Fulfilling the Commission:
Purposefully Evangelizing, Assimilating, and Integrating Millennials
Into Today's Church

by

Derick Brennan

Date: April 27, 2015

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Dr. Craig Hill
D.Min. Director

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
in the Divinity School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Dedication

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

To my wife, Alberta Byrd Brennan, my son, David Matthew Brennan, and my mother, the late Jean Carol Brennan. Your love is the source of my strength, hope, joy, and dreams.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

To my family, Keith Brennan, Darla Brennan, Micah Brennan, Juliette Byrd, Mamie Fains, and countless others, your love, prayers, and encouragement have made this possible.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

To my North Carolina Ancestors and Family
From slaves and sharecroppers in the field to a scholar at Duke University.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

To Rev. Dr. Gus Roman, thank you for being an exhorter, mentor, and friend. Finally, to my Canaan Baptist Church Family, God bless you for your sacrifice, patience, love for God, and love for me.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”
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THESIS INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will attempt to affirm that the centrality of evangelistic practice focused on young adults (ages 18-34) is both a fulfillment of the Church’s call to mission and the means to the production of a more vital church. The systematic evangelism, assimilation, and integration of young adults benefit the individual, the family, and the local and universal Church.

All church subgroups, including young adults, supply numerous intangibles to the vitality of a congregation. However, young adults provide a particularly significant element that constitutes the vitality of any given congregation. This the case for several reasons, first, young adults, bring the assets of energy, spiritual gifts, younger families, new ideas, and a potential harvest field of non-Christian acquaintances. Furthermore, a dearth of young adults undermines the church’s witness as an inclusive body for all generations. As the aging congregants die without a generation of faith heirs, it jeopardizes the future of many congregations. To date, I have found very few resources that have an in-depth focus on evangelizing and integrating the Millennial segment. My thesis will assist in filling this void.

The opening chapter will provide greater clarity of the reasons why the church’s 18-34-year-old demographic and the young adult mission field are shrinking. The section will highlight the forces within and outside of the church that are resulting in young adults avoiding the church or leaving the church. These effects include negative perceptions of the church including the church being an organized religion, biased against women, anti-LGBT, and arrogantly exclusive. Other challenges are societal including church irrelevance, family redefinition, economic instability, and other competing interests.

Next, the thesis will establish a theological basis for evangelizing, retrieving and assimilating young adults into existing congregations. The theological foundation for such an
initiative will be found in Jesus’ teachings on the Lost Sheep, the Commissioning of the Disciples, and his empowering the Apostles for Missions. As these texts will reveal the advantages of systematically targeting non-Christian and non-church going Christian, young adults from outside of the church are many. The witness began in the nearest geography and spread outward, which may serve as a template for contemporary community evangelism. Several other advantages to targeting 18-34-year-olds in from local community include 1) tapping into a new mission field, 2) having a greater witness to neighbors because other neighbors are a part of the church, 3) facilitating more authentic fellowship in and out of the church, 4) increasing the pool of ministry volunteers, because of a reduced commute time, and 5) strengthening the bonds between the church and the community for more effective partnership.

The third chapter identifies several best practices of evangelism and model churches based on a comprehensive 2010 study produced by Faith Communities Today. These practices and churches are relatively successful in drawing and retaining 18-34-year-olds because there is a magnetism that is alluring to the emerging generation. This paper will chronicle and codify the myriad of factors that should be considered when evangelizing young adults including the emotional, social, and personal motives. This section will also include a plan that outlines the preparation, planning, execution, and measurement of evangelism efficacy.

Next, the thesis will be dedicated to the best practices of assimilating and integrating young adults into the church’s spiritual formation processes, ministry service roles, and leadership positions. In this section, the paper will address the young adults that are currently a part of congregations but are not consistently active or entirely vested. The desired outcome will be to orientate new young adults while re-orientating existing young adult members who are not fully active. Relevance is the major challenge, and this chapter will emphasize the necessity of
congregations being intentional about the value, privileges, and responsibilities of membership and leadership. The emphasis will be 1) Illustrating the temporal and eternal relevance of life in Christ, 2) teaching the importance of being a consistently active disciple in the local family of faith and the universal kingdom, 3) sharing a broader scope of Christianity including both a disciple’s privileges and responsibilities, 4) fostering a healthy environment of intergenerational believers, and 5) enlisting young adult participation as the church attempts to transform the spiritual lives of local individuals, families, and communities.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a test church, the Canaan Baptist Church, whose young adult segment has been significantly impacted by the challenges noted above. Canaan’s young adult demographic is the smallest in the church as attested by internal statistics and a Church Planning Report. With around 50 active individuals, this subdivision represents less than 5 percent of the congregation. In response, the church has created a viable strategic initiative purposefully to target young adults for evangelism, reorientation, assimilation and integration. The strategy is based on the best practices of the other churches, a congregational survey, focus groups, and a census analysis of the immediate zip code.
CHAPTER 1

CHURCHES ARE STRUGGLING TO ATTRACT YOUNG ADULT OUTSIDERS
AND
TO KEEP YOUNG ADULT INSIDERS

Introduction
The contemporary American church is in an epic struggle to evangelize, assimilate, and integrate young adults ages 18-34-years-old as members and disciples. Those in this age demographic are also referred to as Millennials, Mosaics, Generation Y, and the Emerging Generation. There are a multitude of issues within and outside of the church that are contributing to the challenge. This chapter will provide an overview of the causes that are contributing to the church’s lack of influence and relevance for the Millennial generation both those outside of the church and inside the church. For every issue introduced, there will be a briefly suggested response for churches dealing with that particular problem. This chapter will also provide a compelling reason for every church to be intentional about developing and executing a plan to target young adults for evangelism and retrieval efforts. This chapter will establish the foundation for the rest of this thesis which includes chapters on theology for evangelizing young adults, best practice churches, strategies for assimilation and a test case church.

Struggling To Attract Outsiders

According to the work of David Kinnaman, the “Outsiders” are those young adults who may have an awareness of Christianity and the church, but have rarely, if ever been introduced to the teachings or spiritual formation practices that distinguish Christianity from other religions or organizations. This is a growing demographic. As Kinnaman writes:

There are about twenty-four million outsiders in this country who are ages sixteen to twenty nine. …Each generation contains more than the last, which helps explain their growing influence. For instance, outsiders make up one-quarter of boomers (ages forty-two to sixty) and Elders ages (sixty-one-plus). However, among adult Mosaic and
Busters, more than one third are part of this category, a number that increases to two-fifths of sixteen to twenty-nine-year-olds.¹

According to a study conducted by Angie Meisnner, when asked, “How do you think/feel about the Christian Church?” the responses were:

55% of participants answered with negative comments, 23% gave neutral comments, and 15% did not answer, leaving 7% giving positive comments regarding the Christian Church. Participants were then asked how they thought/felt about Christians. Forty-seven percent of participants responded that Christians are “normal,” 20% said “judgmental,” 17% said Christians are nice or kind, 10% said Christians are okay as long as they keep their beliefs to themselves, and the remaining 7% did not answer. In other words, 20% of participants view Christians negatively, 57% neutrally, and 17% positively.²

When logging the world’s perceptions of Christians, these statistics could be exhausted and never provide an entirely accurate portrait of an outsider’s belief about the church. For many outsiders’ opinions are based on their limited personal encounters with Christians, media portrayals, and occasional church visits for funerals, weddings or other programs. Outsiders are unaware of the myriad factors that must be weighed when making an assessment of Christianity. Anyone can claim the title of “Christian”, but only God knows who are God’s daughters and sons. As a group, Christians are not homogenous, but an eclectic mix of personalities, beliefs, mentalities, and behaviors. Individually, Christians are fallen and broken people who are capable of both the best and worst of behaviors. Christians have the potential to evolve with time and to gradually become more like Christ in word and deed paling in comparison to their former selves. If opinion and reality are two sides of the same coin, then Christians individually and collectively may be a hybrid of every adjective listed above. In this light, the negative image of


Christians is a great concern because it may make it increasingly difficult for believers to share the good news of Jesus. Misleading perceptions potentially sideline Christianity as an alternative voice in the public discourse that influences culture’s direction.

Though it is impossible to supply an accurate synopsis of what it means to be a Christian, by no means should churches, leaders, and believers ignore the images that are present in the minds of outsiders. A far greater worry is the impact of the Christian’s image on the image of Christ. For the believer, it should be untenable that the value of Jesus’ sacrifice and all of the intangible advantages of a relationship with Him would be diluted by the public’s misperception of his servants.

For the Millennial generation, such distorted images weaken the appeal of Christ and the value of Christian beliefs and lifestyles as a viable alternative to other religious offerings. Consequently, many 18-34-year-olds are opting to be religiously unaffiliated or brand themselves as being “nones.”

“What are the nones? The short answer is that they are the religiously unaffiliated. When asked about their religion, they did not answer ‘Baptist’ or ‘Catholic’ or any other defined faith. They picked a new category: none” In the past, churches and leaders could ignore these statistics because these same “nones” would eventually come around when they entered a new life phase such as marriage or parenting. Alternatively, perhaps in the midst of personal or family crisis the church would be a place of refuge. However, current trends are refuting these assumptions. “The number of Americans who do not identify with any

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http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLyHCXMwY2BQSDQ0AzZTLY1TDFNMzC2SLBONDICTb1NEM9M0s5Qks1SUDWFJpbmbEANTap4og6vba4izhy5oWXM8dBAjHnRuCLC3ZmpuKMbAmwha_J1XAt4kliLBoGCRYm4JLHOSjQxSjUbMTLU2SzlBddRPDIDQjS_NkAPmEJks.

4 Ibid
religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling." The “nones” may not be as much anti-Jesus as they are anti-Christian and anti-church.

Though there are many reasons, four views, in particular, may be propelling the dissonance between Jesus’ image and the image of his church and followers. For many Millennial outsiders, Christianity, as practiced by today’s church, is 1) an organized religion, 2) inequitable for women, 3) biased against the LBGT community and 4) arrogantly exclusive.

What follows is both a description of what propels dissonance and suggestions of ways that the Church can combat such views. Addressing negative perceptions is itself an evangelistic outreach as it renders the Church more invitational to younger generations.

**An Organized Religion**

In her book, Almost Christian Kenda Creasy Dean introduces the challenge of a theologically thin identity in North American churches:

> The National Study of Youth and Religion reveals a theological fault line running underneath American Churches: an adherence to a do-good, feel-good spirituality that has little to do with the Triune God of Christian Tradition and even less to do with loving Jesus Christ enough to follow him into the world. …American congregations…are “almost Christian” -but perhaps not fully, at least not in terms of theology and practice.

Therefore, many young adults brand the church as organized religion. Organized religion implies that the church reflects the whims of people above the intentions of God. For 18-34-year-olds the

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http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLyHCXMrA20DnrRMNDY2STUzN0o2sDRKsTQ2BRjZmaZlAjMgSkoG8KQSnM3lQam1DxRBk31xBnD13QsuZ46CBGPHTpTFom6gYAwuwY5wKAHnFF0s.
“organized religion” tag may hinge on the institutionalization of the church, authority resting with ordained clergy, the celebrity of pastor, and the stigma of being biased and judgmental.

The institutionalization of the church may be a repellent for Generation Y for several reasons. Millennials may chafe at the thought of being subject to the flawed machinations of people where they cede control of their decisions and lifestyles to the pastor, fellow Christians or church doctrine. “No one has ever told me that they are against becoming like Jesus or being conformed to the ways of Jesus; it’s the ways and thinking of the organized church that they don’t want to conform to” writes Dan Kimball. It seems that 18-34-year-olds could not accept their personal freedoms of dress, entertainment, language, or circle of friends being challenged by seemingly provincial thinking or a limited interpretation of the Bible.

Christianity tagged as organized religion is often portrayed as centering on clergy power and leadership organization charts. For previous generations, it was expected that the pastor would ultimately be responsible for every aspect of the church including, worship, congregational care, and stewardship of the physical assets. During those eras, the pastor was one of the most educated persons in the congregation and often had the scheduling flexibility to provide day-to-day oversight. Therefore, members ceding control was a given. However, today’s 18-34-year-old may match or exceed the minister’s education and possess broader vocational experience, thus believing that as stakeholders, they should have equal say in the management of the church.

The organized religion stamp carries the additional baggage of well-known pastors being positioned in the media’s glare as curators of celebrity, success, and personal indulgence. They are often depicted as being more interested in acquiring individual gain rather than serving the

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masses. “Jim Bakker, founder and host of the now infamous *PTL Club* television ministry…with PTL being lampooned as meaning ‘Pass the Loot’ instead of ‘Praise the Lord’.”[^8] Pointing to Bakker as an example of ministry avarice may expose a double standard among young adults. In other areas of their lives, Millennials seem to have a comfort level with the leadership mindset of “me and we,” which means meeting their personal needs as they advance the cause of the organization, yet church outsider young adults seem to believe that a “no cross” line should be drawn at the pulpit. Entertainers, athletes, entrepreneurs, and CEOs are often lauded for their wealth, influence, and raising their organization’s profiles. However, clergy who focus on building and expanding the size and profile of the institution of the church may be derided as publicity hounds or exploiters of the sheep, problematic images that can be associated with the bias against organized religion.

Organized religion may also brand the church with the stigma of being biased and judgmental. Because of historical church teachings, denominational precepts, political and social stances too many churches and Christians are tattooed as the “thou shall nots.” Countless numbers of unsung churches serve their parishioners and communities at large through programs for children, the poor, ex-offenders, and an assortment of other offerings. However, there is still a widespread opinion that the overall church’s base agenda is to condemn and control public behavior through politics and immorality crusades under the banner of Jesus. Such widespread perceptions may be hindering the church’s message to outsider young adults.

In response to the organized religion tag, many millennials interested in Christianity are opting to pursue God in a “do it yourself” manner. Because they have not grown up in church,

many young adults do not see the church as the default-starting place to know Jesus. The lack of experience with the church in conjunction with their negative or neutral opinions about Christians will lead many young adults to seek Christ elsewhere. For many Millennials, technology is the gateway for their news, relationship updates, and entertainment. With technology, there is a perception of control and independent thought because the information seeker decides where to look, what to believe, and whom to consult. Consequently, the Internet and social media may be the primary choice for many in their quest to learn about Jesus. The good news is that there are many Christians, churches, and organizations that are also using technology to introduce Jesus and to advance His mission.

**Inequitable for Women**

The substantiation of the biases against women could be rooted in the contrast between the role of women in the church and the role of women in society. “Women drive most faith participation, with the exception of home churches or house churches. A majority of weekly churchgoers are women (53%). Small groups that meet for prayer or Bible study (60%) and Sunday school programs for adults (59%) are also more likely to be attended by women. Similarly, a majority of church volunteers (57%) are females,” according to the Barna Group. For African American Churches, the statistics for women’s attendance, participation, and support are even higher according to the Pew Research Center’s Religion and Public Life Project. How is it possible that women comprise the majority of active Christians in churches and yet, men dominate the leadership ranks of many congregations and denominations? A 2010 survey polling

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11,000 American churches discovered that 12% of all US congregations had a female as their senior minister. For Mainline Protestant churches it rises to 24%, and for Evangelical congregations it drops to 9%.

The church is not homogenous and in such a diverse environment there is an array of Biblically based beliefs about women and the leadership roles that women should hold in the church. Generation Y is the witness and beneficiary of societal movements and laws that seek to protect women’s rights and advance women socially, educationally, vocationally and economically. Consequently, many 18-34-year-olds have grown up in a generation experiencing the unprecedented advancement of women in earning degrees, holding secular leadership positions and being co-leaders or leaders in their homes. Yet for many millennials, this advancement is not perceived to be taking place inside the church. As one young adult observer of the church has noted:

America was birthed primarily from a male-dominated European society. So the church naturally is rooted from there. However, in our society today, there are great steps being made of seeing females as more equal in the job market and other places. So I certainly would think that the church would be doing the same, but it doesn’t seem to be. I have only heard about churches shooting down women who both aspire in their faith and then desire to be in church leadership.

When a Millennial, like the young adult quoted above, juxtaposes the church and society at large, it is inevitable that they will highlight the gender disparities and speculate about the reasons. Often, the church will bear the brunt of criticism of being archaic and sexist.

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11 Faith Communities Today 2010 NATIONAL SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONS

Biased Against The LGBT Community

Thom Ranier conducted an extensive survey of Millennials and discovered that the majority Millennials, both Christians, and non-Christians, believed that there was nothing wrong with pre-marital sex, singles living together and homosexual marriage. Many Millennials accept homosexuality as normal because they have family, friends, classmates, and fellow church members who are gay or lesbian or because they are themselves members of the LGBT community. Generation Y has also grown up with very public LGBT entertainers, artists, activists and media personalities. Because of publicized battles within denominations and high profile churches or denominations opposing legislation that supports LGBT rights, this generation may believe that churches overall are prejudiced against the LGBT community.

As Kinnaman notes based on his research among Millennials: “The gay issue has become the ‘big one,’ the negative image most likely to be intertwined with Christianity’s reputation. It is also the dimension that most clearly demonstrates the unChristian faith to young people today, surfacing in a spate of negative perceptions: judgmental, bigoted, sheltered, right-wingers, hypocritical,… and uncaring.” How Christians address LGBT people and issues is particularly acute as the church finds itself in the wake of rapidly shifting attitudes about sexual mores, the acceptance of LGBT lifestyles and the legal definition of marriage.

Arrogantly Exclusive

Some suggest that Christians are so arrogant to believe that theirs is the only path to God or the only true religion. “We need to understand that people in emerging generations…place a high value on respecting and seeing beauty in all faiths and expressions of spirituality. If we

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don’t recognize this and aren’t sensitive in how we talk about other faiths, we come across as unintelligent, primitive, close minded, and uncaring of people who hold different views.”

The charge of Christian arrogance and the necessity of a different approach of advocating Christ are based on several factors. In a pluralistic post-modern society, many in Generation Y have grown up understanding that there are numerous religions and countless religious participants living in America. “The plurality of the term (postmodernisms) is indicative of the shift from uniform, shared vision of reality to a plurality of rival, even incomprehensible views. How are we to convey the universal truth claims of Jesus to an audience that instinctively rejects universal claims?”

Many Millennials will not advocate a truth claim about Jesus because their friends, neighbors, classmates, co-participants in extracurricular activities and favorite media personalities have other religions. Because of similar interests, common goals, and like-mindedness, people including young adults will make an extra effort to find common ground with associates, even if they have to sometimes dilute or deny the truth claims of their religion.

In this light, Christian claims to offer exclusive means to salvation can appear problematically exclusive.

**Struggling To Keep Insiders**

John is every pastor’s dream member. He’s a life-long believer, well-studied in the Bible, gives generously and leads others passionately. But last year he dropped out of church. He didn’t switch to the other church down the road. He dropped out completely. His departure wasn’t the result of an ugly encounter with a staff person or another member. It wasn’t triggered by any single event. John

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16 Brad J. Kallenberg, *Live to Tell: Evangelism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2002) 121. [http://duke.summon.serialsolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXmWY2BQSDZLA3a5DEwTgXWhRvpSopniUZpJiNgqXmSsYlpixXKjhCk0txNilePNU-UQdbNNcTZQxe0rDkeOogBPsls2MzU3NxQjIEF2DFoIWBQSDQ2BZ3vBqzQkryxMjM1SkplsgBZZGKVQYgY63NDUGAIqvlC4.](http://duke.summon.serialsolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXmWY2BQSDZLA3a5DEwTgXWhRvpSopniUZpJiNgqXmSsYlpixXKjhCk0txNilePNU-UQdbNNcTZQxe0rDkeOogBPsls2MzU3NxQjIEF2DFoIWBQSDQ2BZ3vBqzQkryxMjM1SkplsgBZZGKVQYgY63NDUGAIqvlC4.)
had come to a long-considered, thoughtful decision. He said, “I’m just done. I’m done with church.” John is one in a growing multitude of ex-members. They’re sometimes called the de-churched. They have not abandoned their faith. They have not joined the also-growing legion of those with no religious affiliation—often called the Nones. Rather, John has joined the Dones.¹⁷

John’s story is not unique to his former church but it is a tale being acted out in countless congregations. Now that we have considered the evangelistic challenge of reaching so-called “outsiders,” now we turn to consider another related group: the “Johns,” “dones,” or “insiders.”

The “Insiders” are those 18-34-year-olds who have been directly exposed to the Christian faith during their formative years as participants, members, or beneficiaries of church based ministries. For ongoing generations, following their teen years, countless young adults disengage and leave the churches of their youth and the church at large. Despite years of active participation, positive relationships with peers and mentors, family tradition, and some fond memories, too many will exit the Christian doors without a rearward glance. A few will return; others will make occasional appearances, but too many leave never to return. “The ages eighteen to twenty-nine are the black hole of church attendance…. Overall, there is a 43 percent drop-off between the teen and early adult years in terms of church engagement. These numbers represent about eight million twentysomethings who were active churchgoers as teenagers, but who will no longer be particularly engaged in a church by their thirtieth birthday.”¹⁸

The issue of the falling away of young adults is not because the decreased religiosity of American Christians. Countless public surveys continue to affirm that the majority of Americans


¹⁸ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith (Grand Rapids, Mich: BakerBooks, 2011) 22. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXMwY2BQAEZzsCjBdpQbg4pII_NUU20jZIM0g-Qj0xRLoxRL1A1hSKW5mxADU2qeKIOsm2uls4euaFlzPHQQi48IwXsaxgajiGwADvGqQCZARe1.
claim to be Christians. In fact, “78.4 % of American adults classify themselves as Christian, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.”\textsuperscript{19} Many adults will point to being exposed to Christianity through a relationship such as a relative, neighbors, or friends. There may be an elementary understanding of the fundamental tenets of Christianity as a result of Catechism or youth Christian education. Despite identity, exposure and knowledge, the erosion of active millennials in the church continues unabated.

In his book, \textit{You Lost Me}, author David Kinnaman provides three broad categories for the young adults who are distant from the Christian faith of their youth. Kinnaman’s groupings are Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles. Nomads are young adults who claim Christianity but are no longer active. Prodigals are those who have renounced Christianity and no longer identify themselves as Christian. Exiles waffle between secular and sacred but maintain some ties to their Christian faith.

Why are so many Millennials becoming Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles? There are probable factors inside and outside of the church that are causing the falling away of 18-34-year-olds. From an internal church perspective, perhaps for many young adults, the faith development process of their youth was insufficient in establishing a firm spiritual foundation because “youth are unlikely to take hold of a ‘god’ who is too limp to take hold of them. Perhaps young people lack robust Christian identities because churches offer such a stripped down version of Christianity that it no longer poses a viable alternative to imposter spiritualties….”\textsuperscript{20,21} Relevant

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, report-religious-landscape-study-key-findings.pdf.
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] Dean, \textit{Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 36. \url{http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLyHCXMwA20DNrRMNDY2STUzN0o2sDRKsTQ2BR- jZmaZlAjqMsGkoG8KQSnM3IQam1DxRBik31xBnD13QsuZ46CBGPHgTpTfom6gYAwuwY5wKAhnFF0s}.
\item[\textsuperscript{21}] Kenda Creasy Dean’s work builds on Christian Smith’s work to reveal the prevalence of “moralistic therapeutic deism” as the default spirituality of American youth (given to them by their parents and pastors).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Christian underpinnings could enable a young adult to navigate a tumultuous and shifting culture healthily while maintaining ties to the church. For other insider Millennials, the pleasure of engagement in the secular norms of sexuality outside of marriage, the casual use of alcohol or drugs, or the priority of money and fame forces them to choose between “fun and faith.”

As I have suggested above, another set of reasons for the loss of younger generations may be related to both the perceived and actual negative actions being perpetrated by Christians and church leaders. “For instance, four out of five young churchgoers say that Christianity is anti-homosexual; half describe it as judgmental, too involved in politics, hypocritical, and confusing; one third believe their faith is old-fashioned and out of touch with reality; and one-quarter of young Christians believe it is boring and insensitive to others.”[22] Personal fissures of doubt are widened when the failings of the church go viral on around the clock media cycle.

