

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

APPLYING CHRIST-LIKE AND OTHER LEADERSHIP
QUALITIES TO MILLENNIAL LAY LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

The use of excellent lay leadership is vital to a healthy church, but what does excellent lay leadership look like? It can certainly be modeled from Christ and from other important leadership qualities. Which demographic of people might be well suited for leadership? A feasible one is the Millennial generation, born roughly between 1980 and 2000. In 2017, compared to other generation the majority of the American labor force participants were Millennials at 35%. Employers have seen potential in this generation and have sought to develop them as leaders. Church leaders are wise to consider the Millennial generation for *lay* leadership. This thesis examines the Christ-like and other important leadership qualities that Millennials have and lack. It also suggests concrete ways for leaders of any church that has Millennial membership to help their Millennials foster the leadership qualities they have and overcome the leadership qualities they lack in order to succeed as lay leaders. The results of this research may apply best to Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) congregations since the extensive interview portion of this research is solely of leaders and members of *WELS* churches, but even the interview portion of this research can be applied to *any* church context that has Millennial membership.

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Introduction

When churches talk about lay leadership, a question to ask is, “Who is the right person for the job?” “Who is the right *generation* for the job?” That’s a question with multiple answers, but one could narrow the focus of that question a bit. Is the *Millennial* generation a viable option? Millennials are in congregations today. In fact, they have strengths for lay leadership to be fostered. They also have barriers for lay leadership to be crossed.

This thesis seeks to answer its big question, ***“How might leaders of any church that has Millennial members help their Millennial members foster the leadership qualities they have and overcome the leadership qualities they lack so that they can succeed as lay leaders?”*** This big question lends itself to other related questions. *Exactly why is lay leadership necessary?* This author answers that question in the first chapter by looking at various Bible passages and pondering their doctrinal points as explained by published author Lyle Lange. *And what might excellent lay leadership look like?* This author answers that question in chapter two by looking at the leadership qualities of the ultimate Christian leader Jesus Christ as suggested by published author Richard E. Lauersdorf. Yet, there are other leadership qualities that may not be clearly seen in Christ that this author believes are beneficial to lay leadership. Also in chapter two this author looks to various books and articles to identify what those qualities are.

This author’s research consisted extensively of interviews conducted by him and others so he often lets his sources speak for themselves.¹ These interviews are of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastors and a staff minister currently serving in urban or suburban churches and of WELS members of a suburban church. Many of their replies to this author’s questions were general in nature and did not apply specifically to WELS, urban or suburban

¹ In addition to the biblical foundation on which this paper stands, this author will use reason to suggest what is good and proper and beautiful for building lay leadership from the Millennial generation.

churches. So the hope is that all churches with Millennial members can use bits and pieces of this thesis to better build Millennial leadership in their congregation. However, since much of this paper's research is from WELS sources, the findings of this research may still be *best* applied in WELS congregations.

In order to answer the big question of this thesis, in chapters one and two this author looks at lay leadership in general. In chapters three and four he identifies some strengths and barriers that Millennials have for lay leadership. In chapters three and four he also answers how lay leader-developers can react to each strength and barrier mentioned to transform their Millennial members into lay leaders.

Chapter 1 - Why Leadership?

People Need the Spiritual Leadership of their King

You've experienced the classic movie scene. Two armies of the Middle Ages are going at it in warfare when one side kills the king of the other side with an amazing shot from a bow and arrow or even with the trickery of a poisonous drink during the king's evening meal. After his death, the king's army is routed and protection and peace for his people are gone. The people need the leadership of their king, which can vanish just in an instant, since the king offers them physical protection and hope.

People of all time, not just of the Middle Ages, have needed the leadership of their King. As you may have guessed, this author is talking about the spiritual leadership of their Savior King, Jesus who offers spiritual protection and hope. God's ideal for a king in the Old Testament was that which reflected the qualities of a shepherd. The LORD once said to King David, "You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler" (2 Sa 5:2).² Jesus fit the description of a shepherd too. He said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11). As a good king has compassion for the people of his community, Jesus had compassion for the many people he came in contact with who were headed toward hell (Mt 9:36).

The Bible calls the Lamb³ Jesus Christ our King (Re 17:14). He has a kingdom of power where he is ruling in the interest of his church.⁴ Lyle Lange writes,

² All Scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are from New International Version 2011.

³ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn 1:29).

⁴ Lange, Lyle W. *God so Loved the World: A Study of Christian Doctrine*. Milwaukee, Wis: Northwestern Pub. House, 2005, 297.

Christ's kingdom of power extends over the entire universe. In the beginning, God created a perfect world. It was created for the benefit of man, and it also gave glory to God. However, when Adam and Eve sinned, they were driven from paradise. If God had left them in their own sinful devices, this world would have been in total chaos. God, however, still wanted the world he created to serve for the benefit of humans and in the interest of his promise of the Savior.⁵

Also, Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of grace in which he rules in the hearts of those who believe in him.⁶ King David reminds people of their sinfulness from the beginning of their lives when he writes, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5). The fact of original sin makes us fall short of God's glory (Ro 3:23) and merits death for us (Ro 6:23). But Jesus is our atoning sacrifice who bridges the gap between our sinfulness and God's glory. By God's grace we are saved from our terrible condition. As Lange writes,

It is by God's action alone, through the gospel and Baptism, that we become members of Christ's kingdom of grace. Through the gospel (Ro 1:16) and Baptism (Tit 3:5), God creates faith in our hearts. Through these same means of grace, as well as through the Lord's Supper, Christ preserves his reign in our hearts.⁷

Because of this new life we have in Christ, our King Jesus leads us to a new will in our lives. Lange continues,

When God works faith in our hearts, he establishes his reign there. He rescues us from the power of the devil and makes us alive in Christ (Eph 2:5). He gives us a new will that delights in carrying out God's will (Ro 7:22). Christ does not carry out his rule by compulsion. Through the gospel and the sacraments, Christ develops in us a deep appreciation of his grace, so that we, according to the new man, desire to serve him.⁸

As the King of his kingdom of grace, Christ is the church's head (Col 1:18). There is no one on earth who fits that role as Lange points out, "No pope or any other official can claim to be

⁵ Lange, 297-98.

⁶ *Ibid*, 298.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid*

the head of the church.”⁹ Our King gives us protection and peace from our enemy, the devil.

Jesus leads us to live a new life. We need the spiritual leadership of our King.

People Need Lay Leadership

The visit of Jethro to Moses in the wilderness shows us that lay people can help in the practical affairs of the church. Ernst H. Wendland comments,

It has often been said that a good administrator knows how to delegate authority. This also applies to the work of the church. Pastors who feel that they must do everything that needs to be carried out in a Christian congregation, or who feel that others can't perform certain tasks properly, are hurting themselves as well as the work of the church. Every congregation has capable lay people who can share in taking care of many of the practical affairs so that the pastor can deal primarily with the spiritual needs of his people . . . A congregation that is doing the Lord's business will involve its laypeople!¹⁰

An additional Bible story that gives us reason for lay leadership is the story of Jesus's Twelve disciples choosing seven men to help with their ministry. The Twelve were in Jerusalem where Hellenistic Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews that their widows had been overlooked when food was distributed. In order not to neglect the ministry of the Word by taking care of meals the Twelve instructed the other disciples to choose men to take care of the meals (Ac 6:1-4).

The plan of the Twelve was key because their primary role was to preach the Word.

Richard D. Balge gives this application from this story of the apostles,

The apostles were not instituting an office for all time by proposing this plan, but they were giving the church of all time an example of orderly procedure and a practical way of carrying out important Christian service. Pastors should not occupy themselves with congregational business that takes them away from the public and private teaching of God's Word, from leading in worship and praying for those entrusted to their care. Congregations should not let their pastors be occupied in that way.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Wendland, Ernst H, and James Tissot. *Exodus*. St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1992. 109.

¹¹ Balge, Richard D. *Acts*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2005, 68.

The leadership opportunities in the examples of Moses and the apostles allowed for a smoother functioning of the many ministries of the church. The necessity for leadership is still present in church work, though it may not be easy to find. Perhaps the pastor of a church is looking for young, passionate, godly leaders to carry on the leadership of the congregation when older members move away or resign, but the interest does not seem to be there. Perhaps it seems there are no leaders around at all. There is a lack of leadership in churches today and it seems to be a big problem for many congregations. George Barna comments on the church's need for leaders,

I have reached several conclusions regarding the future of the Christian Church in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.¹²

Some will say that in this day and age we are simply lacking those who have leadership ability, but James Bolt, the founder of Executive Development Associates, attributes a different cause to the lack of leadership in the church. He writes, "I contend that this leadership crisis is in reality a *leadership development* crisis. It is this development crisis that leads me to agree that our leaders are 'missing in action.'"¹³ Some will say that the ability to develop leaders are what true leaders do. Aubrey Malphurs writes, "The ultimate test of a leader isn't the magnitude of his or her ministry but whether that leader trains other leaders who can sustain the church or

¹² Barna, George, ed. *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People*. The Leading Edge Series. Ventura, Calif., U.S.A: Regal Books, 1997, 18.

