

## **Additional Research Concerning the Millennial Generation: Spiritually Diverse but Fewer Are Attending Church**

Adapted and Posted by Bob Young

Of the Millennial generation-- those born between 1980 and 1991, now young adults aged 18-29—two-thirds call themselves Christian, but far fewer pray or read the Bible daily, attend weekly worship services, or hold to traditional historical positions on the Bible and its teachings. These are the conclusions of a LifeWay Research study of Millennials in the United States. The study is the basis for an upcoming book, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*, by Dr. Thom Rainer and Jess Rainer. The study found that 65% of Millennials identify themselves as Christian, 14% say they are atheist or agnostic, 14% list no religious preference, and 8% claim other religions. Seventy-two percent say they are "really more spiritual than religious."

### **Prayer, worship and study**

→Thirty-one percent of Millennials pray by themselves at least once a day, while 20% never pray. Only 8% pray with others on a daily basis, compared with 65% that rarely or never pray with other people.

→In response to the question: "You read the Bible, Torah, Koran, or other sacred writings," 67% of Millennials say they rarely or never do. Only 8% read the Bible or other sacred texts on a daily basis, 21% do so at least once a week, and 34% do so at least once a month.

→One in four Millennials attends religious worship services once a week or more, but two out of three rarely or never visit a church, synagogue, mosque or temple.

→Twenty percent meet with others at least monthly in a small group to study the Bible or other sacred texts, but 80% rarely or never do so. A slight majority (53%) disagree (strongly or somewhat) that the Bible is the written Word of God and is totally accurate in all it teaches.

→"The research shows us that religion and its practices are decreasing and becoming increasingly privatized among the Millennial generation," said Thom Rainer. "With fewer people attending worship services or praying with other faith adherents, it is not surprising that the religious landscape of our culture is changing with the maturation of the Millennials."

### **God, Satan, sin and salvation**

Here is how Millennials respond to a series of doctrinal statements:

→" God is a real being, not just a concept." Forty-six percent agree strongly, and another 26% agree somewhat; 28% disagree somewhat or strongly.

→"The devil, or Satan, is not a real being but is just a symbol of evil." Four in 10 Millennials agree strongly or somewhat.

→" When he lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people." Half of all Millennials agree strongly or somewhat; only 30% strongly disagree.

→" Believing in Jesus Christ is the only way to get to heaven." Millennials are split on this question, with exactly half agreeing and half disagreeing. Only 31% agree strongly that Jesus is the only path to heaven.

### **Heaven, hell and the afterlife**

→Seven out of 10 Millennials believe heaven is a real place, not just a concept, while six out of 10 believe hell is real. The most common belief about life after death, with one-third of respondents giving this answer, is that "no one really knows what will happen after we die."

→Millennials are evenly split on whether they believe they will go to heaven. Those who don't believe they will go to heaven include 8% who believe they will cease to exist and 5% who say they will return in another life form.

→Forty-eight percent of Millennials believe they will go to heaven after they die, but are split as to the reason. Of all respondents, 26% believe it is "because they have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior;" 16% say it is because they have tried their best to be a good person and live a good life; and 4% say it is because "God loves all people and will not let any of them perish."

While the survey found that Millennials hold diverse beliefs, six out of 10 say their religious faith is very important in their lives today, and 70% agree (strongly or somewhat) that Christian churches are still relevant in America today.

"Millennials are the most religiously diverse generation in our culture's history," Rainer said.

"Unsure of the afterlife and the life of Jesus, Millennials present the church with a great opportunity to engage them in conversations dealing with the nature of truth and its authority as God."

Rainer also noted, "We have dumbed down what it means to be part of the church so much that it means almost nothing, even to people who already say they are part of the church."

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Note: Much of the information in this article was adapted from  
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