Crises of faith may arise when insider young adults’ beliefs appear non-applicable to the challenging realities of adulthood responsibilities including careers, personal finance, and relationships. For some young adults and their spiritual mentors, unbeknownst to both, a paradigm shift has taken place in their relationship. When Millennials were children, the counsel from their parents, pastors, and spiritual mentors’ may have not been subject to overt questioning or rejection. However, as children become teens and young adults, they develop more fully as they begin to think critically and question assumptions. What once was a parent to child or a teacher to student connection has to evolve to being more peer-to-peer. A lack of such collegiality may negate the dialog, debate or even disagreement necessary for Millennials to

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potentially believe that their faith is relevant.

Generation Y may be wandering because Boomers, Busters and Generation Xers are unconscious about the degree to which Millennials have drifted. Some may surmise that the ebbing of young adults stakeholders is a local church challenge or denominational issue, and not a universal quandary for the church at large. Alternatively, perhaps, older generations make the assumption that because when they were younger they left and came back, so too will this generation. Such an assumption dulls the vision, passion and intentionality necessary to launch a strategic initiative to seek and recover Generation Y. Finally, the wandering of insiders may rest in the church’s attempts to lure masses with the objective that volume will lead to more converts who can eventually be transitioned into formal discipleship formation processes. The Seeker Service Movement best exemplifies this strategic process of offering services for all generations including families with young children and teens. Some of the teens and children, who partook in the Seeker programming growing up, are now Millennials who are adrift.

The Seeker Service Movement has been adopted by numerous American churches and has influenced countless others. The Seeker Service Movement has developed and evolved over the last several decades. The highest profile churches utilizing this approach are probably Willow Creek Church pastored by Bill Hybels and Saddleback Church pastored by Rick Warren. Ministers who may view themselves as a combination of a pastor, church administrators, and vision casters lead Seeker Service Movement Churches. These leaders use data, market analysis and surveys to inform their decisions about planting churches, ministry services to offer, and their target demographic.²³

²³ For more insight on the Seeker Movement, please refer to The Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren; Rediscovering Church by Lynne and Bill Hybels.
events that appear less traditional, formal and personally demanding. Instead of pressure or persuasion, a church will draw and hopefully convert individuals without prompting individuals to make on the spot decisions. Seekers or visitors are allowed to hear, see, contemplate and decide on their relationship with God. These church services and events promote relaxed dress, a seemingly unstructured liturgy, contemporary music, planned hospitality, modern technology and life-application preaching. Many services do not include any discomfort provoking elements such as standing to be welcomed or discussions about hot-button social issues. For many of these churches and leaders, the biblical underpinnings for such a strategy are rooted in 1 Corinthians 3:5–8 that reads

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 24

Advocates for this strategy use the interpretation of this passage of scripture to support the notion that the church is responsible for planting and watering the seeds, and God is ultimately responsible for conversions. Consequently, churches can experiment with non-traditional approaches to engaging and attracting the so-called “unsaved” and “unchurched.”

The results of the Seeker Movement have been mixed. On one hand, there are numerous high-profile ministries and churches that have thrived as a consequence of employing seeker techniques. Many individuals have accepted Christ, joined these churches and are faithful disciples seeking to advance the Kingdom. However, there are also many who were early proponents and agents of the Seeker Movement, who now have mixed opinions about the long-term effectiveness of Seeker processes. Bill Hybels, the founding pastor of Willow Creek, one of

America’s largest churches and perhaps the single most influential church in advancing the Seeker Movement publically discussed the weaknesses of the church’s approach. He suggested that the seeker approach is less demanding overall. After the completion of a multiyear qualitative analysis, Hybels acknowledged that the seeker approach did not meet the intended objectives of transitioning individuals from new converts into members hungering for and pursuing spiritual maturity.

“We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become “self feeders.” We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between service, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own.”

Hybels’ admission serves more as a cautionary tale than an absolute rebuttal of the entire Seeker Movement. Data and analysis are important for making ministry decisions about planting churches, ministry programming the assessment of ministry impact. However, it is imperative that a church has a vision and mission that is pursued regardless of the data. It is also important that a church using data not veer too far to a consumerism model shaped by the fickle whims of a constantly changing populace. However, Hybel’s admission does aid in potentially explaining how and why churches have “lowered the spiritual bar” resulting in too many 18-34-year-old congregants who are not completely active and in need of re-engagement and reorientation.

In addition to the failures of the Church to truly form young disciples (despite any success attributed to the seeker model), we can also point to another important factor to explain the loss of younger generations in the church. Namely changes in society are also critical contributors to the formation of the Nomad, Prodigal, and Exile pattern is a rapidly changing society. The world’s ultrafast advancement in communications, the economy and especially

technology is simultaneously expanding and challenging every institution’s norms of operation including the church. In finance, banks are offering an array of products and hours of service for the convenience of a diverse customer base. Educators are using technology to share curriculum beyond paper textbooks and brick buildings in order to disseminate knowledge, boost enrollment and cultivate donors. Medical professionals are offering Skype consultations, online lab results and apps that remind a person to take their medication. Churches are offering online worship services; satellite campuses with simulcast sermons and small group gatherings in the mall or at bars. The Internet provides a bounty of information that the public uses to both affirm and question institutions and its leaders including physicians, employers, politicians, educators, and clergy. “Simply put, technology is fueling the rapid pace of change and the disconnection between the past and the future. The Internet and the digital tools are at the root of a massive disruption between how previous generations relate, work, think, and worship and how [Millennials] (and to some extent, Busters) do these activities.”

Such a paradigm presents a major test for the church that has been built by previous generations that valued stability, routine, leadership authority, and adherence to the Biblical tenets. For the young adult segment, all they have ever known is unfettered access to people and information and for many this has fueled their sense that they have the right to question anything and anyone. The media and their peers reinforce their perspectives.

Young adult wandering may be a consequence of the malfunctioning of other structures that are societal staples. Family is being redefined in the wake of mounting rates of divorce, single-parent households, blended families, gay marriage and cohabiting singles. For many

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26 Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich: BakerBooks, 2011) 41. [http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXMwY26aZzCjBdpqbg4piI_NUU2OvZl0g-Qk0xRLoxRL1AhSKW5mxADU2qeKIosm2ul54euAFlzPHQoi48t4x8xaxgajjGwAdvGqQCZARe1](http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXMwY26aZzCjBdpqbg4piI_NUU2OvZl0g-Qk0xRLoxRL1AhSKW5mxADU2qeKIosm2ul54euAFlzPHQoi48t4x8xaxgajjGwAdvGqQCZARe1).
young adults, experiencing such upheaval and the accompanying emotions has led to expressing family in their terms and often jettisoning the narrow traditions. Economic fluctuations including a devastating recession have destabilized millennials confidence in private and public employers. Many organizations and corporations offer unpaid internships in place of entry-level jobs. Also, many employers have conducted mass layoffs, reduced hiring, frozen compensation, and scaled down benefits. Higher education, which was historically deemed as the safest pathway to upward financial mobility is also in flux. Due to reduced government aid and expensive investments needed to boost enrollment, colleges, and universities are straddling students with incredible amounts of debt to earn degrees with uncertain employment futures. Numerous young adults have grown up in an environment of terrorism, war, political standoffs and scandals that may make them cynical about the role and efficacy of government. Finally, community and a sense of neighborly togetherness have been altered. Many 18-to-34-year-olds have grown up or live in neighborhoods, where they are social estranged. The myriad of factors contributing to this alienation includes housing design, discomfort with strangers, modes of commuting, and a concentrated focus on self and family. The church’s challenge is to meet Millennials where they are in the midst of these rapid societal shifts.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to raise awareness about the obstacles that the church faces as it relates to the young adult demographic. As noted, there is a multiplicity of reasons why Generation Y avoids the church or leaves the church including many that the church has self-induced. The task of evangelizing millennials outside of the church and retaining 18-34-year-olds inside of the church are daunting, but not impossible. The next chapter lays a theological foundation for an outreach and retrieval strategy that the church can deploy. It is a
theology that is full of hope because the teachings were delivered during critical junctures of Jesus earthly ministry. The hope rests on the fact that the teachings are given by a young adult Jesus to young adult disciples who would go on to change the world as we know it.
CHAPTER 2
A THEOLOGY FOR EVANGELIZING, RETRIEVING, AND ASSIMILATING MILLENNIALS

The last chapter presented the daunting statistics and potential causes of 18-34-year-olds avoiding the church or leaving the church. In response, the church must craft and cultivate a strategy to ebb these trends and hopefully reverse them. This plan must begin with the Bible. However, before wading into study and exegesis, the church must first answer the question, is evangelism a priority for the Christian living in this new millennium? Is there a theological and biblical foundation for evangelizing the young adult non-Christian and pursuing the wayward young adult Christian? This chapter will seek to answer these questions by providing a biblical foundation for evangelism. This chapter will also explore the biblical theology of intentionally targeting unsaved or outsider Millennials for conversion and unchurched or former insider Millennials for reclamation. This chapter will address the scriptural basis for assimilating and integrating 18-34-year-olds into congregations.

Evangelizing

Is it necessary to have a recovery plan for Generation Y? The Great Commission does not assert any one group or demographic as a priority, but “all nations” and thus should not the church focus on 18-to-34-year-olds? The church has survived persecution, societal ostracizing, the rise of other religions, wars, cyclical downturns, scandals, and an array of other challenges, therefore won’t the church survive if Generation Y is not recovered? If a young adult is among the elect, then won’t the Spirit lead them to return in due season? Should precious material and human resources be allotted for a “seek and rescue” mission with an uncertain outcome? The answer to all of the above questions is an unequivocal yes! A careful examination and listing of the inherent benefits that accompany a vibrant millennial class in every church will justify a plan,
illustrate how the Great Commission advances, aid the church thriving instead of surviving, outline the church’s role in the calling of the elect and why it is a worthwhile investment.

All churches should desire to engage, enlist and educate young adults about Christianity’s significance for their lives with the hope that it will engender their commitment to being Christian disciples. The eternal lives of numerous young adults hang in the balance, and such an uncertain destiny should prick the conscience of every believer. The sense of urgency may be stoked if the older generation envisions the spiritual future of their children and grandchildren as shaped by their contemporaries. As children age, the influence of their friends will equal in some instances supersede the sway of their family of origin. Therefore, it behooves the older church generation to expand their umbrella of concern. Churches must care about the spiritual welfare of those about whom their children care.

Many young adults may be baptized, receive catechism or are active in the church of their youth, but as they age they enter trial periods. Churches should be empathetic and patient as young adults push and occasionally exceed the boundaries of their youth. Perhaps more importantly churches and leaders can learn from their active and former young adults in order to change the youth discipleship processes for the next generation.

All church subgroups, including young adults, supply numerous intangibles to the vitality of a congregation. Young adults, bring the assets of energy, idealism, spiritual gifts, children, and a potential harvest field of non-Christian acquaintances. As sheep beget sheep so Millennials can serve as envoys for their peers. They know the lifestyle, the music, the priorities and the struggles of their circles. Therefore, they are the best equipped to share the relevance of God’s love and a relationship with Him. 18-to-34-year-old disciples are also the best liaisons to model the advantages of church membership.
A dearth of young adults undermines a local church’s witness as an inclusive body for all generations. When visiting or choosing churches, all demographics desire to see a relative sample of their colleagues. Seeing their peers provides a sense that they can fit in because there are others in a similar stage of life with similar interests. The presence of young adults may also bolster the esteem of older congregants who may in turn extend an invitation to the younger people in their sphere.

As aging parishioners become less active and die, the future dims for many congregations who lack a substantial amount of young adult faith heirs. As the resources of people and finances subside, mission activities may have to be curtailed, the spirit of community may be frayed, and basic church functions may be reduced. Church affiliates such as publishers, missions’ groups, music companies, retreat centers, and schools may be in jeopardy.

Millennials will also benefit from being an active part of a local church congregation. Fundamentally, a young adults’ relationship with God can be greatly enhanced by being in regular communion with other believers. An 18-34-year-old will be assisted in comprehending the basics of the Christian walk by other congregants, whether elders, peers or juniors. A church also contains an array of personalities including those who comfort and inspire, and the church has people who may cause discomfort and consternation. It is an extraordinary moment when a believer discovers that the influential believers in one’s life are not there by chance or coincidence, but by the sovereign will of God. Moreover, how God uses each person to reveal another facet of Himself. As Paul wrote, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

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While interacting with other generations, young adults may glean the faith wisdom of their elders. “Becoming wise does not simply happen by “saying the prayer,” or by memorizing the list of dos and do nots, or by signing a pledge, or by completing a six-week program. Instead, it is a lifetime process of deep transformation through faith in Christ, knowledge of God’s word, living by the power of the Holy Spirit, and engaging in rich community with other believers.”² Such wisdom will be invaluable as young adults seek to integrate faith, vocation, relationships and personal expression. By processing this wisdom, Millennials will also learn that many of their core dilemmas are a conundrum with which every generation has to cope.

What is my God given purpose? Is love possible and how do I find it? What’s the key to raising healthy children? Why does life seem so unfair for many? How do I overcome my weaknesses of character to be a better person? This type of wisdom teaches that there is nothing new under the sun.

The church’s holistic spiritual formation processes of worship, study, prayer, witnessing, service, fellowship, and stewardship are other assets for the Y Generation. In addition to being timeless practices of Christianity, each area assists believers in personally understanding, enhancing and expressing their faith. Taken in totality, these activities provide an additional buttress for a young adult who will inevitably be assailed by the offensives of the world. Like military basic training, young adults need to be equipped and trained on how to recognize and overcome their internal issues of fear, greed, lust, pride, and insecurities. Some unjust external

² David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, You Lost Me : Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith (Grand Rapids, Mich: BakerBooks, 2011) 31. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwY2BQAEZsCjBdpQbg4pII_NUU2OjZIM0g-Qk0xRLoxRLA1hSKW5mxADU2qeKlOsm2uls4euuFizPHQOQ1x48IwXsaxgajfGwADvGqQCZARe1.
forces of social agendas, corporate policies, media propaganda and government statutes may exploit unaddressed personal weaknesses.

Millennials may find an outlet to express their unique personas of education, experiences, creativity, aspirations, and diverse worldviews. In the church, a millennials’ perspective on faith, morality, politics, poverty, gender and sexuality can be affirmed, challenged, and teased out. Such an engagement will aid them and many in their inner church circle to process life through a wider lens.

Young Adults will also have the opportunity, to discover, affirm and apply their spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are those unique God-given abilities that glorify God when the gift is used in service to others. Spiritual gifts are shaped through education, life experiences, vocation, and usage. In a church, an 18-34-year-old will discover their spiritual gift through personal disclosure from God and equally important, communal affirmation by the church. The discovery of these gifts and their exercise in the mission and ministry of the church strengthens both the bonds of community inside the church and the impact a congregation can have in its context. In these ways, the affirmation of spiritual gifts among young adults strengthens the connection between young adults and the community of faith.

Evangelism in the 21st century is complex because the term “evangelism” carries an array of presuppositions, interpretations, and applications among church going Christians. Because of this complexity in interpretation, evangelism may often remain an interesting idea in the minds of contemporary Christians rather than an actual practice. “When asked if they have a personal responsibility to share their faith with others, 73% of born again Christians said yes. When this conviction is put into practice, however, the numbers shift downward. Only half (52%) of born again Christians say they actually did share the Gospel at least once this past year to someone
with different beliefs, in the hope that they might accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.” These statistics may be indicative that the challenge of defining and prioritizing evangelism may be rooted in diverse worldviews, a pluralistic religious landscape, a multifaceted Christian faith community and personal ideologies.

Institutional church evangelism comes in a multitude of formats, methods, priorities and form factors. Social evangelism, the power of person-to-person connection, is the thrust of churches that place emphasis on witnessing to friends, relatives, associates and neighbors. Some churches advocate servant evangelism that centers on meeting the needs of people with the hope of introducing Jesus as the one who meets the ultimate human need. As considered in the previous chapter, other churches are proponents of seeker evangelism where worship and programming are platforms used to draw the unsaved in a non-threatening fashion with the hope that eventually recipients will become disciples. Still, some churches are practitioners of social justice evangelism where unjust social structures are challenged emphasizing the biblical mandate of fairness and mercy for the vulnerable, poor, disenfranchised, or exploited. For other churches, street evangelism is a priority, where they witness to pedestrians through tracts, placards, and forms of public proclamation.

With such diversity of church evangelism efforts, it is no surprise that an individual Christian’s definition and prioritizing of evangelism is honed by various factors. In addition to church or denominational emphases, a believer may also have to contend with Biblical interpretations and the influence of individuals such as parents, mentors, teachers, pastors, and peers. Perhaps most importantly, Christians have to struggle with personal characteristics that may hinder witnessing. Personal evangelism can be undermined by fear of rejection, ignorance.

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of obligation, apathy for the unsaved and unchurched, theological misunderstanding of salvation, and a pride that evangelism is someone else’s duty. Such a broad spectrum of institutional, social and personal factors may impact a Christian’s personal beliefs, witnessing efforts and the degree to which they support the church’s practice of evangelism.

The primary goal of evangelism is an individual having a personal relationship with God through belief and acceptance of the atoning work of His Son Jesus Christ. This personal relationship with God is embodied in a life of discipleship, lived through the Church and the world. The question is what is evangelism? For this thesis, I will use the World Council of Churches’ definition which suggests that evangelism is to “proclaim ‘the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.’” This definition is sufficient for several reasons. The centerpiece of this definition is the person of Jesus Christ and specifically, the intent of leading others to a personal relationship with Him. A relationship with Jesus as a believing and growing disciple is significant in the 21st century, because it seems that numerous evangelism and discipleship efforts are too concentric on programming, leadership personality, and consumerism formulas and too little on a relationship with Jesus that engenders several consequences. Potentially, personal and communal discipleship formation activities such as worship, study, service, prayer, witnessing, and fellowship are inadvertently de-emphasized resulting in a partially formed and fulfilled disciple. Individuals develop and prioritize relationships with imperfect people, institutions, and ideologies. For this reason, when the inevitable human unrest or disagreement arises there is an increasing potential

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of falling away from the Kingdom. To counteract this, there must be an incarnation of Jesus in the Christian who extends an invitation and aids a new believer in assimilating into the Body of Christ. Christians incarnating Jesus have greater potential for ensuring that the sower’s seed lands on good soil.

What does it mean when a Christian is incarnational? “Mackay defined the ‘incarnational principle’ in this way:’…The witness will be “in every aspect a friend [giving] concrete expression by word, act and disposition to the reality of love, of Christian agape, mediating thereby the love of God in Christ Jesus.” Such incarnational living and witnessing empowers the believer to be a resource to advance the Kingdom while keeping the new believer’s focus on the love of God as the source of salvation, discipleship, and fellowship. The WCC’s definition is potent because it mandates both words and actions. When reviewing the outreach efforts of Jesus, i.e. encounters, parables and miracles, He often met a need prior to soliciting a commitment. For this reason, the Christian’s Gospel of the heart and head should be equally expressed through the hand. Verbal proclamation must be complemented with the intention of the holistic formation of an individual.

Scriptural Foundations

Though the Scriptural basis for evangelism and ministry can be found in numerous biblical texts, for this thesis I will use three familiar passages from the book of Matthew.

Matthew 28:16-20 advocates individual evangelism. Matthew 18:12-14 can be a base text for

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5 Daryl L. Guder, "INCARNATION AND THE CHURCH'S EVANGELISTIC MISSION," International Review of Mission 83, no. 330 (1994) 6. doi:10.1111/j.1758-6631.1994.tb03414.x. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwVZ1BCg1xDEWLezeC4nluMNA2bWzW4uAB9ACZJF3OyvtjKi70DuG_H_g_CWHijMU3CRvWO5JhUhnpc7Lal5rWv0LYj5ovh7Cz7Riye-1xve_fZwCzOHHTOTT0ICkcrm0wgfFs7udJE2TgZNLTeZtdKW6OpgMXHt1TykPDKex5hMa316dcpuwqSs1dligUKbpiWvElR14nGOHBN-zoDGL.
specific outreach to young adults. Matthew 10:1-11 can serve as a passage illustrating the process of assimilating young adults into roles of service.

Matthew 28: A Theology for Evangelism

For Matthew, all of his preceding accounts of Jesus’ words, acts, mission, and desired responses create the stage for the commission. In recent times, Jesus’s words have been framed as the “Great Commission,” a timeless directive for the church and His followers into perpetuity. This passage is ideal as an evangelism base text for the church because these verses capture the comprehensive essence of Christian outreach. Outreach to individuals includes a focus on discipleship that requires the context of a local church. The community church has a bead on the pulse of a community’s strengths, opportunities and the specific needs of individuals and families.

“The evangelism that springs from the Great Commission is not a narrow proclamation but a full-orbed work of mission through the church. We cannot even imagine the process of discipleship apart from the church. We use this model today—telling the good news through liturgy, teaching the gospel in Sunday school classes, patterning paths of discipleship for our young people, modeling the values of the Kingdom of God in our communities.”

This quote embodies the magnitude of Matthew 28 as foundation to a theology and practice of evangelistic mission.

The gravity of Jesus’ words is magnified by the fact that these instructions were shared during one of His last encounters prior to His ascension. “The last words anyone speaks are considered of utmost significance. The last words of Jesus Christ, the most important person to ever walk the earth should stir, drive, inspire, instruct, and implore everyone who is His


http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwY2BQSDQ0AzZTLy1TDFNMzC2SLBONDICt b1NEM9M0s5Qks1SUDWFpmbbEANTap4og6yba4izhy5oWXM8dBAjHtSPA1aORuaGYgy8iaDF33kl4EiKR1 MCslGaUYmaceZpxqDjy0xSky2Sk0HNdktg4yQ52eQ4FQD0ZCR7.
Contemporary believers should personally resonate with the words of Jesus because every Christian is a direct beneficiary and the clearest sign that Jesus’ directive is being fulfilled.

For the disciples, the mountain in Galilee may resonate and prompt submission to the request. Galilee is where some of the disciples called home, (Mt. 4:18). Galilee is where Jesus performed miracles, (Mt. 4:23-25). At Galilee, Jesus founded the church (Mt.16:13,18). Contemporary evangelism efforts may need to begin by revisiting the “Galilean mountains” of each believer, those places where Christians have experienced some of their deepest intimacies with God. Intimacy with God may be one reason humans are made in his image and likeness. The fall distorted God’s image, the image of others, and the image of self in the eyes of humanity. This distorted image made authentic intimacy impossible. For this reason, achieving intimacy requires that humanity be conformed to the image of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Galilean mountains are where Christians invest time and energy in the forms of prayer, study, meditation and other activities. These sacred spaces are depositories for iniquity, weaknesses, losses, and insecurities. Galilean mountains are where believers discern God’s vision and receive God’s power for mission.

All eleven disciples appear despite any confusion or respective misgivings. Their obedience in appearing is instructive for disciples of all ages in that followers must be obedient to the tasks of God despite individual uncertainties. Some “worshiped him, but some doubted,” implies that as a group, the disciples’ feelings span a spectrum, which is probably the case for many Christian communities. Jesus had already appeared to the disciples and verified his identity and yet, doubts are present. It is inconclusive why some doubted, but however encouraging for all the disciples who would succeed these initial followers. “How reassuring to modern

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Christians, influenced by the doubt of the Enlightenment, hesitant because of the overextension of the scientific method, convinced by the arguments of the social construction of reality that we cannot know in reality. Our doubt is part of our faith—we have partial knowledge. Some doubted. But the church was established after Christ’s resurrection, and it flourishes today.”

In the wake of the worship and doubts, Jesus seemingly ignores their emotions and opts to issue a commission, perhaps suggesting that an ultimate purposeful mission is of a greater priority than immediate worship and doubts. Purposeful mission empowers by providing goals, necessitating commitment, and prioritizing responsibilities. Mission harnesses and synchronizes the disparate agendas of individuals to accomplish a group goal. Jesus commissions the disciples knowing that this all consuming assignment was necessary to allay all doubts about his resurrected humanity and to justify their worship of Him as God’s Son.