¹³ Bolt, James F. "Developing Three-Dimensional Leaders." San Francisco: eds. Francis Hesselbein et al., 1996, 163.

parachurch organization when he or she is no longer present. The true test is the leadership legacy that the pastor leaves behind.”¹⁴

The need for leadership is great. People need the spiritual leadership their King Jesus can provide and they need leadership in societal affairs. People also need leadership in their church. That leadership seems to be lacking and to be the cause of the decline in church growth. Finding a way to develop leaders in the church is at the forefront of church sustenance and growth. Before being able to develop church leaders one must have a vision of what he is looking for in his leader. The next chapter will discuss what to look for in a potential leader.

¹⁴ Malphurs, Aubrey, and Will Mancini. *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2004, 11.

Chapter 2 - Qualities for Leadership

Qualities Seen in THE Leader

What makes a good Christian leader? In Aesop's fable "The Frogs Asking for a King" the frogs wanted a ruler and asked Jupiter to give them one. Jupiter knew they were simple and cast a huge log into the lake. At first they were terrified by the huge splash it made, but later they realized he was a sluggish king. Their contempt for their new king even led them to sit upon their new "leader."

When the frogs began to feel their new "leader" was an insult to their dignity they asked Jupiter to take away their current ruler and give them another. Jupiter was annoyed by their request so he gave them a stork to rule over them, but the stork caught and ate the frogs as quickly as it could.¹⁵

Is a good leader one who makes an impressive first impression, but lets the crowd walk all over him thereafter? Is a good leader one who uses his followers to his own advantage? Surely the best example we can turn to for characteristics of a good Christian leader is Jesus. In a paper presented in Salt Lake City, Utah on July 19, 1991, Richard E. Lauersdorf gave seven characteristics of a Christian leader using Jesus as the primary example. Of these seven characteristics, at least five of them can be applied to Millennials. In chapter three of this thesis the author will demonstrate how churches can help Millennials foster the Christ-like leadership characteristics they already have and how churches can help them overcome the barriers they face concerning the Christ-like leadership characteristics they may lack.

¹⁵ This fable was used in the introduction of Richard E. Lauersdorf's "Personal Qualities of a Christian Leader." Page 1 in . Salt Lake City, 1991.
<http://essays.wls.wels.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/2908/LauersdorfLeader.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.to>

To retell the fable here this author looked at an online version of the story, "The Frogs Asking for a King." *Aesop Fables*. <http://www.longlongtimeago.com/once-upon-a-time/fables/from-aesop/the-frogs-asking-for-a-king/>.

The first characteristic mentioned by Lauersdorf is, “a leader follows THE Leader.”¹⁶ When Jethro instructed Moses to choose leaders to help him with governing he told Moses, “[S]elect capable men from all the people – men who fear God” (Ex 18:21). So too the Twelve instructed the other disciples, “[C]hoose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Ac 6:3). These leaders were to be men with their eyes on God. Lauersdorf comments that these men should be those “whose eyes have seen the King; whose hearts were filled with love for God’s Word and work; who recognized God’s stamp on them both body and soul and reflected His ownership with their attitudes and actions; who had their priorities straight and practiced accordingly by seeking first God’s Kingdom.”¹⁷ Does this not imply that a Christian leader will practice personal Bible study regularly? Does this not imply that they will also value highly public Bible study with his or her church family?

Secondly, “a leader serves like THE Leader.”¹⁸ Jesus himself did not come to be served, but to serve (Mk 10:45). Lauersdorf comments that Jesus’ style was “to lead by service, not dictation.”¹⁹ When Jesus’ disciples argued about who among them was the greatest, Jesus told them that Gentile kings lord their power over their subordinate. He said they should act differently. To be great like a ruler they must lead with humble service (Lk 22:25-27). In the words of Lauersdorf, “A Christian leader, like the Leader, has power, but is not a power wielder. He leads through humble service, not heavy-handed control.”²⁰

¹⁶ Lauersdorf, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

Lauersdorf also mentions, “A leader feels for people like THE Leader.”²¹ Jesus felt for the physical needs of people. He fed 5000 hungry men, blessed babies, and sought to reach the Pharisees, often to no avail. Lauersdorf mentions, “We might be tempted to think of leadership as handling people.”²²

At this point it is good to make a distinction between what is called “leadership” and what is called “management.” Sasan A. Hendricks and Genevieve M. Hendricks-Lepp distinguish the terms in this way,

[I]t is important to recognize that management involves four processes: planning, budgeting, organizing (creation of a formal structure to accomplish plans such as staffing and delegating), and controlling (looking constantly for deviations from plans which are known as “problems” and using formal authority to solve the problems (Kotter, 1988, pp. 21–22). Leadership, on the other hand, involves the creation of a vision to guide the organization and motivating staff and stakeholders to accomplish the vision. Bennis (1999) sees exemplary leadership as providing a sense of purpose, generating and sustaining trust and candor, and fostering hope. The author writes of the importance of character, which is not only ethical but part of being a “fully integrated human being” (p. 22).^{23 24 25}

Weller makes this application about managers and leaders,

Managers, in general, are “nuts and bolts” oriented whereas leaders are visionaries, conceptualizers, and catalysts. Those who excel as leaders may excel as managers, but those who excel as managers infrequently excel as leaders. The best schools can hope for is having competent leaders and managers in the administrative ranks.²⁶

²¹ Lauersdorf, 4.

²² *Ibid*

²³ Henricks, Susan A., and Genevieve M. Henricks-Lepp. “Desired Characteristics of Management and Leadership for Public Library Directors as Expressed in Job Advertisements.” *Journal of Library Administration* 54.4 (2014): 279-80.

²⁴ Kotter, John P. *The Leadership Factor*. New York : London: Free Press ; Collier Macmillan, 1988.

²⁵ Bennis, W.G. “The Leadership Advantage. Leader to Leader” 4.2 *Open Journal of Leadership* (1999): 8–23.

²⁶ Weller, L. David, and Sylvia Weller. *The Assistant Principal: Essentials for Effective School Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press, 2002, 4.

Management has a focus on the task at hand, but if that is the emphasis in ministry, it can affect ministry in a destructive manner especially in developing and sustaining leaders. Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini say, “Task dominated ministry . . . models a destructive rather than a constructive environment. In doing so, it inhibits an individual’s growth and causes a high leadership turnover in the ministry.”²⁷ This is not to say that leaders should not practice management, but it suggests that management should not be the focus of leadership.

Lauersdorf also mentions, “a leader trusts people like THE Leader.”²⁸ Jesus trusted his disciples with the Great Commission.²⁹ Jesus’ words, “And surely I am with you till the very end of the age,” are key words for believers of all time because they know that they too have been entrusted by THE Leader to carry out the Great Commission in their own lives.³⁰ Other than THE Leader, leaders are imperfect, yet God entrusts them with the work of the Great Commission. In their interactions with other imperfect people, leaders might imitate the trust that Barnabas showed to John Mark even though John Mark was unreliable on the apostle Paul’s first mission journey.³¹ In the public ministry today, public ministers are not perfect. They have their weaknesses, but they are entrusted with administering the Means of Grace to God’s people.

In the final place Lauersdorf says, “A leader prays like THE Leader.”³² Jesus prayed often. He prayed for others such as at the tomb of Lazarus.³³ At the meal before his death Jesus

²⁷ Malphurs, Mancini, 27.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 5.

²⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Mt 28:19-20).

³⁰ Albrecht, G. Jerome, and Michael J Albrecht. *Matthew*, 2005, 441.

³¹ Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord (Ac 15:39, 40).

³² Lauersdorf, 5.

prayed for his followers (Jn 17). Jesus prayed for his enemies.³⁴ Jesus prayed for himself in Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-46).

The goal with all these leadership qualities Jesus employed and that Christian leaders are to employ is a common one. Lauersdorf says, “Though differing in personality and varying in gifts, Christian leaders have this in common. They follow the Leader and oversee His work in such a way that by their example and influence they inspire other to follow Him, too.”³⁵

Qualities Suggested by Two 21st Century Authors

Other than leadership characteristics clearly evident in the leadership of Christ there are general leadership characteristics that are helpful to utilize in lay leadership. In the book *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini suggest some of these characteristics, which will also be applied to Millennials in chapter three of this thesis. Malphurs and Mancini suggest credibility as a key quality a leader must possess in order to influence their followers. They say, “When a leader attempts to influence a person, that potential follower engages in a conscious and unconscious evaluation of the leader’s credibility. The degree to which the individual grants the leader credibility is the degree to which that leader can influence him or her.”³⁶ What gives a person credibility? Two qualities they mention are good character and clarity. Those who pursue godliness and holiness

³³ I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me (Jn 11:42).

³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34).

³⁵ Lauersdorf, 5.

