially excited about serving. She served in the kitchen with some of our normal cooks and servers. She said she did not feel welcomed in “their” kitchen. She said it was a very cold



atmosphere to the point that she just wanted to get the day over with. On the other hand, there was one who served, who had never served before, and she was very humbled by the experience. She spoke of it in her Facebook status that evening. She posted:

EMBC Hot Meal and Clothing Giveaway today: We blessed so many individuals and families and I am so grateful to have been apart of it. Not only were we blessing people in need, but also people were blessing my spirit with their stories and testimonies. I always thank God for everything that he has blessed me with but today really made me sit down and ask myself why are there so many selfish people in the world when there are people that are not as fortunate as you may be to have what you have but if you flip it around it could be you. So my thought for today is to be a blessing to someone else. I am so thankful that my church was able to help so many people today.

The following Wednesday, I gave out the survey relating to the outreach project and these were the questions along with the results:<sup>67</sup>

1. When asked, “Would you commit to doing outreach ministry at least once per month?” 23% said that they strongly agreed; 54% favorably agreed by answering with an 8 and 9. The lowest answered given was a 4 from 8% of the group.
2. The next question was, “Do you agree that outreach is a needed component of ministry for all age groups?” 46% said they strongly agreed; 31% answered with a 9; and 23% answered with an 8.
3. Going forward, I wanted to know if location and type of service mattered so as to get more millennials involved. 31% said that location and type of outreach was very important to the millennial. 38% answered with a 9; of the remaining millennials, 8 % said that it was not important at all.

Overall, I believe the general consensus is that they typically want to engage in outreach projects that appeal to them.

4. And finally, for those that attended, they were asked what kind of impact this the experience had upon them? 31% said the outreach project was extremely impactful; 31% answered with a 9; of the remaining attendees, 15% said that it was not impactful at all.

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<sup>67</sup> Appendix K – Outreach Evaluation

### **Results from Outreach Component**

My fears became reality in that I was afraid that they would not stay true to their commitment because it was at home and they knew that the mature members and the missionaries were going to be there whether they showed up or not. Indeed, they did not show up by large as desired, and the event still went on without a hitch. I wanted them to go off site and take ownership of an outreach project so that they could use their gifts and see what they could accomplish on their own. That did not happen and I am concerned that if I do not press the issue for them to be more intentional about this portion of ministry, they will continue to rely on the mature members to complete this portion of our ministry.

I believe the millennials of our church appreciate the concept and element of outreach. They see the need and know the importance, however, if the activity is not convenient for them or something that appeals to them, they do not make the effort to give of themselves for the cause.

### **Sermon Series**

Originally, the sermon series was not supposed to be a part of the project in that I was only going to use the Bible studies to gather information concerning our worship and study of the Word. However, I decided to do a sermon series as well, but still use the larger Bible study class to complete the surveys. The sermons were all focused on being better servants and understanding what it means to serve with sincerity. Although, I had hopes that the sermons would hit home for the millennials, I believe the mature members were just as impacted. It seems that the millennials responded well on paper, but the mature members have responded more in action. It is the mature members who have

shown more interest and adjoined themselves to some area of ministry or recommitted themselves to areas that they had fallen short in. There were some millennials that responded favorably, but not as many as the mature.

When asked how impactful were the series of sermons, the millennials responded with 53% said very impactful; 33% answered with a 9; the remaining 14% answered with a 7 and 8. Of the mature members, 46% said they were very impactful; 24% answered with a 9; 19% answered with an 8; 5% answered with 7; 3% answered with a 5; and 3% said nothing at all. Both groups were asked if the sermon series influence them to become more active within the church? Of the millennials, 60% said very influential; 27% answered with a 9; the remaining 13% answered with a 7 or 8. Of the mature members, 49% said very influential; 24% answered with a 9; 14% answered with an 8; the remaining 13% answered with a 5, 6, or 7.

I am thankful for the sermon series because the principles and points made in these messages are what I hear the members repeating the most. Very often, my church can get lost in the emotionalism of worship and the excitement of the preaching moment. Therefore, after the Bible Study series was complete, I used the Wednesday nights as Worship Wednesday and used those moments of worship to focus on our need to have a heart to serve others. The sermons were challenging, thought provoking, and at times laced with a hint of rebuke. They were overwhelmingly received and I could see the principles being applied. I have received testimonies from various members that something said during those sermons caused members to feel convicted enough to get up from their seat of complacency and get busy doing what they know they have been gifted

and called to do. Hence, I can honestly say that the sermons did indeed make a difference in the participation and commitment within our church.

### **Post Project Bible Study Evaluation**

On Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, I met with the millennials for a post discussion and Bible Study. Unfortunately, our number of participants had dwindled from the original twenty-seven down to fifteen participants in our final session. I do not have definitive reasons for their absence. One could assume that because it has been two weeks since the group has met because of the Thanksgiving holiday schedule or maybe the interest had already begun to fade away. Nonetheless, those present were excited about our time of gathering and were more than willing to engage in this final discussion. The following were some of their remarks:

- We need a worship service that will focus on the millennial only.
- I think the millennials would be more interactive if there were small group studies.
- I like the thought of working together with the mature members doing outreach. It gives us a chance to really get to know them and learn their way of doing things.
- I like the idea of peer teachers. It gives me hope that maybe I can be used in this area.
- I like the small group study with our peers because there is not as much intimidation and I'm not as afraid to speak up.
- I am more apt to participate in the smaller group study versus the corporate study.
- This project allowed me to see that I can indeed play a more significant role in ministry.
- I enjoyed the peer teacher. They allow for a different perspective and I can relate to the millennials a bit more.

- I would love to work with the older generation more for the purpose of learning how to be more effective in the community. They are more experienced in this area and I would love to learn from them.
- I love the small studies, but also would love to join in the corporate study at least once per month.

Surveys were given at the conclusion of this session and these were the responses:<sup>68</sup>

1. The first question asked was how many Bible studies did the participants actually attend out of the four weeks? 40% of the participants attended all four weeks; 47% attended at least three weeks; 13% of the participants attended at least two weeks.
2. During our study sessions, I noticed some of the attendees were taking notes, some on paper, but mostly were on their phones. Therefore, the question was asked, prior to this project, how likely was it for you to take notes during Bible Study? 20% said they were very likely; another 40% gave answers of 8 or 9; 20% were in the middle; and 7% said they did not take notes at all.
3. Then they were asked, post project, how likely are you to take notes? 46% said they are very likely. 34% answered with an 8 and 9; the remaining 20% answered with a 7 and 6. So their desire for taking notes changed considerably post project.
4. The next question concerned, how likely was it for you to study the lesson prior to attending? 20% said they would very likely study the lesson. Another 20% answered with an 8 and 9. 20% were in the middle and 7% said not at all.
5. Post project, how likely is it for you to study prior to bible study? 53% said that now they are very likely to study prior to bible study. 19% answered with an 8 and 9. 7% were in the middle and the lowest answer was a 2 from 7% of the class. Once again, the response doubled after the project.
6. The next question, post project, how important is it now for you to attend bible study regularly? 60% said it is very important; 27% answered with an 8 and 9; a seven was the lowest answered given from 13% of the participants.
7. The millennials were asked their opinion on the new bible study format that caters to the millennial. 73% said that the new format was excellent. 13% answered with a nine; the remaining 14% answered with a 7 and 8.

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<sup>68</sup> Appendix M – Post Project Survey; Appendix S – Post Project Comparison Graphs

8. When asked if the new format continues, how many would invite someone else to attend. 53% said very likely; 40% answered with a nine; 7% answered with a 7.
9. Post project, how important is it to take advantage of the teaching opportunities at Emmanuel? 67% said it was very important; 27% answered with a 9; 6% answered with a 7.

### **Post Bible Study Results**

We can conclude that the millennials, who have remained, appreciated the millennial study and would do well participating in a small group study going forward. The change of teachers and location did not make a significant difference in their level of participation and/or attendance. Those millennials who remain seem to be a bit more engaged, in that they take their preparation and time of study a bit more seriously than they did pre-project. It gives me hope that there is a remnant of millennials who remain consistent with their attendance and participation in Bible study.

### **Post Project Evaluation**

At the close of this project, the millennials and the mature members were given a set of questions that would give me some idea of the impact the targeted components (i.e., sermons, bible studies, outreach, fellowship) had upon them and their decision to participate in ministry.<sup>69</sup> I wanted to know if either of those components had a significant impact upon their decision to be more active. I wanted to know if their commitment of attendance in Sunday worship, Bible study, and Sunday school had changed in any significant way. The following are some of my final findings:

1. When asked the question of how many times per month do you now attend Sunday worship, the millennials responded, 73% said they attended four times per month; 20% said they attended at least three times per month; and 7% said they attend at least once per month.

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<sup>69</sup> Appendix O – Post Project Questionnaire

Of the mature, 97% said they attended four times per month; and 3% said they attend at least once per month.

2. When asked, how many times do you attend Bible study per month? The millennials responded, 60% said they attended four times per month; 13% said they attended at least three times per month; 20% said they attended at least twice per month; and 7% said they attended at least once per month.

Of the mature members, 78% said they attended four times a month; 14% said they attended at least three times per month; 5% said they attended at least twice per month; and 3% said they attended at least once per month.

3. When asked, how many times do you attend Sunday school within the month, the millennials responded 14% said at least twice per month; 13% said they attend at least once per month; and the remaining 73% said they do not attend at all.

Of the mature members, 35% said they attend four times per month; 3% said they attend at least three times per month; 8% said at least two times per month; 5% said they attend at least once per month; and 49% said they did not attend at all. These findings were disappointing, but not surprising.

4. When asked about their participation in ministry, 60% of the millennials said that they were active now; 10% slightly active; and 30% said they were not. Of the millennials, these numbers did change slightly. Pre-project, 49% said they were active, 19% said they were slightly active, and 33% said they were not active at all

Of the mature members, 89% said that they were active, while 11% said they were not. Those mature members, who were not active, were within the age range of 40 – 49 years.

5. When asked how impactful were the series of sermons, the millennials responded with 53% said very impactful; 33% answered with a 9; the remaining 14% answered with a 7 and 8.

Of the mature members, 46% said they were very impactful; 24% answered with a 9; 19% answered with an 8; 5% answered with 7; 3% answered with a 5; and 3% said nothing at all.

6. Did the sermon series influence you to become more active within the church? Of the millennials, 60% said very influential; 27% answered with a 9; the remaining 13% answered with a 7 or 8.

Of the mature members, 49% said very influential; 24% answered with a 9; 14% answered with an 8; the remaining 13% answered with a 5, 6, or 7.

7. Did the ministry fair have any influence on you becoming more active within the church? Of the millennials, 60% said it was very impactful; 13% answered with a 9; 20% answered with an 8; 7% answered with a 3, which was the lowest response.

Of the mature members, 57% said it was very impactful; 16% answered with a 9; 8% answered with an 8; 13% answered with a 7; the remaining 6% answered with a 5 or 6.

8. During the process of the project, how impactful were the bible studies? On a scale from 1 to 5, of the millennials, 60% said they were very impactful; 7% answered with a 4; 13% answered with a 3; 13% answered with a 2; and 7% said the bible studies were the least impacting.

Of the mature members, 73% said they were very impacting; 8% answered with a 4; 5% answered with a 3; 14% said not at all.

9. During the process of the project, how impactful was the outreach project? On a scale from 1 to 5, of the millennials, 13% said very impactful; 27% answered with a 4; 20% answered with a 3; 13% answered with a 2; 27% said it was the least impacting component. Since both groups served during the same outreach effort, the mature members were asked the same.

Of the mature members, 32% said it was very impactful; 16% answered with a 3; 14% answered with a 2; 16% said it was the least impacting; and 22% said it was not impactful at all.

10. During this project, how impactful was the fellowship outing? On a scale from 1 to 5, of the millennials, 7% said very impactful; 33% answered with a 4; 20% answered with a 3; 13% answered with a 2; 27% said it was the least impacting component.