Throughout the book of Matthew, the author places a great emphasis on Jesus being the Son of Man and his authority over humans and human issues such as sin (Mt. 9:6), illness (Mt.10:1), and religious tradition (Mt.21:23). Now the resurrected Jesus claims full power over both human and divine. It is with this clout that Jesus charges his disciples with an assignment that will consume the balance of their lives and leave an impact on the lives of others into infinity.

“Jesus’ commission, applicable to all His followers, involved one command, “Make disciples,” which is accompanied by three participles in the Greek: “going,” baptizing, and

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8 Adeney, Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2010) 21. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXrMwY2BQSDQ0AzZTLY1TDFNMzC2SLBONDICt bINEM9M0s5Qks1SUDWFpmbEBANTap4og6ya4izhy5oWXM8dBAjHtSPA1aORuaGYgy8iaDF33kl4EiKRI MCslGaUYmacZpxqDjy0xSky2Sk0HNdktg4yQ52eQ4FQD0ZCR7.
teaching.” His words provide what I describe as the 5Ms of disciple-making – the **mission**, the **market**, the **method**, the **motive** and the **measurement**.

The **mission**al charge of Jesus is for the disciples to be both faithful and fruitful in replicating their beliefs and behavior in others as they have been taught (Mt. 16:13-20:4). For the modern church and believer, such a mission tasks us with codifying and expressing the foundational tenets of our faith. More importantly, replicating the faith in others will be based more on how we behave than what believe. For Millennials who may possess an innate cynicism, they may be more attuned to a Christian’s life than their lips and whether the believer is living the principles of Jesus in integrity, service, and love. Therefore, the replication of faith in others is based on both word and deed, how we behave in addition to what we believe.

The **market** is radically expanded beyond the “lost sheep of the house of Israel,” (Mt. 10:5-6) and rests outside of the disciple’s homogenous community, targeting a diverse world. “The new fellowship transcends every limit imposed by family, class, or culture. We are not winning people like ourselves to ourselves but sharing the good news that in Christ God has shattered the barriers that divide the human race and has created a new community. The new people of God has no analogy; it is a ‘sociological impossibility’ that has nevertheless become possible.”

The **methodology** is teaching the commands of Jesus through their words and their works, (Mt. 10:1-42). For men who probably had never ventured beyond their immediate

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communities embarking on an extensive evangelism outing is a major undertaking. “The operative verbs…make disciples, preach, and witness. The scope of fulfilling these commands is all the nations… to the end of the earth. If you isolate the essence…you get one imperative: Evangelize the world!” The authors overlook “baptize” as another operative verb from this passage. The methodology is to connect proclaiming/sharing the gospel in evangelism and baptizing/teaching the gospel in discipleship. Matthew’s commission holds both together and this constitutes the key to the method.

Evangelize the world is a timeless decree for all who are in covenant relationship with the triune God. Our behavior and obedience are the most telling signs of our beliefs. We are tasked to go whether to the next cubicle, the next community or the next city. The goal of our going is to incite others to embark on their co-journeys with God through his Son.

For such a God-sized task, Jesus provides the ultimate motivation by guaranteeing His presence until the very end. Christians need incentive to traverse the hidden boundaries of comfort zone, tradition, contentment, or lethargy. “Ultimately, then it is Jesus’ abiding presence with his disciples which transforms an imperative into an inspiration.” Like the first disciples, to actively and effectively evangelize, we need the omnipotent presence of Jesus inspiring us to overcome our personal hindrances and external obstacles. Given the example of Jesus, we hold together in his Lordship both “all power” (omnipotence) and an embodiment in suffering service as he emptied himself and died on a cross. Perhaps we need the presence of the


teaching, suffering, crucified, and risen Lord to challenge, strengthen and guide our evangelistic mission.

**Measurement** is important and can guide the ministry’s assessment, planning, resource allocation, and the evaluation of outreach efficacy. Evangelism strategies may be weakened by a misunderstanding that Christians only have to be faithful, when Christians have to be both faithful (Matthew 25:14-30) and fruitful (John 15:1-8). Evangelism strategies must be evaluated to guarantee that as much as possible, the targeted outcomes are tangibly evident. Whether the purpose is the salvation and assimilation of individuals, the regeneration of families and communities, the transformation of social structures or the reconciliation of human beings and nature, the stakes are too great. Measuring the effectiveness of the disciple’s efforts can take place in two ways. One way to measure is the number of individuals receiving the sacred ordinance of baptism by immersion symbolizing a person’s relationship with the Triune God as evidenced by their identifying with Jesus’ death and resurrection. Another means to gauge impact is the participation of newcomers in the church’s spiritual formation activities fostered in a community of like-spirited individuals, (Mt. 16:24-25; 17:20-21; 18:3-6,12-13, 21-35; 19:4-9).

**Matthew 18: Theology of Retrieval**

Building on the foundational theology of evangelism gleaned from our engagement with the commission text of Matthew 28, we can turn now to consider the focused call to the evangelistic mission with young adults. One of the greatest opportunities for more impactful overall church ministry is the systematic retrieval and re-assimilation of young adults 18-34-years-old who may have formerly been a part of the church. The methodology of recovery will have to overcome some significant hurdles.

Barna research shows nearly six in ten (59%) of these young people who grow up in Christian churches end up walking away from either their faith
or from the institutional church at some point in their first decade of adult life…. the unchurched segment among Millennials has increased in the last decade, from 44% to 52%… when asked what has helped their faith grow, “church” does not make even the top 10 factors.  

How do we respond to such disturbing developments? Though Christians are charged to evangelize all of humanity are there grounds for the targeted evangelism of a particular demographic? Matthew 18:12-14 may provide an answer, and it reads:

12 “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?  
13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.  
14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

Jesus shares this parable to highlight God’s value of children and symbolically, the value of the children of God. The parable appears to be an intended exaggeration in order to place greater emphasis on the significance of seeking believers who have gone astray. “In Luke 15:3-7 the lost sheep represents a lost sinner, and the ‘joy of finding’ is God’s joy over his conversion. In Matthew, by way of contrast, the parable of the lost sheep is addressed to disciples and oriented toward ecclesiastical concerns.” The sheep started with the herd, but it has wandered away from the herd. Though each sheep is of equal value because the one sheep is lost, there is a greater sense of urgency. “The people called by Jesus cannot help but refuse any logic that would suggest some should be sacrificed for the good of the greatest number. Jesus’ ministry, his patience with his disciples, embodies God’s fierce desire to have the little ones cared for. Just as

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13 Barna Millennials 5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millenials/635-5-reasons-millenials-stay-connected-to-church#.UyEPHZzE7tf


God refuses to lose sight of them, neither can we lose them to our sight."

Keeping the parable of the lost sheep in mind prompts Christians to contemplate the reasons and risks of Millennials who have wandered away.

To overcome these obstacles, the church must offer the wayward 18-34-year-old, the viable alternative of an authentic relationship with God in community with others who were also once lost. Such a place would be a living organism where the processes of striving for trustworthy relationships, pursuing life purpose, erring, confessing, and forgiving would be integrated with service to one another and the community. Such a compelling opportunity might be enough to draw the one back to the ninety-nine.

Young adults separated from the church are more vulnerable to having their spiritual hunger and thirst filled with inferior substitutes for living water. Estranged Millennials are also more susceptible to the temptations of this world including consumerism, narcissistic behavior, and relevant morality that may ultimately leave them weakened in character. In the final accounting, the shepherd is responsible for all of the sheep entrusted to his care including those that are lost. Clergy, church leaders, and laity are responsible for transforming the lives of both the insiders and the outsiders. Though the sheep is astray from the flock, it does not mean that the sheep is dead or too far-gone to be recovered. It is premature and potentially unchristian to assume that a generation is beyond the reach of the Spirit because all have been lost at some point in our lives.

The shepherd does not write off the one but leaves the others. Though potentially exposed to predators, the threat to the ninety-nine is less than the danger of the one that has meandered off. Consequently, instead of waiting for the roving young adult to return, the church

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must be proactive and seek them. The shepherd goes to the mountains where it is likely that the sheep has gone. Efforts to find and retrieve straying 18-34-year-olds will require a hands-on approach. Such an effort may necessitate Christians leaving our sacred spaces and comfort zones. This type of Millennial outreach process may entail venturing into the world of the lost including their locales, interests, relationships, and lifestyles. Finally, such a retrieval initiative provides invaluable experience because inevitably future generations of disciples will be prone to drift.

Finding the lost will produce joy. The joy may stem from accomplishing the uncertain task of finding and returning the lost sheep. However, more than likely, the joy is the person recovered more than the process of recovery. “The rejoicing is not in the success itself; the accomplishment achieved, but “over” the person who has been brought back into faith and discipleship. The rejoicing is totally other-directed.”17

Contemporary believers may experience the joy of one of their children, grandchildren or mentees returning to the fold and the impact that their return has on their future. The Father’s desire that all would be saved from perishing including both those who stay and those who wander. God’s will that all be saved elevates the priority of pursuing and reintegrating lapsed disciples of all generations including those in the 18-to-34-year-old demographic.

Matthew 10: Theology of Assimilating

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of

Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, 10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.18

“From the time of being chosen, indeed, the twelve entered on a regular apprenticeship for the great office of apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their master, what they should be, do, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world”19 Now, He summons them and issues a call to service sending them forth for ministry field education. A task that will empower the disciples to apply and practice all that they have gleaned from Jesus for their contextual learning and ministerial identities.

At the conclusion of chapter nine, Jesus teaches about the suffering of Israel and instructs his followers about the potential harvest of new sheep. He concludes the lesson by encouraging the disciples to pray to the Lord to send laborers. If indeed, Jesus’ followers prayed for additional laborers, chapter ten might confirm that their prayers were answered and that they are the answer to their prayers. These men were called to be Jesus’ disciples, as described in chapters four and nine, and now he is integrating them as agents of Kingdom proclamation and the practices of mercy.

Though some of the disciple’s names are referenced in additional biblical passages, other names are only noted in this text, which is appropriate considering that the focus of the mission is the name of Jesus and His kingdom. For Matthew’s Jewish readership, the choice of twelve

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might resonate as a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel. “This is the first time in the Gospel that Matthew has used this number to refer to the band of disciples and it has obvious symbolic reference to the ‘twelve tribes’ of Israel…. The numeration of the founding tribes now scattered through deportation evokes the ideal of a reassembled Israel, itself another eschatological hope.”

Such a symbol of hope may also resonate with a modern church seeking to maintain her relevance and to reestablish her credibility with younger generations that have been scattered far from the Church’s doors. Millennials who identify themselves as “spiritual,” and “nones” because of an assortment of reasons may discover that, like the disciples, they may be the answers to their prayers for a different kind of church. Whether a young adult is conscious of it or not, all of their life experiences including any disillusionments and disappointments with the church, provide a foundation for service in the church.

Jesus sends them as apostles. “The word αποστολος...means someone who is ‘sent’ and one who shares the authority of the one who sends, as his representative.”

The apostles, those sent on a mission, serve as a model for the ongoing assignment of the church though differences exist.

The first difference is that Jesus calls the twelve to Himself, instructs them and sends them on their way. Conversely, the church often calls individuals to buildings, leadership hierarchies and set ministry paradigms that orientates and vets individuals before elevating them as representatives of the ministry.

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http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/elvHCXMwY2BQSAU15NOSTZKNzBLTUs1TuKGH3hm At2wmWULGoAbwpKCeZbBqbUPFEgWtXEGcPXdCy5njoIEY8- FwYYo0MhJj4E0ELf70KwFvEkUyFAwSktLTktJkk0s0g2SbRtIgTanZIGbKgYJxmnGSQmAQARyWj.
Another variance is that Jesus sends the apostles on a temporal assignment in which they would return to Him to give an account and receive immediate feedback. The Holy Spirit leads the church’s perpetual mission and feedback for today’s disciple often has to be discerned as the guise of the Spirit through prayer and imprecise human evaluation.

An additional distinction is that the apostles advocate beliefs that may be interpreted and received as contrary or even threatening to the religious norms of Judaism. The consequences of such actions could include persecution, imprisonment, and death. However, many contemporary Christians live in pluralistic societies, especially in the west, where the Kingdom can be shared openly without the perception of being hazardous to other religions.

The final difference between the disciple’s outreach and contemporary evangelism is that Jesus limits their mission field to a single community. “The apostles were to go only to the lost sheep of Israel (cf. 15:24) because the kingdom message was for God’s covenant people. She needed to accept her King, who had arrived. If she did the nations would then be blessed through her (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 60:3).”\(^\text{22}\) However, the church has the commission to reach all people to the ends of the earth in that all will be blessed by being reconciled to God through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Today’s disciples must be models and envoys for our contemporaries, as the apostles were examples and heralds to the people of their day.

In the light of Jesus’ selfless generosity, the apostles would exercise their gifts without the expectation of a material return. He instructs them to embark on a journey without the necessities of life. “By going about without possessions the disciples not only put themselves beyond suspicion but also become examples of trust in God’s providential care (cf. 6.24-34).

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They are, further, signs that God is working not through the rich or powerful but through the poor and powerless (cf.5.3-12).”23 Such selflessness would require the apostles to trust God for all of their material needs, and protection, which would be another signal to their audiences that the Kingdom is near. Their bare bones mission will enable the apostles to offer nothing but Jesus and life in His Kingdom. A Kingdom life, which may be void of material possession, social position or worldly success, but a life that soon will be revealed as immune to death.

“Jesus summons the disciples to him, and, so summoned, they become for us witnesses who make it possible for us to be messengers of the kingdom. The disciples are not impressive people, but then, neither are we. Their mission, as well as our own, is not to call attention to ourselves but to Jesus and the kingdom.”24 Calling and assimilating young adults into life service for Jesus where lives are eternally impacted may be a compelling proposal to Millennials who are too often being the presented the temporal and superficial baubles of the world. The potential of making a difference in the lives of the forgotten, disenfranchised and exploited stands in direct contrast to raising the profile of any institution, increasing a corporate stock price or sustaining the celebrity cult of personality. Once assimilated, an immediate challenge will be educating young adult church members on the privileges and responsibilities of church membership.

Jesus enabled the disciples to embark on their mission being yoked to His authority, but untethered from the fundamental concerns of life. It may be that God is enabling this generation of Christian disciples to loosen the fetter of status based on the number of members, the sizes of our buildings or the zeros at the end of our budgets and to become constrained by His message


and power. Denying of self and following God to serve others may aid in prompting assimilated Millennials to begin serving, which is often a difficult transition.

Service and leadership opportunities must be available and consistently communicated to 18-34-year-olds being targeted including 1) Illustrating the temporal and eternal relevance of a rooted life in Christ, 2) teaching the importance of being a steadily active disciple in the local family of faith comprising a disciple’s privileges and responsibilities 3) sharing a broader perspective of the universal church 4) fostering a healthy environment of intergenerational believers, and 5) enlisting young adult participation as the church attempts to transform the spiritual lives of local individuals, families, and communities. Being a part of a community of faith and serving others is important to illustrate that the mission of Jesus is real. However, as it was in Jesus’ time, the mission must be evident not just in theory, but in power!

“Likewise, it is Jesus’ message, (‘gospel of the Kingdom’, εναγγελιον της βασιλειας!), that the disciples proclaim, his miracles that they continue, and his presence that defines them (10:40 cf. 28:16-20).”

Their message would be the same as that of Jesus (Matthew 4:17), the Kingdom of Heaven has come, and all must repent. However, these apostles would be more than agents in word, but they would also be imbued with Jesus’ power to heal the sick, resurrect the dead and deliver the demonic.

Jesus had a reputation for performing miracles (Matthew 4:24). For this reason, it is natural to expect that His emissaries would have a similar ability. The Imitatio Christi is inherent because such power and proclamation distinguish Jesus’ followers from the disciples of all others. The people that the disciples will encounter will receive a salvation message

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complemented by a physical example of deliverance.

**Conclusion**

Young adults are no different from those who made the request “we want to see Jesus.” Since He walked the earth, there continues to be an ongoing and insatiable desire to experience His word and even more so, His power. Today’s church struggles to honor such a timeless request effectively and not because of a lack of effort or interest. Churches offer programming that honors Jesus’ mandate to care for the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the incarcerated but in the end, programming and outreach cannot be equated with Jesus. Because of a diverse church landscape, seekers can find an assortment of worship liturgies that can appeal to any preference of denomination, music tradition, homily style, or building architecture; however, none can guarantee an encounter with the risen Savior. Unbeknownst to Generation Y, many church members would also like to see Jesus consistently. To their credit, these church members continue to serve by faith, believing that every time a person is born again, the seriously ill are discharged from the hospital, a soldier returns home from war or someone is freed from addiction, they have seen Jesus.

The next chapter will offer model churches where young adults are seeing Jesus. These churches embrace and exemplify the theology of the evangelism, retrieval and assimilation of 18-34-year-olds. The best practices that will be presented will provide the tools to fulfill the Great Commission, find the lost sheep, and empower the disciples.
CHAPTER 3

CONGREGATION BEST PRACTICES
FOR EVANGELIZING MILLENNIALS

Introduction

This chapter will build on the previous chapters by incorporating the theological underpinnings of Matthew 10:1-11; 18:12-14; and 28:16-20 to identify churches and best practices for evangelizing, retrieving and assimilating Millennials. These churches express their intentionality of reaching 18-34-year-olds through identity, marketing, technology, worship, service, fellowship, and mentoring.

Is there potential to begin reversing the current trends of the “Rise of the Nones” and the “You Lost Me” generation with so many 18-34-year-olds walking away and staying away? The news is not all dire, and the challenge is certainly not insurmountable. There are churches and young adults who understand the trends and are concerned, but are not discouraged. These same Millennials value their faith traditions and are zealous about their churches. In 2011, the Barna Group completed a nationwide random sample of young adults with a Christian background, and their findings are quite enlightening. “We found, for instance, that two out of five (42 percent) eighteen-to twenty-nine-year old Christians say they are ‘very concerned about my generation leaving the church.’ A similar proportion (41 percent) describe their desire for ‘a more traditional faith, rather than a hip version of Christianity.’ And three out of every ten (30 percent) young Christians say they are ‘more excited about church than at any time in my life.”

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Who are the churches and leaders that are cultivating such unbridled passion among Millennials and fulfilling Jesus’ commission? Faith Communities Today provides a glimpse through their most recent comprehensive survey. “Faith Communities Today is a series of ongoing research surveys and practical reports about congregational life, conducted and published by the Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership, a multi-faith group of religious researchers and faith leaders. The research partnership includes members from 25+ different faith groups, working in conjunction with Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary.”

Faith Communities Today’s 2013 report “Increasing Young Adult Participation in Churches and Other Faith Communities” concentrates on religious organizations that are having success evangelizing, assimilating and retaining young adults. Starting in 2010, FCT conducted a national survey of religious congregations and churches across the USA. FCT engaged 32 of the most prominent religious organizations spanning several faith traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Latter Day Saints, and many others. In total 11,000 plus churches, mosques, temples and other faith communities replied and their survey responses form the basis of the report. The report’s data is compared to FCT’s national surveys from the years 2000, 2005 and 2008. Though there is significant variation in the percentage of Millennial participation amongst the large group of respondents there were several religious congregations that were having impact on young adults. Influence with young adults based on the standard established by FCT means that a congregation is “considered to have significant young adult participation if 21% or more of its participants were 18 to 34 years of age. Across all faiths, a total of only 16% of all congregations were in this category.”

Who are these congregations? Of the numerous

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churches highlighted in the FCT report, 5 congregations stand out because of their diversity of denomination, theology, geography, and congregation demographics. These churches are the most relevant to this thesis and they are New Life Covenant Church in Chicago, IL; Christway Community Church, Ooltewah, TE; Kirkwood United Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA; Life Center Foursquare Church, Spokane, WA; and The Well, Scotch Plains, NJ. These churches represent a diversity of locations, denominations, size, age and origins.

Based on FCT’s report a composite of the ideal church to reach Millennials would be a newer, large, Western USA, urban congregation, with a significant male ethnic minority membership, employing multiple staff persons, fully embracing technology and offering an array of ministry programming. This composite church will host evolving worship services that incorporate contemporary elements and this congregation will provide spiritual formation practices. Consequently, a church with such spiritual vitality will experience consistent numerical growth through new converts, a higher percentage of male presence and a substantial number of 18-34-year-olds. For churches that do not fit the parameters of the “composite church” there is hope. A careful examination of the FCT report reveals that there are trends and best practices that can be embraced and executed by many of America’s congregations. Regardless of their size, age, existing geography, tradition, demographics, and local communal settings, churches can reach and keep Millennials.

Congregation Intentionality

According to the Faith Communities Today Report, churches that place “a lot of emphasis” (leadership priority, resource allocation, and communications) on young adults have a 33% increase in active young adults over all other congregations. Consequently,

congregations that are consistently attracting Millennials are intentionally fulfilling Matthew 10, 18, and 28 by evangelizing and systematically assimilating young adults who are outside of the church. These congregations are deliberate about retaining and engaging the young adults that are already a part of the congregation. Such congregations have the potential of experiencing multiplying momentum because when young adults find something beneficial they are apt to share it with their peers and contemporaries. This type of inner network sharing may bestow instant credibility on that church.

An example of intentionality is the Well Church, which in 2007 was birthed out of the Evangel Church, a large, thriving Assemblies of God congregation located in Scotch Plains, NJ. The Well church differs from the Evangel church in that the Well Church’s gatherings are smaller, there is less emphasis on their Pentecostal roots, and they intentionally target the colleges and universities in the surrounding area. Like the shepherd pursuing the lost sheep, such a fresh approach has enabled the Well to draw many college Millennials from across the region with experience in a variety of Christian denominations. For many worship attendees, the Well serves as a complement and not competition for their home churches.

The leaders of the Evangel Church understood the key to planting the Well was founded on communications. The pastor secured the support and funding for the startup. A congregation’s approval and commitment to being intentional about Millennials may begin with openly communicating about the young adult challenge within the body of Christ and the local church. Some congregants may be surprised by the scope of the task, because of a genuine unawareness of the issue or they may hold the traditionalists’ perspective that young adults will return just as they or previous generations returned. For other active churchgoers, the shrinking 18-34-year-old segment may not come as a shock because it reflects their families and their circle of
relationships. Regularly participating congregants are often more observant than they are given credit. Therefore, there may be a cognizance of the ebbing of young adult new members, worship attendees, ministry contributors and church leaders. An enlightened or existing awareness may facilitate receptiveness to praying, discerning, dialoguing and crafting a plan of action.

Replicating the Evangel’s approach requires a prayerfully discerned plan of action will include current reality, a hypothesis, action steps, and measurable evaluation. Such an action plan and its components must begin with discussions. There needs to be communications with the church’s leadership in order to garner their spoken and unspoken support of time, budget, and other resource allocation. Any significant ministry plans will succeed or fail based on the degree of vesting by the leadership. When Jesus sent the apostles forth in Matthew 10, he sowed his authority and anointing into the mission. It will be necessary to communicate with the overall church with the hope of securing their help, encouragement, and allowance. It is imperative that the laity understands the mission, motive, method, measurement and meaning for the church. Discussions should also intentionally target the church’s existing young adult populace and other congregants who are passionate about Millennials.

In addition to the Evangel approach, I would suggest that all of these meetings should result in a vested steering committee that can guide other steps in the plan. A steering committee may begin by listing all of the church’s existing ministries and assets that would be beneficial to 18-34-year-olds. Such a list will inform a church’s marketing plan, aid in the assimilation of new members and enable the church to plan future ministries.

Next, a steering committee will need to conduct a needs assessment of young adults within the local church and the local community through surveys, focus groups, and census data.
Juxtaposing a church’s current and projected programming with the needs of Millennials will enable a church to decide what specific steps they are willing and able to take to better serve 18-34-year-olds. Ministry programming can be created that specifically targets the needs of Millennials and may address issues such as being single, career choices, relationship navigation, finances, discovering life purpose and service to others. Finally, to go beyond “build it and they will come” ministry programming needs to be systematically and consistently communicated to the Millennials within and outside of the church through the website, social media, Sunday worship and other inner church communiqué.