³⁶ Malphurs and Mancini, 21.

have good character. Those who know where they are going and can show others where they are going have clarity.³⁷

Malphurs and Mancini also suggest that capability is a key quality a leader must possess. They say the abilities they possess to be capable “may be God-given abilities, such as spiritual gifts (an example is the gift of leadership in Rom. 12:8), a passion for leadership, or a temperament that favors leadership in certain situations.”³⁸ Leadership abilities such as “godly character, leadership knowledge, and various skills for leadership” may not be God-given, but they can be developed. Usually, both God-given abilities and developed abilities are present in good leaders.³⁹

These two authors mention influence as another quality leaders should have. As a Christian leader influences them the goal is to lead them to follow Christ with the power of God’s Word. Yet, in order to have this influence there must be a relationship between the leader and the follower.⁴⁰

Finally, another thing to be aware of when it comes to the task of evaluating a leader is the context in which they are leading. Malphurs and Mancini say,

“Leaders always lead in a particular context. Contrary to what many people believe, there is no superleader who can lead all people in all situations, no matter what the circumstances or the time. God gives leaders certain abilities that fit one particular context but not another. For example, some pastors lead small churches well but not large churches. Others lead large churches better than small churches. Some are church planters while others are church revitalizers. Some lead best in a rural context, and others lead best in an urban or suburban context.”⁴¹

³⁷ Malphurs and Mancini, 21.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ Malphurs and Mancini, 22.

There is clearly a need to build lay leadership today. People have a need for the spiritual leadership of their King, general leadership in society, and lay leadership. Some qualities of a lay leader have been explored using Jesus as an example and using the qualities suggested by two 21st century authors. Now is the time to start building. With whom does one begin? One could begin by focusing on a specific demographic of members in his congregation. For the sake of this thesis this author has chosen to use the Millennial generation as that demographic. The thesis's focus now shifts from defining the characteristics and qualities of excellent lay leadership to transforming members of churches who are Millennials into such lay leaders.

Chapter 3 -- The Millennials: Their Strengths and Barriers for Lay Leadership

Why the Millennials?

Over this author's vicar year he directed his church's Vacation Bible School (VBS). He had the privilege of working with volunteers and station leaders⁴² ranging from sixth grade through age seventy-six and found the work of finding and training those volunteers and leaders intriguing. This was his first-go around at directing VBS. He learned from the experience that some volunteers from the Millennial generation, those born between 1981 and 1996 who in 2018 are from ages 22-37,⁴³ were more likely to feel dissatisfied with small details like locations of activities and schedules than the individuals older or younger than they. He wanted to explore what it was about these Millennials that caused them to think that way and, at the same time, find ways to use their gifts of leadership better in the future.

A senior thesis was written in 2015 by a Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) student that focused on encouraging Millennials to volunteer in church⁴⁴ and various articles and papers in society have been written on how to encourage Millennials to lead, but this author has found a lack of information written specifically on building Millennials into lay leaders. Additionally, Millennials are dominating the workforce in their numbers. Pew Research Center has analyzed the U.S. Census Bureau's data of labor force participants by generation. They have concluded,

⁴² A station leader organizes activities for VBS students to do at a VBS station. The leader usually explains the activity and makes sure it is carried out through student and volunteer participation.

⁴³ "Millennials." *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/millennials/>. Accessed December 2018. However, other dates have been suggested for this generation. For example, GEN HQ suggests that the years range from 1977-1995. The more popular year range seems to be Pew Research Center's suggestion of 1981-1996 (ages 22-37 in 2018). The website Mentalfloss.com also supports that range of 1981-1996. Due to the discrepancy of ranges one might hear an inclusive range of years such as the range given by Pastor James Hein of St. Marcus Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI. He describes the Millennial generation with the years 1980-2000.

⁴⁴ Kirschbaum, Allen. "A Role of the Pastor Is to Encourage Millennial-Age Individuals to Volunteer in Their Congregations." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2015.

more than one in three American labor force participants (35%) are Millennials . . . As of 2017 – the most recent year for which data are available – 56 million Millennials were working or looking for work. That was more than the 53 million Generation Xers, who accounted for a third of the labor force. And it was well ahead of the 41 million Baby Boomers, who represented a quarter of the total.⁴⁵

While not all of those Millennial workers are in leadership positions, employers are certainly trying to work them into leadership positions because they see potential in them. This author believes the church should not overlook Millennials as potential leaders, but should see how the church can best transform Millennials into lay leaders. An advantage to training and retaining Millennial leaders is that with Millennial leadership it is more likely that a church will be blessed with individuals who can serve the church in lay leadership for a long time. For these reasons then – a curiosity in why Millennials tend to be more dissatisfied than other generations, a lack of information on building lay leadership from the Millennial generation, a dominant number of Millennials in the work force of which some are being trained into leadership, and the advantage of training individuals who may serve as leaders for a long time – this author has chosen to explore how lay-leader developers might transform their Millennial members into lay leaders.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ “Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force.” *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/>. Accessed December 2018.

⁴⁶ Pastor James Hein of St. Marcus Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI, says, “I think it’s important to keep in mind that no generation is inherently better or worse than any other generation, right? They’re just different. To me I think something of what we’re seeing is a little bit close to like when Peter preaches on Pentecost in Acts two and Paul preaches in Athens in Acts seventeen. If you comb through those sermons, they are very different sermons. Both gospel-oriented. Both pointing people to Christ, but Acts two is speaking into a culture that has a biblical framework and a biblical worldview and that sort of thing. In Acts seventeen the apostle Paul is talking to Athenians on Mars Hill, who are highly educated, hedonistic, pluralistic, and I think in many ways they are the counterparts to our 21st century Millennials. Again, not better or worse, but the power of the spirit to convert dead hearts to life just like he’s done with us. He does that miracle in every generation no matter who it is, but I think for us and for Christian leaders it’s important for us to understand what are the potential unique opportunities that this [Millennial] generation presents and what might be some ways, in fact, that they might even be uniquely calibrated to do gospel ministry in a way even better than prior generations” (*Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 4).

To begin, one should understand who the Millennials are, but do so with a view toward leadership qualities that apply to Millennials. So this thesis will proceed by examining the characteristics of the Millennials in view of their strengths and barriers for lay leadership. It's important to note that the characteristics that will follow are not to be assumed of every Millennial, but only trends seen within this generation. Still, these trends can help those who develop leaders in their church to do exactly that with their Millennial members. Sometimes it is good to hear the bad news first, so the examination will begin with the barriers facing Millennials for lay leadership.

Barriers for Lay Leadership Facing the Millennials

Valuing Spirituality

In chapter two of this thesis, nine qualities for leadership were examined including five from Christ's leadership style and four listed by two twenty-first century authors. Those nine qualities certainly do not exhaust the list of qualities for leadership, but they do provide a framework in which one can examine the characteristics of Millennials that speak to their ability to lead in the church. One of those qualities for leadership mentioned was that a leader follows THE Leader. In short, that means a leader will keep their heart and mind focused on Jesus, their God, and their relationship with him. One of the challenges Millennials face is valuing spirituality. Thom Rainer writes, "The shocking reality for us is that only 13 percent of the Millennials consider any type of spirituality to be important in their lives."⁴⁷ Since the focus of this thesis is to build up Millennials who already worship regularly with the church family, it would appear that

⁴⁷ Rainer, Thom S., and Jess W. Rainer. *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*. Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group, 2011 quoted by Gunnar R. Ledermann, "Intentional Pre-Evangelism: Gaining a Hearing for the Gospel." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2016. <http://essays.wls.wels.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/4232/Ledermann.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

spirituality would be of great value to them, otherwise they would not be in church. On the other hand, it is good to note this characteristic of Millennials to understand the temptation they face from their Millennial peers. They may be tempted to undervalue spirituality in the church.

Not Having Enough Time in the Day

Another quality of a leader mentioned earlier was that a leader serves like THE Leader. THE Leader was sometimes very busy, but he continued to serve. One example was a series of two days that started with Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. At the synagogue Jesus caused an impure spirit to come out of a man who approached him there. Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue to go to the home of Simon and Andrew, but Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. Jesus healed her. In the evening Jesus continued to be busy. The people brought all the sick and demon-possessed to Jesus. They gathered at the door and Jesus healed many of the sick people. He drove out demons too. Does it not seem as though Jesus was busy beyond belief? Yet in these busy days he never said he was too busy to serve (Mk 1:21-38).

The Millennials are known to be busy multi-taskers. Why is that? The oldest Millennials were born right about the time computers were, as Caroline Beaton of Forbes.com calls them, "text-only and displayed just one task at a time."⁴⁸ After the mid-1980's, computers were designed to multi-task. One could have multiple folders open, tasks in progress, and even play a game with the mouse instead of the keyboard's directional arrows.⁴⁹ Rick Hicks, author of *Boomers, Xers, and Other Strangers*, writes, "This is one of the first generations who, as children, had to carry around their own Day-Timers to keep track of all their activities." In connection with Millennials multitasking a former WLS student suggests, "This type of

⁴⁸ Beaton, Caroline. "The Millennial Workforce: How Multitasking is Changing Our Brains." *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinebeaton/2017/01/27/the-millennial-workforce-how-multitasking-is-changing-our-brains/#3aea917f3605>. Jan 27, 2017. Accessed December 2018.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

influence can have a direct effect upon participation in congregational life. Perhaps [Millennials] will think that they are busier than reality. Perhaps, they will not give proper priority to volunteer service.”⁵⁰ Perhaps, they will not give as much time to leadership opportunities either and not demonstrate the service-like leadership Jesus demonstrated even when he was very busy.

