

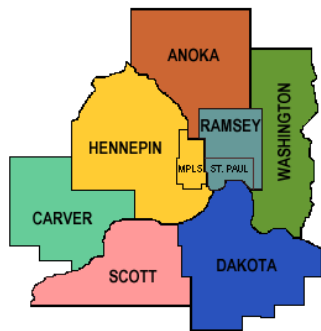


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# BRIEFING 10

## How Millennials Think

Hear in their own words



This Briefing is for Twin Cities pastors and church boards about **Millennials**, the essential population segment for long-term church growth

January 2018

All Briefings – and more – are online at [www.churchscouts.org](http://www.churchscouts.org)

# Understanding Millennials

## TAKEAWAY 1 - Millennials are changing the spiritual landscape

Many church leaders don't yet recognize that Millennials and their children have become **the majority population** in our country, the overwhelming segment that's not only influencing our churches but literally reshaping them.

As shown in CHART 10.2, this year – 2018 – is the **tipping point**, the year the oldest millennials turn 38 ... and the year the [U.S. Census Bureau reports](#) that the median age in the United States is now 38 ... which means that **Millennials and GenZ (their children) now outnumber all other generations combined!**

Overall, churches can no longer grow without large numbers of Millennials. As shown on CHART 10.1 and explained in this Briefing, Millennials think much differently about spiritual matters than older generations, so now churches must contextualize the gospel to the ordinary people on the street today, just as missionaries do in other cultures.

## TAKEAWAY 2 - Learn from Millennials directly

There is an enormous amount of survey information about Millennials, mostly polls that force Millennials' answers into neat structured categories, resulting in simple tables and percentages.

However, the changes in thinking between generations are much more complex and nuanced than polls can capture. Full understanding requires actual conversations.

Church Scouts wants to hear from Millennials **directly, randomly, without bias, in their own voices**, not just learn about them through reading what Christian authors say about them.

There are difficulties to overcome in initiating these conversations: Where do we find secular Millennials willing to honestly discuss spiritual matters with us? How do we avoid the bias that comes from invited focus groups that meet in unfamiliar rooms, that are not random, that cause participants to withhold full answers? How do we get interviewers that look and talk naturally like one of them?

So Church Scouts commissioned two Millennials from [Steiger](#) – a female and a male from an organization that ministers to secular young people – to go out on the streets of Minneapolis and engage 25 other Millennials in random conversations.

This briefing reports what they learned, not just by giving interviewer impressions, but by giving all the actual words and inflections direct from mouths of the respondents.

## TAKEAWAY 3 - Six things learned from the street interviews

When walking down the street, do you sometimes pass people and wonder what's going on in their minds ... their view of God ... the purpose of life ... Jesus ... sin ... salvation ... church ... afterlife ... ?

That's the idea behind these street conversations. The interviewers spoke with 25 people at random who appeared to be between ages 18 and 38. There could be some bias in this survey because the interviews were in an urban area near the University of Minnesota, but the bias, if any, would be an overbalance of influence leaders, which might show an acceleration of the speed but not the trend of secular thinking.

The full transcript of these interviews on **pages 7-15 of this Briefing**, and the voices at [www.churchscouts.org/audio10](http://www.churchscouts.org/audio10), capture the substance of these conversations.

Nothing has been omitted in the transcript except chit-chat, hems-and-haws, 'like,' and extraneous content, to facilitate easier reading.

### **Summarizing the results, here's what we learned about these Millennials:**

- 1 - There is **no creator-God**, but maybe a higher power or spirit of some kind. Our origin is through evolution, beginning with the Big Bang.
- 2 - Our purpose in life is to **help one another** and create a better and more just society.
- 3 - There are **no absolutes** except government law and everything else is relative to the situation; **no absolute truth**, and there is **no sin** in the biblical sense.
- 4 - There is **no hell** – maybe some kind of heaven – but no one can know before dying.
- 5 - Christians are tolerated, the church is irrelevant, and **Jesus is not even part of the conversation.**

Findings here not statistically significant, but definite thought patterns emerge.