The Life Center Foursquare Church in Spokane, Washington is intentional about reaching Young Adults. The church has created a ministry for Young Adults called “Alive.” On the church’s website, the Alive Ministry has entire web portal that features sermons, videos and additional information about small groups and service opportunities. Alive has coordinated housing and roommate opportunities for college students who are seeking a positive living environment while they are completing their studies. The college students’ homes serve as spaces for meetings, studies, and other activities. “It started out with about 60 people and has seen steady growth, mostly through word of mouth. The current attendance ranges from 120-180, stated Josh Schiel, the student ministries Life Groups’ pastor.”

Such growth through Alive small groups is because they meet weekly, and each meeting features food, worship and teaching. Alive groups seem to fulfill Jesus’ commission in Matthew 28 to witness, teach, baptize, and to make disciples. Alive groups concentrate on relationship building with God and other young adults. This is important because for many humans being in relationship with other

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30 Tamara Michalenko Terry. 2013. FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults Life Center Foursquare Church, Spokane, Washington.
http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/Life%20Center%20%20Young%20Adult%20Case%20Study.pdf
members in the family of God bolsters their relationship with God. Life Center’s efforts are also important, because authentic relationship building is pertinent for 18-34-year-olds who may be jaded by the breakdown of traditional relationships such as family and community. There is a tension between desiring to be in relationship and fearing potential relationship disappointment. Alive groups are an attempt to ease the anxiety.

Congregation Identity and Brand

“To thine own self, be true,” wrote William Shakespeare. Congregations that fully understand and authentically incarnate their church’s distinctive niche or DNA may be attractive to 18-34-year-olds. In Matthew 10, the apostles going forth to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” would have to navigate both the strengths and opportunities of traditional Judaism to announce the kingdom of heaven. Likewise, a congregation’s brand and identity will be significant in overcoming the hurdle of being seen as an “organized religion”.

“The Greek word for character is often translated ‘image.’ It means a notch, indentation, a sharpening, scratching, or writing on a stone or a coin. Consequently, character historically meant a distinctive mark impressed or formed.” 31 A congregation’s history, theological beliefs, denominational affiliations, leadership and laity demographics shape a church’s character that creates the first impression for a guest. For many churches, the official congregation identity and brand is found in the name, the denomination, and both the mission and vision statements. However, to find the authentic church identity, which may or may not be noted in any church publication, one has to become immersed in the church’s activities and congregate with the members. The way that a congregation functions in their worship, discipleship, witness, and service to their parishioners and neighbors gives voice to their character.

At the Kirkwood United Church of Christ Church in Atlanta, leaders have cultivated a young adult brand that is based on drawing local seminary interns who respond by inviting their friends. “If you have a good group of seminarians at your church, it is a feeder to attract other young adults. What a way to kick-start a young adult ministry by putting ‘muscle’ behind working with young religious leaders,” notes Anna Flowers a KUCC intern. The presence of seminarians is the brand of this church. Though it may not be widely known or embraced a church’s brand will be found in the stories told, names invoked from the past, annual celebrations and the art, photos and awards that are displayed. Perhaps most compelling for the emerging generation is when a contemporary like Anna Flowers can succinctly give voice and tell everyone, “This is my church.”

Congregation identity and branding serve as the foundation for unity, resource allocation, leadership selection, efficiencies, and effectiveness. Children and new members are overtly and subliminally indoctrinated into a congregation’s ethos. Personal faith identity is often inextricably bound and shaped by church identity. “Identity is constituted by not only the meanings one has of oneself but also the meanings one has of others and other’s perceptions of oneself. … Another way of making this point is to say that Christian identity is essentially church related or ecclesial.” Members and guests may not be able to fully articulate the congregation’s identity or their own, but certain characteristics will remain in the form of images, adjectives, and lore. One reason that a congregation identity and brand may have magnetism for Millennials is because in an age of a blurred religious landscape and virtual

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relationships, a church striving to be true to their values provides an appealing alternative. A church identity and brand with roots in a faith tradition that is shaped by a contemporary vision and mission to address the needs of a surrounding community may draw the attention of Millennials.

In Matthew 10 and 28, the effectiveness of Jesus’ commissioned disciples would rise and fall based on their ability to convey what they had witnessed and been taught. It is imperative that churches understand their cultural appeal, both their strengths and their opportunities for engaging 18-34-year-olds. What do the congregation’s distinctions say about the church’s mission, vision, and priorities? Does their identity convey that they are in step with the emerging generation or are they more synchronized with a bygone era? Will the church’s character attract or repel 18-34-year-olds? At Kirkwood in Atlanta’s website reads, “God is love, and at Kirkwood UCC we believe God’s love belongs to all of us. As a congregation, we strive to open our hearts without fear of seeming different and open our doors to share God’s love with the entire community. …Above all, we believe in the transformative power of God’s love in human hearts. Everyone, Everyone, Everyone is Invited and Welcomed! Kirkwood’s hospitality and embrace of diversity seems to be very appealing to the young adults that they are drawing. Like Kirkwood, a thorough examination and identification of a church’s magnets, particularly young adult enticements, will serve as a foundation for strategically communicating the congregation’s culture as it seeks to be intentional about reaching Millennials.

Church identity strengths that attract young adults should be featured prominently on the church’s website and social media outlets because these are often the front door to the emerging generation. Church distinctions should be included in the new member curriculum. Because of

34 http://www.kirkwooducc.com
their excitement, new members are often the church’s best envoys to get the word out to their families, peers, and associates. All members should be re-orientated through consistent and diverse messages highlighting their church’s uniqueness. Time and familiarity may result in many congregants taking their church’s assets for granted. A pastor needs to model and emphasize the church’s identity and brand in their sermons, meetings, home visitations, and other communications to the members. Annual planning for the church’s calendar and budget should mirror the church’s cultural advantages. Ministries and programming should be evaluated to identify those that are operating based on the church’s core character. Volunteer leadership appointments and Staff hires should be based on those individuals who can accentuate and burnish the congregational identity. A church’s brand should be ever present through the church logo, motto, website, letterhead, signage and all other distributed materials. Each of these tools should begin an attention-grabbing caption that prompts the interest of Millennials.

Congregation Marketing

Marketing is a reality for every institution, business, organization or entity including churches like those in the FCT Report. “I contend that a social/political/economic sphere like the United States where everyday life is thoroughly shaped and governed by management and market relationships, tends to transform everything (and everyone) into manageable objects and marketable commodities. This commodification of everyday life has not left the churches of America unaffected,” asserts Philip Kenneson.35

Kenneson and others while acknowledging the impact of marketing, would argue that marketing desacralizes religion by making it a commodity for sale. However, I assert that marketing is not new, but evident throughout the Bible as a means to share the message of God

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in pursuit of a holy outcome. In the Old Testament, God seeing the needs of humanity uses prophets to convey a vision of a complete life through a faithful relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Similar themes appear in the New Testament. In the last chapter, Matthew 28:16-20 was examined as a text where the disciples they are charged to share the good news based on what they have witnessed. Paul’s missionary journeys are replete with instances of him identifying a need and proposing Jesus as the solution.

Marketing is a must for the contemporary church whose message must compete for the attention and ultimately the hearts and minds of a citizenry that finds itself in information overload. Between emails, the Internet, TV, radio and social media Americans are inundated with messages, many of which, espouse a better life apart from God. Therefore, if a church wants to target young adults, it will be necessary to develop a marketing plan to specifically focus on them. Marketing may be the single most important means of fulfilling the commission of God and retrieving the lost sheep.

Church marketing is not sacrilegious when it is distinguished from selling. Church marketing is distinct from church sales in that a church marketing plan comes from the mission field and not the church. The church identifies the needs in the community and meets the needs in order to introduce Jesus. For example, in the last chapter, Matthew 10 underlines the fact that when Jesus sends the apostles, meeting needs incarnates the announcement that the “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Church marketing is the performance of both business and ministry activities that impact the church’s target audience with the intention of ministering to and fulfilling their spiritual, social, emotional, or physical needs and thereby satisfy the ministry goals of the church.”

What are the specific needs of the immediate community can shape a

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church’s outreach ministry? At the New Life Covenant Church, Pastor John Hannah’s ministry has been described as, “often seen taking it to the streets of Chicago, unafraid to roll up its sleeves and get to work.” Pastor Hannah writes, “We adopted Betty Shabazz School…we spent $50,000 to rehab their bathrooms…we Clean the Green—take 1000 members and clean the neighborhoods in the community…Other outreach efforts included a back to school carnival where the church had a petting zoo and hired ice cream trucks.”

The church that possesses a community responsive identity and programming has a built in draw for outsiders, but these benefits need to be communicated. An effective church marketing plan should include elements that can get and hold the attention, educate the person about the church and prompt a decision.

The marketing strategy will be based on distinguishing the church’s offerings, compartmentalizing the market, and conditioning their chief stakeholders to advocate the congregation. Distinguishing their offerings is based on the congregational identity and brand. However, a church will need to go further and assess which aspects of their missional identity may have the greatest appeal to young adults and highlighting these ministries in their marketing communications. Compartmentalizing the market means that a church will not seek every unsaved and unchurched 18-34-year-old, but they will target market those Millennials who may resonate with the church’s identity. In Matthew 10, Jesus compartmentalized the apostle’s outreach by explicitly forbidding them from engaging the Gentiles and the Samaritans. Defining the young adult segment to be targeted can begin with soliciting the views of various groups and stakeholders within the church. Also, codifying and detailing the young adults that are currently active in the church will aid in plan development. Understanding their passions, experiences,

spiritual gifts, and interests that result in their ongoing commitment. Finally, the perspectives of non-church going young adults can be secured through surveys, focus groups and analyzing local secular organizations that are drawing the emerging generation. The investment of upfront research may enable a church to discern and create a template for the specific type of 18-34-year-old that they have the most potential of attracting.

However, the significant tool in a congregation’s marketing strategy will be the personal advocacy of the church’s brand by the staff, congregants, and other stakeholders. “A Nielsen survey found that overall, consumers trust other consumers above all else! 78% of respondents said they trusted - either completely or somewhat - the recommendation of other consumers.”

Pastor Hannah of New Life states “the secret for his success is “coming out of the four walls of the church has always been an intricate part of our ministry. …his church’s mission is “going after the loss.” “Churches swap members…but I tell my members don’t bring me your cousin that’s saved but bring me your unsaved cousin or aunt—we want the ones that don’t go to church…bring me the ones that are lost…”

Church staff, congregants, and other stakeholders are the chief agents, partakers, and beneficiaries of a church’s ministries and services. If those engaged by congregation advocates react like the typical consumer than there may be a higher probability that the message of the church will be better received.

Congregation Technology

For Jesus’ time, the commissioned disciples would have to spread the word by mouth from town to town. However, for many of today’s Millennials, technology is their primary means for accessing information. Technology has become an indispensable part of

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young adults’ careers, education, and personal relationships. Therefore, it is imperative that churches use technology to establish and enhance their faith. Technology can provide the least expensive and most effective means of introducing a church’s identity and brand to 18-34-year-olds. Technology can be a communications and outreach tool that enables the church to tell their story, extend an invitation, provide discipleship and create community. Technology provides access to members and the public regardless of geography or mobility. Technology can provide a more efficient and effective use of time, money, and physical space. Technology requires a small monetary investment with the potential for high returns for church advancement. In fact, most social media tools are free. Technology can bolster ministry entry and productivity by streamlining processes of communications, assimilation, training, planning, and delivery of services. The key tools for a church’s technology platform and evangelistic outreach is primarily a website and secondarily the social media tools of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

The church website is the front door for visitors, but especially tech savvy Millennials. A church’s website serves as both an introduction and invitation for 18-34-year-olds. Therefore, it behooves every church to make the necessary investment to ensure that they have an effective and engaging website that is vibrant and evolving.

It is imperative that the website be maintained and regularly refreshed with new content. Nothing shouts lethargy and stagnation then a church website with out of date information. Also, a church website should have photos, podcasts, sermons and when possible video clips. In the sales industry, it is an oft-repeated mantra that “words tell, but pictures and stories sell.” Pictures, videos, and podcasts should represent not only the church’s existing demographics, but also reflect the constituents that the church is seeking to draw. For example, if a church is trying to draw 18-34-year-olds then the multimedia highlighted on the website should enable a Millennial
to imagine themselves being a part of the church. For a website to potentially appeal to Young Adults several features must be incorporated including a church’s history, worship schedule, ministry opportunities and upcoming events. However, the most critical information for Millennials may be a church belief page, a leadership and staff page, and the first-time worshipper page.

A church beliefs page is essential because website visitors may come from every imaginable background. A beliefs page should have enough simplicity for a non-believer while having enough depth for an experienced Christian. It is imperative that a church’s core doctrine and beliefs are succinctly and clearly presented so that a visitor will have clarity about the church’s role in advancing the gospel. It should also be noted if a church is receptive to those wrestling with the issues of life including relationships, parenting, co-habitation, sexuality, and recovery. At Kirkwood church their beliefs page includes “In our midst are believers, questioners and doubters, young and old, gay and straight, partnered and single, many with children and all who are children of parents, those who know what they believe and those who are still trying to figure it out.” Statements like this are especially pertinent in light of the perception that many churches are anti-sexuality or closed to those who do not fit a certain mold.

A leadership and staff page are important for several reasons. First, in today’s society many individuals have to find credibility or compatibility with church leaders, before they buy into their church’s mission and vision. A leadership and staff page should include photos, brief bios, church responsibilities and email contact information. Church leadership pages are also important way to highlight a congregation’s diversity of gender, race and LGBT leaders. At the ChristWay Church Website, not only do they feature a leadership page, but they also have an

[^40]: [http://www.kirkwooducc.com/about_kucc/who-we-are/](http://www.kirkwooducc.com/about_kucc/who-we-are/)
entire page that provides an overview of the criteria to qualify for leadership and the responsibilities that leadership entails.  

A first-time worshipper page is important because it sends the message that a church wants visiting worshippers. Such a page may also subtly communicate that the church is engaging enough for first-time worshippers that a separate page is necessary. A first-time worshipper page should include Worship times, a description of worship, and activities for children, directions and parking. The Life Center Foursquare Church’s Website emphasizes that there is no dress code, the length of service and the content of the worship.

The church website should be interactive and not simply a billboard. Therefore, there should be links to the church’s other virtual community and discipleship tools. At Life Center Foursquare Church’s Website they offer a Study Tools Resource Page that includes recommended Bible Study Tools, Class Archives from previous Bible Study lessons and Resource Library that provides a full list of books, curriculum and videos that can be borrowed to enhance the learning process.

Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are evangelism musts for churches seeking to fulfill Jesus’ commission through outreach to young adults. “Throughout history, people of all generations have gathered in town squares—public spaces where the local community gathers for social and commercial purposes. In the old days, it used to be a literal ‘Town Square,’ and it still is in some places. Until social media came around, town squares were shopping malls and other social areas. Social media is the 21st century town square.”

For many adults, but especially 18-34-year-olds, social media is a major platform for how they

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govern their lives professionally, economically, educationally, and personally. For example, “87 percent of all online 18-29 year olds use Facebook…37 percent of online 18-29 year olds use Twitter…53 percent of online 18-29 year olds are on Instagram.” Consequently, a church that is serious about evangelizing and discipling Millennials must have a social media presence.

Through evangelism and discipleship tools such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter congregants can share thoughts about sermons, devotions, media topics, upcoming church events and other relevant information. These tools, when properly used can create church buzz. For example, when church members “like” their church’s Facebook page or sign up as twitter followers this information is forwarded to all of their social media friends and associates. Also, social media can create a dialogue that may facilitate a physical visit or ministry collaboration. The keys for the effective use of social media are that the forums are regularly updated, monitored for any negative content, and quickly responsive to inquiries. Another important factor is that all social media should provide a “next step” and direct the person to the church’s website.

YouTube is another technology that can complement a church’s in person gatherings. YouTube can be accessed through computers, tablets, smartphones and home televisions. YouTube provides a stage for a church to share videos relevant for young adults including sermon clips, member testimonies, music, discipleship classes, commercials for upcoming events, and service opportunities. On their website, the Life Center Foursquare Church features 1-2 minute “Soul Punch Videos,” that encourages viewers to laugh by satirizing church stereotypes through skits, music and spoken words. The kingdom of heaven being at hand should touch all emotions.

Congregation Worship

For the emerging generation, a congregation’s worship can be powerful when the presence of God is experienced in word, music, and fellowship. The worship liturgy should be true to the congregational identity and transparent in the prayers, scriptures, songs, sermon and offering. The desire for young adult presence in worship must be complemented with open, warm and non-judgmental hospitality. “If you are going to reach the nones, they are going to come to you as a none. That means they will come as couples living together, as gay couples, pregnant outside of marriage, addicted, skeptical.”44 When young adults come to worship, like some of the disciples in Matthew 28 some will bring their doubts. Therefore, God expects believers to be sensitive and kind to guests despite their current lifestyle, circumstances or choices. An inviting worship service begins long before the guests enter the door. The church’s website, social media, and distributed materials should convey a welcoming message to everyone. Individuals trained in hospitality should be stationed at the entry areas including the parking lot, church street corners, and building entrances. Visitors should be referred to as “guests”, because if they were invited “into our personal homes” we would not refer to them as visitors, but “guests.”

Millennials may be prompted to revisit a church’s worship services when they can experience a representative amount of their peers in attendance. The New Life Covenant Church in Chicago was established in 2003. According to the FCT Report, “…in a typical New Life Sunday service the youth and young adult population, though not quite at the 50% mark, is very


http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/еВхСКМwY2BQSDQ0AzZLY1TDFNMzC2SLOBONDICt бlНEM9M0s5Qks1SUDWFJpbmbEANTap4og6yba4izhy5oWXM8dBAjHnRuCLC3ZmpuKMbAmwha_J1XAt4kli LBoGCRYm4JLHOSjQxSjUzSjBMbLU2SzlBddRPDjDQjS_NkAPmEJks.
visible and seems to comprise between 25-35\% of those in attendance."\textsuperscript{45} For an 18-34-year-old guest, such numbers may indicate that there is a place for them or that the church has something relevant for their life.

Congregation worship that attracts the emerging generation often incorporates technology in the liturgy. At the WELL’s worship service, “the audio, visual, and technical presentation are intended to produce what the team calls the ‘wow-factor.’ The stage is adorned artistically, with a black background, candles, good lighting, and musical instruments. There is a creative use of drama, video, and computer-generated graphics to accompany the presentations and sermons.”\textsuperscript{46} The use of modern video technology provides an extra sensory element that young adults have grown accustomed in most every other area of their lives. Announcements, missions and service opportunities, sermon aids, and song lyrics may have a greater impact when projected on a monitor, whether a sanctuary screen or a smartphone and tablet display. Technology can also be a tool for creating dialogue, fielding additional inquiries, increasing giving and capturing contact information for follow-up. Technology also enables the worship to extend beyond the boundaries of the church when services are live streamed, capable of being downloaded from a cloud or uploaded to the church’s website and YouTube.

For some churches, the traditional liturgy may be insufficient in attracting 18-34-year-olds. In such a case, leadership may want to consider offering an alternative worship service that

\textsuperscript{45} Lee Granville, Donna. “FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults New Life Covenant Church, Chicago.”
http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/New\%20Life\%20Covenant\%20Church\%20Young\%20Adult\%20Case\%20Study.pdf

\textsuperscript{46} Gary S. Walter. 2013. FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults The Well, Scotch Plains, New Jersey,
http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/The\%20Well\%20Young\%20Adult\%20Case\%20Study.pdf
is designed with Millennials in mind. From a five-year comprehensive study of multiple worship services by Church Growth, Inc., we learned that growing churches are more likely to offer choices of when people worship, how they worship, and where they worship.

Approximately half of the 355,000 Protestant churches in the United States and Canada should consider adding a new service to their weekly schedule of activities. Of the churches that add a new service, eight out of ten will experience a measurable increase in (1) total worship attendance, (2) total giving, and (3) total number of Christian conversions, asserts Dr. Charles Arn.47

An alternative worship experience has many pros. Such a service would supplement the other evangelism efforts being deployed to attract the unsaved and unchurched including 18-34-year-olds because more choices mean more points of entering the church. For example, the WELL’s website notes “the WELL is the young adults ministry at Evangel Church for ages 18-29. We meet every other Sunday at 6:00PM for a time of community, worship and teaching. We come from all different walks of life, backgrounds, families, and cultures. But the one thing, that remains the same, is our desire to walk deeper in a loving relationship with Christ and to model our life as a response to that.”48 A new service may provide synergy and motivation for existing congregants who have a desire to attract Millennials, but are unsure how. Also, current members, who are not consistently active, may be drawn to the buzz of a new church initiative. An additional worship service provides leadership with an opportunity to try alternative elements in the liturgy without creating tension for current members who prefer worship to maintain the status quo. An alternative worship service may also infuse a church with new energy, a type of new wine in old wineskins. Finally, such an action sends a signal that the congregation is evolving rather than plateauing and declining.


48 Walter. “FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults The Well, Scotch Plains, New Jersey.”
Congregation Service

Congregations, that are organized and committed to serving others, are effective in attracting 18-34-year-olds for several reasons. “In one national survey, 72 percent of the public said a person who helps the poor is someone they would admire a lot. In the same survey, 82 percent said doing volunteer work is important to being a good citizen, and 92 percent said this about helping the poor. Among people in their twenties and thirties, these percentages were just as high as among people in their fifties or sixties.”49 The emerging generation desires to be a part of churches that provide service to their congregants, their neighbors and the broader community on the behalf of Jesus Christ. Congregation service is the best branding and marketing to introduce a church to the community’s collective conscience. It is a cliché, but often true “people don’t care what you know until they know how much you care.”50 Such caring may be most evident in meeting the particular needs of individuals and families in the community. At Kirkwood, a person said “We don’t even live in Kirkwood, but we stand behind the fact that this is a community ministry. It exists for its locality. Localized ministry is what people in my generation are looking for. If you are at all religious, the movement now is to make it local.”51 In today’s society, there is a great need for ministry to the whole person including the mental, physical, emotional, family, vocational, and financial needs of an individual. Young adults may be drawn to churches that are unabashed in acknowledging their commitment to Jesus as an

49 Robert Wuthnow, After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 228. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLwHCXMwY2BQSEoGdnXsJiFIMUJINzJKSLUXMzRMTLY0sUovB1ZsF-KgmxLYwpNLcTYiBKTVDIEHWzTXE2UMXtKw5HjqLATrCEthXMsIzMhRjYAF2jFMBx9gYG.


51 Lizardy-Hajbi “FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia.”
impetus for service. It is also important that the service provided by the church balances meeting practical and spiritual needs in order to be distinct from other organizations, non-profits and community groups. These types of ministries provide service with a hope of having an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and introduce an individual to other spiritual formation processes offered by the church.

Young adults in a congregation will be exposed to the existing and unique needs of those within the church and the surrounding community. The congregation will then provide a vehicle for service to meet those needs. For example, at Life Center Foursquare Church, they have a ministry dubbed the Blue Collar Crew. “The Blue Collar Crew (BCC) is a group of skilled laborers who are members of Life Center and assist our disadvantaged members in need of help. The BCC accepts requests from the elderly, disabled, impoverished, single parent, and/or widowed. Projects include small home and car repairs, as well as help with moving.”52 Such self-sacrificial service as the BCC may be appealing to young adults when they experience the joy of meeting people's needs with love and humility. Millennials will learn that they love, glorify and please God by serving others. Service is one means of experiencing God’s transforming presence as he prepares the recipient and empowers the server. With proper orientation 18-34-year-olds will discover their personal spiritual gift and how God has uniquely equipped them for ministry. The gift being activated and cultivated through service may affirm their place in the plans of God and the church. Being active in service may also prepare the heart of a Millennial to receive the spiritual gifts and service of others for their growth in God. Finally, service is a means for binding a young adult to their peers, others and the overall ministry. Such bonding rooted in belonging may facilitate accountability, fellowship and outreach to their unsaved and unchurched

52 The Blue Collar Crew: http://www.lifecenter.net/connect/outreach/local-missions/blue-collar-crew/
peers. Through service, Millennials will see the intangible assets that they bring to a ministry such as youth, generational perspectives, and different personal and professional experiences. Such a unique makeup will greatly benefit a church and the community that they are attempting to impact.