Distrusting Authority

Lutheran pastor James Hein of St. Marcus Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin recently completed a project he was a part of for the WELS to best reach Millennials with the gospel. This project consisted of examining who millennials are, how they think, why they are leaving the church, and finally how to draw them back into the church.⁵¹ Also working with him were pastors Kent Reeder of Illumine Church, Rock Hill, South Carolina and Luke Thompson of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Ontario. Those are all young men who minister to Millennials weekly and who are passionate about reaching them with the gospel. On November 13th, 2018 Pastor Hein was interviewed by Nicole Balza, WELS Communications Project Manager, about “Ministering to Millennials,”⁵² which was released to the public in the same month. Based on the research he and his team did, Pastor Hein described Millennials this way, “They have a remarkable distrust of authority. Sometimes we think of Baby Boomers as being anti-authoritarian back in the 60’s. Millennials are that much more so.”⁵³

If it is true that Millennials have a hard time trusting authority, might that be a challenge for them as potential leaders since a leader trusts people like THE Leader? Some people say

⁵⁰ Kirschbaum, 7.

⁵¹ D009 – Ministering to Millennials: Discipleship Modules, Modules, n.d. <https://welscongregationalervices.net/download/d009/#wpdmpp-product-files>

⁵² This resource can be found at wels.net/ministering-to-millennials/

⁵³ *Together Video Update - November 13, 2018*, n.d. <https://vimeo.com/300560444>.

Millennials are multi-source, which speaks to their tendency to distrust authority. Pastor Reeder describes “multi-source” this way, “Instead of like being committed to one newscast or one newspaper or one place to go to get some authoritative information Millennials are going to look at a whole bunch of different sources. Sometimes that gets interpreted as being disloyal or being flighty, but what it is is that they are multi-source. They are used to having multiple sources for their information.”⁵⁴ That means they are not as inclined to trust one authority figure as a member of another generation would be inclined to do so, such as a Baby Boomer (born approximately from 1946-1964).⁵⁵ One Millennial explains how Millennials think along those lines especially when it comes to believing an authority figure talking about God’s Word,

They’re seeking truth, but they’re not just going to rely on an authority figure to tell them this is it. ‘You need to show me some proof. You know, why is it rational for me to believe this?’ You know, eventually the Holy Spirit has got to work in their heart, I understand that, but you need to give them a reason as to, ‘Look, this isn’t made up stuff. There’s a reason I believe what I believe.’^{56 57}

Some will argue that this lack of trust is not a bad characteristic. From the author’s independent research⁵⁸ Participant A said in response to being asked if Millennials struggle to trust authority that she doesn’t inherently trust everything an authority figure says. She also said, “Maybe that is

⁵⁴ *Ministering to Millennials*. Vol. 1. Milwaukee, WI, 2018. <https://vimeo.com/297737486>.

⁵⁵ Pewresearch.org

⁵⁶ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

⁵⁷ One must keep in mind that the tendency for Millennials to be more skeptical towards authority can be viewed as a strength for leadership, too. That view will be discussed latter in this thesis.

⁵⁸ Part of the research for this thesis included two group interviews and a follow up single interview conducted by the author. On three separate occasions he was able to sit down with two Bible study groups and one individual as a follow up from a WELS church located in a suburban area. The first group consisted of one young Millennial, a borderline Millennial/Gen Xer, a young Gen Xer, and two IGeners (those born from 1997 and after). The second group was a similar demographic of age levels, but on a larger scale. The single interview was with the borderline Millennial/Gen Xer from the first group interview. The author asked a number of questions to the groups to gain views from the field. Throughout the rest of the thesis the author will refer to quotes from these interviews as “Participants” ranging from A-E.

a Millennial thing, but I don't think it's a bad quality.”⁵⁹ This could be a good quality, for example, if Millennials are seeking first to compare the authority figure’s words with the truth before trusting that authority figure. One might think of the Berean Jews of Acts 17, who compared the apostle Paul’s preaching to the Scriptures. Still, the lack of trust for authority figures can be a barrier for Millennials over against leadership. Millennials may be challenged with commitment as leaders also.

Lacking Commitment

Millennials are unique from the Boomers and Xers, those born from 1965-1981 who in 2018 are 38-53 years old).⁶⁰ Authors Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto and Craig L. Blomberg explain,

The best word to describe Millennials in community is one they use themselves, “tribe.” For this generation, they do not first primarily associate community with large organizations or institutions with whom they have affiliation (like Boomers), nor do they shun the idea that they might be like some other collective that they themselves haven’t selected (like Xers). Instead they readily connect themselves with various smaller groups in which they find shared interests or characteristics.⁶¹

I myself, a Millennial born in 1993, can identify with this characteristic of Millennials in a very specific way. Over my vicar year I was looking for friends in my area and during this time one of my friends from college introduced me to an app called Meetup.

Meetup is a social networking site that allows you to find and join groups related to your own personal interests. However, instead of just talking about these interests online, Meetup is used to organize offline and in-person meetings in your area. Common locations for Meetup groups include cafes, parks, and sometimes even people's homes.

⁵⁹ Participant A. “Group Interview 1 by Author,” 30 October 2018.

⁶⁰ Pewresearch.org

⁶¹ Sbanotto, Elisabeth A. Nesbit and Craig L. Blomberg. *Effective Generational Ministry: Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016, 185-186.

Meetup is a great resource for meeting new people, getting involved in your community, and being more active with an interest you enjoy. Best of all, it's completely free to sign up for an account and get started.⁶²

Since I love to sing I joined an acapella group in the area. Eight to ten of us, mostly Millennials, got together to practice the songs. Some there had been part of the group for over a year and others, like me, were there for the first time. The group was welcoming to us new guys, but like most of the groups on Meetup, the group did not require our commitment. We could come and go as we please. I can't remember if I returned for one more meeting or not, but I did not come for a third meeting. I guess it was not working with my schedule or just was not my thing. I didn't feel bad about leaving the group because there was no commitment required. I find it funny that the fact there was no commitment required was the main reason I tried the group. Perhaps, aspects of life with little commitment required is something Millennials gravitate toward. Sbanotto and Blomberg acknowledge this desire for freedom from commitment preferred by Millennials, "Community for this cohort involves choices and options, allowing them to identify with various smaller groups simultaneously—and without long-term commitment, if they so choose. They may have a tribe from dance class, a tribe from their professional association, a tribe for their hiking and backpacking excursions, and so forth."⁶³

This lack of Millennial commitment in primarily recreational activities has been said to be evident in the workplace too. In today's world of technology people can find instant gratification. They can stream their favorite video or show online, they can Skype a family member or friend, they can post on their Facebook timeline and get "likes," but there are some things that don't provide instant gratification. Simon Sinek, a best-selling author and "optimist,

⁶² "What is Meetup?" <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/meetup/what-is-meetup/1/>. Accessed December 2018.

⁶³ Sbanotto and Blomberg, 186.

who believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together,”⁶⁴ explains how his experiences with Millennials in the workplace has revealed how they react to the lack of instant gratification in the workplace. He says there is instant gratification for everything you want except for “job satisfaction and strength of relationships. There ain’t no app for that. They are slow, meandering, uncomfortable and messy processes.” Then he continues with these words as he works to his point,

So I keep meeting these wonderful, fantastic, idealistic, hard-working, smart kids. They’ve just graduated school. They’re in their entry level job. I sit down with them and I go, “How’s it going?” They go, “I think I’m going to quit.” I’m like, “Why?” They’re like, “I’m not making an impact.” I’m like, “You’ve been here eight months.” It’s as if they’re standing at the foot of a mountain and they have this abstract concept called impact that they want to have in the world, which is the summit. What they don’t see is a mountain. I don’t care if you go up the mountain quickly or slowly, but there is still a mountain.⁶⁵

This lack of commitment to a job could come down to a lack of fulfillment in any form for Millennials in the workplace. One Millennial says,

For me, I heard a lot about how my family or my parents didn’t like their jobs growing up. Actually, not growing up, but like throughout their life. Like they would always complain about work. So I would like to find something that if I’m going to be doing it for the rest of my life, I’d rather try fifty things, find the one thing I love and do it for the rest of my life, rather than find one thing and suck it up for 50 years.⁶⁶

This lack of commitment characteristic of Millennials has implications for a committed life of leadership in the church, doesn’t it? Pastor Thompson comments on that idea,

We can see then how on the one hand there’s this intrinsic belief that you should be able to make a difference right away in the workplace that’s not being fulfilled. That’s got to apply just as much when it comes to being part of a church family . . . or what it means to

⁶⁴ “Our WHY” <https://startwithwhy.com/about/#simon-sinek>. Accessed December 2018.

⁶⁵ *Simon Sinek on Millennials in the Workplace*, n.d. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hER0Qp6QJNU&t=544s>. Accessed December 2018.

⁶⁶ *Ministering to Millennials*. Vol. 2. Milwaukee, WI, 2018. <https://vimeo.com/297755465>.

grow as a Christian. There's this time that it takes that I think as a [Millennial] generation we're not used to and we're not expecting to wait for, right?⁶⁷

This lack of commitment can be a barrier facing the Millennials for lay leadership considering First Timothy chapter three. There Paul describes what deacons and women should be like in the church. First, who were the deacons? Armin Schuetze and William Hendriksen suggest that the best biblical example would be the seven men who were chosen by the Twelve in Acts chapter six to take care of the widows.⁶⁸⁶⁹ Schuetze says, "They were servants, or helpers, who took care of collecting and dispersing the congregation's finances, looking after the widows and the sick, and, in general, administering the affairs of the congregation . . . [O]ur church councilmen may come closest to the position of deacon."⁷⁰

Second, who were the women? Commentators wrestle with identifying them. Some say they were the deacons' wives and others say they were deaconesses. It seems likely that Paul is speaking of deaconesses here since he doesn't mention wives of deacons earlier in the context. Also, Scripture mentions the service of Phoebe, who is called διάκονον "deaconess, servant" (Ro 16:1).⁷¹ ⁷²

⁶⁷ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

⁶⁸ Schuetze, Armin W. *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. 2nd ed. The People's Bible. Milwaukee, Wis: Northwestern Pub. House, 2000, 55

⁶⁹ Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of I and II Thessalonians. Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*. 2. print. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1981, 130.