Although the mature members did not participate in the same outing, I still wanted to know how impactful are moments of fellowship for them. Thus, of the mature, 32% said it was very impactful; 8% answered with a 4; 14% answered with a 3; 3% answered with a 2; 27% said it was the least impactful component; 16% said that it was not at all impactful.

11. Although, the ministry fair was not an original component of the project, I still wanted to know if it had any influence upon our members becoming active within the church. On a scale from 1 to 5, of the millennials, 33% said it was very impactful; 27% answered with a 4; 13% answered with a 3; 27% said it was the least impactful.



Of the mature members, 43% said it was very impactful; 8% answered with a 4; 19% answered with a 3; 14% said it was least impactful; 16% said not at all.

### **Post Project Questionnaire Results**

Of these findings, the millennials conclude that the fellowship outing was the least impactful; the outreach project was the next least impactful component. The sermon series and the Bible studies were most impactful. The ministry fair was just as impactful as the sermon and Bible study components. Through these three components, we were able to recruit approximately twenty inactive members to work in various ministries within the church. Of those twenty persons, unfortunately less than half of new volunteers are millennials. These findings prove my theory that the millennials of this church are more event and activity driven than they are program driven. They seem to prefer short-term tasks rather than long-term programs (i.e., missionary programs, ministry auxiliary leadership, usher's ministry, etc.).

At the conclusion of this project, I believe our millennials as well as our mature members have a better understanding of the roles they play in the lives of each other. Was the project a success? I would say, yes it was, although I did not receive 100% cooperation, and we even had a couple of millennials to disengage rather than engage in the end. Even though we had some who were not very excited about our new lease on life in ministry, I am excited about the new energy that I am sensing within our church. I am encouraged because I see new members excited about new opportunities and mature members excited about receiving the help. What is even more encouraging is that it is not just a feeling of excitement, they are showing it in their actions by volunteering, participating, engaging themselves in the work of ministry.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Residual Results (Ministry Fair)**

As a result of the Bible studies, sermon series and all of the talk surrounding this project of engaging millennials, the desire to engage others spilled over into the church. I wanted to find a way to take advantage of this momentum. So I came up with an idea that could possibly engage the entire church and at the same time give the millennials an opportunity to serve. Thus, I asked a core group of young adults to organize a ministry fair which would include every ministry within the church, giving them an opportunity to put their ministries on display. This fair would be held in the church's fellowship hall and could possibly be the event that could spark a new zeal within our church body.

Once the announcement was made, every ministry immediately got on board and was excited about reaching out to those inactive members who would attend service, but they were not involved in any way. We have countless members who sit in the pews weekly, desire to do something in ministry, but do not know how to make the connection with those who are in charge of the various areas of ministry. This ministry fair would be the point of connection for all desiring to attach themselves to ministry in any way.

Each ministry was encouraged to be creative and design a booth along with handout material and a means to solicit and sign up volunteers. The young adults were responsible for submitting the announcements to the church secretary for placement in the Sunday bulletin. They were responsible for following up with all of the ministry leaders to assure they had all of the materials needed for the ministry fair. They were responsible for setting up the space and assuring that everyone knew their placement.

They also worked in connection with the food services ministry to assure that refreshments were prepared as well.

On the Saturday before the fair, our church body met to cast vision for the New Year. I shared with them my thoughts on where we are as a church and where I believe we have the potential to go. I gave them the plan in which we would engage our congregation during the ministry fair and this plan would set the tone for the next few months. As it relates to engaging potential volunteers, I used the principles from one of the sermons. I challenged the ministry leaders and told them that it would be our objective to greet the potential volunteers, grab them, guide them, and grow them. The ministry fair would be designed to greet and grab those members who have not been active in ministry. Then once the event was concluded we would focus on ways to guide them and grow them. At the conclusion of the meeting, ministry leaders went to the fellowship hall to set up his and her booths. I must admit that it has been a long time since I have seen such excitement and new life in our church.

On that Sunday, the excitement was refreshing. As soon as the benediction was given, ministry leaders rushed to the fellowship hall to stand at their posts. I was not sure if the membership would stay after service and take the time to peruse through the various booths and participate, but to my surprise they were just excited as I was. By the time I changed clothes and entered the fellowship hall, the room was filled to capacity. There was music playing, people laughing, teenagers taking selfies, countless others walking around with chips, a sub sandwich and a glass of punch, and ministry leaders doing their best to interest passers by in stopping to see what their ministry is all about.

From that event, ministries were able to engage and sign up a number of members who had not been active previously and were even able to impress some none members as well. After the fair, I followed up with those ministry leaders and they each had a minimum of three and some as many as eight new participants who were interested in committing to become an active part of ministry. It is safe to say that we succeeded in greeting and grabbing them. Now, we are focusing on ways to guide them and grow them.

The young adults were very excited about the role they played in organizing this event. One of the millennials asked me when would we do this again because she was already thinking of ideas for the next one. I told her to hold on to her ideas because we would indeed do this again. The young adults are now preparing for their next event that is being designed to engage young adults, not only within our church, but also from the community as well.

### **Final Findings and Future Implications**

My goal was to engage the millennial generation of our church and perhaps move them toward some level of participation in ministry. In addition it was my desire to gain an understanding for the lack of participation and commitment within our church. The findings discovered during the course of this project lead me to believe that the millennials of this church seem to be more event and activity driven than they are program driven. They love the Lord; they love His Word; they even love working in His name; but, they do not necessarily care for long-term, constant accountability. If one desires a task to be completed, they are the persons for the job. They will go over and beyond the call of duty to assure that their assignment is completed sufficiently.

Conversely, it is not the norm for the millennial to commit to the mundane routine of programs. In her book, *Millennials in Ministry*, Jolene C. Erlacher writes “For young, passionate leaders entering the church to serve, the greatest cultural shock often occurs when the interests of people and programs clash. Just as they are not impressed by formal presentations devoid of authenticity, young adults are not impressed by extensive programs failing to meet real needs of people.”<sup>70</sup>

So how do we keep the millennial engaged? In my opinion, we give them tasks to perform. We must find space for them to use their talents and gifts. We remain open to listen to their suggestions. We create moments so that those suggestions become an active part of ministry. We must endeavor to help millennial members understand the role they play, and the value they bring to our churches. We must be persistent in helping them to understand that they are members of a large body and their part is needed so that this body may continue to function as it was designed.

In my church setting, along with churches of all kinds from around the world, there are millennials who have not officially connected to the church because they do not see how they fit in. In speaking with other pastors and leaders from various denominations, it seems that this is a twenty-first century church issue. Other pastors complain that the members will come to Sunday service, but only a remnant are actually doing the work needed to keep ministry viable, while the millennials are content with the option of attending Sunday morning services. They feel that their self-proclaimed spirituality is sufficient for the spiritual journey that they have embarked upon. Therefore, what is the church leader to do? Do we push, pull, and prod them to connect in some way

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<sup>70</sup>Jolene C. Erlacher, *Millennials in Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2014), 17.

with the church? Do we create positions and/or opportunities for them to work within the church? Do we move aside those workers who we know are consistent and dependable and take a chance on this new generation that we are unsure of? And my answer to that question would be, yes, we have to take the chance. We have to take the chance and pray that the reward will be greater than the risk.

This millennial generation needs responsibility. When they are given responsibility, there is a sense of belonging, spiritual connection, and relationship. As Pastor and leader of this church, I understand more than ever that this is a “hands-on” job that needs consistency, and evidence of care and concern. I understand that my millennial membership desires a measure of responsibility and ownership, yet they still need consistent leadership and guidance. If they are steered in the right direction, they have the potential to be a mighty force because of their energy and influence. The truth is, this millennial generation is very influential and they greatly impact the social climate around us.

In an article, “Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture,” Matthew J. Peeples shows us how we can take a lesson from the marketing world. In this article, he states, “the effects of rapid change in technology have not just grabbed the attention of those who have grown up as millennials, but they are also affecting Generation X and even the Boomers.”<sup>71</sup> The author submits that the marketing world shows us the impact that the millennial generation is having upon the overall culture of this time. Peeples says, “It is no longer simply a matter of reaching one generation; the rapid changes we have seen in the last ten years are affecting everyone. What the marketing world has discovered is that

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<sup>71</sup>Matthew J. Peeples, “Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture,” *Missio apostolica*, 21 no 1 (May 2013), 76.

when we learn to reach out more effectively to the millennial generation we will actually be learning how to communicate more effectively across generations.”<sup>72</sup> And because of the millennial influence, we cannot simply write them off, we have to find a way to bridge the gap. We have to find a way to keep the lines of communication open with this new generation.

When you look at social media, it is not only millennials who are connected. We find all age groups connecting via social media outlets. I have witnessed my own 70-year-old mother and father connect on social media. Once they could grasp the operation of Facebook, it was no turning back for them. My 70-year-old parents found another means of communication and discovered a new way to connect with family members from around the country. They found a way to bridge the gap with their younger nieces and nephews that they did not know was humanly possible.

The same way that we see this connection in social media, we need to find a means to do the same within the church. It should be kept in mind that not all millennials have a disdain for the church. Contrary to popular belief, there is a remnant that has a relationship with Jesus Christ as well as a desire to connect and play a part within the work of the church. We just have to reach out to those millennials who are consistently coming to church, participating in ministry functions, and give them some responsibility. Give them reason to be present and remain consistent. We have to give them a platform to use their gifts and work their resources. We will find that this generation is becoming very influential, even across generational lines.

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<sup>72</sup> Peoples, “Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture,” 76.

In his article, Matthew Peeples says it comes down to three factors, or rather three values that are very important to this millennial generation. According to Peeples, those values are authenticity, relationship, and conversation. He says:

Millennials will accept you for who you are, as long as it is authentic. Authenticity is a value that cannot be ignored in the millennial generation. This is a real asset that the church needs to capitalize on, because what we are offering is an authentic gospel. If we focus on sharing the authentic life of faith with those far from God, the disconnected, we will find them actually connecting to faith.<sup>73</sup>

So, authenticity is very important to this generation. They do not believe the hype, and they can spot a phony a mile away. They want to know if what they see in you is what they get on a consistent basis. One of the complaints in the traditional African-American church is that the members display one personality in the church and another personality outside of the church. This millennial generation prefers not to connect with these type people, and they will not connect with a church if they sense a lack of authenticity. One of the complaints that I have heard from people who have left our church is that they love the Word, but the people in the church can be fickle. It became clear to me that most millennials have to perceive authenticity.

Another value that appeals to the millennial generation is that of authentic relationship. They want to feel that we love them and want to connect with them just as they are, imperfections and all. They want to know that we care about a relationship with them rather than putting their name on the church role and filling the church pews. Peeples gives a testimonial of how his church made intentional efforts to connect with those disconnected from the church. He talks about how they went into the community, hosted a tailgate party, helped renovate a homeless shelter, went to bars, and hosted

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<sup>73</sup> Peeples, "Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture," 79.



separate events for men and women. He says the message they wanted to relay was, “We don’t care who you are and we don’t care where you have been; we just want to connect with you in relationship.”<sup>74</sup> It was their desire to offer a genuine relationship before extending the gospel message. He declares, “the key was not a program; the key is connecting with people in authentic relationship.”<sup>75</sup> Traditionally, we have desired to see the well-put-together potential member walk through our church doors, but that era is seemingly over. Now, it seems that we have to purpose to accept them as they are when they come or either go, meet them where they are, and connect with them in relationship first. The millennial generation seems to be the generation that prefers to connect with authentic relationships rather than membership.

The final value that appeals to the millennial generation, according to Matthew Peeples, is that of authentic conversation. This generation wants to know that we are willing to have a genuine conversation with them. They do not want empty promises. They do not want to know what is going to happen when we get to heaven. They are more concerned about the challenges they face here on earth. They want to know how to manage their daily struggles. They want to know that it is acceptable not to have everything figured out in order to come to church. They have questions, and they want answers. They want to know that there is someone willing to listen; someone willing to have a conversation with them, and someone willing to help them figure it all out without being judged. Unfortunately, in the traditional church, we would rather talk about them

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<sup>74</sup> Peeples, “Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture,” 80.