## **TAKEAWAY 4 - Problem for the church**

These interviews reveal a very difficult communication problem for the church:

**If they believe there's no creator-God,  
no absolute truth, no sin, and no hell,  
then why need a Savior?**

It's clear that much of the evangelism and disciple-making language of the past – exemplified by Billy Graham preaching *'the Bible says ...'* and Bill Bright handing out *Four Spiritual Laws* – doesn't communicate well with Millennials today. That's foreign language to them. New starting points are needed for explaining the Gospel in this new culture. Through future Briefings, Church Scouts will report on what's working.

## **TAKEAWAY 5 - Resources on Millennials/GenZ in next Briefing**

This Briefing about Millennials is very focused, only what we learned from 25 random interviews with Millennials on the streets of Minneapolis. (Church Scouts is planning more interviews like this; see [www.churchscouts.org/interviews](http://www.churchscouts.org/interviews).)

The next Briefing – Briefing #11 – will be much broader in scope and will review relevant national data and commentary about Millennials and GenZ. It will tie the local findings here to the national findings of other researchers.

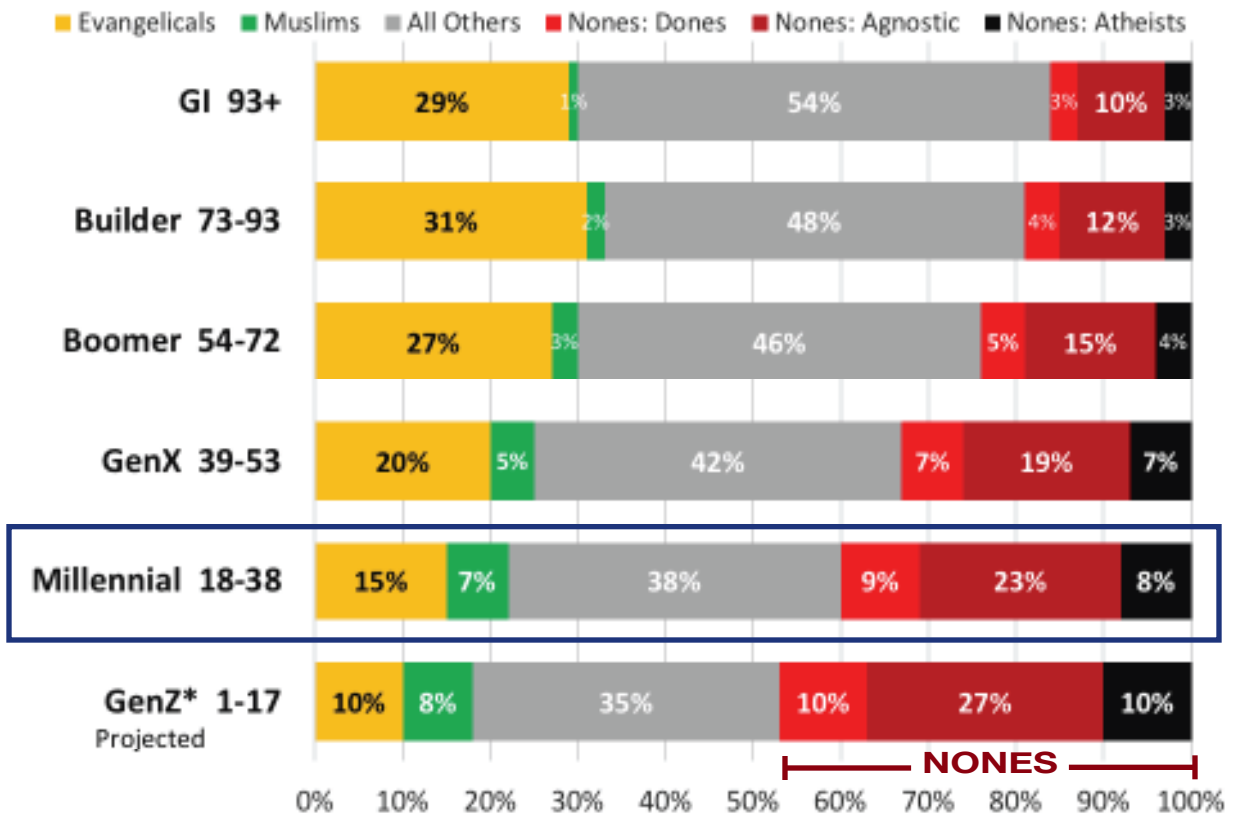
CHART 10.1

## Twin Cities Population 2018 by Generation

### Millennials are changing the spiritual landscape

Constructed from Twin Cities data in Table 9.1 of [Briefing #9](#)