⁷⁰ Schuetze, 55-56.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 57-58.

⁷² We recognize from Scripture that a woman cannot lead in the church by having authority over a man (1 Ti 2:12). Not having authority over a man is the principle women are to follow. Paul applies that principle to when a woman teaches. In teaching she should not practice authority over a man (Schuetze, 42). Women can lead in the church in many ways. The church is blessed to have the leadership gifts women have to offer. The church just needs to remember the principle Paul laid out in First Timothy chapter two for female lay leadership.

The deacons and the women in Paul's time were to be respectable. Male and female lay leaders today should be respectable too. If the lack of commitment associated with Millennials in society and in the workplace is also characteristic of them in the church, others will give less respect to them, will they not? If respect, which is an aspect of godliness, is diminished for Millennials, won't also their good character be diminished? If their good character is diminished, won't also their credibility be diminished? If their credibility is diminished, will not their quality of leadership finally be diminished since credibility is a key quality for leadership, as mentioned by Aubrey and Mancini?⁷³

Struggling to Make Intimate Relationships

Millennials may be challenged with building authentic relationships too. Sbanotto and Blomberg say,

Although Millennials have more of the benefits of increased social contacts through various tribes and technological resources (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.), their actual level of connection is decreased along with their sense of safety. As such, community for Millennials is something they deeply seek. . . But they do not bring with them the sense of safety and security that previous generations had. . . From the perspective of older cohorts, the community relationships that Millennials had may be wider and more numerous, but they are seen as far less intimate. And, from a Millennial perspective, they see themselves as "lonelier, and more isolated individually."⁷⁴

Millennials generally take more time than other generations to committing to a relationship as Pastor Hein explains in his interview with Balza,

It takes a little more of relational investment for them. If there is any level of distrust, if that's true, it takes a little bit longer (and that's not unhealthy) to fully commit to a relationship with somebody. They need to know that they can trust you. That means that they need to get to know you.

I think there's a sense that a generation or two ago, if somebody was attending a worship service, that could be perceived almost as like the entirety of their like church experience.

⁷³ Malphurs and Mancini, 21.

⁷⁴ Sbanotto and Blomberg, 187.

That just doesn't work. I don't know if that's healthy in general, but that doesn't work for Millennials because they need to have their relational interaction. They're a little slower to come to a point where they're comfortable trusting someone.⁷⁵

Millennials notice this lack of intimate or meaningful relationships in the church too. One Millennial said,

A lot of times growing up in church you went there and you kind of knew the people, but you didn't necessarily have that strong relationship with someone. You knew people's names, but you didn't necessarily know what was happening in their lives. I think that's kind of been something that I've seen as far as lacking in churches is really those meaningful relationships.⁷⁶

Malphurs and Mancini mentioned that leaders influence people and that “[t]his leadership exists in relationships.”⁷⁷ Obviously, if Millennials struggle with making intimate relationships, they are going to have a challenge with influencing others as lay leaders.

The challenges for leadership facing the Millennials sound intimidating. Millennials struggle to value spirituality, to have enough time in the day, to trust authority figures, to be committed long-term to their life choices, and to make intimate relationships. These struggles clash with key qualities of leadership. Even though Millennials are challenged in these various areas, they have remarkable strengths for leadership, which strengthen our hope for them as lay leaders.

Strengths for Lay Leadership Possessed by the Millennials

They Are A Diverse Generation

In 2015 Millennials were the most diverse generation in America. A “Brookings” report said 44% of their population was minorities, including Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian,

⁷⁵ WELS Together Video Update.

⁷⁶ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

⁷⁷ Malphurs and Mancini, 22.

Hispanic, and those identifying with two or more races.⁷⁸ This could be a contributing factor to the openness they have with other “religions, ages, and lifestyles.”⁷⁹ Certainly being open to trying any religion for oneself or being okay with a friend practicing whatever religion he or she feels like would be a challenge for a lay leader in the WELS. WELS lay leaders will want to direct friends, family, and strangers to pure Biblical teaching, which the WELS teaches, however the fact that Millennials are open to other ages and lifestyles could be strength for leadership. Being open to different lifestyles might look the following way as illustrated by a Millennial named Benny,

Right now so like my wife’s expecting. We are. So like just talking with what we want to do compared to what my parents do with children is like, I know it’s Church and this is completely different, but like they were so set in like, “Well this is what you do when you have a child.” Like we’re going to a birthing center and in their minds that’s like crazy because you have to go to a hospital. Or just like the small things. Like we have a baby box to sleep in for the first two months we’re there. They’re like, “No you need a crib.” I don’t know, it’s just they had the absolute, “This is what you do,” whereas now we’re more of, we’re accepting of like individuality. We’re like, “Oh you do it that way? That’s cool with me. Like do what makes you happy.”⁸⁰

Benny mentioned the support of individuality that he, his wife, and other Millennials share. This shows that Millennials are not only an ethnically diverse generation, but as former WLS student Gunnar Ledermann wrote in his senior thesis, “For the Millennials their brand of diversity may best be described as the diverse ways in which they hope to contribute something to this world.”⁸¹ Being willing to have different lifestyles, that are God-pleasing, in other words, to be

⁷⁸ William H. Frey, *The Millennial Generation: A Demographic Bridge to America’s Diverse Future*. Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, 2018. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-jan_brookings-metro_millennials-a-demographic-bridge-to-americas-diverse-future.pdf.

⁷⁹ Sbanotto and Blomberg, 171.

⁸⁰ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

⁸¹ Ledermann, 17.

different operationally, rather than simply doing things how they have always been done is a healthy way to grow together. If Millennials are supporting individuality, it is an opportunity to see new ways of operating. Those can be ways that are better than before.

They Value Social Impact

There may be a common misconception about the effort Millennials offer in life in general. One Millennial says, “I have a lot of friends that are really hard workers and are really passionate about serving the community. So, I think that’s a common misconception that we’re care free and we’re not giving 100%.”⁸² Research shows that in addition to being diverse both ethnically and operationally, Millennials’ hearts highly value social impact. They see needs in their communities and the world at large and desire to help fill those needs. In this way they have the quality that a leader feels for people like THE Leader, who saw the hungry crowd and fed them.

This high value of social impact that Millennials have shows itself in sustainable investing. Sharon French of Openheimer Funds defines sustainable investing in this way, “Sustainable investing is a broad term for investment approaches that consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors and their impact.”⁸³ James P. Gorman, chairman and CEO of investment bank and financial services company Morgan Stanley, has a platform connected with Morgan Stanley for investing with impact. He describes the philosophy of this impact, “To galvanize the necessary capital to have real impact, sustainable investing can’t be limited to

⁸² *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 2.

⁸³ French, Sharon. “ESG in Focus: What is Sustainable Investing?” <https://www.openheimerfunds.com/advisors/article/esg-in-focus-what-is-sustainable-investing>. October 17, 2017. Accessed December 2018.

investors willing to accept unattractive returns in order to create social good. Getting to scale requires investment products that seek attractive returns while benefiting society.”⁸⁴

With this type of investing, 75% of Millennials believe what they contribute to it will have positive influence in climate change and 84% of Millennials believe it will help to reduce poverty.⁸⁵ While only 23% of the total investor population was very interested in sustainable investing in 2017, 38% of investing Millennials were very interested in the same year⁸⁶ and the Morgan Stanley website says, “80% of the general [Millennial] population is more likely to adopt sustainable investing if they can tailor the impact.”⁸⁷ This highlights their hearts for making a social impact in society.

They Value Collaboration

James S. Hernandez writes, “Although Millennials often are characterized as requiring excessive attention and praise, they can be thought of collectively as being inherently social with a natural desire to collaborate.”⁸⁸ Part of that collaboration has to do just with sharing ideas with each other. Lisa Roepe writes in a 2017 article that Millennials may have “fresh perspectives” and “tech-savvy attitudes” to share with others. Roepe also quotes Lisa Chui, vice president of finance and HR at Ubiquity Retirement and Savings, a San Francisco-based retirement benefits services company, “They speak up, and if they have ideas, they want to share them.”⁸⁹

⁸⁴ “Millennials Drive Growth in Sustainable Investing.” *Morgan Stanley*. <https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/sustainable-socially-responsible-investing-millennials-drive-growth>. August 9, 2017. Accessed December 2018.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ *Ibid*

⁸⁷ *Ibid*

⁸⁸ Hernandez, James S., Kenneth G. Poole Jr., and Thomas E. Grys. “Discussion: Mentoring Millennials for Future Leadership.” *Physician Leadership Journal* 5.3 (2018): 41.