<sup>75</sup> Peeples, “Bringing the Gospel to a New Culture,” 80.

than talk to them. But if we fail to talk to them, we will also fail to connect with them, and the disconnected will remain disconnected.

It has been my goal to create an atmosphere of authenticity. It was my desire to see authentic relationships form with authentic moments of fellowship. Going forward, it is my desire to continue to discover ways to help bridge the gap between the mature generations and the millennial generation. I earnestly want to get a handle on what appeals to this millennial generation. I want to help them discover their place in ministry and help them to realize their value and how they can help meet the needs of the overall ministry.

### **Personal Reflection**

In my earlier years as Pastor of Emmanuel, I was often asked if I would be able to handle the position as a leader to men? I was often asked from those in the community if I was having problems with the men of the church or the other male pastors of the community receiving me? My answer was always the same and that was, "I can only be who I am and do what I have been called to do." I will admit that when the ministry started to reach a plateau, I began to ask myself if I was still the right person for the job. I often contemplated if a male Pastor would have done something different and taken the church in a different direction. Therefore, even I have to encourage myself to stay focused and be assured in who I am and what I have been called to do as the Pastor of Emmanuel.

This project has forced me to take a close look at how I have managed ministry up to this point. There have been times when I have sat silently and simply allowed ministry to happen. I now know that I have to be more intentional in my position as the leader of

this church and encourage those who are a part of this body to make ministry happen. I am committed to continue to preach and teach as well as creating moments of fellowship and outreach for all generations. There is no denying that I want to see the gap bridged between the generations of our church and discovering methods to do so will be an ongoing task. In the meantime, I distributed an evaluation to the millennials to assess how they felt about my accomplishment in this area thus far. They answered questions concerning their thoughts of me as coordinator and facilitator of this project.<sup>76</sup> The following is how they responded:

1. When asked if I explained the project well? 93% said extremely well and 7% answered with a 9.
2. Then when asked if the problems and the goals of the project explained well, 73% said extremely well while the other 27% answered with a 9. That answer somewhat concerned me. I am left wondering who does not completely understand the problems/issues we are facing within our church.
3. Then when asked how well organized? Again 73% answered extremely well and the other 27% answered with a 9.
4. When asked to rate my knowledge of the subject matter, 100% said that my knowledge of the material was excellent.
5. They were then asked to rate my teaching method on the subject matter. 87% said my teaching method was excellent, while the remaining 13% answered with an 8 and 9.
6. When asked to rate my enthusiasm about the subject matter, 93% said it was excellent and the remaining 7% answered with a 9.
7. Then when asked about my enthusiasm about the project, 87% said it was excellent and the remaining 23% answered with a 9.
8. When asked how well I engaged and maintained the attention of the millennials, 80% said extremely well and the remaining 20% answered with 9.
9. And finally when asked how they would rate my overall performance throughout this process, 73% said my performance was excellent. 20%

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<sup>76</sup> Appendix N – Post Facilitator Evaluation

answered with 9 and 7% answered with an 8. Again, I would be curious where I fell short in the opinion of that 7%.

### **Post Facilitator Evaluation Results**

The responses of the millennials were relatively favorable and consistent. It seems to be the consensus that they saw the excitement and enthusiasm I had about the project and the knowledge of the subject matter was evident as well. I can say that I enjoyed our times together. They were indeed life changing for me. Looking back, if I had to do this again, I think I would have done a couple of things differently. One thing in particular, I would have preferred to teach a couple more classes or at least attended while the millennials taught the lesson. Although that would require the project to be extended for a longer period of time, it would have been my preference to be a bit more present. Again, I am finding that this generation wants to lead, but they also want to know that the parent/leader is right there to fill in the gaps if the need should arise. At the same time, I am trying to find platforms for our millennial ministers to exercise their gifts and allow the millennials to have space and opportunity to create the type of environment that appeals to the millennial generation. I am still trying to find that healthy balance as a leader to this complex generation of millennials as well as serve as the pastor to our generation of mature members also.

Ultimately, I believe Emmanuel has all of the ingredients needed to be an impactful force in the community. With our millennial members connecting with our mature members, our church has the potential to be the hub of authentic worship and life changing ministry, and I believe that we shall indeed make an impact. I have a heart for

God's people and a passion for ministry. As senior pastor and lead servant of this church, I am committed and determined to see this church operate at its greatest capacity.

At the end of this project, I believe we were successful in changing the mindset of many and I believe that that is half of the battle. Although we did not see the participation within the millennial generation that we desired, there was participation, commitments were made and the overall mindsets of many mature and millennial members have changed. I will end by quoting from David Stark's *Reaching Millennials*. In his book, he writes of ideas and methodologies used to engage and influence millennials, but he says one has to first have the right mindset before attempting to implement those methods. He states:

Without the right mindset in your church, any methodology has a great chance of failure, so I ask that you keep mindset and methodology connected as a whole. The good news is, God is very much at work today around us. Even so, it will help to keep the first part of the Serenity Prayer in mind: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."<sup>77</sup>

As Senior Pastor, that is indeed my prayer for Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church as we strive to effectively engage the millennials of our congregation and our community.

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<sup>77</sup> David Stark, *Reaching Millennials: Proven Methods for Engaging a Younger Generation*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2016), 13.

## APPENDIX A

### A Survey of Your Thoughts Concerning Commitment In the Church

1. What is your age range?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ 75 +
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ 65 - 74
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ 55 - 64
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ 45 - 54
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ 35 - 44
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_ 25 - 34
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_ 18 - 24
  - h. \_\_\_\_\_ 12 - 17
2. Are you Male \_\_\_\_\_ or Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your ethnicity? (circle all that applies)
  - a. African American
  - b. Caucasian
  - c. Asian
  - d. Hispanic
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. What type of church denominations have you been a part of in the past?  
(circle all that apply)
  - a. Baptist
  - b. Methodist (AME, AMEZ, UMC, CME)
  - c. Presbyterian
  - d. COGIC
  - e. Holiness
  - f. Apostolic
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. What's the average Sunday morning attendance of this church? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. What's the average age range for this church? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Does this church offer multiple services? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_
  - c. Does this church have multiple campuses? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_
6. Are you an official member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_ If no, how long have you been attending? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you an official leader within this church? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many Sundays out of the month do you attend church? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you attend Sunday school? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you attend Bible Study? \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you an active participant in any group/organization within the church? \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. If yes, how many ministries do you play an active role? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Why do you continue to attend this church? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. In your opinion, has the overall level of commitment to ministry increased or decreased in the past 5 – 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you feel that YOU are committed to serving in this church? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

15. In your opinion, what is needed to increase participation within the church?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

16. What area of ministry appeals to you the most? (Circle your top 3)

- |                    |                         |                           |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Morning Worship | e. Women's Ministry     | i. Music Ministry         |
| b. Sunday School   | f. Men's Ministry       | j. Food/Clothing/Missions |
| c. Bible Study     | g. Single's Ministry    | k. Ministry for Seniors   |
| d. Youth Ministry  | h. Young Adult Ministry | l. Drama/Dance Ministry   |

17. Please share any additional information that you feel that will help explain the reason for overall commitment/participation within the church or the lack thereof.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**  
**Doctoral Project Commitment**  
**Participant Agreement**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age range?  
                     \_\_\_\_\_ 20-24                      \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29                      \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34                      \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39
3. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male                      \_\_\_\_\_ Female
4. How long have you been a member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you been an active participant in ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement**

1. I agree to be present each Sunday and each Wednesday and take an active part in each setting.
2. I agree to be present each Wednesday to discuss and give my honest input of my thoughts regarding the events of the week.
3. I agree to be an active participant in the fellowship outing. I will make every effort to be sociable and be an asset to the group.
4. I agree to be an active participant in the outreach service project. I agree to willingly give of my time, talent, and resources to be a blessing to those who are less fortunate.
5. I agree to share my thoughts about the Bible studies via social media as well as with other millennials. I understand that this is a part of the evaluation process.
6. I agree to be an active participant for the entire 4-week project and during which time I will make every effort to be open minded to the possibilities of what this ministry has to offer.

\* NOTE: All information obtained through questionnaires and surveys will remain anonymous and I am aware that portions will be included in this doctoral project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date:



## APPENDIX C

### Pre-Project Questionnaire

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. Highest Level of Education Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ High School \_\_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate

4. How many times per month do you attend Sunday morning worship? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many times per month do you attend Wednesday Bible Study? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many times per month do you attend Sunday school? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How important is it to you to be an official member of the church?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. How important is it to you to be an active participant in ministry by using your gifts?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. How important is it to you to attend worship service on a regular basis?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. If you had to rate your "overall" opinion of our worship services, how would you rate it?

(1= poor 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

11. How likely are you to invite someone to attend a Sunday morning worship service?

(1= not at all 10= very likely)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

12. The word we receive on Sundays is relevant to my needs and real life situations.

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

13. How import is it for you to support this ministry with your financial gifts?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

14. How important is it for you to have an understanding of the church's business matters?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

15. How important is it for you to have a voice in the church's business meetings?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX D**  
**Project Questionnaire (Bible Study #1)**  
**(From Acts 2:42-47)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24      \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29      \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34      \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male      \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. Prior to this project, how many times per month do you attend Bible study? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In your opinion, how important is salvation to the millennial generation?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. In your opinion, how important is fellowship and sharing in meals to the millennial?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. In your opinion, how important is corporate prayer to the millennial?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. In your opinion, how important is personal prayer time to the millennial?

(1= not important 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. Although we are Christians and we share the same Lord Jesus, do you agree that there is division within the Lord's Church?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. In your opinion, has there been a decrease in reverence for spiritual authority?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. In your opinion, most millennials participate in ministry out of obligation.

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

11. Speaking for yourself, YOU participate in ministry out of obligation.

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

12. There were certain elements at the foundation of the early church. Are you at all interested in establishing those elements in THIS church?

(1= not interested 10= very interested)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX E**  
**Project Questionnaire (Bible Study #2)**  
**(From Romans 12)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. In your opinion, do you think that the millennial generation is copying the behavior of the world?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. In your opinion, do you think that the millennial would be more apt to participate in church if the church was not so “churchy”?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. Do you personally feel that you are accepted as a part of THIS Body of Christ?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. Are you an “active” participant within THIS Body of Christ?

(1= not at all 10= very active)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. Do you have a clear understanding of the part you play (your function) with THIS Body of Christ?

(1= not at all 10= fully understand)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. Presently, how often do use your gifts within THIS Body of Christ?

(1= not at all 10= very often)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. Going forward, how willing are you to use your gifts with THIS Body of Christ?