The KEY generation



‘Nones’ (red and black) means no church affiliation

‘Dones’ (category within ‘Nones’) means still Christian but done with the traditional church

**Evangelicals** (gold) means belief *plus* affiliated with a church

**Three categories of Nones (see Briefing #9):**

- **Atheists** (black): People who have no faith in God or any supernatural power
- **Agnostics** (dark red): People who left their faith and/or people raised without any church connections
- **Dones** (light red): People who left the church but not their Christian faith

**All Others** (grey): Includes many mainline Protestants, non-evangelical Catholics, cultural-only Christians and other religions

**Directly and indirectly, the millennial generation is now reshaping all churches in the Twin Cities**

CHART 10.2

# A picture of the new Twin Cities

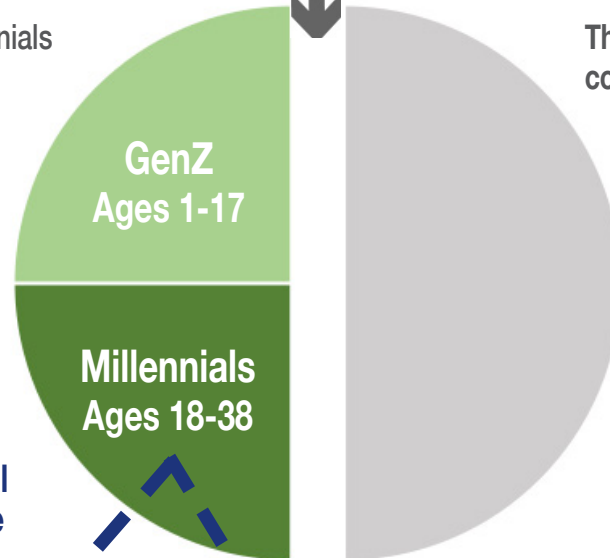
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 median age = 38

This half of population is Millennials and GenZ (born 1980 or later), the new **MAJORITY!**

GenZs are still kids, mostly children of Millennials, adopting Millennial thinking

This half is all other generations combined (born before 1980)

This half is dying off; the future of the church is the **OTHER** half



**Millennials is the crucial population segment the church must reach if the church is to grow**

*Follow arrows to learn how Millennials think about spiritual matters*



## AUDIO SNIPPETS

Hear sampling of voices of 25 Millennials in random street interviews in Minneapolis, expressing their views on spiritual matters.

[Click here](#)

or go to

[www.churchscouts.org/audio10](http://www.churchscouts.org/audio10)

## FULL TRANSCRIPT

See complete written transcript of 25 Millennials in random street interviews in Minneapolis, expressing their views on spiritual matters.

**Next 10 pages**

or print as PDF file from

[www.churchscouts.org/briefing10.pdf](http://www.churchscouts.org/briefing10.pdf)

# TRANSCRIPT



## Minneapolis random street interviews with millennials

Twenty-five millennials were interviewed at random on Minneapolis streets. Here's how they answered these questions:

### How did we get here?

We were created by God. [F13]

I come from a Christian faith background so I do believe that there's a God and higher power that put us here, but I believe that there's a lot of different factors that play into the purpose of life. I do believe that we were created by some kind of higher power. [F19]

I grew up in the Catholic Church. I don't follow the religion as much as I follow the faith. I still believe that God created human beings, but I'm also hesitant because I'm also scientific in the sense that I also believe in evolution. When I think of my faith, I think of God creating, but when I think of reality I fall back to the beliefs of scientists. There's an interchangeable connection in some ways. When I'm in an academic situation, I can definitely see evolution. But when it comes to my faith, I believe that God did create us. I also believe he does have a plan for us and stuff like that, so I do follow that part of my faith. [F21]

We don't really know. Some people say it's a Creator, but I don't think there's a definite answer. For me, it's a matter of studying how the universe came rather than jumping to a conclusion. I think it's a matter of learning