Congression Fellowship

Fellowship is a critical component of the Christian faith and church congregations. In the New Testament the word fellowship is translated from the Greek word “koinonia” meaning to be associated with, in communion or sharing with others. In a church congregation, the fellowship means sharing our lives with one another as God shares His life with us. Humans have been created needing to be in relationship with people and through this relationship we grow mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. “Religious belonging is the other side of the coin of religious identity. The formation of religious identity is ineluctably connected with belonging to and feeling solidarity with a particular group, be it family, ethnicity, race, gender, class, profession or religion. The questions ‘Who Am I?’ and ‘Who do I become?’ are inextricably intertwined with the larger question, ‘Whose am I?’” Congregations have a responsibility to aid believers in answering the question “Whose am I.” “Whose am I” is especially critical for the emerging generation of Mosaics who as noted earlier may be jaded by the breakdown of traditional symbols of relationships including marriage, family, and community. The website of the Well notes “We believe that genuine community is one of the hardest things for young adults to find in the church today. We also believe that we were created to be in a relationship with one another. Therefore, we have set out to establish “well communities” in the different towns and

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neighborhoods in our area. A well community exists as a “place of life’ where people gather together to celebrate and grow in the life that is available in Christ.”

For 18-34-year-olds, many of whom have virtual and cursory relationships, a caring congregation can serve as a reminder that they truly belong and are not alone. Authentic congregational fellowship strengthens believers by providing a safe environment to learn, share, question and dialogue about the faith and how the faith informs life. The New Life Covenant Church’s Men’s Ministry Iron Sharpens Iron “…seeks to provide a transparent atmosphere for men to share and be heard on a variety of issues that are specific to men. We use resources of fellowship and teaching to develop godly character to equip men to influence their community for Christ.” Partaking in the spiritual formation processes of worship, prayer, study and service as a community will help to deepen one’s relationship with God and fellow believers. Fellowship creates space for loving accountability where sins and shortcomings can be addressed in humility and transparency with the hope of confession, repentance and when necessary forgiveness. True fellowship also serves as a source of encouragement for life’s opportunities and challenges. The support of others can serve as inspiration for believers to pursue education, relationships, career and ministry opportunities. Fellowship may also enable congregants to weather life’s traumas including relationship issues, education struggles, unemployment, illness, and death. Time with other believers can serve as an outlet for pent up pain, a sounding board to vent and a chance to hear different perspectives.

In addition to the personal, there are also tangible benefits for the church when there is true fellowship. A church has a greater chance of conveying the love of God to guests and

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54 Community: [http://thewellnj.com/about/](http://thewellnj.com/about/)

neighbors when there is a sincere sense of fellowship. For example, at the ChristWay Community Church, “LIFE groups are where real life and real issues are discussed, and true discipleship takes place. This is an environment where we dig deeply into God’s word and apply it to our lives. We celebrate the successes and good times of life, as well as comfort one another during the tough and disappointing times. It is a place to be encouraged, equipped, and challenged to become fully devoted follower of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{56} Worship, study, prayer and ministry are enhanced when there is genuine love in a congregation. Finally, God’s vision for a church can gather momentum when there is a sense of care and concern for one another as expressed in personal interactions and group gatherings.

Congregation Mentoring

God invites God’s people into relationships of mentoring and learning – Abraham and Lot, Eli and Samuel, Paul, and Timothy. Young Adults in a period of rapid transition will profit from mentors who can provide identification, stretching, and encouragement. “They respect the competency of the young adult, and at the same time they are prepared to be present in ways that invite more learning and becoming. Mentors are willing to be part of the young adult’s initiation into a practical and worthy adult imagination of self, other, world, and ‘God.’”\textsuperscript{57} A young adult mentee represents an individualized mission field. The objective of mentoring Millennials is to provide positive and supportive relationships that will enhance and strengthen a young adult’s faith journey. It begins with guiding mentees to see the work of God in their lives and the world that they inhabit. Such guidance should include exploring how God has shaped their lives through family, friends and supporters. Mentors will also lead mentees to examine how God is

\textsuperscript{56} LIFE Groups: http://christwaychurch.org/#/ministries/life-groups

\textsuperscript{57} Sharon Daloz Parks 1942-, \textit{Big Questions, Worthy Dreams : Mentoring Young Adults in their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith} (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 2000) 128.
currently active in their careers, education and relationships. Mentees also need to be prompted to imagine God in their future faith growth, vocational decisions and relationship commitments. At the Well Church the lead pastors seek to model mentorship by being mentored by the pastor of the mother church Evangel. The Evangel pastor provides guidance on pastoring, resource support, a license to be creative and perhaps most importantly, the liberty to fail. In return, the Well can serve as a test lab for leading edge initiatives that may be eventually adopted by the Evangel Church.

Ideally mentees will gain new faith perspectives, spiritual formation skills and a broader perspective of their beliefs. Mentees will learn how to incorporate their faith into their relationships, education, vocation, and value systems. Mentees will benefit from having a special relationship within the church that will serve as a source for ongoing support, growth, and strength. Ultimately and ideally mentees can find a place of belonging. Just as the infant is dependent upon a network of others for confirmation of a universe of care and promise, even so everyone throughout life is dependent upon a tangible “network of belonging.” Everyone needs a psychological home, crafted in the intricate patterns of connection and interaction between the person and his or her community.58

Mentoring is an investment that does provide a return for the mentor. At Kirkwood in Atlanta, one young adult stated, “When I was at [another church] in Atlanta, they were much more established. But it was also kind of like the young adults were their own group and were not integrated with the whole church. KUCC is the opposite of that church. You want integration…some of the older adults have also taken some young adults ‘under their wing’ and

58 Daloz Parks, Big Questions, 89.
have invited them out to meals, drinks, or over to their homes.” Mentors receive relationship with someone other than their family or circle of friends. Ministry to a Millennial will provide an enhanced sense of service because it goes beyond the norm of most church ministries. Giving and receiving from young adult will broaden a mentor’s understanding of their faith as they channel their beliefs through another persons’ life. A mentor will also receive a diversified perspective on relationships, arts, career, and community.

To create a mentoring environment, like all congregation initiatives, mentoring needs to be prayerfully discerned, a vision articulated and mentors need to be screened, trained, properly matched and provided with ongoing support. Since life is hectic for everyone a mentor needs to be committed to making regular contact with their mentee through email, texts, and social media. A mentor should also have a regularly scheduled in person meeting. Perhaps most importantly a mentor has to be committed to regularly praying for their mentee.

A mentor cultivates and develops a relationship that will include the mutual impartation of wisdom and guidance. “It is (in this sense) accurate to say that emerging adults are seeking mentors rather than heroes. They do not need someone who will overwhelm them with unquestioned expertise as much as a faithful mentor who will facilitate the development, nurture and at time, correction of their growing faith.” Any committed and spiritually mature older or more experienced Christian adult can serve as a mentor for an 18-34-year-old. Successful mentoring requires that a mentor is dependable and consistently adhering to the principles that they advocate. A mentor also needs to be honest, trustworthy and confidential. A mentor has to

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59 Lizardy-Hajbi “FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia.”

be open to listening, learning and having their views questioned. Finally, a mentor has to be lovingly patient as they hope for growth while avoiding forced change.

Conclusion

Congregation intentionality expressed through identity, marketing, technology, worship, service, fellowship, and mentoring are some of the best practices to evangelizing and retrieving young adults. At first, it may seem like an inordinate amount of work for churches and leaders who are understaffed and over extended. However, through careful examination many will recognize that they are already incorporating many of these tools and practices. For this reason, the real challenge may be identifying, prioritizing, and improving the elements that will be the most effective in a given ministerial context.

The next chapter will provide the next steps for churches that want to be effective in their evangelism and retrieval efforts. For these ministries assimilating and integrating Millennials is essential to ensure this segment’s long-term viability as a part of the community of faith.
CHAPTER 4

ASSIMILATING NEW AND REORIENTED MILLENNIALS

Introduction

The ultimate goal of evangelism is much more than leading a person to a personal relationship with God or increasing church membership. In fulfillment of Matthew 28:16-20, the objective of evangelism is to make disciples and to accomplish this requires a confluence of factors focused on assimilating new and existing members into the mission of the church. Part 1 of this chapter will center on the critical step of assimilating new young adult members into the church’s discipleship formation process through relationships and instruction. Part 2 of this chapter will also explore inactive 18-34-year-old members, “semi lost sheep,” who are present in the church but not fully engaged. One objective is to explain potential reasons for the inactivity and to suggest steps to re-engage and reorient this young adult segment. Finally, Part 3 of this chapter will address completing the assimilation process by outlining steps to transition new and reoriented Millennials into active ministry service in the church as Jesus did with his apostles in Matthew 10:1-10.

Assimilation

What is Assimilation? “Assimilation is the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church.”\(^1\) Assimilated members can be identified as individuals who are formally integrated into the church as active members. Assimilated active members model the vision and purpose of a church as defined by the church’s covenant or mission/vision statement. Assimilated active members also consistently participate in prayer, worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, service and stewardship.

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Assimilated active members regularly and publicly support and advocate God’s vision for the church. Several ways to properly assimilate new members, including Millennials, are through New Congregant Mentors, New Congregant Small Groups, and New Congregant Orientation.

New Congregant Mentors

Many individuals become Christians through a network of personal connections including family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others. For this reason, it is imperative that the church has a process of providing relationships to support the new church member as they advance in the disciple making process. One way to provide relationship is by assigning a mentor to each new congregant and inviting new congregants to join a small group. For the young adult new member, ideally both the mentor and the small group would reflect their age group. In addition to a relationship, new members also need an essential understanding of a church’s beliefs, history, vision, mission, and systems of operation. For this reason, each new member should be required to complete a new member orientation process. New members have to be guided to serve in ministry, which can occur through a formal ministry integration process. Small groups, mentors, and orientation classes provide a foundation for church’s to fulfill Jesus’ charge to “make disciples,” “baptize,” and “teach.”

Relationships are critical for assimilating new members, including 18-34-year-olds, into a congregation. “Several studies have shown that between 65 and 90 percent of laypersons first come to the church through the witness of relationships…Newcomers don’t come with Velcro already applied. It’s up to the congregation to make them stick.”\(^2\) New Congregant Mentors (NCM) are an important component of relationships that help new members to stick. The value of mentorship was detailed in the last chapter. However, there are unique responsibilities for a

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New Congregant Mentors. NCMs are individuals within the church family who act as first relationships and church liaisons for new congregants from the time they unite with the church through their first year of membership. When new members have been identified through altar calls, submission of applications or other ways, then an NCM’s service begins. Jesus embodied the mentor principle as he guided his disciples, which prepared them to be sent in Matthew 10:1-10 and commissioned in Matthew 28:16-20.

The NCMs are individuals who embody assimilated membership as described earlier. NCMs may possess the spiritual gifts of hospitality, compassion, and gentleness. NCMs have been vetted and trained to serve new members adequately. A church committed to assimilating young adults has to identify and train 18-34-year-olds to serve in this ministry.

The service of NCMs includes: Affirming and welcoming a new member immediately after the new member responds to an altar call, submits an application or a personal introduction is made.

- Guiding the new member induction process. This guidance includes:
  - Having prayer and verifying the person’s intentions. Sharing information and answering questions about salvation, rededication or renewal of membership.
  - Giving the new member a welcome packet containing a membership information form and a brochure capturing an overview of the church.
  - Completing the new member information form.
  - Exchanging contact information i.e. Cell & Email and establishing the next time of contact or meeting.
  - Following the initial contact, the mentor assists new members by:
    - Praying For Them, Praying For Them, Praying For Them!
    - Contacting and being contacted to address general information questions regarding classes and church life.
    - Introducing new members to the instructors for their first orientation class, reminding them of the upcoming orientation classes and times.
    - Being available at different church gatherings to answer questions and introduce new members to the church family.
    - Aiding the new members in church logistics i.e. People, Places & Things
    - Encouraging the new member to witness to and invite family & friends to their Baptism & Right Hand of Fellowship and church programs.
• Celebrating milestones such as the half way point of New Member Orientation, Baptism, Right Hand of Fellowship, and their 1st Year Membership Anniversary or other celebrations that are personal to the new member.
• Assisting the new member with discerning and identifying their spiritual gift and the selection of a ministry.

New Congregant Small Groups

A church that is intent on integrating new congregants into the fellowship may find small groups or cell groups to be a valuable option. Small groups or cell groups are mini-communities within the church. Jesus used a small group training model to repeatedly prepare his disciples: Mark 2:1; 7:14-27; 9:33; 10:2-12; Matthew 10:1-10; 13:36. The disciples were hosted in homes where they served, taught, organized and launched out on missionary journeys. For example, Peter at Simon’s residence in Joppa and Paul in Judas’ house, which illustrates that small groups have more flexibility related to scheduling and location.

Small groups are to the church what minor epistles are to books in the Bible, small in size, but potent in impact. Small groups, with six to ten members, are equally as valuable as larger ministries in the church, but provide a service that is oriented to the individual. For Millennial new members, an ideal small group would have members and leaders who are close in age to 18-34-year-olds or have an understanding of this segment. Life Center Foursquare Church is conscientious about how new disciples are grouped. “Life Groups are designed for connection through shared interest, similar life stages, and the opportunity to build friendships.”3 Groups will have a loose hierarchy that consists of a leader, an assistant, members and space for a new congregant to be added.

For young adults, small groups can be very useful in their integration for several reasons. First, because small groups are based on the biblical model of fellowship, it signals the church’s

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3 Terry. 2013. FACT “Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults Life Center Foursquare Church, Spokane, Washington.”
intentionality to be loyal to the roots of the faith. Christian authenticity is particularly pertinent in
the wake of the widespread perception that the church is too much of an organized religion.

Small groups can also serve as a hub to transition new members into ministry. Spiritual
gifts can be explored, discerned and affirmed. The church’s existing ministries can be studied to
determine a match. Ministries that may be necessary, but not currently offered in the church be
researched, planned and presented to the church for inauguration.

Churches rightfully advocate personal devotions to facilitate intimacy with God, but
seldom provide the forums to learn how to cultivate this relationship. Small groups can provide
the framework for training in study, fasting, meditation, silence, and prayer. These spiritual
formation activities can be witnessed, modeled, and tried, which may foster greater commitment
from the new member.

Groups may also assist in training for evangelism and missions. Participants can learn
the importance and techniques of evangelism in order to be effective witnesses in their circles of
influence. Church growth may be one outcome because Millennial members may be the best at
attracting other 18-34-year-olds. Small groups may also provide an alternative church entry point
for some unsaved and unchurched who may be more comfortable with attending a group than a
church-wide event. Groups can expand missions by identifying needs in the immediate and
broader community and developing mission’s projects. Such mission’s activities can advance
the witness of the church in the surrounding area.

Small groups also supply a safe space that may help group members to develop intimacy,
transparency and vulnerability. Gatherings can become spaces where difficult subjects such as
church conflict or family issues can be discussed and probed without fear of judgment, shame or
exposure. Personal and mutual accountability among participants may be one of the outcomes,
which is necessary for members seeking to be Christians with authenticity and integrity. Groups will also supply another form of congregational care to complement the care provided by the church’s leadership. In the event of death, illness, or other personal crises group members may be more efficient and expedient than the official church process.

New Congregant Orientation

New Congregant Orientations have numerous benefits. Orientations are the first opportunity for a church to provide an in-depth presentation of their beliefs, priorities, and hopes to all new congregants. This is especially pertinent for young adult members who may still carry thoughts of the Church being “arrogantly exclusive,” “judgmental,” “organized religion.” The process is an ideal complement to the church’s website, brochures, and new member mentors. Orientations also enable a new disciple to grapple safely with why they joined and their compatibility with the church. The orientation may facilitate a new congregant’s comprehension of the privileges and responsibilities of being a part of a congregation. Mutual expectations established in the beginning may set the tone for a member’s entire tenure with the church. Future misunderstandings and conflict may be avoided with proper communication at the beginning.

Orientations are an important means of fostering relationships with teachers and leaders. In turn, the instructors and leaders can discover a new member’s spiritual gifting, professional experiences, background, and passions. Teachers who are aware of the needs of the church’s ministries can begin to identify potential workers and leaders. In person gatherings, can serve as a way for newbies to meet peers who have common interests beyond the longevity of their church affiliation. Such mutual identity may affirm that a Millennial and their contemporaries
have a place in the church. Self-understanding, relationships, and the comprehension of the church’s vision may increase the probability of new members staying.

The structure of New Member Orientations will be contingent on the purpose. If the objective is to provide in-depth instruction in the Bible, denominational polity, or the church’s vision than perhaps regularly scheduled classes over multiple sessions would be appropriate. For convenience, these classes can be scheduled on Sundays when new members will already be present for worship. Sunday classes will also provide a natural transition to other Sunday Christian Education classes after the orientation is completed. Weekly scheduled classes create an opportunity for incremental instructions that can build and result in a comprehensive understanding. A regularly scheduled class may eventually become a church norm that will not require as much general communication. Regularly scheduled classes enable instructors and coordinators to plan their schedules. Weekly multisession classes also help new disciples to get better acquainted with their teachers and leaders.

New Member Orientations can also be tailored to fit new members based on their previous church experience. For example, if a new congregant has documented experience with church in the same denomination or a church with similar beliefs, then the orientation can take place in a weekend retreat or a one-day extensive session. An abridged course may be appealing to experienced new members and instructors because of convenience. Invitations can be quickly disseminated without any formal communications. Also, turbo classes may be attractive to seasoned members who want a refresher on the basics. Condensed new member processes assist the church in quickly transitioning new members into ministry service, which may help to continue building a new members’ zeal. Finally, condensed new member orientations can be offered multiple times per year.
The New Member Orientation class content should be informational, instructional, and inspirational. “Informational classes were designed largely to be an orientation to the church. Instructional classes, on the other hand, provided both orientation and some basic training in Christian disciplines.” Informational content explores church leadership, polity, ministry opportunities, mission partnerships and community affiliations. Instructional content refers more to the introduction of significant theological issues, beliefs, ordinances, doctrines, and practices. Informational and instructional content must also be inspirational to create passion for the spiritual formation processes that are critical for the life of a disciple and healthy church. These spiritual formation activities include worship, evangelism, study, prayer, ministry, fellowship, and stewardship.

New Member Orientation should include the basics of the Christian faith as informed by the church’s denomination, tradition or leadership vision. Though not an exhaustive list, the instructional content could include studies on God, the Bible, salvation, prayer, church, church ordinances, congregation history, denomination polity, the tools to grow as a disciple, spiritual gifts, and ministry service.

Classes should also introduce informational content including the church’s history, church leadership, the leadership structure, the church’s vision and mission. It would also be beneficial to provide an overview of the church’s constitution, governance and decision-making process. Stability, longevity, and mission focus

The inspirational content from classes would outline the privileges and responsibilities of membership and opportunities to serve in ministry. Mentors, testimonies, sermons, and ministry impact reports can be the tools to share the privileges, responsibilities and opportunities.

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4 Lawless, “Membership Matters” 37.
Members receive the support from other congregants when life’s temptations and struggles arise. For 18-34-year-olds, such a support network can be beneficial as they chart their professional and personal futures. Members receive opportunities for spiritual development through an array of spiritual formation initiatives. Membership advantages also include staff and leadership responsibilities for laity and access to services such as counseling, weddings, funerals, baby dedications or space usage. Congregant benefits also include channels to express ideas, comments, questions, and the process of conflict resolution. Such channels are particularly relevant for young adults who have grown accustomed to expressing their observations and opinions. Members also publicly affirm their commitment to being united with a church and their fellow congregants, which is of particular importance in a rapidly changing society. Congregants are a part of a group seeking to advance the Kingdom of God through witness, service and fellowship. This can be a catalyst for 18-34-year-olds to share and invite their peers.

The responsibilities of membership are critical for all members to foster a healthy environment that sustains the church’s pursuit of mission. For this reason, it is imperative that the expectations of participation in the spiritual formation initiatives noted above be clearly outlined, if a church is intent on fulfilling the commission in Matthew 28:16-20. New members should be made aware of the opportunities to serve in and out of the church. Inspiring a new member to serve requires an explanation of the significance of service, the ministry names, the contact persons, ministry purposes, and the appropriate spiritual gifts. This type of relevance is very important for young adults who are trying to gauge where the church fits into their lives.

New Member Orientation classes should be mandatory for all new congregants. ChristWay Community Church requires orientation classes for anyone who wants to become a member. “In order to join the church, one is invited to attend the “Discover ChristWay new
partner orientation. People who join and regularly attend CWCC are known as “partners” rather than members.”

Some churches may have reservations about mandating classes because theologically salvation is the gift of God. However, it is important not to blur the lines between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is free, but discipleship is costly according to Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; and Luke 9:23. Still other churches may believe that they would be one of few churches that make such a requirement. Statistics do not support such an assessment. “The percentage of churches that require members to attend membership classes increased from 18.2 percent in the 1997 study to 31.0 percent in this study. Correspondingly the proportion of churches that expected but did not require attendance at membership classes decreased from 54.5 percent to 39.4 percent.”

Other churches may be reluctant to mandate orientation classes for fear that it will deter individuals, especially young adults from joining the church. However, many young adults have been conditioned to participate in orientations by their colleges, employers, children’s schools, and social organizations. If the purpose and value of new member classes are adequately communicated, there may be significantly less resistance.

Existing Congregant Reengagement and Reorientation

There is a significant segment of members, including young adults, within churches who are not fully and consistently participating in the discipleship formation processes of worship, evangelism, ministry service, prayer, Bible study, fellowship and stewardship. These individuals are akin to the “lost sheep” that Jesus highlights in Matthew 18:12-14. Data is invaluable in aiding a church in firmly gauging congregant commitment and participation in order to identify

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those congregants who are present as members but semi lost as disciples. Many church leaders and laity operate by personal perception, anecdotal evidence and the influence of their inner circles, which can be very misleading.

Gallup surveys of Americans have shown that for decades roughly 40 percent of Americans say they are in church weekly, but recent actual counts of Christian attenders indicate that perhaps no more than 22 percent of Protestants (and 25 percent of Catholics) actually show up in any given week. Additionally, only around 20 percent of the typical congregation both attends regularly and produces what might be described in sheep language as a full coat of wool, one that marks a person as a spiritually growing, engaged, and committed follower of Jesus Christ.7

Like the “nones” and the “dones,” there are numerous reasons for existing congregants’ lack of full engagement. The causes of non-commitment may include: 1) Economics, consumerism and individualism, 2) Disappointment with Church, 3) Church ministry disorganization and irrelevance of, 4) Parishioner life changes (age, altered family structure, declining health and career transitions). However, one of the most overlooked reasons may be the church’s minimizing of the expected commitment of members.

“For a long time many churches have tolerated a minimalist understanding of faith. Others have played down the implications of making a spiritual commitment to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Regrettably, it seems the spiritual bar has been set low over the decades—and centuries—more to add members than to create disciples.”8 There are multiple reasons why discipleship standards have been lowered. Since the time of Jesus, the church has attempted to meet the needs of society including ministries for feeding, clothing and care for the disenfranchised. For many churches, the belief was that meeting needs clearly illustrated the love of God and would

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7 Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church’s Spectators into Active Participants: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants, Vol. 56. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011) Kindle 494. http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLyHCXMrY2BQMDFOjTjYyTUpJsTAwTzJtBtwTAZWO2YWyakGaeYmQUyoG8KQSm3lQam1DxRBnk31xBnD13QsuZ46CBGPOicEgVqVUrGYgwswI5xKgDeYkht.