It May Be Most Convenient to Lead as a Young Professional

If one were to divide the Millennial generation into two groups, namely young single professionals and young married parents, he would find that the young single professionals might be in a better stage of life to serve in lay leadership. The main reason for this is the fact that an unmarried person can devote more time to the Lord's work than a married person can since a married person is also spending time with his or her spouse and family. The apostle Paul writes in First Corinthians chapter seven,

An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.³³ But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—³⁴ and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.³⁵ I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord (vv 32b-35).

The energy and time for young single professionals to use their gifts in the church seems to be evident in the world today. From this author's independent research Participant A, a young twenty year old, said,

I am a little biased obviously, but I feel like college age and young professionals are like so ready to do anything, but with nowhere to direct any of their energy. I went to _____ for college. We had chapel. Chapel was really good at getting leadership positions and I'm one of them. Like, "If you wanted a Bible study, if you want to start some group on campus, we will give you all the resources to do it. There so many people who like took on those roles. Like work for chapel or run their own young professional groups and that started at chapel in college. I think people in college are really ready to do anything and then it just goes with young professionals, who they like have all this time and all these skills."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Roepe, Lisa Rabasca. "Retool Recruiting to Attract Millennials." <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0417/pages/retool-recruiting-to-attract-millennials.aspx>. March 21, 2017. Accessed December 2018.

⁹⁰ Group Interview 1.

From this author's independent research Participant B, a young Gen Xer agrees with this trend of young single professionals tending to offer more time and effort for leadership than other age groups. He says,

I don't have experience with this specifically with church, but I do a lot of professional development and training for schools and I am seeing a lot more of like those young professionals, who are brand new teachers and they are more likely to sign up and be like on committees within the school and work on teams and kind of like that collaborative nature that you mentioned earlier I see that a ton more than I ever did fifteen years ago since I graduated from college. I'm seeing much more influx of young professionals, not necessarily with families yet, but like in schools or dedicating their time beyond the school day in committees and working to improve their schools.⁹¹

The Millennials are a worth-while generation to build into lay leaders as a generation because of their unique circumstances. It is true that they have some barriers for leadership including devaluing spirituality, not having enough time in the day, distrusting authority, lacking commitment, and struggling to make intimate relationships. Their strengths including being a diverse generation, valuing social impact, valuing collaboration and being in a convenient position as young professionals to lead only compliment the fact that they are a good generation to consider as leaders. The question to answer now is, "How can church leaders transform Millennials into lay leaders?"

⁹¹ Participant B. "Group Interview 1 by Author," 30 October 2018.

Chapter 4: Ways to Transform Millennials into Lay Leaders

Leadership development is a process that yields great rewards, if done successfully. Malphurs and Mancini define successful leadership development in this way, “[T]he intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills.”⁹²

As it is wise to use the example of Jesus to identify good qualities of a leader to look for, it is also wise to use Jesus as an example for how to develop leaders. Malphurs and Mancini recognize that and identify four steps to leadership development that Jesus practices in developing the twelve disciples into leaders: recruitment, selection, training, and deployment.⁹³

Recruitment

Help Millennials Overcome Their Barriers

There were three ways Jesus recruited his disciples. He let them come to him (Jn 1:35-40), he invited them (Mk 1:16-19), and he taught his disciples to pray more would come to him (Mt 9:36, 37). If church leaders, who are working to develop Millennials into lay leaders, seek to follow any of these methods of recruitment that Jesus practiced, they should keep in mind what might motivate Millennials to be recruited. A church leader may want to consider ways to help Millennials overcome the barriers for leadership that they face.

Of Devaluing Spirituality

Hopefully the trend that Millennials do not value spirituality will not be a big barrier to overcome since the pool of Millennials on which this thesis focuses are those already established as members in the congregation. However, since Satan is always tempting Christ’s followers to

⁹² Malphurs and Mancini, 23.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 68-71.

give up their faith, church leaders will encourage these Millennials to stay in God's Word regularly so that they do not fall (1 Co 10:12).

How might church leaders encourage Millennials to stay in God's Word regularly? They need to keep the concept of love in mind in order to show Millennials that they are loved.

Ledermann writes, "Millennials understand through experience, so the open door to their hearts is to show them love. Showing them love gains their trust because they experience the kind of message the Bible holds for them."⁹⁴ How might this look concretely? Pastor Hein says,

[T]here's something about the incarnation, right, both in a salvation sense, but also in the human flesh and human contact and being with one another sense? I think [in] the church it's still important to be together and stay together and shake a hand and give a hug. I think you have to teach the beauty of that [that] doesn't come through technology."⁹⁵

If church leaders can reflect God's love toward the Millennials in their church and create that vital foundation, then Millennials are more likely to be in church and hear more about the importance of being in God's Word regularly. The pastor can take advantage of their presence by making it a point to preach and teach about a regular diet of God's Word. He can even have a workshop on setting up a healthy devotional life. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) Professor Richard Gurgel does a devotional workshop with WLS students and their wives annually. Much of the ideas for a healthy devotional life can be found in his four-essay series entitled "Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ledermann, 16.

⁹⁵ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 2.

⁹⁶ These essays can be found at the following site <https://www.wls.wels.net/grow-in-grace/reclaiming-our-christ-centered-lutheran-devotional-life/>

Of Not Having Enough Time in the Day

In addition to overcoming the barrier regarding devaluing spirituality, church leaders may have to overcome the barrier of Millennials thinking they do not have enough time in the day to serve as leaders. One key way church leaders can overcome this barrier is by not making so many rules. For example, they might consider compromising with their Millennial leaders over the topic of leadership meetings. This author heard an example of this happening in a church from his independent research. Participant C, who facilitates a number of Millennial lay leaders at his church to accomplish various large projects in church, spoke to this author about how he has compromised with his Millennial leaders. The leadership structure at his church is different from most churches. First, he talked about their governing board,

The way that [our church] operates, our structure is different from the way you would envision in a normal church. So we don't have a board of evangelism and a board of trustees and a board of finance. We don't have that. What we have is a governing board and each one of the members has a very specific role as far as how to keep the large ship that we have afloat.⁹⁷

Participant C said their governing board consists of three primary individuals including a chairman, vice chairman and treasurer. The chairman is the representative of lay membership. He has authority to sign official documents such as call documents and checks. The vice chairman does the work of the chairman when the chairman is unavailable to fulfill his duties and regularly helps the chairman with some of his duties even when he is available. The treasurer keeps an eye on finances and makes sure the staff is doing what they need to do to stay in line with the finances.

Then there are three secondary positions including a secretary and two advisory members. The secretary takes notes and gives reports of governing board activity. The two

⁹⁷ Participant C. "Group Interview 1 by Author," 30 October 2018.

advisory members vote on decisions as they represent the congregation. They also have some elder-like duties such as sitting in on confirmation examinations.⁹⁸

Next, he talked about their staff and how each staff member gets leaders to help him or her on a project,

Then we have our church staff. Each of us is sort of the one directly responsible for an area of ministry and then each of us in our roles on staff is responsible for organizing our own teams to do what we're doing. So it's much more of a team focused, maybe I'll say, project driven [thing]. Like, we're doing this thing [and] we're going to get these people involved to make it happen. And then maybe once that thing happens that group of people are not responsible for it anymore. It's not like [saying], "Okay, sign up for three years of serving on a board and coming together every month for a meeting," which, by the way, most Millennials are very impatient with because where I served previously in [] we couldn't get somebody under the age of 30 to agree to that. The main reason was because they would often say, "It's not that I don't want to help. I do. It's just I don't see the point of sitting for an hour and a half in a meeting where all we do is talk and we don't actually get anything done. We have to meet every month. Why do we have to meet every month?"⁹⁹

In response to these concerns from most Millennials, Participant C likes to take a more compromised approach to leadership. He said,

And the most success I've ever had was when we got a group of people to do that and we didn't meet every month. We instead said, "Okay, we're going to meet. We're going to talk about things we have to do and I'm going to check in every couple of weeks with you guys. We'll talk about it through email and when we feel as a group that we need to get some face-to-face to talk about things that we're dealing with some can say, 'Hey, we should have a meeting,' and we get together. So we end up having [a meeting] every two to three months. We got a ton more stuff done."¹⁰⁰

At Participant C's church the leadership paradigm for carrying out projects assumes there is one person who is experienced in their field of service (such as event planning) to lead the project with help from the congregation. This person facilitates their group to carry out a church project. This person's group may consist of a committee that works with him to plan the project.