# AUDIO

Hear the millennials quoted below speak in their own words

Click [HERE](#) or to go

[www.churchscouts.org/audio10](http://www.churchscouts.org/audio10)

and process of elimination to get a better understanding of the origins of the universe. Look for scientific proof, find out what's happening, learning more and more. Rather than say this is the way it is, people want instant gratification and an answer right here and now, and if they don't get it because it doesn't agree with their beliefs, they're closed off to it. For me, I'll continue to understand what happens and get better knowledge. We don't know. Our quest is to find it, and we're a long way from it. As far as human evolution is concerned, it's a priority to learn more about it. [M23]

I'm not really a religious person, but my family goes to church, so there's the God aspect, too, but I really think it's the Big Bang. My parents think it's probably from God, you know, the aspect that he made all these creatures and everything. I do agree in some aspects. [F24]

I want to say a Big Bang, but it's just like there's a higher spirit. I wouldn't say there's a God specifically, but there is a higher energy. I don't know. I think it just happened. We wanted to be existing, and we did. [M7]

Big Bang. Through evolution. [M14]

A long, long time and evolution. [M12]

I believe in basic evolution. I believe in science. [F10]

I believe in evolution. [M4]

Evolution. [M25]

My theory is evolution. I'm a very scientific person. There are many possible theories. Like it came from an asteroid. Like tiny micro organisms that came into our water. They've actually found tiny microorganisms

that can survive under extreme temperatures. Even in extreme cold and heat it can induce a cell death-like state. [M1]

When you're over-populating there's always going to be fights for resources and leadership positions. The instincts to make things better come from understanding that there are injustices and inequities and being open to the ideas that those things can be changed because they were created by people. The natural order of the planet isn't inequity and discord. [M14]

I think we're all here by coincidence. That's not a great reason why we're here, but since we are here we should make the best of it. I give people a lot of credit. People actually know what's good and what they want to do. They know a lot more about life and how they can affect their communities. So I feel they can make the best of it by being true to themselves and being the kind of person they want to see. I think everybody knows what they want, but they just don't follow it. [F20]

Against all odds, uni-cell organisms lived for thousands of years in a very efficient way of living, and then for some reason we developed into multi-cellular beings, although there's no evidence as to why that would possibly be a good idea, because it's way less efficient, and we ended up in this place where we're now building buildings, and cars, and roads, and social media, and trying to figure out how to navigate it all. Evolution basically. And here we are. There are probably creatures in other galaxies asking the same question. [M9]

I don't know. [F8]

For me, it just like we're another species on this earth. I know a lot of people think we have this greater power, but honestly, I think we're just another part of the whole eco system. [F16]

## **DOMINANT BELIEF:**

***There is no creator-God, but maybe a higher power of some kind. Our origin is through evolution, beginning with the Big Bang.***

## **What's the purpose of life?**

Just to go through our own individual life journeys and to better society and community. To help people around you to make life better for the next generation and not to destroy the planet. [F18]

It's hard. I actually think of that quite a lot. Generally I do feel that people are here for people, and I feel that my specific purpose is to love people. That sounds very general and holistic, but that's what I think. Acts of kindness, big and small. [F19]

Be a very positive influence and give positive vibes to people, and not be judgmental. [F3]

Enjoying your time with the people around you and bringing value to others. [M7]

To help change society and to let people know there's more to life. By taking one thing at a time, letting people know that you're not alone. I've been through things and I want to let people know how to cope with that. [M2]

To make the world a more just place, and more equitable. [M15]

I don't know. Maybe to find a connection with other people. That's the best thing I can think of. [M6]

I'm not entirely sure. I guess whatever you want to make of your life. Be a good role model for my brother and sister. Go to college and get a computer science degree. [M1]

I see it as a macro thing. We're basically the same thing as the ants and snakes and everything. Everything that's here is just to live, and that's what we're here for, and we have to work for it. Humans are here to better themselves while trying to avoid making other animals and organisms and species inaccessible to their own resources, so it's like a balance, doing what you can do without harming what others can do. You have to learn as you grow up. You learn from your experiences. It's kind of messy and there are a lot of curve balls. To better the world for all our kids. That's the goal. [F22]