(1= not at all 10= more than willing)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. Do you honestly feel that there is a place for you to use your gifts within THIS Body of Christ?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

11. How comfortable are you with someone else other than Pastor teaching the class?

(1= not at all 10= very comfortable)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX F**  
**Project Questionnaire (Bible Study #3)**  
**(From Hebrews 10:19-25)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. In your opinion, do you think the importance of attending church has changed over time? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. In the past, the Church has been the cornerstone of the community. Do you think the same rings true in today's society? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. Can you honestly say that you enter THIS place of worship for the purpose of getting in the presence of the Lord? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. When you come to THIS church, can you say that you have opportunities to experience real worship? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. Can you say that this church is equipped to help you develop your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. In your opinion, is it really necessary to attend church service on a regular basis"? (1= not at all 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. Going forward, how willing are you to encourage another millennial to attend church service? (1= not at all 10= more than willing)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. Do you honestly feel that attending church has made a difference in YOUR life? (1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX G**  
**Project Questionnaire (Bible Study #3)**  
**(From Hebrews 10:19-25) (Mature)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 40-49    \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59    \_\_\_\_\_ 60-69    \_\_\_\_\_ 70 +

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. In your opinion, do you think the importance of attending church has changed over time? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. In the past, the Church has been the cornerstone of the community. Do you think the same rings true in today's society? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. Can you honestly say that you enter THIS place of worship for the purpose of getting in the presence of the Lord? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. When you come to THIS church, can you say that you have opportunities to experience real worship? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. Can you say that this church is equipped to help you develop your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. In your opinion, is it really necessary to attend church service on a regular basis?" (1= not at all 10= very important)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. Going forward, how willing are you to encourage someone else to attend church service? (1= not at all 10= more than willing)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. Do you honestly feel that attending church has made a difference in YOUR life? (1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX H**  
**Questions for the Millennial Open Forum**  
**“The Mature Versus The Millennial”**

1. What are your thoughts about the state of our church? Do you feel that the needs of those in attendance are being met? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel that the millennial generation has a place in this church? If no, why not?
3. Do you feel that the millennial generation has a voice in this church? If no, why do feel this way?
4. Do you feel that the millennial generation is accepted by the older generation? If no, give examples.
5. In your opinion, what would need to happen in order to bridge the gap between the millennial generation and the older generation?
6. As a millennial member of this church, what type of changes do you feel are needed to help our church operate at its greatest potential?

**APPENDIX I**  
**Project Questionnaire (Open Forum - Millennial)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. In your opinion, after tonight's session, do you feel that the millennial voice was heard?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. In your opinion, do you feel that tonight's forum will help bridge the gap in any way between the millennials and the mature generations?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. In your opinion, can you say that the open forum was impactful to those in attendance?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. In your opinion, can you say that YOU feel a part of the overall "Team?"

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. In your opinion, do you think that the millennials of this church are accepted by the older generation?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. As a result of this forum, do you have a better attitude toward ministry?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. As a result of this forum, will you agree to give working in ministry a chance?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. As a result of this forum, will you make an effort to connect in a greater way with those of the mature generations?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX J**  
**Project Questionnaire (Open Forum - Mature)**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 \_\_\_\_\_ 60-69 \_\_\_\_\_ 70 +

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. In your opinion, after tonight's session, do you feel that you understand the needs of the millennial?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. In your opinion, do you feel that tonight's forum will help bridge the gap in any way between the millennials and the mature generations?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. In your opinion, can you say that the open forum was impactful to those in attendance?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. In your opinion, do you feel that the millennials clearly explained their thoughts about ministry?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. In your opinion, do you look at the millennials as a part of this team?

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. As a result of this forum, would you say that your eyes were opened in some way?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. As a result of this forum, do you have a better understanding of the role YOU play in assisting the millennial in becoming an active part of ministry?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. As a result of this forum, will you make an effort to connect in a greater way with those of the millennial generations?

(1= not at all 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10



**APPENDIX K**  
**Project Questionnaire**  
**Outreach Evaluation Tool**

1. What is your age range? \_\_\_\_\_ 20-24    \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29    \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34    \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. Do you participate in the outreach project in any way? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. If you did NOT participate, which answer is close to your reason?  
 a. Other Plans    b. Not Interested    c. Did not see importance    d. Simply Forgot
5. As it relates to outreach projects, would you seriously commit to doing outreach ministry at least once per month?  
 (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
6. Do you agree that outreach ministry is a needed component of ministry that all age groups should play a part?  
 (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
7. In order to pique interest, how important is the location/type of the outreach project to the millennial?  
 (1= not important 10= very important)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
8. As a millennial, what kind of impact did this outreach project have upon you?  
 (1= none at all 10= extreme impact)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
9. In your opinion, what do you think the apprehensions are of participation in outreach ministry for most millennials?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
10. What would be your suggestions for future outreach ministry projects?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX L**  
**Project Questionnaire**  
**Fellowship Evaluation Tool**

1. What is your age range?    \_\_\_\_ 20-24    \_\_\_\_ 25-29    \_\_\_\_ 30-34    \_\_\_\_ 35-39
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. As it relates to the evening of fellowship, would you agree that monthly fellowship is a necessary component of ministry that all age groups should carve out time to engage in?  
 (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
4. Do you agree that fellowship is a needed component of ministry that all age groups should play a part?  
 (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
5. In order to pique interest, how important is the location of the fellowship to the millennial?  
 (1= not important 10= very important)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
6. As a millennial, what kind of impact did this evening have upon you (if any)?  
 (1= none at all 10= extreme impact)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
7. Do you feel that fellowship at a different location would have had a greater impact?  
 (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
8. How willing were you to participate in this fellowship?  
 (1= none at all 10= more than willing)  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
9. In your opinion, what do you think the apprehensions are of participation in fellowship outings for most millennials?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
10. What would be your suggestions for future fellowship outings?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX M

### Post-Project Questionnaire

1. What is your age range? \_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. How many Bible study sessions did you attend during this project? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Prior to this project, how likely is it for you to take notes during Bible study?  
(1= not at all 10= very likely)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
5. Prior to this project, how likely is it for you to study lesson prior to attending?  
(1= not at all 10= very likely)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
6. Post-project, how likely is it for you to take notes during Bible study?  
(1= not at all 10= very likely)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
7. Post-project, how likely is it for you to study lesson prior to attending?  
(1= not at all 10= very likely)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
8. Post-project, how important is it to you to attend Bible study on a regular basis?  
(1= not important 10= very important)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
9. How would you rate your “overall” opinion of this new Bible Study format?  
(1= poor 10= excellent)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
10. If we would continue this new format, how likely are you to invite someone to attend Bible Study? (1= not at all 10= very likely)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
11. The word we received on Wednesdays was relevant to my needs and real life situations. (1= disagree 10= strongly agree)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
12. Post-project, how important is it to you to take advantage of all of the teaching opportunities, workshops and seminars held at Emmanuel?  
(1= not important 10= very important)
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

13. The Word received on Wednesday during this project has greatly enriched my spiritual life and caused me to grow spiritually.

(1= disagree 10= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

14. Post-project, how likely are you to participate more in ministry?

(1= unlikely 5= more likely 10= very likely)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

15. After this project, how likely are you to encourage another millennial to become more active in ministry? (1= not at all 10= very likely)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

16. After participating in this project, what are your thoughts regarding the format of our worship services?

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17. After participating in this project, what are your thoughts regarding small group studies versus corporate Bible study?

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18. After participating in this project, what are your thoughts regarding peer teachers versus “minister only” teaching?

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19. After participating in this project, what are your thoughts regarding outreach ministry?

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20. After participating in this project, what are your thoughts about participating in outreach ministry along with the older generation?

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21. After participating in this project, can you say that you better understand the significance of church participation? If no, why not?

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## APPENDIX N

### Post-Project Facilitator Evaluation

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24      \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29      \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34      \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male      \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. How well did the facilitator explain the purpose of this project?

(1= not at all 10= extremely well)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. How well was the problem and the goals of the project explained?

(1= not at all 10= extremely well)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. How well organized was the facilitator for this project?

(1= not at all 10= extremely well)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. How would you rate the facilitator's knowledge of material presented?

(1= poor 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. How would you rate the facilitator's method of teaching the subject matter?

(1= poor 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. How would you rate the facilitator's enthusiasm concerning subject matter?

(1= poor 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. How would you rate the facilitator's enthusiasm about the overall project?

(1= poor 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. How well did the facilitator successfully engage and maintain the attention of the millennials of this project?

(1= not well 10= extremely well)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

11. If you had to rate the overall performance of the facilitator during this project, how would you rate her?

(1= needs improvement 10= excellent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

12. Because of this facilitator's project presentation, I have a better understanding of the role I play as a millennial in ministry?

(1= disagree 5= strongly agree)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**APPENDIX O**  
**Post-Project Questionnaire #2**

1. What is your age range?

\_\_\_\_\_ 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 \_\_\_\_\_ 60-69 \_\_\_\_\_ 70 +

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. How many times per month do you attend Sunday morning worship? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many times per month do you attend Wednesday Bible Study? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many times per month do you attend Sunday school? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Can you say that you are an active participant in this church? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How impactful were sermons from Worship Wednesday?

(1= not at all 10= very impactful)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. Did the sermons influence you to become more active in our church?

(1= not at all 10= very influential)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

9. Did the ministry fair have any impact on you becoming more involved in the church?

(1= not at all 10= very impactful)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. Of the following, which were the most influential in becoming more involved in ministry?

(5= Most impactful 1= Least Impactful)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible Study

\_\_\_\_\_ Sermon series

\_\_\_\_\_ Fellowship Outing

\_\_\_\_\_ Outreach Opportunity

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Fair

\_\_\_\_\_ None of the above

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX P

### Facebook Inquiry Millennial Response


I have listed a few of the responses from a Facebook post of one of our millennial students. I have preserved the responses in their original state as written in their own vernacular to preserve their authenticity. Further, for the sake of keeping their friends' identity anonymous, I will simply call them FB Friend.


The Facebook post stated:

“Millennials (age 19-39) Do you attend church? Why or why not? #AskFB Feel free to inbox me if you don't want to share publicly. #NoJudgement #BeHonest #NotADebate #JustAPoll

**FB Friend #1:** No. Grew up in small AMEZ church. Got older and realized it's a money hungry, power driven community depleting, organization. They've forgotten why certain orders or rules or disciplines were written. It's so far away from the order and so called good Christian like values. Churches should be where the community comes to for refuge from the world, love, help, support... not so much the other way around. Especially when the church isn't giving anything back... just depleting community resources to send money out of the community with no return. I can't stand assessments. Pretty much begging folks for money to pay assessments. Not all churches operate like that. Anyway, led me to religion explorations. I don't consider myself Christian... Haven't for 10 years or so, maybe... somewhere around there. I don't consider myself religious. However, I am very spiritual. I respect religion and religious rituals and believe that fellowship, church or regular religious gathering is important for children. I have found the basics in most religions are the same and it's important for children to have a solid foundation. It is also important for leaders and people of the church to not be so quick to dismiss questions or ideas that children or young people may have about certain religious topics. Questions like well in the Bible it reads in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth but Earth is the name of our planet and we know there are other planets and other universes that are filled with many more so what if our God is just that, OUR God and he sits on a panel with other Gods and even though he just might be the high God couldn't it be possible that there are other Gods a great? Just like we are uniquely made and we are all made in his image and he is our Father, what if our Father has siblings or cousins or come from something that our brains can't quite comprehend. Christianity is an easily manipulative religion. Like man made. Many times in history it was used to manipulate people's way of thinking in order to conquer and control. I'm going to stop here bc I think I've gotten pretty long in my reply. But no, I don't attend church. Mostly just weddings and funerals. I don't mind or

wouldn't mind visiting from time to time just to get a good word and fellowship. I do see Jesus as my brother and during songs and such hear God instead.


**FB Friend #2:** I do (: My dad is a pastor and I have seen the fight my parents go through to keep His name alive and true. I go to church for direction and guidance. Christ is the only thing I can count on and cleave too 

**FB Friend #3:** I did when I lived down South. I honestly haven't found a church up here that I like or feel welcome & that to me is really sad. 

**FB Friend #4:** I do go to church. Not every time the door is open anymore, but when I "feel" like it. I got "church hurt" because I rebelled against the pastors wants and followed what God wanted. When we moved back to kings mountain I found a great church I'm just nervous about getting involved again. I was going Tuesday evenings, Thursday evenings, Sunday mornings, and Sunday nights. Now I go on occasion. My belief and trust in God has not swayed at all, but my trust in man has.