8 Thumma and Bird, The Other 80 Percent Kindle 455-457.
eventually provide an opportunity to share the Gospel. However, many churches experience mission drift and meeting needs become the end goal displacing sharing the good news. Church leaders and laity are not always comfortable gauging a congregant’s discipleship commitment. There is not always a comfort level with discussing an individual members’ lack of dedication. Church leaders and members are often not very self-reflective about all of the factors that have led to their ongoing commitment. For this reason, there is an underlying assumption that hopefully enough sermons, public appeals, receiving services, or prompts by peers will lead an inactive person to fully engage. As noted in chapter one, a significant reason for the church’s lack of emphasis on commitment may rest in “Seeker Movement” efforts to lure masses. The “Seeker” objective being that volume will lead to more converts who can eventually be transitioned into formal discipleship formation processes.

The re-engagement of existing congregants will require a process of personal conversations and a series of small group gatherings with church leaders. The objective is to re-engage 18-34-year-old members into consistently active discipleship formation. The re-engagement conversations will aid in accurately identifying a congregants’ commitment level and the reasons for their commitment or lack thereof. Discussions will expose the understanding gap that exists between leadership and laity relating to the church vision/mission, church priorities, and the role of leadership and laity. Conversations can also affirm and reaffirm that a member understands the privileges, responsibilities, and expectations of being a part of the church. It is an opportunity to clarify the distinction between membership and discipleship. A church’s continual usage of terminology that has been distorted by societal changes may be contributing to a members’ view that greater commitment is not necessary.

Jesus didn’t recruit volunteers or members in the sense many people today use those words; he called people to be his disciples. Yet most people in our churches
are drawn to terms like member and volunteer. Many understand these terms in ways that are far below biblical standards......... It’s often a badge we wear to label our tradition (“I’m Presbyterian”) rather than a spiritual commitment and covenant that we live out.9

Millennial members have an opportunity to share feedback, suggestions, and concerns about discipleship and congregation life, in general. This will also be an invaluable chance to reiterate the church’s vision and mission.

Pursuing this strategy, the church will train and assign individuals to conduct personal conversations with every current young adult member. Conversations will be scheduled with a planned length of 30 minutes. Those individuals assigned by the church will be trained in using a reorientation script. They will also be supplied with an Orientation Discussion Form, and a Church Ministries List Form (ministry contact names, phone numbers). Conversation leaders will also be responsible for inviting existing congregants to participate in a series of small group gatherings with the church leadership. Small group gatherings with church leaders will be designed to share information and to inspire commitment. The New Member Orientation process noted earlier would be repackaged and presented to existing members who have been receptive to the reengagement conversations.

New Millennial and Reoriented Millennial Congregant Ministry Integration

New Millennial congregants are individuals who join a church for the first time, while reoriented Millennial congregants (semi lost sheep) are those existing members who are not full active prior to reorientation. Many church members, both the new and the reoriented, will often state that one of the main reasons that they do not serve in ministry is because no one ever asked. In contrast, most church leaders will assert that they frequently ask for volunteers through the

9 Thumma and Bird, The Other 80 Percent Kindle 1538-1541.
bulletin, the website, and pulpit announcements without a great response. Though seemingly contradictory, both assertions are correct. The issue is not “are volunteer appeals being made”, but “how volunteer appeals are being made.” Leaders have been conditioned that verbal or written appeals in congregational gatherings are useful because there is a captive audience. However, just because there is a crowd present does not mean that the group is attentive or responsive to every appeal. As noted earlier, attention spans are shorter, and distractions are greater, consequently general appeals are not as effective as in the past.

One of the best strategies for transitioning new and reoriented young adults into active service may begin with the creation of a ministry that specifically facilitates ministry transitioning. New Life Covenant Church in Chicago has its Connect Point Ministry. “Our goal is to connect members with a ministry to offer their service on a volunteer basis. To facilitate that goal, we provide information about various ministries, in addition to acting as a conduit to open the lines of communication between members and prospective ministries.”10 All churches can create a ministry that will enable shifts into ministry. Too often, church leaders are so desperate to fill volunteer voids that they are willing to recruit and assign congregants indiscriminately. Being shortsighted in filling ministry volunteer slots yields middling results for the ministry, volunteers and those receiving the service. Accomplishing ministry goals is very dependent on the competency, commitment and chemistry of the volunteers. Ministries like Connect Point will benefit both the ministries and the members.

With member transitions being coordinated, ministries profit because ministry leaders and participants have to assess their ministries formally. Ministries have to answer the questions: What is the ministry and the ministry’s purpose? What ministry training is provided? Who

10 Connect Point: http://www.newlifeoakwood.org/ministries/member/connect-point.php
benefits from the ministry and how is the overall church’s vision advanced? How many and who are the volunteers that are needed? What are the responsibilities and time commitment necessary for ministry servants? What benefits can a volunteer expect to derive from serving? What do we want to say when extending an invitation? What are some frequently asked questions that an invitee may pose? What are the next steps after an invitation is accepted?

For potential volunteers, person-to-person coordination and invitations may gain more attention and have greater impact. A written announcement or a 60 second blurb from the pulpit is far easier to ignore than a person reaching out. Personal engagement also personalizes the ministry by publicizing the identities of those currently serving. Many congregants only see the outcomes and not the process or the people making commitments in order for a ministry to function. Personal invitations connect the personal sacrifice with the task. Individual outreach also conveys to the invitee that the ministry is organized which may be very critical for those whom time is an obstacle to serving. Accountability is an inherent part of receiving an individual invitation because awareness has been established and a personal response is necessary.

Invitations to potential volunteers should be aimed at the specific individuals who are the most ideal for the ministry. Personal outreach to 18-34-year-olds should include a theme, mantra or tagline that is brief, memorable and elicits a reaction. It is also important that the response to an invitation be convenient and not requiring additional steps such as completing a form at the point of invite, making a later phone call, or going to another room. Invitations should also include a card or text message that provides an overview of next steps including date, time and content of the next gathering. A ministry may consider emailing a Potential Ministry Member Survey to respondents to save time and to establish the tone for the upcoming conversation or meeting.
Ministry conversations should provide an extensive description of the ministry including:

- The ministry’s formal name, date of establishment, the ministry’s place in the overall church.
- The ministry’s purpose, the beneficiaries of the ministry
- The ministry’s leadership hierarchy
- The necessary prerequisites including clearances
- The roles and responsibilities of volunteers,
- A schedule of ministry activities
- A description of the training process
  - The completion of a ministry orientation
  - Shadowing a ministry members

The ministry information shared should also seek to preempt the reasons why people do not serve as volunteers in ministry. Time or the perceived lack of time may be the top reason committed church members and others do not serve in ministry. For this reason, a meeting to discuss ministry service opportunities must be explicit about the needed time commitment. One way of overcoming the hurdle of time is by detailing the time necessary to fulfill all of the volunteer roles. For example, if a church is committed to a weekly feeding ministry the functions include community outreach, shoppers, space set up, food preparers, servers, cleaners, monitors and worship leaders. Each of these roles requires different responsibilities and various times of execution. For this reason, there is a place for an individual who has a heart and skills to serve regardless of their schedule. Volunteer roles can be presented as an opportunity for an individual and their families to serve together. For example, young adults serving in the feeding ministry can take their kids when they shop for the food or bring their spouses when they serve. Technology can be a valuable tool to enable an individual to contribute to a ministry at their convenience. If data entry is necessary to chart feeding ministry participants or if a room setup schematic needs to be created than a volunteer can assist as their schedule permits without having to travel to the church.
A ministry volunteer information session should also address other anti-volunteer sentiments including “the church has enough volunteers,” “ministry service is for clergy or staff,” or a sense of inadequacy to qualify as a volunteer. Providing a brief overview of the church including the role of clergy, staff and volunteers may be an effective way to address the sense that volunteers are not needed. Outlining the various ministries that the church offers may awaken an individual to the fact that they have a role to play. For relevance sake, all potential volunteers including Millennials want to know that they are part of a ministry process that will make a difference in the lives of others. The fear of failure, disappointment or wasting time can only be alleviated through understanding the fail-safes built into the ministry to ensure their effectiveness. Such fail-safes include written volunteer descriptions, an overview of the training process, an open communications policy, and a forum for post ministry debriefs including strengths, opportunities, and concerns. A structured and augmented process to pursue ministry achievement may be the key to converting volunteer inquirers to volunteer participants.

An information session should also highlight some of the potential benefits that a volunteer may derive from serving in ministry. Ideally, congregants would serve as a commitment to God, compassion for others or general altruism, but this is not always the case, especially when considering that individuals may be new to the faith or newly returning to the church. For this reason, the potential benefits need to be communicated. Some benefits may include using one’s spiritual gift, experiencing compassion and empathy, helping someone in need, sharing the love of God, gaining new experience, adding a resume entry, becoming a more active part of the congregation, and meeting others. At Kirkwood United Church of Christ members serving in ministries feel like partners. “There is a spirit of openness to co-creating the present and future mission and vision; …gifts are celebrated, nurtured and utilized. One young
woman remarked, “I love KUCC because the leadership and Susannah have always said, ‘Come and create with me.’”

Churches may also want to provide “ground level ministries” or ministries that are easy to enter. These ministries do not require spiritual maturity, comprehensive biblical knowledge, or extensive training. Congregants can get started quickly with little responsibility. Their service can be viewed as a trial run to exercise their spiritual gifts. Ministry leaders, mentors, and small group peers can use the opportunity to observe a congregant’s willingness to serve. Ground level ministries can include hospitality, clothing, feeding and support for office administration.

Churches must be very intentional about recognizing and celebrating the service of all members, but especially new congregants or re-engaged congregants. Recognized congregants may feel that their sacrifice makes a difference and that the church values their contributions. Those who are celebrated may tell their family and friends and that becomes a form of outreach. Public recognition sends a message to all congregants that ministry service is valued and may increase volunteer enlistment.

The following brief list provides ideas for recognition:

- Give tokens of appreciation including cards, emails, and small gifts.
- Provide serving congregants with lapel pins or nametags that highlight their areas of ministry.
- Create newsletter articles or multimedia presentations that acknowledge ministries and those who are benefiting.
- Record and share the testimonies of those who have received service and the impact on their lives.
- Pastors can acknowledge volunteers in their sermons, announcements, and other church-wide communications.
- Host annual or semiannual appreciation events.

11 Lizardy-Hajbi “FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia.”
Conclusion

The scripture passages in Matthew 28:16-20 and 18:12-14 serve as guideposts for the church’s endeavor to evangelize and disciple young adults. To accomplish this task requires the synchronizing of a myriad of factors. This chapter has sought to identify some of those elements. It was also the goal to provide a framework for a church systematically to oversee the assimilation and integration of congregants into the disciple formation process. The next chapter will highlight a church that is dealing with the issues outlined above and attempting to utilize many of the noted suggestions to overcome those challenges.
CHAPTER 5

A TEST CHURCH: CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Introduction

Like the congregations in the Faith Community Today Study, Canaan Baptist Church has a desire to engage, enlist and educate young adults, those ages 18-34-years-old. One of our missions is to expose the emerging generation to Christianity’s relevance for their lives with the hope that it will engender their commitment to be Christian disciples. Canaan’s plan for intentionally targeting young adults is based on the theology, best practices, and assimilation tools presented in the earlier chapters of this thesis. The intent is to reintroduce Canaan’s vision and mission to existing congregants and the surrounding community. The ideal goal is to use the Canaan’s traditions of people and programming to continuously disciple Millennials resulting in generative possibilities for Canaan and the Germantown Community. Canaan’s use as a test church reveals that much of what has been presented in the previous chapters can be applied regardless of the church’s age, community setting, and existing demographics. The use of Canaan will also reiterate that churches can effectively evangelize, retrieve, and integrate Millennials, if they concentrate on their identity, marketing, technology, worship, service, and fellowship.

This chapter will explore Canaan’s identity based on the church’s official biography, and member feedback received from congregant surveys and focus groups. The analysis of the church’s official profile and congregation feedback reveals Canaan’s significant resources including people, programming, and finances. Analysis of the local census data reveals opportunities for the church to engage and evangelize the local populace, especially 18-34-year-olds. Using many of the best practices presented in chapters 3 and 4, this chapter will provide an
overview of Canaan’s viable strategic change initiative to attract and retain more Millennials from the church’s zip code based on applying the church’s resources to needs in the community. Canaan’s strategic change initiative targeting Millennials focuses on Ministry Evaluation, Leadership Vetting, Church Marketing, and Reorienting Inactive Millennial Congregants.

Canaan Identity

Canaan Baptist Church, celebrating her 107th Anniversary, is dually aligned with the denominations of the American Baptist Churches and the National Baptist Church, USA. Canaan is a large thriving urban congregation with over 650 predominantly African American Families, 1100 disciples and is averaging over 500 Sunday worship attendees.

Canaan is located in the Germantown Neighborhood, of Philadelphia, PA, 8 miles northwest of the center of the city. Germantown is rich in American history, with the architecture reflecting the area’s colonial past. “Originally part of 5,700 acres that William Penn sold to two groups from the Rhine region of what is now Germany, German Township was a processing center, made up of a diverse group of craftsmen and cottage industries, where raw materials from outlying counties were turned into finished goods for sale at market in Philadelphia.”¹ The residential architecture, Quaker Schools, and cobblestone streets still reflect the areas’ bygone past. However, 21st Century Germantown has evolved into a diverse mix of races, ethnicities, religions, and economic drivers.²

Canaan is committed to the commission of Jesus and highlights a Discipleship Institute, a Christian Arts Ministry, a Daycare Center, a credit union, a thriving community development


² For additional insights highlighting Germantown’s History, please access following video on YouTube: Germantown History at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqM_YePWD3Q>.
corporation and numerous other ministry offerings. Being true to her roots, Canaan remains at the leading edge of local, national and international missions. Canaan’s staff includes a Senior Pastor, a Director of Teen/Youth Ministries and two Administrative Assistants.

The Canaan Church Vision Statement reads, ‘Our vision is to be a servant church family witnessing to God’s love in Jesus Christ and ministering to the needs of people within and outside the church.’

The Canaan Mission Statement reads, ‘The Canaan Baptist Church is a Word and Christ-Centered fellowship providing worship, holistic care and nurture to its family members and seeking to share the full gospel of Jesus Christ to meet the needs of people in the local and broader communities’

Canaan has many disciples who are deeply committed to embodying Kingdom priorities, the church’s vision, and mission statements. The congregation has a legacy of ensuring that Canaan makes a difference in the local and broader communities. As a vital congregation, Canaan seeks to be a community of believers that “announces the good news, calls new disciples, nurtures and equips the faithful for their mission, and reaches out in ministry especially among those who suffer.”

Canaan’s Mantra is “The Church That Cares” and we embody this by being open every day, providing services to the church’s neighbors through an array of ministries, including human services, child development, physical fitness classes, mature adult activities, recovery groups, and so much more. Like the apostles sent forth in Matthew 10:1-10, Canaan seeks to announce that the kingdom of heaven is at hand in both word and deed. The church continues to refine the ministry programming to affect both outreach and intake recognizing that Canaan’s outreach ministries could be more efficient in segueing ministry recipients into Canaan’s disciple making process.

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In the spirit of Matthew 28:16-20, Canaan was established as the Canaan Missionary Baptist Church, “A Great Commission Church.” Though Germantown has many churches, Canaan’s uniqueness is the commitment to offer life-changing ministries to the community at large on a daily basis. Canaan’s community capital includes our reputation, our partnerships with local churches, schools, and community organizations and a very committed core group of laity and leaders. Ministry programming is the primary evangelism tool that congregants use to introduce their unsaved and unchurched acquaintances to the church. Ministry programming includes Sunday intergenerational worship, a bible study institute, human services, feeding ministries, child development, physical fitness classes, mature adult activities, recovery groups and partnerships with local schools. Canaan’s ministry programming is a wonderful asset with which the most vested congregants are pleased and take great pride.

Though established as a “Great Commission Church,” I would argue that Canaan has become more of a “Great Commandment Church.” A great strength of Canaan is the memberships burning passion for supporting and encouraging each other and the neighbors, as we experience life, whether celebration, struggle or grief. Though congregation care is a must, because of too much emphasis, the church is experiencing a degree of mission drift related to disciple making. In the wake of the disruptive forces noted earlier in the first chapter and serving a community that has more needs than church resources, the church leadership has started asking probing questions about our ministry programming. We have begun to analyze our mission, vision by assessing our mantra “The Church That Cares.” Is Canaan the church that cares about too much? What do we care about most? What should we care about least? Perhaps most importantly, does God care about what we care about most? We are becoming concerned

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4 Disruptive Forces – Chapter 1, Pages 3,4,16-22.
that unlike the apostles in Matthew 10:1-11, we are no longer healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out demons. As Lafley and Martin assert, “Focus is a crucial winning attribute. Attempting to be all things to all customers tends to result in underserving everyone. Even the strongest company or brand will be positioned to serve some customers better than others.”5 With over 40 ministries and open doors, seven days per week, it is a real possibility that we are underserving many including the congregants.

Canaan struggled to evangelize and retain 18-34-year-olds during the late 90’s and early 2000’s. My predecessor and the inner circle of leaders were committed to maintaining and incrementally improving the very successful status quo of evangelizing, assimilating, and integrating new members including Millennials. The former pastor is a clergy outlier who is a gifted international preacher, a former mission’s convention president, and a dynamic vision caster who inaugurated many of the church’s current ministry programs over the course of close to 30 years of service. Though he guided Canaan with a leading edge social entrepreneur mindset, even the former pastor could not resist the subtle powers of disruption that adversely affect all churches blindsiding him and the church’s leadership. Though these forces of disruption were noted earlier in the first chapter, Canaan’s neighbors were particularly impacted by high unemployment, stagnant wages, and a burgeoning consumerism mindset. Canaan’s members were affected by church irrelevance among teens and young adults, and changes in the lives of existing congregants - age, altered family structure, declining health, and career transitions. Canaan’s focus on incrementally improving and evolving the church’s mission enabled a much smaller neighborhood church, with a new young dynamic pastor to capitalize on leading edge approaches of church ministry. By offering young adult ministry programming,

contemporary liturgy, alternative non-Sunday worship times, life application sermons, and bible study this much less established church drew the attention of many of Canaan’s young adults. Many 18-34-year-olds and their families left Canaan seeking a similar church experience by joining this neighborhood church or joining churches that offered a comparable ministry platform. That small church has become a mega church with over 10,000 members. Consequently, this mega church has relocated to a modern campus in another area of the city with only a satellite location in Germantown. However, the effect of this organization and the other disruptive forces caused Canaan’s new convert momentum to stall, the young adult population to plummet, and the overall congregation morale to ebb.

Currently, the vast majority of Canaan’s members, both new and tenured, live outside of the Germantown community’s 19144 zip code. There are a number of factors that contribute to this disparity, including 1) the church relocated to the current location, (albeit, 40 years ago) and the church’s roots are in other parts of Germantown. 2) Upward mobility has led many middle class plus congregants, especially Millennials, to move from Germantown for career, real estate appreciation, services, safety, and class elevation. 3) Canaan has not been consistently effective in sharing with the immediate neighbors all that God and Canaan have to offer for their lives, families, and the community.

Several advantages, to evangelizing our neighbors, include: 1) Tapping into a new mission field. 2) Having a greater witness to our neighbors because their neighbors are a part of the church. 3) Facilitating more authentic fellowship in and out of the church. 4) Increasing the pool of volunteers, because of a reduced commute time. 5) Strengthening the bonds of the church and the community for more effective partnership. 6) Alleviating parking inconvenience, which is the top facilities’ issue in the Congregation Survey Report.
Canaan’s census data reveals that the church’s demographics mirror the overall zip code in the categories of education and income. However, as the internal data and a recently completed Church Survey Report reveal that there is a significant disparity in median age (the church’s is significantly higher) and most importantly, the percentage of the population in the 18-34-year-old range (the church’s is significantly lower). Currently, Canaan’s young adult demographic is the smallest in the church as attested by our internal statistics and our Church Survey Report. With around 50 active individuals, this segment represents less than 5 percent of our congregation. An estimated congregation demographic based on internal data and the Congregation Survey Report is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>African American 99.75 %</th>
<th>Other .25%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female 60%</td>
<td>Male 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sub 18 20%</td>
<td>19-35 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital</td>
<td>Married 40%</td>
<td>Single 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High School Grad 70%</td>
<td>Some College 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation</td>
<td>White Collar 40%</td>
<td>Blue-Collar 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canaan Congregant Feedback

Membership feedback is based on an internal Church Survey, focus groups, and leadership input. For the Church Survey, I used the Hartford Institute for Religion and Research’s Church Planning Inventory. I opted for Hartford’s Church Planning Inventory for several reasons. It was comprehensive for in-depth church planning. The extensiveness of the survey would prompt the respondents to contemplate and formulate their opinions about the
church. I was hopeful that those completing the survey would vest more in adopting and implementing key learning from the Congregation Survey Report.

For the focus group, I used standardized open-ended questions that I excerpted and reframed from a congregation survey that I created (see Appendix 1). I conducted two focus groups - Group A, and Group B. Group A’s session included: 25 attendees, ages 45+ years, a variety of ministry leaders and emerging leaders and the session lasted 60 minutes. Group B’s session included: 15 attendees, all ages under 45 years, a variety of ministry leaders and emerging leaders and lasted 70 minutes.

One significant outcome of the focus groups is that we have created a Young Adult Advisory Team. These individuals of various ages are enthusiastic about the prospect of targeting their peers in the community. Though our young adults have general concerns for society, their core expectation is programming and outreach that primarily addresses issues pertinent to them, their families and the African American Community. They believe and seek to live the commission in Matthew 28:16-20. They would like to see more of their contemporaries in the church. Their desire to improve the lives of African Americans is based on a history of community activism from which they are the direct beneficiaries. They know, witness and experience the negative impact of poor personal choices, family breakdown, ineffective education systems, unequal economics, crime, systemic racism etc. on the African American Community. Like the shepherd in Matthew 18:12-14, they have empathy for others who appear to be lost, knowing that ‘But by the grace of God........

In addition to the focus groups, I also solicited input from leaders who guide the assimilation and integration of new members into the church. In the opinion of Canaan’s New Disciples Ministry Leaders, there is a sketch model of an 18-34-year-old who joins Canaan and
remains an active part of the congregation after one year. According to them, Canaan’s evangelism target 18-34-year-old is an: African American, associate degreed or higher educated, middle income, a married couple or single female and households with children under 15 years of age.

Based on the congregation survey, focus groups and leadership feedback, Canaan’s top assets identified that can be utilized to attract, assimilate and retain young adults are people, programming, and finances.

Canaan People Resources

One of Canaan’s greatest assets for attracting Millennials is a core group of members who are making a full commitment to moving from church members to Kingdom disciples. A quick analysis of the data, including Bible Study Attendance Logs, Tithe and Offering Records, Ministry Participant Lists, New Disciples, New Disciple Referrals, Right Hand of Fellowship Recipients, and Sunday Worship Attendance Counts, reveal the following initial findings:

• The church is averaging ten individuals joining every month as new converts or rededicating believers. Many note that their awareness of Canaan came from a personal invitation.
• Adult Christian Education attendance is ranging from 150 to 200.
• Sunday attendance is consistently ranging between 500 and 600.

Based on this brief analysis and the Church Survey Report, it seems that the church has a dedicated remnant that if properly focused could serve as agents for a consistently vibrant community of faith that can have the greatest missional impact by drawing, assimilating and retaining Millennials.
Canaan Program Resources

Canaan’s other great strength for the Millennial target demographic is the church ministry programming that respondents described as biblically based, orderly, conveniently scheduled, and life applicable for individuals and families. This is important because as noted in A Decade of Change, “Broad and dynamic, local oriented mission programming provides both name recognition in the community and feedback loops about the needs and interests of potential recruits.” As suggested in Decade of Change, Canaan currently offers over 40 local oriented mission programming ministries spanning the areas of Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship, Service, and Stewardship. The ministries are intergenerational drawing both volunteers and ministry recipients from all age groups. Canaan can add new ministries as needs are identified and if meeting the need, fulfills the church’s mission statement. Another attraction is the church has a programming missional thrust that includes community empowering initiatives and partnerships.