⁹⁸ Participant C. "Interview by Author," 21 February 2019.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

Once the project is planned volunteers are recruited to carry out the plan. Participant C and his church which consisting much of Millennial age people have had much success gaining Millennial helpers and leaders for these projects. In a similar church setting it is worth trying a compromised approach to leadership.¹⁰¹

Of Lacking Commitment

A third barrier a church leader will want to help his Millennial members overcome in order to motivate them to be recruited for leadership is the barrier of lack of commitment. One theory to explain this lack of commitment centers on attention span. Roepe puts it this way in her article on attracting Millennials with recruitment,

Over the past two years, Milwaukee-based staffing company Manpower has streamlined its outreach to job applicants by using text messaging and website chats. Doing so has had a positive effect on recruitment, says Frank Armendariz, the company's regional vice president in the Phoenix area. When a person applies for a job, he or she may opt in for a preferred form of communications, he says. Increasingly, text messaging is the top choice for candidates because of its immediacy. "If it's a difficult process, it's not going to be attractive to this generation," he says.¹⁰²

Most Millennials seem to be looking to technology as they form a first impression of a company or church. Pastor Thompson noticed this too in his ministry and shared the anecdotal evidence. He said,

I spent one year asking every one of my visitors that was observably under the age of 40, "How did you hear about us first?" Virtually to a person they all said, "Your website first." So that means, and there's a lot of studies that talk about this, the assumptions should be that before a person ever steps foot into your church they are going to first get to know you virtually. That's going to be the way that they begin to shape their understanding of who you are, which is bizarre, if you think about it because that's not the real you. It's a virtual thing, yet their construction and their identity of who you are begins first with what your website looks like, which is maybe something that pastors should be giving priority to in some shape.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Participant C. "Interview by Author," 21 February 2019.

¹⁰² shrm.org

¹⁰³ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 2.

Most Millennials use technology to gain their first impression. Their commitment is not long as they encounter low quality technology because they are used to having top notch quality. If pastors and church leaders can give more priority to having streamlined websites that Millennials will not get turned off to, churches might be able to help Millennials get over their barrier of lack of commitment.

Of Struggling to Make Intimate Relationships

This isn't rocket science. In order to help Millennials overcome their struggle to make intimate relationships, a leader-developer needs to consider making more opportunities for Millennials to have personal interactions with each other and with those not of their own Millennial generation. They need to learn by experience.

In this author's independent research he asked Participant A what leads her to stick around her church. She answered with her church's worship services in mind, "I feel like part of the church in a way. I don't feel as like part of other services. It feels more like coming together than just like coming to a service. I feel like it's more of the heart of what Jesus wants us to do. There's less like routine. Every time we went we felt like we were communing with people."¹⁰⁴ Pastor Hein offered a specific way in his interview with Balza that congregations can make their worship services more relational,

I think [about] the way our pews or chairs are set up in a sanctuary. You can tell there's something designed to be accomplished there, but no one's facing anyone except the pastor. Therefore, it's a vertical relationship with God we're expressing, but we're not expressing any kind of horizontal relationship with the people that God says he "indwells." So you have to have some kind of safe spaces and relational spaces in which people are using God's word, but facing one another, interacting in that sort of way.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Group Interview 1

¹⁰⁵ WELS Together Video Update.

Leader-developers can try other methods of fostering relationships between Millennials such as the following methods Pastor Hein offered in the same interview,

I think things like small groups ministries are essential. I think things like service opportunities that are done in groups as opposed to each person just having a role that they do in the church that's not necessarily relational, but serving the community and serving as a community together (something that fosters relationships) [are essential].¹⁰⁶

A method leader-developers can use to give Millennials meaningful relationships and to give them greater confidence in leadership is a mentorship program. The military uses mentorship programs and defines mentorship as, “[T]he voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect.”^{107 108}

Hernandez suggests a number of reasons mentorship is significant among Millennials. He mentions that Millennials tend to seek opportunities to be mentored. They are doing so today in the health industry. If Millennials find out that a job in the health industry doesn’t offer mentorship, they often keep looking.¹⁰⁹ Hernandez also mentions that mentorship “builds better leadership skills and can develop a deep loyalty.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁷ “Adrp6-22.Pdf,” n.d. <http://data.cape.army.mil/web/repository/doctrine/adrp6-22.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ The military definition continues. Mentorship is generally characterized by the following:

- Mentoring takes place when the mentor provides a less experienced leader with advice and counsel over time to help with professional and personal growth.
- The developing leader often initiates the relationship and seeks counsel from the mentor. The mentor takes the initiative to check on the well-being and development of that person.
- Mentorship affects personal development (maturity and interpersonal and communication skills) as well as professional development (technical, tactical, and career path knowledge).
- Mentorship helps the Army maintain a highly competent set of leaders.
- The strength of the mentoring relationship relies on mutual trust and respect. Protégés carefully consider assessment, feedback, and guidance; these become valuable for growth to occur (Adrp6-22).

¹⁰⁹ Hernandez, 41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 44.

Mentorship can have negative outcomes though. A specific example is given by Participant E, a Gen Xer, from this author's independent research,

With a mentor I think if you have always felt like you've needed that, you might begin to depend on it. Where you don't have the ability to always make those decisions you're indecisive. You have a tough time making decisions. That can affect other parts of your life because you're always looking for someone to give you the answer.¹¹¹

If a leader-developer decides to try a mentorship program with the Millennial members of his or her congregation, the leader-developer should consider some factors. One factor is that the mentor should be the right person for the Millennial being mentored. Participant E explains,

One thing that is interesting with the whole mentor thing with Millennials is that you [as a Millennial] have been told that you are good and special all your life by your parents. The trouble with that is it's hard to confide your vulnerabilities into somebody that thinks you're awesome. So to really be vulnerable so that you can grow, sometimes it takes this outside counsel or a mentor or a role model or someone that you look up to that doesn't see you in that way, but sees you where you're at and how you are today and where are you maybe could get to and helps you along that path.

For me the mentors in my life we're more of that role. They gave me confidence. I knew my parents always believed in me, but I needed somebody else outside of them because your parents have to believe in you. You're their special child, right? But the other person doesn't have that same bias. I think that's where having a mentor especially as a Millennial is important.¹¹²

Another factor to consider is the idea that Millennials might benefit also from mentoring others. Participant A told this author about her experience serving as a mentor in college,

We had mentorship [in college] at chapel where I was a freshman and you could opt in to the mentorship program, which basically paired you up with an older student maybe a year older than you. They would basically be your friend. And it was really nice. They would help you with any questions you had. You would meet up with them throughout the year.

It was great the next year as a mentor to do that and it just felt like you're taking ownership. They definitely give you guidelines to follow. "You have to do this, this, and this." Basically like, "This is your mentee. Take care of them." I think it was really cool. I

¹¹¹ Participant D. "Group Interview 2 by Author," 1 November 2018.

¹¹² Group Interview 2.

think everyone really benefitted a lot from it. I think it made everybody more confident.¹¹³

Help Millennials Foster Their Strengths

Churches can also help Millennials be more motivated to be recruited for lay leadership by helping Millennials foster their strengths.

Of Being a Diverse Generation

The ethnic diversity that is characteristic of the Millennial generation is accompanied by operational diversity, which can be a benefit to the church. By “operational diversity” this author means an attitude of openness to doing things. Millennials are willing to find the best way of doing something. One Millennial said,

Because we have access to so much knowledge and research via the Internet we can like see like the proper way of doing something. Like older generations when they made their coffee they probably just like got instant coffee or pre ground coffee and now like things like grinding your own beans, maybe even roasting your own beans, is taking off and that can go across like anything. People are more interested in doing things correctly.¹¹⁴

This attitude of operational diversity might show itself especially helpful in a situation where complacency is a struggle for the congregation. A good Millennial leader might be the push the congregation needs to go the extra mile, to try new ideas and to find attractive ways of accomplishing congregational tasks.

Of Valuing Social Impact

Since most Millennials are passionate about making a social impact in the world, church leaders would do well to consider how they themselves as church leaders are making decisions. Pastor Reeder explains,

I think there’s this exciting conversation about the difference between involvement in a church and membership in a church and how we empower involvement and think about

¹¹³ Group Interview 1.

¹¹⁴ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

membership with a generation that doesn't love ownership, but loves accessibility. I think, just very practically, there's an internal question and external question that congregations can be asking themselves, especially leadership within congregations can be asking themselves. The external question is, "Will the Millennials in our community miss us, if we were gone? Would they feel it, if this congregation ceased to exist?" Being really honest and trying to answer that question and trying to identify what can be done to make sure that that would happen, right? How can we benefit them before they ever walk in the door is a really significant externally focused question.

On the internal side I think there's a question about the way we think in regard to the membership of our congregations. The question has something to do with, "Is the decision I'm about to make based on the membership of this congregation or is it based on the people this congregation can affect?" I think a great many of the decisions that get made within a congregation (And this happens sort of by default. It's a gravity thing. I get it.) are based entirely on this limited group of people that are known as members. We strip ourselves of the ability to be impactful, of the ability to be inclusive, of the ability to show that this isn't what we're for or what we're about by making those decisions in that way. I think by simply asking those questions on a regular basis can start to help a congregation, help a leader, help the culture think about the ways it can engage people in ways it maybe hasn't previously done so just because of gravity patterns.¹¹⁵

The internal question is especially significant for building lay leaders from one's own Millennial members because Millennials are more motivated to help with external, social impact than they are about merely affecting a set group of people like the membership of a congregation. Putting Millennials in places of lay leadership will help congregations have this external vision which could help push a congregation to get into the community, even reaching more people with the gospel.