**FB Friend #5:** I got church hurt, at about 3 different churches. There's just a little too much judging and not enough love. God is love and all sin is equal. Two very important factors that are chosen to be skipped over at a lot of churches. I haven't found one that emphasizes the "love thy neighbor" factor enough for me

**FB Friend #6:** I do not. Born and raised attending services with the Church of Christ (John Campbell reformation). When I came out of the closet I had to do a great deal of introspection. Being told I was abomination from the pulpit drive me to the brink of suicide. Poured myself into religious study, every credo and dogma I could find from Western and Eastern cultures. No. One. Agrees. I've seen two churches schism over very different topics and have seen the fall out when congregations pick whose toes they're willing to step on. Further, the modern "love the sinner, hate the sin" does not hold water. As churches accept fellowship from gay individuals the message is "We love you, but please realize that you aren't allowed to date or find a partner." That's not sincere, and honestly hurts more than the folks who tell me I'm going to Hell. At the end of the day, He made me, He'll judge me. In the mean time, I study, I pray, and I treat my fellow man with charity flavored with wisdom.

**FB Friend #7:** lol not a millennial, but I do attend church. I have found it a loving and supportive community that strives to learn and grow together and never stops finding new ways to help our community. We are blessed with ministers and staff who DON'T proclaim to have all the answers but we all are working together towards a common goal. 

**FB Friend #8:** I did, I haven't been in almost a year... I find a lot of flaws and distractions in most systematic churches... I lose sight of the spiritual nourishment



I come to seek... I need to get back there, but i need to rebuild any parts of my relationship with God I may have lost... My focus is one on one

**FB Friend #9:** I don't. I grew up going but our family stopped at age 12. That church had too much politics and rude members. My parents taught us to choose for ourselves and that you can worship anywhere. Being a good person is most of it. So I've never started on my own. Attended some in College and since. I feel like some churches can be fake and political just haven't sought out one to go to.

**FB Friend #10:** To be honest because I have boys to raise and I'm not built to handle this load alone. I need God and the strength from like minded people. No I dislike "church folks" "religion" but those who can help me be lifted when being a mom weighs me down, raising black men weighs me down, being a woman..... So I figured a long time ago that I wouldn't allow people to dictate to me with their personalities when where how and why I go to church.

**FB Friend #11:** I attend church. Have all my life. Since we moved to charlotte, it hasn't been consistent because we are trying to settle our lives. I go to church because I do believe in the story of Christ and it centers me spiritually.

**FB Friend #12:** For real though too many have lost the hunger for relationship with God through Christ! Too much DOING church and not BEING CHRISTIANS according to the Gospel of Christ!!! The only thing that keeps us Christians is the Spirit & the Word!!! We need more of that from the pulpit! Religious rituals is not keeping a soul grounded! Church by-laws, constitutions, and religion ain't saving souls. Too much YOU NEED TO BE THIS WAY OR THAT WAY instead seeking Christ and learn of His way, because He alone IS the way the Truth and the Life. I'm struggling to hold on to church attendance! I need Jesus and the Word!!! Please don't try to transform souls with the ways of man, because it fails! HOW DO I BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST IN A DIVIDED HURTING LOST SOCIETY!

**FB Friend #13:** Yes because I like the fellowship. My church is definitely a different type than I grew up with, though, and that's why I'm happy to be a part of it.

**FB Friend #14:** I was raised in the church and a Christian home. I am a Christian and believe as a Christian that staying connected to the body of Christ keeps you grounded in your faith. I have a child now and raising him to do the same. Raise up a child in the way that he shall go and he will not depart from it. I attended a variety of churches in Raleigh while at NCSU and joined a church in Greenville when I went to ECU. Not saying I am perfect and I still make mistakes, but going to church helps me learn and grow in my faith and who I need to be.

**FB Friend #15:** I went to church on the regular growing up but I don't attend now unless it's a wedding or a funeral. I don't need church to know how to be a good person or to have a sense of community.

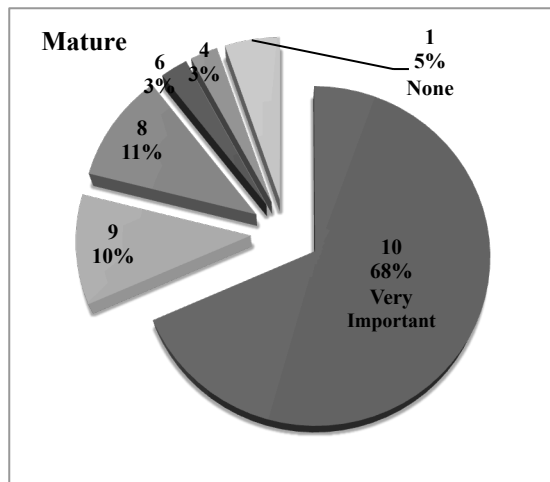
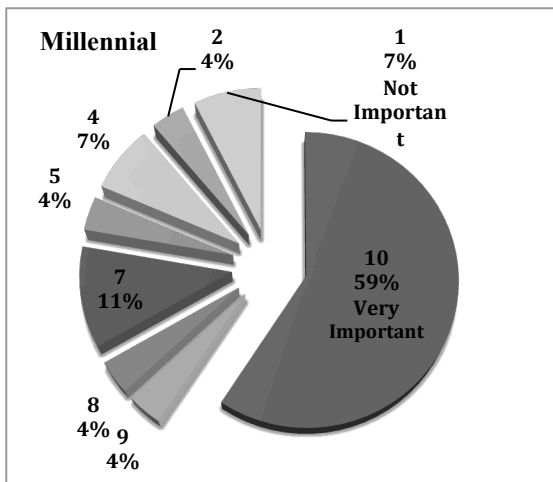
**FB Friend #16:** 😞 :( We have church at home as a family. This was the subject of our conversation all the way home from Raleigh last night. I thought it was just our "pocket" culture up here in the mountains, but I guess we're not the only ones. We'd love to find a church where the Word is taught, Jesus is the focus (and not judging), and where people don't check their brains at the door and denounce the amazing intricacies of God's science. There is so much division of churches in our county...there are very few functioning bodies of believers here...so many tiny churches of angry "Christians" who can't do any good works or outreach... can you imagine the \$ that could go to help the hungry and those who can't visit a doctor or get the meds they need??? All of those mortgages, all of those electric bills, all of that grounds keeping...such a waste... sadness.

**FB Friend #17:** Great question, although we need to remember that WE ARE the church! We ARE the body. Let's not forget that because when we do; we start pointing fingers at other parts of the body and get distracted. I'm not a millennial, but yes I am part of the church and I meet every weekend to learn more about the word with other.

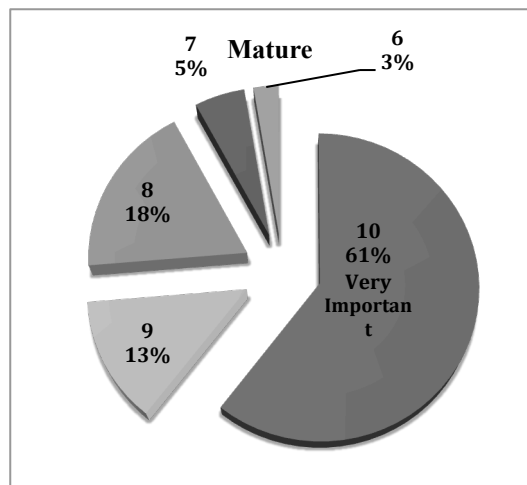
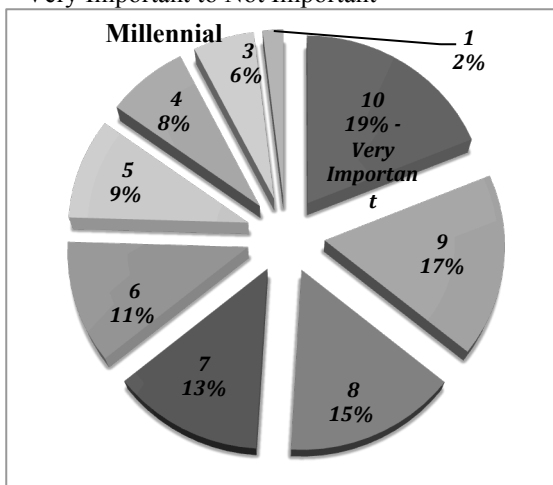
## APPENDIX Q

### Pre Project with Comparison Graphs

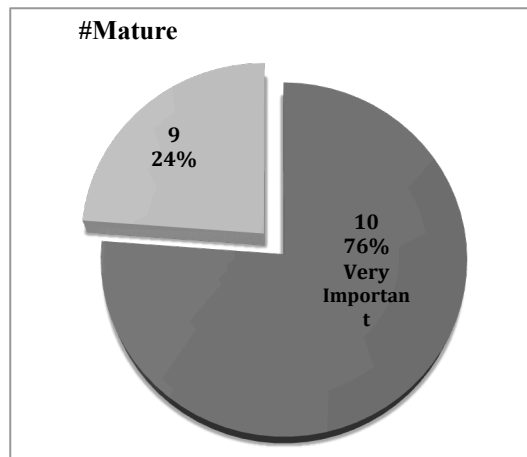
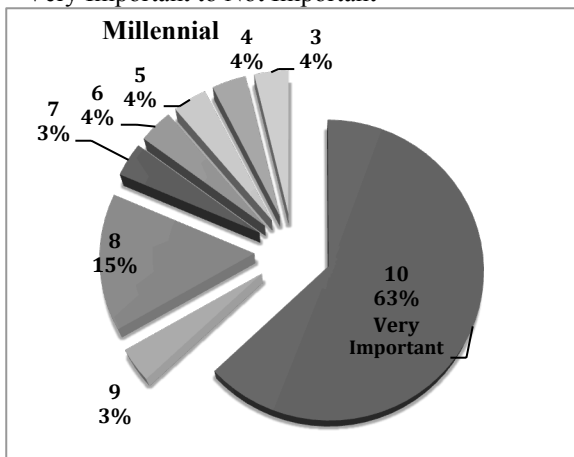
#7 - How important is it to be an official member of the church?  
Very Important to Not At All



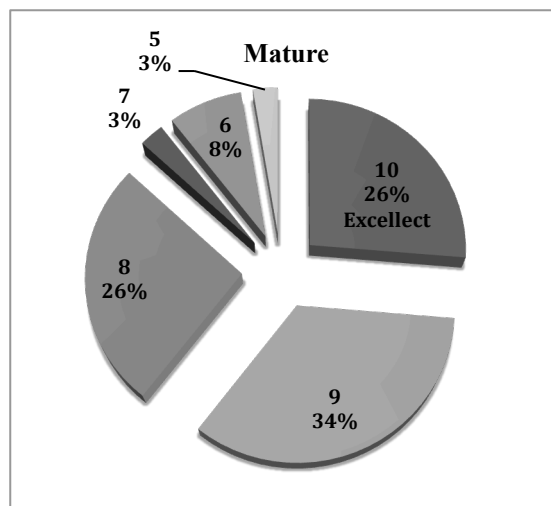
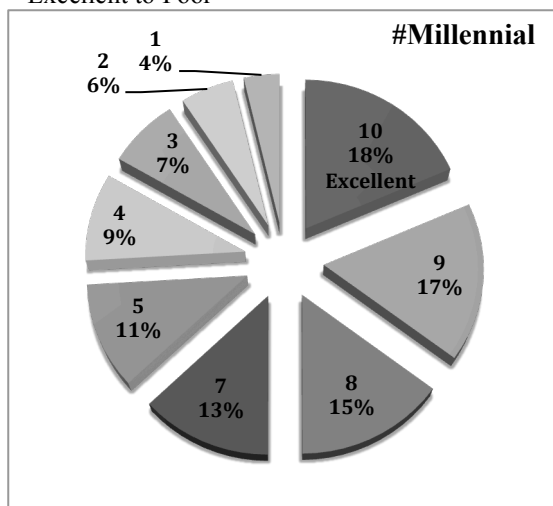
#8 - Importance of Church Participation  
Very Important to Not Important