The following ministry grid highlights some of Canaan’s Ministry Programs that may be appealing to the target demographic of 18-34-year-olds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canaan Ministries for 18-34-Year-Olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children's Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREAC -Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Empowerment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canaan Ministries for 18-34-Year-Olds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Sankofa After School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>*Singles Ministry</td>
<td>Teen Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Ministry</td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Young Adult Ministry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Ministries in the development and planning phase

Canaan Financial Resources

During the soon to be completed six-year capital campaign, the Canaanites contributed 2 million dollars, above and beyond their tithes and offerings, despite one of the worst economic recessions. The campaign has enabled the church to renovate the main building, acquire an adjacent property and continue developing three contiguous properties into a Family Empowerment Center, an Economic Empowerment Center and an Education Empowerment Center. These Empowerment Centers seek to serve the community at large through a Christocentric approach that is holistic in focus, addressing every aspect of a person’s life and is empowering in application, which means transforming a person’s outlook, decision making, and choices.

Current operating budget also presents significant resources for new ministry. Including tithes, offerings, capital campaign contributions and revenues from the non-profit business ministries, e.g. Daycare, Sankofa Afterschool, and Christian Arts Ministry, the projected 2014 annual operating budget totals a little less than 2 million dollars. The current finances reflect the generosity of a dedicated core of congregants and are a reflection of several factors. God’s vision for Canaan is regularly communicated. It is a cliché, but true “there is provision for the
vision.” Canaan has employed a number of accountability measures, including adhering to
congregant affirmed financial policies and procedures, partnering with independent vendors for
payroll and financial accounting, and retaining a CPA to conduct financial audits. Consequently,
trust has been built among givers. The leadership has remained committed to creating an
environment of financial transparency. These financial resources, if properly invested can fund
the marketing plan and the hiring of staff in order to evangelize, serve and integrate young
adults.

Canaan’s Local Census Data

Canaan’s people, program, and financial resources provide a solid foundation to
intentionally evangelize the local community and specifically 18-34-year-olds. Like the apostles
being sent in Matthew 10:1-10, the church has what it needs to announce the kingdom of heaven
to the 19144 zip code. As the apostles would find great opportunity in the house of Israel, so the
19144 census data reveals that Canaan has a rich harvest field just outside the doors.

For this thesis, the Census Data was sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau American
FactFinder Website\(^7\) and City-Data.com Website.\(^8\) I retrieved the 2010 Census Data for the
church’s zip code – 19144. The disparities between Canaan’s data and the 19144 zip code are
few and include the community having greater racial diversity, more public transportation usage,
and a higher percentage of residents living below the poverty line. Canaan’s ministry
programming centering on human services and economic empowerment will be an asset in the
church’s evangelistic efforts to the poor. The census data also reveals some similarities between
the Canaan membership and the neighbors in the local community. For example, Canaan

\(^7\) Census Factfinder Website <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml>

\(^8\) City-Data.com Website <http://www.city-data.com/zips/19144.html>.
member’s education attainment is close to the communities’ ratio of 81.5% attaining a high school diploma or higher and 23.8% attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher. The community’s industries for employment and median household income of $29,849 and the mean household income of $45,019 are also reflective of Canaan’s congregants. Similar incomes are a plus for the church’s outreach because those receptive to the church’s witness will find congregants of like income and education. As noted in an earlier chapter, people respond better to outreach and assimilate easier when they can experience others like themselves with similar backgrounds.

The greatest census learning for this thesis and Canaan fulfilling the Matthew 28 Commission for Millennials rests in the age disparity. With a median age of 55+, the church is significantly older than the 35.7 median age of the overall zip code. For the 18-34-year-old age segment, Millennials make up almost 30% of the zip code population, but less than 5% of church congregants.

Canaan Change Initiative Description

The congregation feedback, congregation resource determination, and census data analysis provides the foundation for a viable strategic change initiative to attract, integrate, and retain more Millennials from the church’s zip code – 19144. This initiative will center on Ministry Evaluation, Leadership Vetting, Church Marketing, and Reorienting Inactive Canaan Millennial Congregants.


Ministry Evaluation

The first goal of Canaan’s strategic change initiative centers on evaluating ministry programming and the relevance for all generations, but especially 18-34-year-olds. I would deem our ministry programming as an asset, but also part of a ‘wicked’ problem. “Solving a hard problem can be vexing, as it requires working doggedly through potential solutions to find the correct answer. But some problems are not just hard but wickedly hard in their unconventionality and scope, and the usual problem-solving skills are not effective.”12 Canaan’s programming is challenging because of the different perceptions of the programming among different constituencies – one inside the church and one outside. Many of the congregation’s key stakeholders’ seem to be content with unfocused and potentially irrelevant ministry programming. Satisfaction with the status quo is too often in direct conflict with maximizing finite church resources for measured and significant returns on outlay.

I view ministry programming as the key to achieving the other strategic initiatives detailed in this chapter. If we ‘double down’ on evaluating ministry programming, it is my hypothesis that we will augment the church’s marketing efforts, attract more young adult residents from our local zip code, aid more Millennial congregants in becoming active in ministry and create a greater pool of 18-34-year-old leadership candidates. To accomplish this goal, it will require a collaborative effort among leadership, ministry participants, and laity.

Canaan’s ministry evaluation would include examining the historical basis for the ministry, identifying current ministry goals, comparing ministries to expose the programming duplication and soliciting improvement recommendations from current ministry participants.

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The ministry evaluation process would conclude with the development of a ministry vision statement for each ministry. As Lovett Weems asserts “Vision Is the Invisible Leader.”13 A ministry vision statement that is embraced will serve as a consistent communicator, administrator, accountant and motivator even when a human leader is absent or silent. A ministry vision statement would be based on several factors including the Biblical basis for a ministry, the target audience, a description of the volunteers needed and an ongoing process to evaluate ministry effectiveness. The ministry vision statement will be used to guide ministry specialization without duplicating other Canaan ministry programming. A ministry vision statement would bolster the morale of ministry volunteers. Completing the ministry programming evaluation process and ministry vision statement will enable the church leadership to properly allocate resources including money, space, calendar dates, and marketing efforts.

Leadership Vetting

The second goal of the strategic change initiative is vetting individuals for leadership positions. The church’s laity and leadership age demographic skews 45+, which is an impediment for those ‘looking for themselves.’ The existing leadership must continue to qualify and appoint more leaders who are ages 18-34-years-old because their presence, word, and image can aid in outreach to their peers.

John Maxwell describes the “The Law of the Lid: As the Leader Goes, So Goes the Nation or Organization. Leadership ability is the lid on the success of a nation or organization. The heart and skill of a leader will always tremendously affect the life of the people under his

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The Kingdom impact of Canaan’s ministries on Millennials will ebb and flow according to those who serve as ministry leaders. For Canaan’s ministry programming to maximize impact, ideally every leader would exhibit competency, commitment, character, and chemistry all of which may appeal to the Millennial generation who have been exposed to leadership evaluations through secular organizations. Assessed leaders could model discipleship for 18-34-year-olds by consistently participating in Worship, Evangelism, Study, Prayer, Ministry, Community, and Giving. For this reason, any officer or leadership nominee would already demonstrate a commitment to being:

- A regular attendee (3 out 4) of Sunday Worship Services.
- An active witness for Jesus Christ to the unsaved and unchurched.
- A regular participant in Canaan’s Christian Education Classes and Prayer Activities.
- A documented faithful financial supporter of Canaan through tithes, offerings, and Capital Campaign contributions.
- A consistent supporter of Canaan’s fellowship and community activities.

Using the Ministry Leader Evaluation Process and Criteria Template, each ministry would verify that a potential officer, president or leader has already made the commitment to these areas before their name is submitted as a candidate for leadership. The Nominating Ministry would be tasked to verify the commitment of all elected officers, presidents and leaders during the interviewing process. It would be noted that God is holding every leader, ministry and the church accountable for the choices of leadership.

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Canaan Marketing

The final goal of the strategic change initiative is drawing more young adults from the immediate community. The census analysis reveals that there is a mission field of 44,341 citizens, of whom 29.3% or 12,992 are Millennials. However, the data must be sifted through the changing religious landscape that is altering every community in the country. According to the Barna Group, data indicates that 28% of the adult population has not attended any church activities, including services, in the past six months. When applied to the 19144 zip code, this equates to a potential missions’ opportunity of 3638 young adults!15

The advantages of sourcing more non-Christian and non-church going Christian young adults from Canaan’s zip code are many. In addition to the theology of evangelism detailed in the earlier thesis chapter, in Acts 1:8 Jesus charged the disciples to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. The witness began in the nearest geography and spread outward, which may serve as a template for contemporary community evangelism. The community would benefit considerably from a change initiative rooted in individual Christian conversion that is supported by the life application discipleship ministries of Canaan offers. Like many urban environments, the church’s surrounding neighborhood is plagued with a critical mass of social ills, including broken homes, failing schools, high unemployment, crime, and much more.16

Canaan’s primary strategy is to increase the church communications and marketing to our target demographic, especially through technology. (See Appendix 2, Marketing Plan) It is


16 For additional insights, highlighting Germantown’s current challenges, please access the following two videos on YouTube: Down Germantown Avenue: Part One at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSc_u6ScMEg> and Down Germantown Avenue: Part Two at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SH941Z_zjIE>
conjecture, but I would assume that there are many who are totally oblivious to the positive impact that Canaan has on their lives and the community at large. An article in the Philadelphia Inquirer captured Canaan’s and other church’s dilemma:

“What is a church's economic worth to the community it serves? Last summer, a University of Pennsylvania professor and a national secular research group based in Center City. ……added up the money generated by weddings and funerals, festivals, counseling programs, preschools, elder care. They tallied the salaries of staff and the wages of roofers, plumbers, and even snow shoveler. They put dollar signs on intangibles, too, such as helping people find work and teaching children to be socially responsible. The grand total for the 12 congregations: $50,577,098 in annual economic benefits.”

It is imperative that we introduce and reintroduce Canaan to the local target demographic and ensure their awareness of Canaan’s relevance and our theological, communal, and social worth for their lives.

Reorienting Inactive Canaan Millennial Congregants

A significant opportunity rests in numerous young adult Canaanites who have not yet made a fuller commitment to moving from church members to Kingdom disciples. The church does not seem to be able to reach critical mass or a tipping point in congregant participation in worship attendance, discipleship classes, ministry volunteers, witnessing to family and friends.

Canaan’s annual corporate vision articulated at the church conference, reemphasize the priorities of spiritual formation activities. Sunday sermons, Bible studies, prayer and fasting opportunities, ministry meetings, and church communiqué affirm the importance of these initiatives. When participating in the ordinance of Holy Communion monthly, the congregation including young adults read the church covenant, pledging our dedication to these tools of spiritual formation. It is crucially important that the tradition of these practices will enable all

Canaanites and our 18-34-year-old members to think theologically through the frames of scripture and doctrine. How do we as a leadership group and congregation convey that the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures attest that every believer in covenant relationship with God and other believers are charged to commit to spiritual formation initiatives?

However, I believe that the greatest motivation may be the opportunity to build on the momentum of recent efforts to broaden the appeal of Canaan beyond the core congregant.

- Hiring a full-time Director of Youth and Teen Ministries that has resulted in doubling the number of teens and youth consistently participating in church activities.

- Launching a revised New Disciples’ Curriculum and Friends in the Family Mentorship Ministry that has aided in the increased retention of new disciples, especially Millennials.

- Adding new elements to the Sunday Worship Experience, including musician accompanied praise and worship, Diaconate Prayer Intercession, Pass the Peace fellowship moment, the use of Greeters, monthly praise dance, and launching the Unity Worship Experience. These adjustments have been critical in creating a welcoming and personal environment for many who have come to rely on relationships through technology. Consequently, 18-34-year-olds are consistently attending the worship beyond the Sundays that are intentionally focusing on youth.

- Starting impact ministries, including Chosen 300 Feeding Ministry, Greeters, Friends in the Family, Men’s Mentoring, Young Adult Praise and Worship, Teen Choral and the expanded Fitness offerings.
• Hosting life application and curriculum-based Bible Study for all ages including a class for young adults that also provides childcare.

• Casting a seven-year, purpose oriented macro-vision for Canaan through 2015 with annual themes. This resonates with all Canaanites, but especially those in the targeted demographic because many 18-34-year-olds experience such planning through their jobs, colleges and social organizations.

• Many Canaanites share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with family and friends. As a result, over 800 new disciples have joined Canaan as candidates for baptism or transference of membership. Included in these new member statistics is an increasing percentage of young adults.

Canaan is what Alan Fiske would describe as a “Communal Sharing Congregation. We treat each other as equivalent and undifferentiated in terms of contribution to the community. We strive to have things in common, agape love and shared suffering.” A Communal Sharing Congregation is based on the post Pentecost Christian fellowship outlined in Acts 2:42-47. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus and his disciples, this type of church, is intentional about altruistic and egalitarian in their treatment of each member. This church’s identity seeks to advance the Christian mission by serving as a contrast with the world’s emphasis on self, pleasure, and inequality. Canaan’s leadership and laity have historically stressed loving one another and our neighbors. Communal sharing is a must when seeking to re-orientate many in our young adult segment. It is possible that the significance of being a loving family of faith where all make equal sacrifices seems to have been forgotten by many. If so, this may be because of a lack of systematic formation of habits that catechize existing and new congregants.

For this reason an atmosphere that practices spiritual and Christian formation has to be the foundation for approaching our Millennials to engender a renewed commitment. It could be that the lethargy of some young adults reflects the Canaan family, as a whole. As a collective body, we may not fully understand, or behave as Kingdom agents because we do not fully believe:

- The temporal and eternal lives of unsaved family, friends, and neighbors are at stake.
- Northwest Philadelphia is in dire need of transformation, and Canaan is charged to be a change agent.
- Every Canaanite’s family would improve if each of family members were a disciple.
- Every disciple and leader in Canaan is being held responsible now and will be accountable to God for our obedience to His priorities.
- A family of faith is only as strong as the commitment of each family member.

If the church stops practicing the World Council of Churches’ definition of evangelism, believing in the importance of the commission in Matthew 28:16-20, the retrieval of the lost sheep of Matthew 12:12-14, and the assimilation of new and reoriented congregants as stressed in Matthew 10:1-10, then perhaps this is the result?

The book *The Other 80 Percent* by Warren Bird and Scott Thumma will guide Canaan’s efforts in re-assimilation. The book seeks to aid church leaders in learning how to shift more congregants from being members to being disciples through a “re-engagement process”.

According to Bird and Thumma, the Re-Engagement Process includes: 1) Congregation Listening via a Congregational Listening Team that will be tasked to listen to the committed 20 percent and the less committed 80 percent. 2) Congregational Learning through a team that will

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[http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwY2BQMDFOtjYyTUpsTAwTzJTBwTZWO2YWyakGaeYmqUYoG8KQSnM3lQam1DxRBlk31xBnD13QsuZ46CBGPOicEgvQVUgYgswsI5xKgDeYxht](http://duke.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwY2BQMDFOtjYyTUpsTAwTzJTBwTZWO2YWyakGaeYmqUYoG8KQSnM3lQam1DxRBlk31xBnD13QsuZ46CBGPOicEgvQVUgYgswsI5xKgDeYxht)
be responsible for interpreting the information gathered by the Listening team and creating a plan to address the key issues and 3) Congregational Leading, including prayer, strengthening strengths, affirming expectations for commitment, individualizing avenues for participation and using recognition to affirm the ideal.

“Spiritual growth and fulfillment are indeed a spiritual quest. Taking care of our sheep means developing their spiritual lives.” Successfully implementing an 80/20 Initiative will take 12-18 months before tangible results can be measured. However, I do believe that the 80/20 Initiative will aid in abridging many of the laity’s gap in proximity to the sacred. “For many, their ministry inertia is rooted in a disconnect to the historical and physical proximity to the man Jesus.” Ultimately, the way to keep 80/20 syndromes at bay is for our church’s leadership to be truly committed to being spiritual shepherds, always connecting activity with some aspect of spiritual maturity.

Change Initiative Viability

Many of Canaan’s leaders and the church’s key laypersons are conscious of the church’s lack of growth among the Millennial segment. Many are in support of efforts to target the church’s evangelism efforts on young adults. Because of the importance of the issue, many have expressed a comfort level with disturbing the status quo of long-term ministry programming and traditional resource allocations. These feelings provide a place of entry for the leadership to communicate and motivate the congregation. This requires what Bird and Thumma describe as “congregational leading,” where educating the membership rests heavily


on communication for cooperation. It is necessary to employ what Christensen calls “tools of cooperation.” The significant mechanisms of movement for Canaan will be giving a “common language, and a common way to frame a problem, which can occur if there is a sound theory that people broadly understand.”\(^{22}\) The common language rests in the fact that many Canaanites are aware of the necessity of making a concerted effort to balance the age demographics in our congregation through the purposeful evangelism, retrieval and assimilation of 18-34-year-olds. Common language that evokes understanding is critical in a Baptist Church such as Canaan.

A staple of Baptist Polity is the autonomy of each church and a system of congregational church governance, where the collective membership makes major church decisions using democratic voting. Decisions, including establishing the church, locating the church, church finances, calling and dismissing pastoral leadership, and appointing lay leadership are affirmed by a vote. Often, securing the vote or buy in of Canaan members occurs by sharing the vision with important leadership groups, seeking their input and obtaining their commitment. Next, the vision is conveyed to the congregation to garner their support. In my opinion, it is a basic human nature for people to appreciate and often consent if they are first informed of an idea, their feedback is solicited, and their commitment requested.

Canaanites have committed to major initiatives, including reducing Sunday worship from two services to one, experimenting with alternative worship services, completing major building renovations, implementing new bylaws, employing compensated staff beyond the pastor, purchasing real estate, vehicles, and major equipment and undertaking the capital

campaign. This encourages my conviction that a critical mass of congregants will embrace this initiative to target Millennials.

I am also confident in the viability of this strategic initiative because of my standing as the pastor. In most Baptist churches, pastors have significant influence. This authority enables me to lead, make more decisions and to exercise more influence over every aspect of church life. However, more sway is always complemented by greater responsibility, and I have repeatedly had to employ (PITCH) - Patience, Interpretive Charity, Truthfulness, Courage, and Humility.

Like a social entrepreneur, I will “help others to envision a new possibility, appreciate to meaning, and recognize how it can be broken down into doable steps that build momentum for change.”23 “Authority can be given; leadership must be earned. A person can be assigned, selected, or designated for a position, but a person cannot be appointed to leadership.”24 After twelve years of pastoral service and six years in my current assignment, I am the recognized and authorized servant leader of Canaan. I have enough pastoral relationship, experience, and measurable results to affect lasting change in the church and community. I believe that my chief pastoral responsibility is to cast a vision that equips individuals to establish and build a relationship with God through Jesus Christ that will enable them to have loving relationships with Christians, to be humble disciple makers of non-Christians and transformers of their communities.

I have begun to instigate the implementation of this strategic initiative through various communication mechanisms. The plan is being communicated at the annual and semi-annual church conferences, described in each weekly bulletin, supported with signage arrayed around

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the church facility and reiterated through letters, email blasts and other church communiqué. I am attempting to frame and communicate God’s short-term (one year) vision, mid term (two to three years) vision, and long-term (eight years) vision. The strategic initiative communication includes sharing the Mission, the Motivation, the Method and the Measurement. An analysis of the Measurement takes place in midyear, and at the end of every year and these results are shared with the leadership and laity at the semi annual conferences.

Communication will be complemented with incentives in order to transition the membership’s awareness into action. For a small contingent of Canaanites, they may be motivated because evangelism is a command of God (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). For other members, they may view the plan as an opportunity to transform their families and communities. One advantage of a predominantly older congregation is that they have children and grandchildren, whom they want to have a personal relationship with God and have this God relationship at Canaan. Still others would be encouraged by a sense of fulfillment as Christians (cf. 1 Corinthian 12). For leaders who experience burnout a more resourced church and kingdom (cf. Acts 2:43-47) would be an incentive to draw more 18-34-year-olds.

The measurement of the success of this plan would be individual & congregational growth (cf. Ephesians 4:1-16) and the numerical growth of the new disciples joining the church, (cf. Acts 2:41). Mission is what we measure. As Will Willimon argues, "You only count what's important and whatever you count becomes important." Numbers will not show everything about the outcome of Canaan’s strategy, but they are reliable indicators of spiritual vitality and a major way of focusing and energizing our ministry.

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Conclusion

“Society, culture, and institutions are always evolving. Exactly where American culture and society, emerging adulthood itself, and religious communities and traditions in particular actually end up going in the future will in some measure be shaped by the beliefs, desires commitments, decisions and actions of emerging adults and those who care about their lives.”

Canaan, “the church that cares” is a congregation that cares about the lives of emerging adults in our fellowship and the surrounding Germantown Community. The future life of Canaan is inextricably bound to these emerging adults’ relationship with God and their relationship with Canaan. Our task is not as daunting as it seems because as Sample asserts, “the task of the church...is to seek out the Spirit of Christ, to discern the current of saving work, to affirm---wherever it appears---authentic, qualitative life (zoe) and to call into question the bondage, illusion, and death of a twisted world. This means that we are not called to go anywhere where Christ has not already gone ahead to open the way so that we are able to go confident in the moving power of the Spirit.”

Like the disciples and the shepherd, Jesus has commissioned Canaan’s leaders and members to preach, teach, baptize, recover the lost, and to make disciples. Canaan as a test church faces the same young adult challenges as other congregations, but Canaan also possesses many of the best practice attributes of the Faith Community Today Congregations. Moving in the power of the Spirit will enable Canaan to purposefully evangelize, assimilate, and integrate Millennials into the church. The Spirit is Canaan’s forerunner in Germantown and is active in the lives of the 18-34-year-old residents, whether they know it or

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not. For this reason our initiative is viable, doable with a predictable outcome if Canaan is as faithful to the Spirit as the Spirit is faithful to Canaan.
APPENDIX 1

Canaan 45 Years Plus Focus Group - 3/4/13 (18 in attendance)

1. What is Canaan’s greatest challenge in reaching young adults ages 22-39?
   - Identify and understand what their needs are and meet those needs
   - Music and Worship
   - Mutual Understanding between the generations – giving each other a chance
   - Engage in the process of witnessing
   - Availability of worship times and parking
   - Communication is different – more technology

2. You know that young adults (ages 22-39) think that Christianity is _____?
   - Hypocritical
   - In Church too long (time in general)
   - Whiteman’s Slave religion
   - Old school – out dated
   - No connection – church heritage
   - Dress protocol
   - Not necessary to attend church; church is not relevant
   - Don’t believe in God or Satan; heaven or hell; have a disbelief and attitude
   - Boring

3. Young Adults (ages 22-39), active in church, that say, “I am a Christian”; why are they here?
   - Christian background
   - Freedom on dress
   - They stay connected
   - Role of the Spirit
   - Life tragedies; challenges; setbacks; and looking for answers

4. What were their impressions of Canaan?
   - Canaan members don’t like to be close
   - Connect with the Pulpit not the pews
   - Barrier – Separation of ages sends a message

5. What strengths make Canaan appealing?
   - Youth Pastor
   - Programs and activities for entire family
   - Young Adult choir is appealing
   - Mentoring and Interacting; personal witnessing
   - Commitment in the church

6. What are you prepared to do to make a change?
   - Get out and talk to young adults (22-29)
   - Prepare to live a life style (?)
   - Provide transportation to the church
   - Utilize experiments that we’ve already taken (i.e., Summer Breeze)
   - Expand to a second service, volunteer to work on creating that service
   - Flexibility – open to experimentation
   - Dream marketing team – think outside the box
APPENDIX 1 (Cont.)

Canaan Under 45 Years Focus Group - 3/5/13 (15 in attendance)

2. What are some of the greatest challenges with capturing this age group at Canaan?
   • Type of transition in dealing with youth with regards to ministry leader abrupt transition.
   • Folks want to see people that look like them in that age group.
   • The age group 22-39 is very broad. Is the ministry designed to cater to the specific needs of specific age groups.
   • The age group is very busy and tends to be flaky. (Work/life balance)
   • Church should be hype each Sunday
   • Event ministries in the age group. Programming and consistency of programming.