Of Valuing Collaboration

From a Biblical perspective, collaboration is a great way to reach full potential. For example, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Pro 27:17). From a societal perspective, collaboration is a great way to reach full potential too. Collaboration in the health care system is a good example. Administrators have often been asked to care for patients and to improve systems within the hospitals. The only problem is that they were typically not trained in

¹¹⁵ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 4.

the latter task. That's why they need to collaborate with each other to find the best way to doing things. This form of effective leadership is described with a metaphor called the T-shaped model. Maria Doyle explains the T-shaped model, "The vertical bar on the 'T' represents the depth of related skills and expertise in a single field, whereas the horizontal bar represents a breadth of skills and the ability to collaborate across disciplines with experts in other areas and to apply knowledge in areas of expertise other than one's own."¹¹⁶ James Hernandez writes in his article that health care professionals must have a deep grasp of their subject material. In other words, they must have the vertical part of the T-shaped model ready to go. However, in a world like today that uses "collaborative and interconnected delivery systems" health care professionals must also have a grasp of the horizontal line of the T-shaped model by practicing what has been called the "business side of health care." Hernandez continues,

That said, the most valuable physician leaders possess a comprehensive understanding of business concepts, such as operations, strategy, finance, marketing and organizational structure. Seasoned leaders who have leveraged these domains and can help others learn to do the same are connectors. Connectors are invaluable as mentors and can teach Millennial physicians how to develop and nurture these business-related skills.

Since Millennials have a natural desire to collaborate, they would work well with those mentors who would teach them leadership skills. The effect would be Millennials making full use of the T-shaped model and reach their full potential as leaders in society.

Using the T-shaped model in a church context would also help them reach their full potential as lay leaders. The traditional church committee consists of people from many generations and varying levels of experience. These traditional committees gather to collaborate about congregational matters in order to overcome challenges and strive for ministry excellence.

¹¹⁶ Doyle, Maria. "Why Engineers Need to Develop T-Shaped Skills." <https://www.ptc.com/en/product-lifecycle-report/why-engineers-need-to-develop-t-shaped-skills>. December 2, 2014. Accessed December 2018.

If a church mentorship program¹¹⁷ can be set up for these Millennials, Millennials would fit well into the committee aspect of lay leadership.

Of Trust as a Barrier¹¹⁸

Again, hopefully this will not be an issue with Millennials members, who are in God's Word regularly, but there is still the temptation from their unbelieving peers to forsake their trust in pastors and Bible study leaders. The distrust that Millennials tend to have of biblical authority like pastors and Bible study leaders should be addressed with more and more instruction in the Word so that they can confess, "Your Word is truth" (Jn 17:17). As circular as that argument sounds, it is what works. The books of that Bible are a canon. They were given through authors inspired by God. They are authentic internally and externally. The external evidence for the authenticity of the Scriptures is in the discussions concerning the *homologoumena*, *antiloegomena*, *apocrypha* and *pseudepigrapha*. The internal evidence for the authenticity of the Scriptures is that they have self-authenticating power. The disciples once asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while [Jesus] talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32).

Yet, Millennials are looking for rationale to believe God's Word. This Millennial quote from earlier in the thesis shows that fact, "They're seeking truth, but they're not just going to rely on an authority figure to tell them this is it. 'You need to show me some proof. You know, why is it rational for me to believe this?'"¹¹⁹ This is where apologetics might come in handy, but

¹¹⁷ This will be discussed later in the thesis.

¹¹⁸ Remember that some will not view lack of trust as a barrier for lay leadership. They might say like Participant A, "I don't think it's a bad quality."

¹¹⁹ Ministering to Millennials, Volume 1.

that is a discussion for another thesis and has been discussed in some theses that you can access on the WLS essay file.

Selection

After working to recruit Millennials for lay leadership and instilling leadership interest in them, leader-developers will focus on selecting lay leaders from that pool of individuals who have been recruited. When Jesus selected his twelve disciples, he was intentional. He spent the entire night in prayer (Lk 6:12). What's the take-away for selecting leaders? Malphurs and Mancini suggest, "Leader-developers are wise to bathe their leadership-selection process in much prayer."¹²⁰

As leader-developers let God's Word work on the Millennials, for whom they've prayed, these leader-developers will get to know these Millennials. That's very important. This is where leader-developers should really start. Getting to know them is so important because Millennials are often stereotyped. One Millennial said,

We're all different. Like we're not defined by our age. We have different characteristics. We have different stories. We have different lifestyles. I might be a Millennial by my age, but I don't necessarily fit into society's Millennial culture. So realizing that we're different and listening to us instead of grouping us together [is my desire].¹²¹

Leader-developers may start getting to know the young single professionals as having a potential to dedicate more time to leadership than married Millennials with families. By getting to know Millennials personally, leader-developers can begin to see what strengths for lay leadership that Millennial has or what barriers he or she needs to overcome. Leader-developers will look for Millennials with the best strengths and least barriers to overcome in a specific area of ministry and choose the Millennials with that unique set of leadership qualities.

¹²⁰ Malphurs and Mancini, 70.

¹²¹ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 1.

Training

After selecting lay leaders, leader-developers will focus on training them. In order to successfully train Millennials for lay leadership, this training process should focus on the leader-developer treating his or her newly selected lay leaders as family. The leader-developer should not act as a dictator, but show love and respect for their lay leaders with the goal of helping them grow to their fullest potential. This quality of treating trainees as family is seen in how Jesus treated his disciples. In Matthew chapter twelve, his biological mother and brothers stood outside the place where Jesus was talking to the crowd. When Jesus was notified of his family's presence he replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother'" (vv. 46-50). Jesus was pointing out that in the kingdom of God one's true family are those who do his father's will, which is repenting of their sins and turning to God in faith.¹²²

This quality of treating trainees as family is seen as successful in the business world too. In this author's independent research Participant E, a 30's Millennial, who is also a business manager, said this,

Last week I attended a conference at _____ for business owners and one of the main things that they talked about in all the platforms was leadership . . . There's a big movement right now about building healthy cultures within organizations. It's fascinating because the organizations that are really thriving and keeping their talent in this low unemployment marketplace are the ones that have really really good cultures. That comes from the top down, right, like really good leaders, who are investing in their people in ways that make those people feel recognized and welcomed and more of a family than it being a job or a dictatorial sort of relationship . . . I manage people in my business so I'm always trying to look for ways to do that better. I think that parallels the Christian aspect that if you're treating someone as your brother's son or daughter, then you're treating them the way you should be as ones who are extending the love of Christ to others.¹²³

¹²² G. Jerome Albrecht & Michael J. Albrecht, 187.

¹²³ Group Interview 2.

The point of Christian leadership is to point trainees to Christ, right? Participant E uses the example of Christian parenting to make that point.

If you're parenting you're raising your kids in the right way, right, under a biblical model, you're raising them to be like you, right, assuming you're the right model to follow. Usually you're trying to follow Christ and point back to him anyway. If you're leading like Christ in your family or your work, ideally you're training the people below you or beside you to be that way too, right?¹²⁴

Deployment

After training Millennials for lay leadership, leader-developers will focus on deploying them into ministry. After Jesus gave his disciples authority to “drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” (Mt 10:1) he instructed his disciples to preach a specific message and to perform miracles. At this time though, he instructed them to only go to the people of Israel (Mt 10:5-8). After Jesus’ was crucified and risen he gave his disciples the Great Commission. With this command he deployed them to reach out to all nations with the message about him.

Into what areas of ministry might leader-developers deploy Millennials lay leaders? One option is into the media platforms.¹²⁵ Pastor Reeder urges with these words,

Maybe the most practical thing that I could possibly say to any church that is thinking about Millennials is you have to, have to hire a Millennial to make your website great. Like just do it. It's how [Millennials] are going to experience you first. Then from there start to build your persona in that other world, in that new digital world. Consider how [your church] exists . . . Physically build something there that they can access. On a regular basis we just have to be engaged in that.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Group Interview 2.

¹²⁵ They can take many forms (although not all are guaranteed to be used well for church) like church website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.

¹²⁶ *Ministering to Millennials*, Volume 4.

Other than getting Millennials involved in the media platforms leader-developers might also consider involving Millennials in the planning of social impact events especially where they can collaborate with each other.

Conclusion

After finally considering the offer to become the next president at the University of Sioux Falls, Danita Bye, a middle-aged business woman, declined the offer. She compared the work of the presidency there and her abilities as “oil and water.”¹²⁷ She felt she was not the right person for the leadership position. This story is told simply to illustrate that before accepting a position of leadership it is human nature to assess one’s own gifts and abilities to see if he or she is the right person for the job. In the conversation about lay leadership, who is the right person, or who is the right *generation* for the job? Is the Millennial generation a viable option? This thesis presented that Millennials have some barriers for lay leadership such as having limited time in their schedules, a lack of commitment, and a struggle to make intimate relationships.

This thesis also presented that Millennials have some strengths for lay leadership such as being a diverse generation and demonstrating a value of social impact and collaboration. How lay leader-developers decide to help Millennials to overcome these barriers and to foster these strengths is essential to developing Millennials into lay leaders because ultimately Millennials need to see that they themselves are equipped and fit for the job (or calling) of lay leaders. They need to see that their abilities don’t mesh with the lay leadership positions like “oil and water,” but that their abilities prove that they are the right people for the job. Let lay leader-developers do the best they can to help Millennials in their congregations to overcome barriers and foster strengths for lay leadership to develop this Millennial generation as lay leaders. Finally, as the

¹²⁷ Bye, 6.

leadership development process begins, let lay-leader developers start with prayer and after Millennial lay leaders are established let the prayers continue, for the Savior prayed in such a way himself (Lk 6:12; Jn 17:9-19).

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