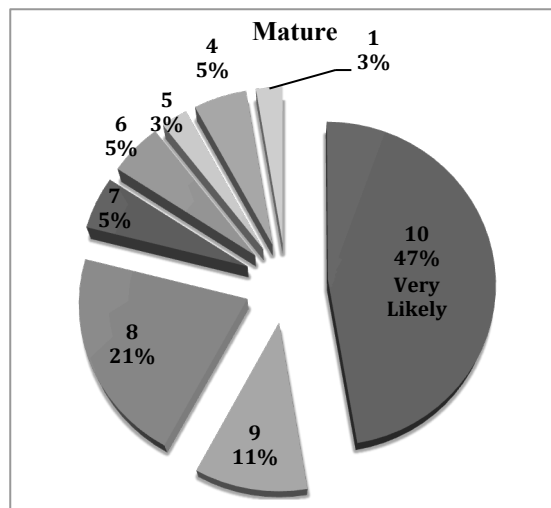
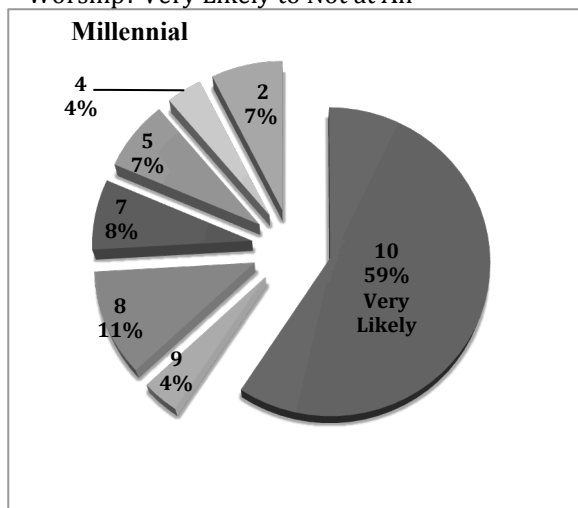
#9 - How Important Is It to Attend Worship Regularly  
Very Important to Not Important



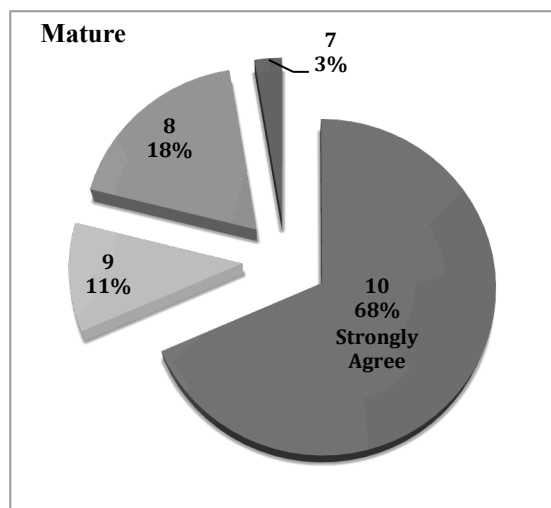
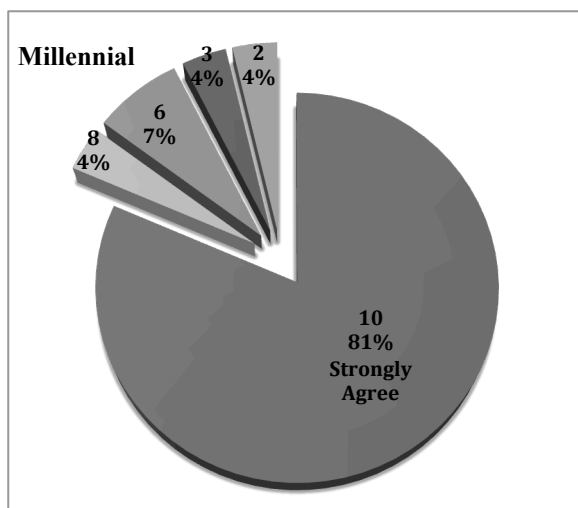
#10 - Overall Opinion of Worship in this Church.  
Excellent to Poor



#11 - How Likely Are You to Invite Someone to  
Worship? Very Likely to Not at All

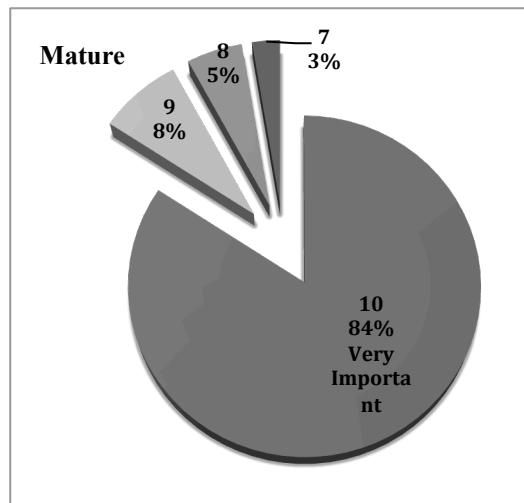
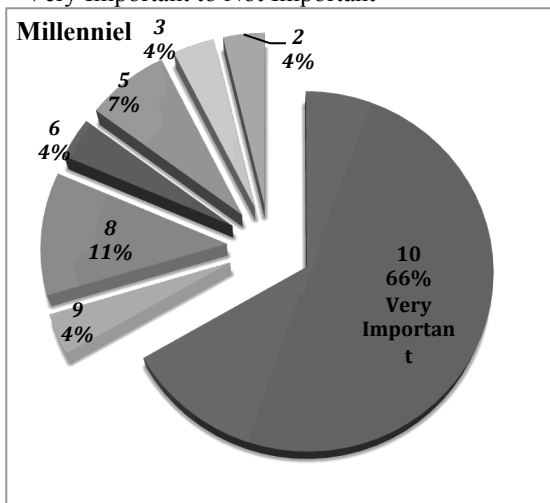


#12 - Is the Word Received on Sundays Relevant to my Needs?  
Strongly Agree to Disagree



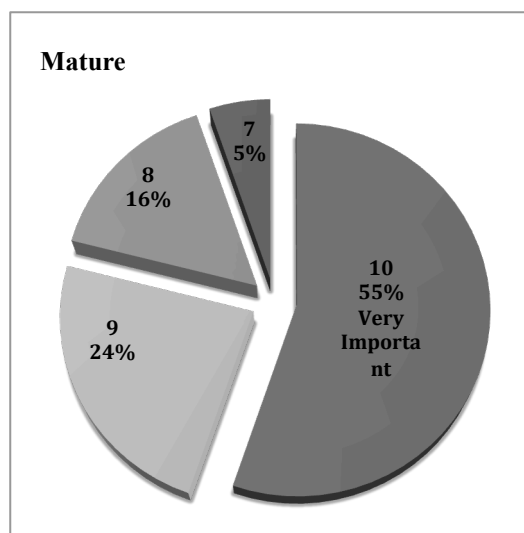
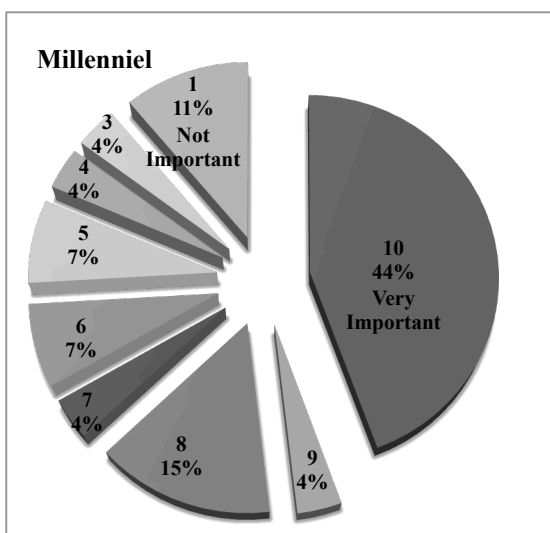
#13 - How important is it to support ministry financially?

Very Important to Not Important



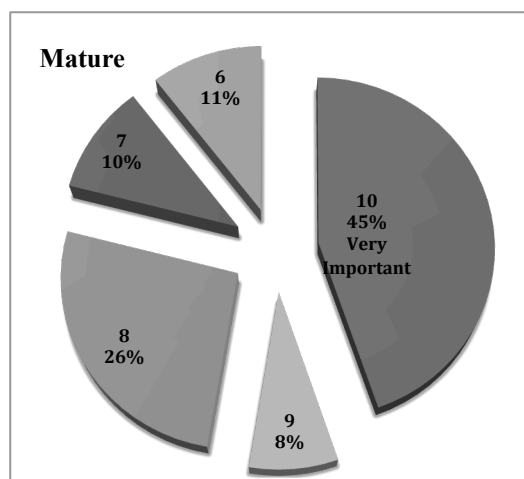
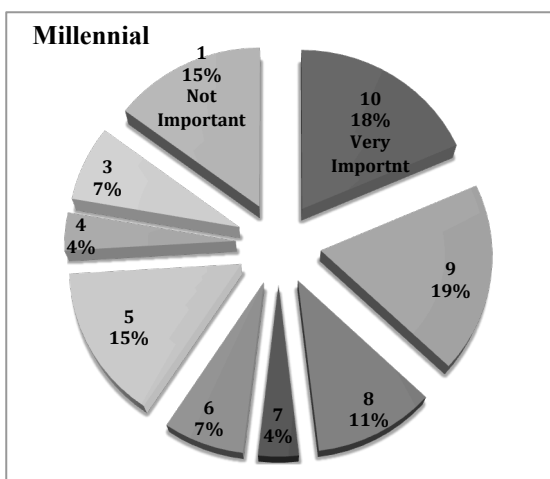
#14 - How Important is it to understand business of Church

Very Important to Not Important



#15 - How Important is it to have a voice in business matters?