3. For the unsaved that we know, what is their view of Christianity?
   • Hypocritical, judgmental, they want money, I don't need to go to church to have a relationship with Christ.
   • The church service is not as important.
   • Folks are busy.
   • The responsibility of having a relationship with Christ and being a Christian once you're "in."
   • The urgency is not there.
   • Equalizing of all faiths that Christianity is no different from another religion. Ignorance.
   • All Christians are too conservative, focusing on fact vs. faith.

4. What are some of the conversations that take place between us and the age group?
   • Service too long.
   • Pastor is closer in age to "us" so folks may want to come back but are still apprehensive.
   • People are impressed with and fund raising efforts.
   • People think that the service is too early however the group that is here likes it.
   • Parking is challenging.
   • People enjoy Praise n worship, second Sunday and they enjoy the word. (Sort of like Summer Breeze).
   • Unfamiliarity with the name of the church. (Around the corner from the old Enon)
   • Some people are still very wounded and can't adjust to change.
   • Not open with our worship/praise.
   • Canaan is very formal.
   • The judgment that comes with openly praising The Lord.

5. What is Canaan's greatest strength with reaching this age group?
   • Personnel.
   • The fact that church dedicates 2nd Sunday to the young adults.
   • Ministry for children - Nursery, daycare, C2K, etc.
   • Pastor is young.
   • Age group of bible study and bible study discussions.
   • Pastor is accessible.
   • Pastor is open to new ideas with ministry.
   • Leaders in key places are committed to making ministry more affirming to Young Adults.
   • Services offered to the community.
   • Kid friendly outside of Sunday morning.

6. In terms of reaching the 22-39-year-old age group,
   • I think that we as a church can have more young adults in leadership positions.
   • Get a schedule together of planned activities.
• To structure those activities to tailor to the different needs of young adults. Ex: couples ministry, college students,
• Meeting people where they are in order to do outreach where folks congregate, etc. however still maintaining the integrity of the church.
• Hangout sessions.
• Partnering with different ministries on different service projects.
• Seasonal alternative services.

7. What are we prepared to do?
• Join and become a member in full standing.
• Come to meetings, focus groups bible study, speak up when it's time to talk.
• Supporting efforts, and the Pastor's vision for the church in general.
• Being dedicated to bringing people to our church.
• The young adults assisting with the teen ministry.
APPENDIX 2

Marketing Plan

Purpose
The purpose of Canaan Baptist Church’s marketing plan is to build new relationships within Philadelphia area, initially throughout the Germantown neighborhood. Canaan’s goal is to reintroduce the “Gem of Germantown” to the people its’ committed to serve. The strategy for building these relationships is through evangelism, grassroots efforts, publications and various media outlets. Over the next year, Canaan will continue to establish its brand message of Membership to Discipleship throughout Germantown and surrounding neighborhoods.

How will Canaan increase young adult membership among 18-34-year-olds?
In order to achieve the goal of increasing membership amongst young adults, the church must be visible to this demographic. Under the leadership of the Pastor or a communications liaison, Canaan will depend on social networking as their top marketing approach to this age group. Any information about Canaan or upcoming events or news should be posted as soon as possible. This specific target group depends on easy access of information since this has become a part of their culture. The following steps will set the groundwork for a successful plan.

• Be more visible where they are by using social network (Facebook, twitter, socialcam, church website) – Social networking is one of the most effective forms of marketing or promoting your event or business. It’s free and you can promote your event or business at any time. Being able to add pictures, text or video allows one to be as creative as they wish.
• The proper and effective use of Social Media is to build community, conversation and relationships with your audience. There are significant opportunities for Canaan to achieve gains within this medium. Currently, Canaan is missing most digital media components, thereby forfeiting opportunities to engage the congregation and social media fans/followers. Furthermore, there are significant opportunities to optimize existing marketing and branding efforts to leverage the digital media components to attract additional social media fans/followers and ultimately votes.
• Lidy Creative will direct the proper implementation of Social Media channels that will further build the brand, loyal member-base and community. Some of the activities that will be included in the program are:
  • General Social Media Strategy and Social Integrated Marketing consulting.
  • Content marketing
  • Optimized Digital Press releases
  • Formal Analysis of current marketing deployment, Digital Media strategy development and integration.
  • Social Media Account creation, management and daily responsibility, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube,
  • Fanpage custom landing page design and implementation.
  • Twitter page custom background design and implementation.
  • Development and execution of a digital content strategy.
  • Management of Fanpage posting - We will be posting 1-3 times per day, and optimizing posts and page to generate engagement and likes
  • Management of Twitter posting - We will be posting 12-20+ times per day
  • Cross channel flow consulting from all media sites including website, fanpage, twitter, etc.
  • General text, photo, video and other posts to Social Media umbrella sites.
• General compilation and coordination of client news, events, community involvement postings within Social Media umbrella sites.
• Social Media cross pollination and marketing integration plan and execution, ensuring all client channels are integrated and draw on one another toward social media.
• Responding and engaging with fans and followers to build relationships.
• Graphic Design visuals for all marketing campaigns

• Start a blog on the church website giving members a daily word or a “nugget” of information. It could refer to a topic or series or Sunday messages have or maybe just a word you would like to share with those visiting the site. It’s very important for potential members to see that you are interested in connecting with the congregation and willing to share a word that can have an impact on their daily life. (Using this option in conjunction with Facebook is possible)
• Recruit Rev. Bisa Bennett to write some words out to the 18-40 group using the Young Adult Facebook page; these could be messages from Tuesday Bible Study or life “nuggets” to share with those passing through. Facebook users are able to “Like” the page and would be able to “Share” the status of information to all of their Facebook friends, therefore reaching hundreds of people within minutes.
• Name the Young Adults as a group to identify them within church – members need to know the purpose and name of ministry in order to support it. The name should be catchy, cool, easy to remember and biblical, not forgetting the purpose of the ministry.
• Create a link on Canaan website with previous sermons (1 or 2 sermons at a time would be fine switching out weekly r bi-weekly) This option offers a sample of what potential member could expect at a typical service at Canaan.
• Ramp up promotion for Summer Dance Camp (starting in late March/early April) – can offer discount for early enrollment/payment using a themed banner on the corner of Pulaski & School House Lane or Chelten & Pulaski Aves. Most parents like to plan in advance for their summer plans for school age children. This would include better banner placement and door hanger initiative.
• Partner up with community organization or cause to gain visibility (ex. Sponsor a Breast Cancer Walk team). Basically asking what can we do to help the Germantown neighborhood? Perhaps this could be a cleanup project?
• Keep updating website with information on Daycare, Sankofa & CCAM program & staff success – letting parents know about the strides the program helps keep them content with program. Recent information highlighting program benefits.
• Partner with Kelly School to offer parents program benefits; providing pamphlets with pertinent information. Offer the convenience of location, transportation and staff.

Materials Needed
• Door hangers – according to Kinko’s quote $450 per 1000
• Volunteers for street team & events
• Website – unknown what cost will be to update or edit information
• Fliers – can be printed in-house

Implementation Timeline
• Immediate attention – update all website information/calendar/events
• Social Media Summer 2015
• Summer 2015 – start door hangers distribution
• Fall 2015 – identify a community service project to promote or sponsor within the Germantown neighborhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate attention</th>
<th>May - September</th>
<th>June-September</th>
<th>October-December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update all website information with calendar</td>
<td>New CCAM, Daycare &amp; Sankofa banners</td>
<td>Pamphlets for CCAM, Daycare &amp; Sankofa programs at Kelly School</td>
<td>Identify new goals for 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setup Facebook &amp; twitter accounts &amp; pages</td>
<td>Highlight Young Adult Facebook page in bulletin</td>
<td>Identify Germantown community project</td>
<td>Analyze marketing material changes (letterhead, business cards, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop survey for parents</td>
<td>Implement survey responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Church Planning Inventory Member Survey 393 Total Respondents

The survey listed a number of tasks that a local church is likely to perform. The congregational members were asked to evaluate these tasks as to whether they were generally satisfied with the congregation’s current performance on the task, or whether they felt the tasks should receive more emphasis, or whether the task currently receives too much emphasis. The following percentages show how your congregation responded to these task questions. These percentages (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### TASKS OF THE CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Too Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Offering worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Providing Christian education for children and youth.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Providing Christian education programs for adults.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Helping members deepen their personal and spiritual relationship with God.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sharing the Word with the unchurched.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Engaging in acts of charity and service for persons in need.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Providing fellowship opportunities for members.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Helping members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Supporting the global mission of the church.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Participating in activities and programs with other religious groups.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Expressing our denominational heritage/tradition.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, which one task does your congregation do best?

For the sake of your own personal involvement in your congregation, which one task would you most like to see strengthened?

Congregational respondents rates of agreement or disagreement with the following identity statements from the perspective of individual members looking at the congregation’s overall identity and vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Our church’s identity, as it is, is one with which I feel comfortable.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An effective effort was made to instruct me in our church’s mission.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Members were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to certain organizational issues, such as making decisions, sharing information, and developing resources. The percentage (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the congregation are doing.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The activities taking place in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Study of the needs of the congregation and the community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lay leaders are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Every member who is capable and interested has an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders and members.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Members help each other out in times of trouble.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Cooperative programs with other churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The current morale of our church members is high.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There is a sense of excitement among members about our congregation's future.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY:

Listed below are several alternatives that touch upon important dimensions of a church's identity. Using the seven point scale between each set of alternatives, members were asked to circle the number that best describes where the congregation falls, "1" meaning most like the characteristic on the left, "7" meaning most like the characteristic on the right, "4" meaning an equal mix of both. The number below indicates the average of all these responses.

1. Our church is more influenced by history and tradition
   1-------------------3.9-------------------7 Our church is more influenced by contemporary ideas and trends

2. Members are similar to the people who live immediately around the church
   1-------------------4.2-------------------7 Members are very different from people who live immediately around the church.

3. Our church is very involved with the community around the church
   1-------------------3.3-------------------7 Our church is not at all involved with the community around the church.

4. Our church is primarily serving our members
   1-------------------4.0-------------------7 Our church is primarily oriented to beyond our membership

5. Our congregation feels like one large family
   1-------------------3.4-------------------7 Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups

6. Our church is known as a prestigious one in the area.
   1-------------------2.9-------------------7 Our church is not considered one of the status churches in the area.

7. Our church's approach to issues is basically educational
   1-------------------3.8-------------------7 Our church's approach to social social
   is decidedly "activist."

8. The congregation's approach individual salvation emphasizes education, nurture and gradual growth in the faith
   1-------------------3.7-------------------7 The congregation's approach to to individual salvation stresses conversion and a born-again experience

9. Our church gives strong expression to its denominational identity and heritage
   1-------------------2.6-------------------7 It would be difficult for a visitor to know to which denomination the congregation belongs.

10. Our congregation strives to partnerships with other local churches.
    1-------------------3.0-------------------7 Our congregation prefers to work by create ourselves or through our

Denominational channels
**FUNCTIONS OF THE SENIOR MINISTER:**

Members were asked to rate how high or low a priority should each of the following tasks be for the Senior Minister of the church. The following percentages show how your congregation responded to these task questions. The percentages (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing administrative leadership for the congregation's ministry.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Actively and visibly supporting the church’s stewardship program.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Directly involving laity in planning and leadership of church programs and events.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Planning and leading a program of new member recruitment.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participating in local community activities, issues and problems.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Holding social justice issues before members.</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Emphasizing the spiritual development of members.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Visiting the sick, shut-ins, and bereaved.</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Visiting members at their homes.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Pastoral counseling of members having personal, family, and/or work related problems.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Developing and supporting religious education program for children and youth.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Developing and leading adult education programs.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Supporting the world mission of the church.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Participating in denominational activities beyond the local church, that is, at the regional or national level.</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Preparing and preaching inspiring sermons.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SIZE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES:

A. Congregational members were asked to assess the following spaces in terms of size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</th>
<th>Needs Immediate Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worship Space</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Space</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Space</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Space</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Space</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Congregational members were asked to assess the following spaces in terms of general condition and aesthetic appeal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</th>
<th>Needs Immediate Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worship Space</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Space</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Space</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Space</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

A. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your congregation's Christian Education program for children? A “Don't Know” (DK) response is provided, but please use it only if absolutely necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Very Satisfied</th>
<th>DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The total number of children that attend.</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The time and day at which classes for children are held</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The training provided teachers</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Members were asked how satisfied they were with each of the following aspects of the congregation's church school program for children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Need More Or better</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Too Much Already</th>
<th>Doesn't Have No Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teaching children about the Bible and the church</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Giving children the feeling that they are loved by God and the church</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Developing in children a sense that Christian love includes respect for and service to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Providing examples of what it means to be a Christian in today's world</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Offering enjoyable fellowship activities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Including the children in the worship service</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Which one of the above 6 types of activities for children did members believe should be the primary focus of the congregation's children's program?
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Members were asked how satisfied they were with each of the following aspects of the congregation’s church school program for youth and teens?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Need More Or Better</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Too Much Already</th>
<th>Doesn’t Have No Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educational programming that is biblically centered</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Educational programming that helps youth clarify values and beliefs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Programming that involves youth in serving others</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Providing fellowship opportunities for youth to have fun in Christian setting</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Youth choirs or other kinds of musical groups</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Including the youth in the worship service</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which one of the above 6 types of activities for youth did members believe should be the primary focus of the congregation’s youth and teen program?
ADULT EDUCATION AND SMALL GROUP PROGRAMMING

For each of the kinds of programs or groups listed below, members were asked to indicate:

A: Whether they think their congregation needs more or better programs of this kind; is doing about right; is already over-emphasizing or doing too much in the area; or, if the congregation currently doesn't have such a program and they see no need for beginning it?

B: Whether it is likely that they would Attend if the congregation offered more or better programs of this kind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Group</th>
<th>Need More or Better</th>
<th>About Right</th>
<th>Too much Already</th>
<th>Doesn’t Have No Need</th>
<th>Would Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Study groups dealing with the Bible and theology</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Study and discussion groups dealing with contemporary issues, topics and problems</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prayer, meditation and spirituality groups</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support groups in which members share with each other at the level of feelings and personal experience</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fellowship events or hobby groups</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evangelistic outreach and visitation groups</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Social concern groups for planning and working on projects directed at community or social issues/problems</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recreation/Athletic activities</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Literary/culture groups</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Groups and classes that explore marriage, the family, and parenting issues</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which three of the following are the **best times** for you to attend adult programs?

- Saturday morning 68%
- Sunday morning 59%
- Weekend retreat 56%
- Weekday evening 45%
- Weekday morning 30%
- Weekday afternoon 23%
- Sunday evening 22%

Which three of the following are the **worst times** for you to attend adult programs?

- Sunday evening 90%
- Weekday morning 72%
- Weekday afternoon 63%
- Weekday evening 48%
- Sunday morning 35%
- Saturday morning 30%
- Weekend retreat 26%
### WORSHIP

A. Members were asked how satisfied are were with each of the following aspects of the congregation's Sunday worship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Need More Emphasis</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Receives too Much Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing time for members to greet one another</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing worship that is emotionally moving</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Providing worship that is intellectually challenging</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attention given to sacraments</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lay participation in leading worship</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use of inclusive, non-sexist language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use of creeds or statements of faith</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Silent prayer/meditation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Having parts of the worship especially for children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Use of new or unfamiliar hymns</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Corporate prayer in which the entire church participates</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Providing worship at times other than Sunday morning</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Use of contemporary worship styles, music and language</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### QUALITIES OF A GOOD SERMON

Members were asked, personally, how important for them is each of the following in the mix of qualities that make a good sermon?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Downright Distracting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and living a faithful life.</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Based on a clear, unambiguous religious authority.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Touches directly on my everyday life.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Contains scholarly or literary illustrations.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is Biblically based and illustrated.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Makes me reflect on issues and events that go beyond my personal life and local community.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is challenging and thought-provoking.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Obviously flows from the depth of the preacher’s own personal faith and spiritual convictions.</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is comforting and reassuring.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is carefully composed and skillfully delivered.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is spiritually moving and inspirational.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sets forth various sides of an issue without advocating one position as the only Christian position.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

Members were asked what priority they would give each of the following many possible ways the congregation could be involved with community and social issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Highest Priority</th>
<th>High Priority</th>
<th>Moderate Priority</th>
<th>Low Priority</th>
<th>No Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing or supporting social services for persons in need</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing meeting rooms in the church for community groups working on various issues and problems</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encouraging the minister to use a portion of his/her time working with community and social action groups</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Calling attention to social, community and world issues from the pulpit and in study groups</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organizing social issue advocacy or action groups</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Linking interested lay members to denominational, ecumenical or non-church social service or advocacy programs</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Giving money to denominational programs</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Giving money to ecumenical or non-denominational programs</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Helping organize or support disadvantaged groups to pursue their own causes</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lobbying and petitioning corporate and government officials on peace and justice issues</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**A.** Members were asked what priority they would give to each of the following efforts to encourage the congregation's stewardship program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strong appeals from the pulpit</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adult education programs on the meaning of Christian stewardship</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mailings to members clearly setting out the reasons for Christian stewardship</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Encourage membership pledging</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Every member canvass or visitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tithing or proportionate giving</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hiring a professional fund raising consultant or group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fund-raisers such as fairs, bazaars, tag sales, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Encourage giving to a church endowment through wills and bequests</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Special giving appeals for a charitable cause or mission effort</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B.** Members were asked to imagine that the congregation were able to raise significantly more money than currently budgeted and rate how high a priority they would put on each of the following uses of that money?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Funds</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increased support to our denomination</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increased support for community social service programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increased support for world missions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Increase current staff salaries</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hire additional staff</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Renovate, enlarge or add to current facilities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Increase budget for educational and program materials and resources</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Begin an endowment or add to an existing one</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Increase evangelistic efforts and advertising</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVANGELISM

A. In thinking about the many possible ways that the church could use to share the “good news” of the Gospel and to recruit new members for the church, members were asked to rate the priority of each of the following efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highest Priority</th>
<th>High Priority</th>
<th>Moderate Priority</th>
<th>Low Priority</th>
<th>No Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strengthening from the pulpit the importance of members inviting others to visit our church</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appeals to members to make a personal witness about their faith to others</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The use of newspaper advertisements</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The use of radio or television</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mailing church literature to newcomers in your community</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pastoral or lay visits to newcomers in your community</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Using a group of lay volunteers to canvass (knock on doors in) the neighborhood</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The use of a church web site</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Developing church programs especially targeted at unchurched persons in your community</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Changing the style of your worship to make it more appealing to the unchurched</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Developing home Bible, prayer and study groups to which friends who are not members are invited</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Overall, to what extent did members think the congregation needs to increase or improve its efforts at evangelism?

[24%] To a great extent  [26%] We are doing fine as is
[48%] To some extent  [2%] We’re doing too much now

C. To what extent would individual members personally be willing to get more involved in the evangelistic efforts of the congregation?

[13%] To a great extent  [53%] To some extent [10%] Not at all

25% To a moderate extent

OVERALL

A. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is the membership with the music (choir, anthems and instrumentals) during Sunday worship?

[44%] Very Satisfied  [11%] Somewhat Dissatisfied
[42%] Generally Satisfied  [3%] Very Dissatisfied
B. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is the membership with the congregation's Sunday worship, other than the music?

[57%] Very Satisfied
[39%] Generally Satisfied
[ 4%] Somewhat Dissatisfied
[ 1%] Very Dissatisfied

C. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is the membership with the way your spiritual needs are being met in the worship service?

[52%] Very Satisfied
[45%] Generally Satisfied
[ 2%] Somewhat Dissatisfied
[ 1%] Very Dissatisfied

D. If they could choose any time on Sunday morning, what time would members prefer for worship to start?

[ 3%] before 8:00 a.m.  [27%] 9:00 a.m.  [ 1%] 10:30 a.m.
[16%] 8:00 a.m.  [12%] 9:30 a.m.  [ 7%] 11:00 a.m.
[ 8%] 8:30 a.m.  [17%] 10:00 a.m.  [ 0%] 11:30 or later

E. In thinking about what originally brought you to this congregation, What originally attracted you to attend this congregation? Will not equal 100% since it was possible to pick more than one.

50% The minister
24% My friends are here
28% The church’s reputation
12% Adult Education program
34% Child & Youth program
27% The music program
12% The social outreach
42% The worship style
6% The self-help groups
15% The denominational ties

F. In thinking about what originally brought you to this congregation, What is the foremost reason you remain a part of this congregation? Will not equal 100% since it was possible to pick more than one.

53% The minister
30% My friends are here
28% The church’s reputation
24% Adult Education program
18% Child & Youth program
28% The music program
19% The social outreach
53% The worship style
12% The self-help groups
20% The denominational ties

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PERSONAL PRACTICES:

1. Members were asked which one of the following best expresses their view of the Bible?

Percent

2  (1) The Bible is an ancient book of history, legends and cultural stories recorded by man. It has little value today except as classic literature.

2  (2) The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good people, but I do not believe it is really God's Word, but it can teach us many moral precepts.

10 (3) The Bible is the record of many different people’s response to God and because of this, people and churches today must interpret for themselves the Bible’s basic moral and religious teachings.

47 (4) The Bible is the inspired Word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it reflects some human error.

39 (5) The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally.
2. **Rate your agreement or disagreement with the following belief statements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral or Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jesus’ resurrection form the dead was an actual event.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Bible has answers for all of the basic questions of life.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is often difficult to live out my faith in daily work, leisure and community life.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Indicate how often you engage in the following practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Few times a week</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Few times a month</th>
<th>Seldom or Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spend time in private devotional activity such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible or other spiritual books?</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use the web at home or at the office?</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use email?</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Look at religious Internet sites?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Volunteer time in social service?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR CHURCH PARTICIPATION:

How long have you been a member?

How long does it usually take you to travel from home to church?
On the average, about how many times have you attended church services during the past year?

In how many church committees and groups do you hold membership (not counting congregational membership itself?)
Has your involvement in the congregation increased, decreased, or remained about the same in the last few years?

If a member’s participation has increased or decreased, which of the following are the reasons for the change. [Percentages will not equal 100% because it was possible to select more than one answer or none at all.]

If involvement has increased (n=125), why:
- More time available: 51 persons
- Better health: 92
- Stronger faith: 63
- More positive attitude: 14
- Because of children: 10
- Accepted office/responsibility: 50

If involvement has decreased (n=38), why:
- Decreased faith: 6 people
- Less time available: 32
- Health problems: 3
- Given up office/responsibility: 12
- More negative attitude: 36
- Because of children: 9
Approximately how much did your family household contribute to the church per year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution Category</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $200</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200 - 599</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600 – 999</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 – 1,499</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500 – 2,499</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,500 – 3,499</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,500 – 4,999</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 – 7,499</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7,500 or more</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many persons or families have members invited to visit or join the church in the past year?
OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

**Gender**
- Male -- 25%
- Female -- 75%

**Ethnic Background**
- White – 0.3%
- African American – 97%
- Hispanic – 1%
- Mixed – 2%

**Marital Status**
Of those who have children, Number of children in age range:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th># of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth - 5 years old</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six - 12 years old</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen - 18 years old</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteen and over at home</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which best describes your current household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Type</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One person living alone</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple without children</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One adult with child/children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more adults with child/children</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several adults living in same household</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Education

![Bar chart showing level of education distribution]
**Household Income Range**  
348 respondents to this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $149,999</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or more</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Status**

**Occupation**
Are you self-employed? 7 percent said yes

If you are married, is your spouse employed?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, full time</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, part time</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religious Heritage

Members were involved in the following denominations when they were growing up:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciples of Christ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Church of Christ</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Protestant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many years have members lived in this general area?

How likely is it that the membership might move out of this general area within the next few years?
How many of your closest friends attend this church?

- None: 38
- One: 33
- Two: 14
- Three: 13
- Four or more: 6

percent
BIBLIOGRAPHY


