**Generation Why: ‘Millennial’ engagement with the Church and what approaches can the Church of Ireland take in offering a place to ‘Millennials’ that encourages spiritual growth and active participation in the work of the Church?**

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**Abstract**

Millennials currently comprise one of the largest generational cohorts, yet in many church surveys, national censuses and in other research that has been conducted, they constitute a small proportion of the active churchgoers in most denominations. Over the last number of decades, church attendance among the Millennial age group has fallen dramatically within most of the mainline denominations, and well into the second decade of the 21st century the Church is reaching a crisis point with regard to this group. In view of this situation, this dissertation seeks to explore three key questions. Firstly, who are the Millennials? What are the traits that identify this cohort and what values are important to them? Secondly, how might scripture inform our outlook as we consider the Millennial cohort as an outsider’ generation? What lessons can be gleaned from Jesus approach to outsiders and from the way in which the early Church integrated them into the church community. Finally, how might the Church develop mission to Millennials in light of the insights learned from scripture, and armed with the knowledge of who these Millennials are. This final question is explored through the grid of ecclesiology, asking what does Church ‘mean’ to this cohort. A number of suggestions are presented which may help the Church in its attempts to reach out to Millennials and reverse the trend of decline.