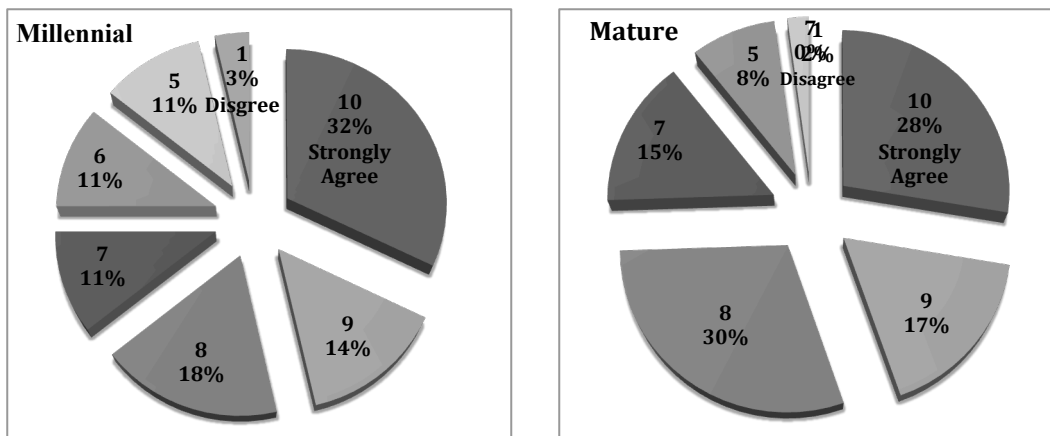
Very Important to Not Important



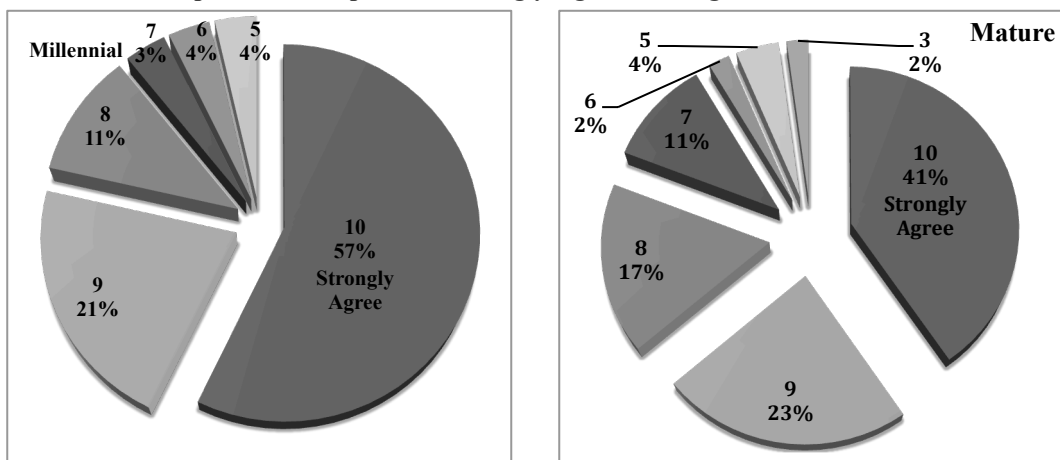
## APPENDIX R

### Millennial vs. Mature Open Forum

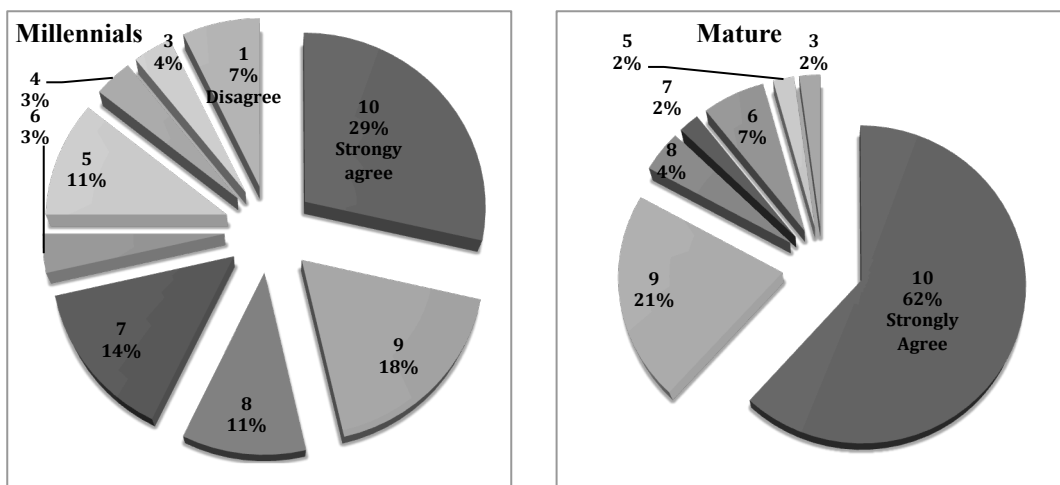
**#4 – Did this forum help bridge the gap? Strongly Agree to Disagree**



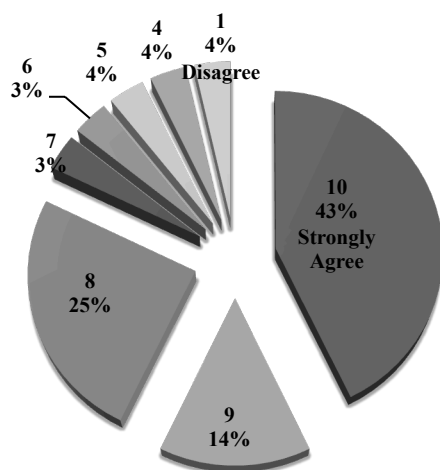
**#5 - Was the open forum impactful? Strongly Agree to Disagree**



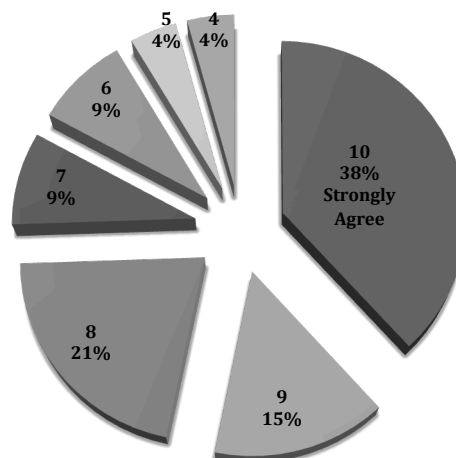
**#6 – Are millennials accepted as a part of the team? Strongly Agree to Disagree**



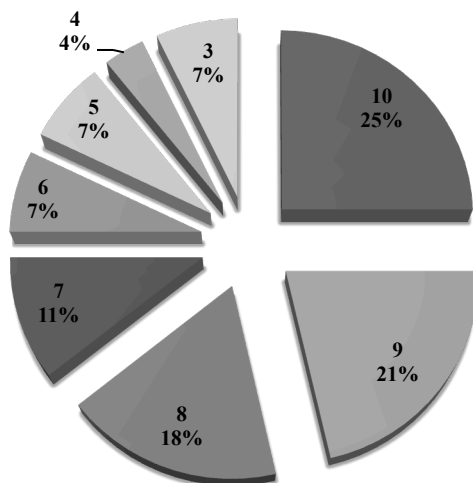
#3 - Was the Millennial Voice Heard



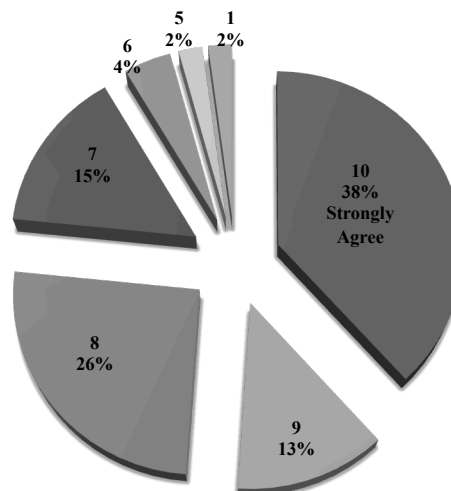
#3 - Do you feel you now understand the needs of the millennial member?



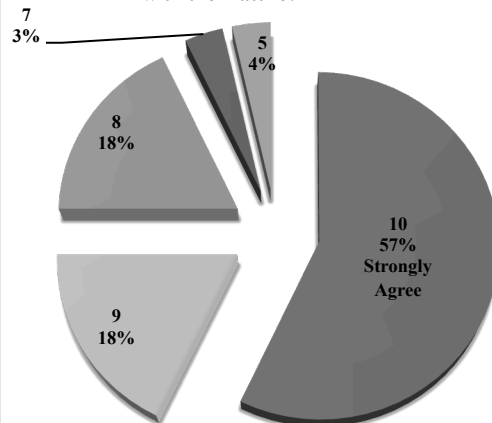
Millennial: After forum, do you have better attitude toward ministry?



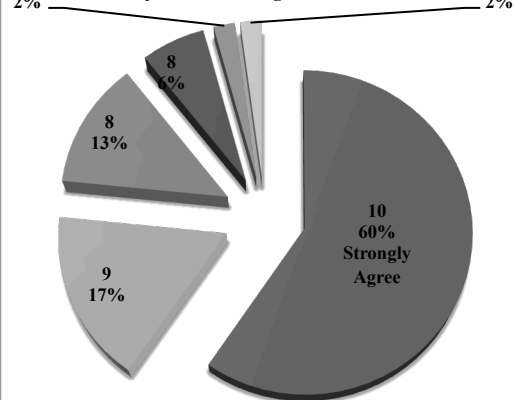
Mature: Would you say your eyes were opened in some way?



Millennial: Will you make an effort to connect with the mature?



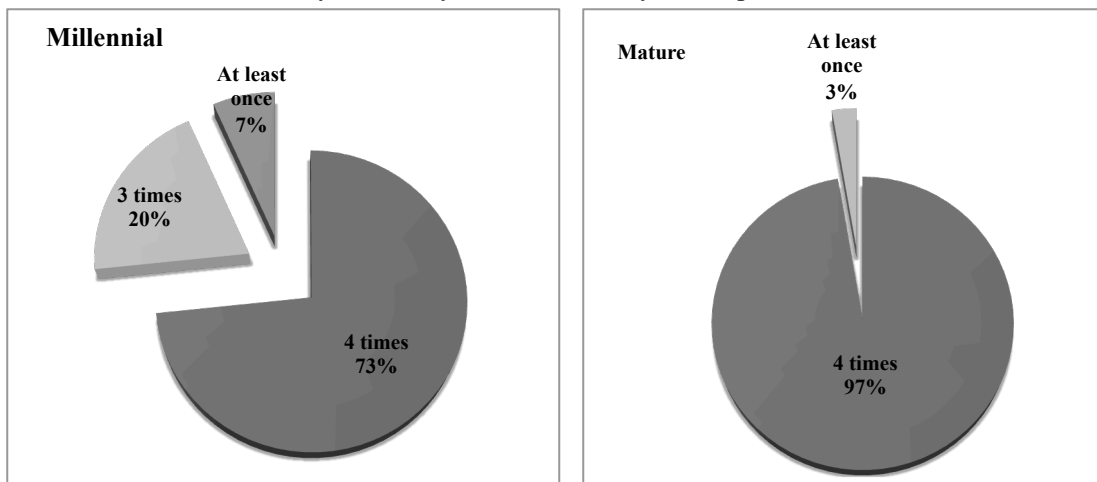
Will you make an effort to connect in a greater way the millennial generation?



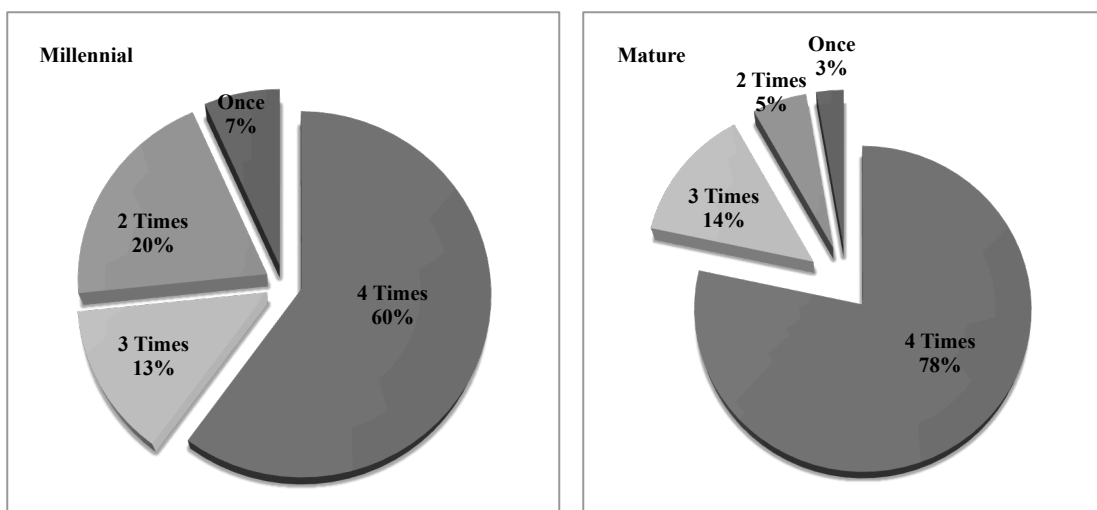
## APPENDIX S

### Post Project Survey

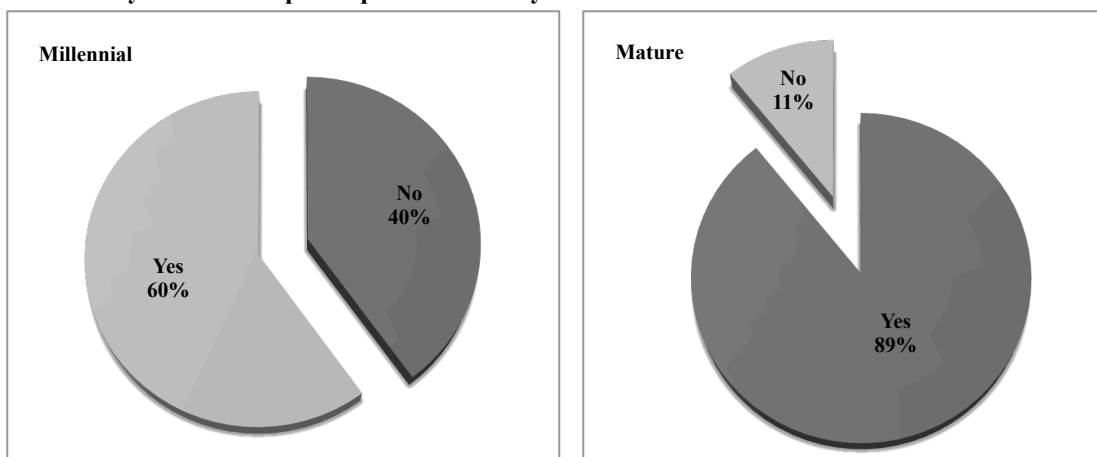
#### #3 - Millennial: How many times do you attend Sunday worship?



#### #4 – How many times do you attend Bible study within the month?

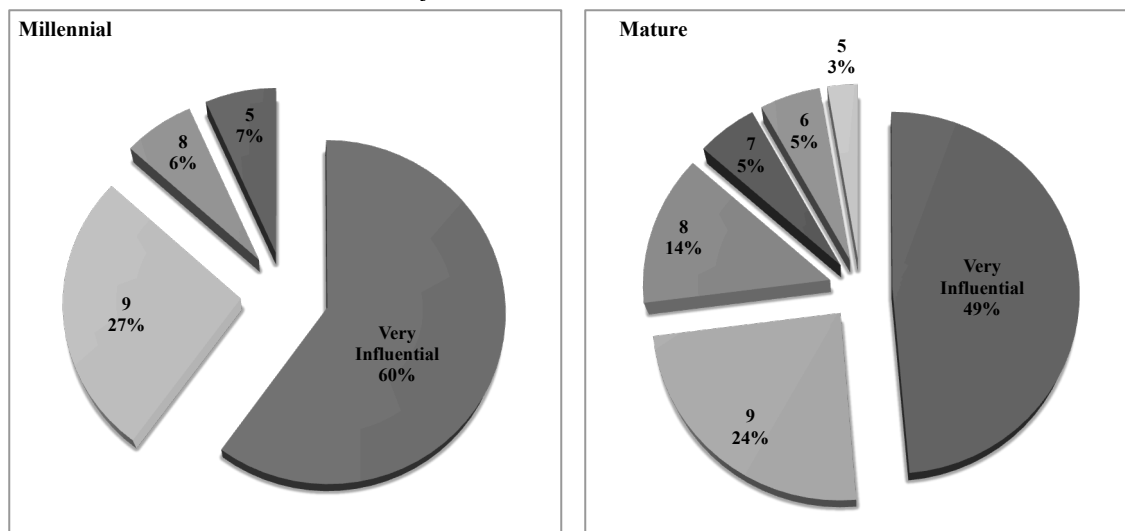


#### #6 – Are you an active participant in ministry?

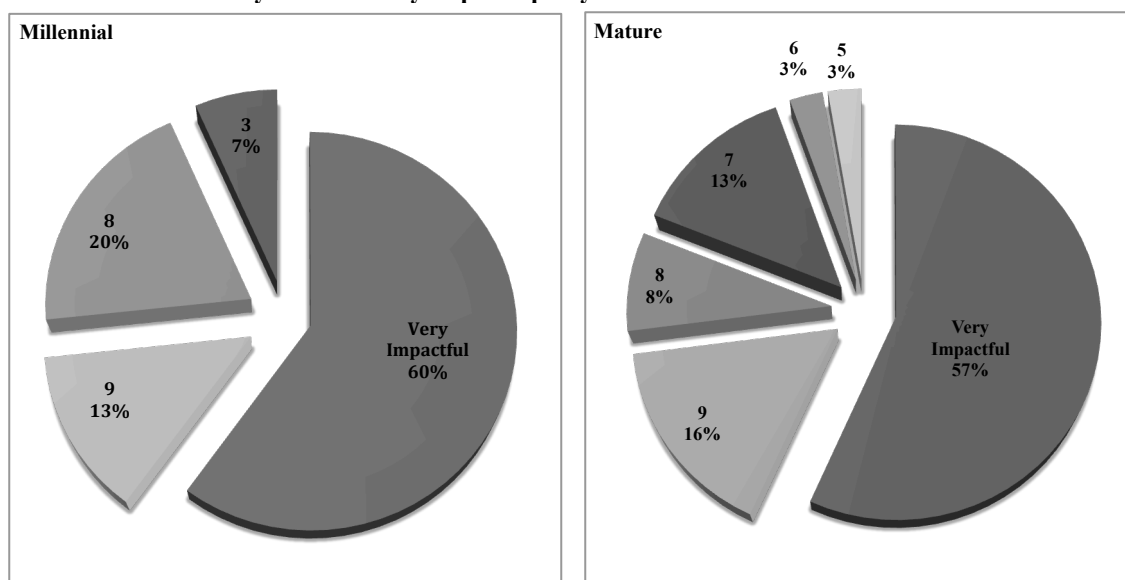




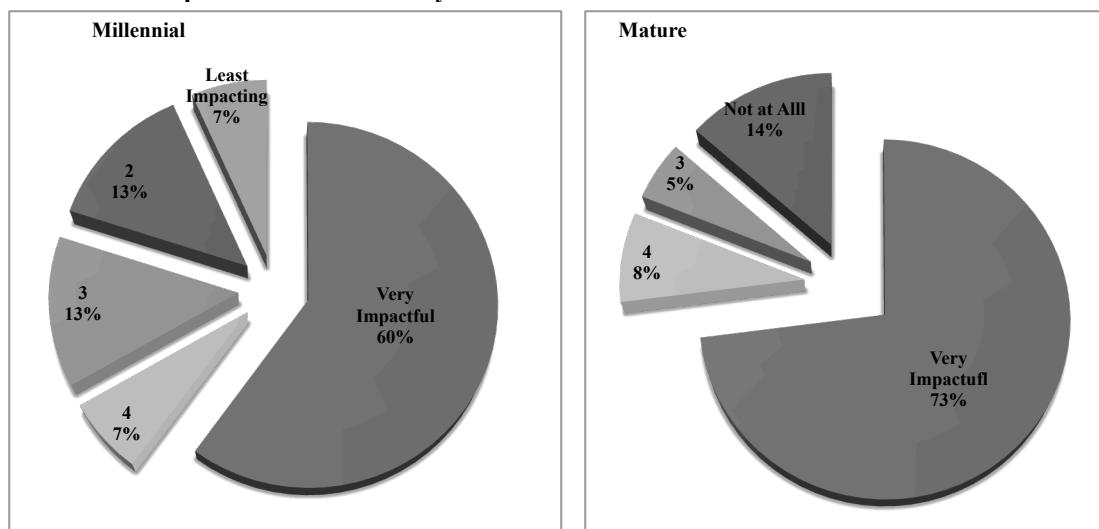
**#8 – Did the sermon series influence you to become more active?**



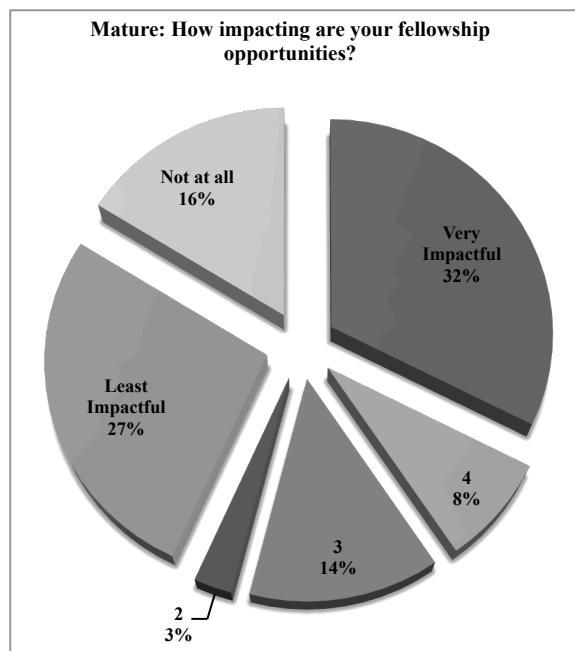
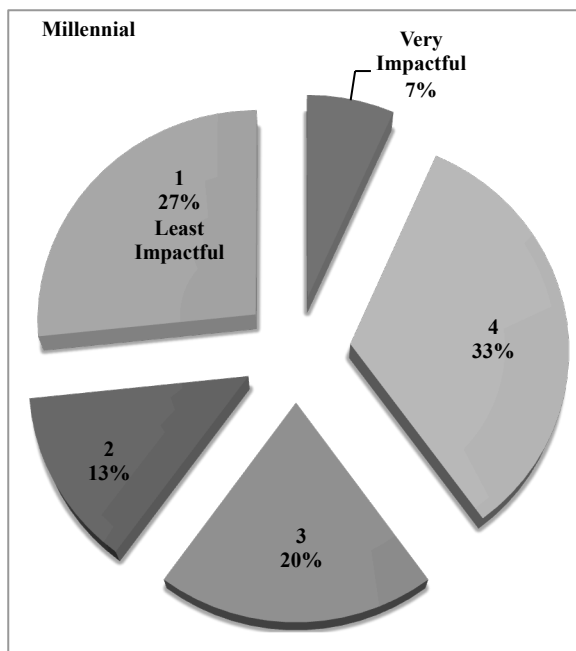
**#9 – Did the ministry fair have any impact upon you to become more active?**



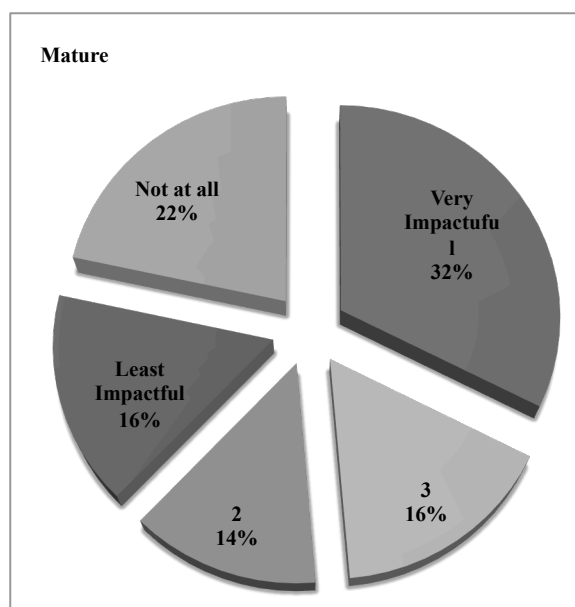
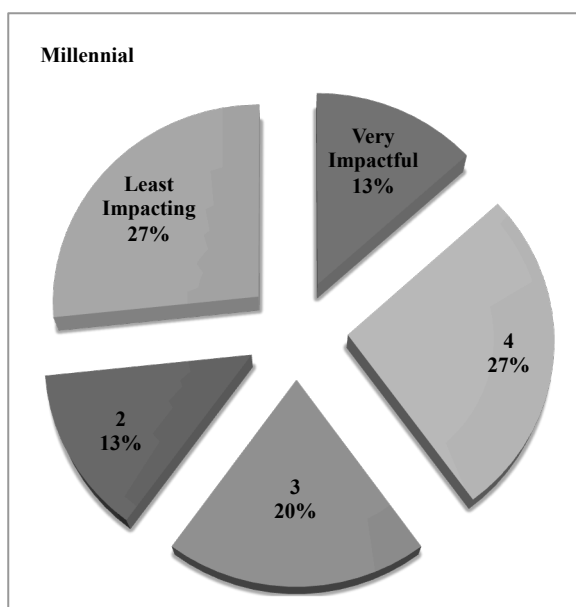
**#10 – How impactful was Bible study?**



**#10a – How impactful was the fellowship outing? On a scale from 1 to 5**



**#10b – How impactful was the Outreach Project? On a scale from 1 to 5**



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