I think everyone has purpose on earth. I don't know how to explain it, but I think we're all here to just chill, to put

a smile on someone's face, to make them feel better. [F24]

For me, I do believe we have purposes, we do have paths. It's just a matter of finding the opportunities and taking advantage of them. There are so many opportunities and possibilities, especially when we live in the privilege we live in, and know that I can use this privilege for helping people. All you can do is work within the big scheme of things. Like I'm going to effect the entire world by ending poverty, or something like that, it's just not realistic. For me, personally, I believe purposes are through relationships and connections with one another and stuff like that. [F21]

I'm still trying to figure that out. I don't know. I don't have one big thing, one grand mission. Just little ways I can help out day to day to help out. [F8]

Bringing value to people in different ways. I'm an entrepreneur myself. I want to become President. I'm originally from Mexico. I have a DACCA so I'm only here for working. I have to renew every two years. I've been taking courses on social media and Internet marketing, and I also do realestating. My goal is to become the President of Mexico. Right now I'm 19 years old and I have five years to start a pyramid of different businesses I starting for my personal brand. I do daily blogging about my road to becoming President. [M7]

A purpose can be anything. I'm just thankful that I'm existing here and now. The possibilities required for me to even be at this moment and even talk to you is unfathomable. The millions of years of process, that I can have this health and mentality to see and convey what I'm saying right now. My purpose is to appreciate where I am right now and live life as best I can, and spread as much positivity as I can, and knowledge, and not be a jerk to other people. And watch what I say because people will listen. I don't want to lead them down the wrong path. Empathy. Being able to connect with people. Being able to come back to your mother, your father, your siblings, your friends. You learn to work in community, and you find that you get more done that way. The sense of happiness increases when you're nice to people. I've noticed that when you're mean and shut people off you become lonely, isolated, depressed. Everything starts deteriorating, and that's not taking advantage of the life that you have. So I think that it's very very important to do good to people because it's continuously spread across everyone else. [M23]

I always try to find some little positive thing in my day,

like whether its raining outside, which I like, or making someone smile. To do anything to make us more social, since we're naturally social, like being humans, taking more steps to your future goals. [F18]

I work in school and help international students study. If I don't show up, no one does my job. You get that reward back. [F10]

Helping other people. Making people happy. [M12]

Even though we're just part of the equation, I believe we can still make a difference in this world, and it starts with the individual. I know a lot of people say, what can I do? But you can really make a difference if you join organizations and stuff. [F16]

The purpose of life for me is the fact that I have potential to literally do whatever I want, when in other countries the government or opposition parties are stopping them from doing what they want to pursue. I am very thankful that I have the opportunity to literally do that every single day of my life here in Minneapolis. Every day is a gift. It's just what you make of it. I'm excited by the incredible opportunity in life to create and share things with other people. [M9]

The purpose of life is to do whatever fulfills you, whatever makes you happy. If you walk away from your job every day and you don't take anything away from it, then get rid of it. The purpose of life is to do something that sets your soul on fire. Talking to strangers, listening to what other people have to say. [F5]

Well, I don't know. I'm still figuring that out a little bit. But I'm a very patient person, and I'm good at listening. I think it's about helping other people spread their thoughts and opinions. [M4]

I do believe that there's something after that. I don't necessarily get rewarded for being a good person. But honestly, I'm trying to think more in the moment. We have this one life to live. What is the point of being angry and hateful the whole time you're here. [F19]

Just get me through to the next day. [M17]

No specific reason. I've never seen evidence for any specific purpose. [M17]



Eventually die. You eventually get put in the ground. It's inevitable. [M25]

What are you passionate about?

I get really excited about everything. Like the air around me is great. Seeing people I love every day. Waking up every day and doing the things I like to do. [F5]

It's what I have going on that day that motivates me. [M11]

I'm really passionate about the education of young people. I want to feed or fan audiences and spread stories from people who usually don't get heard, in communities where they can be heard. [M4]

Lots of things. I love sitting down with my brother and sister even though our ages differences are vast. They're much younger than me. [M1]

Anything new. It's a kind of quandary. I like change and I don't like change at the same time. Anything I can learn from is good. [M6]

To learn new things. And I work in a job where I come in contact with a lot of different kinds of people. And coffee helps. [M4]

Hearing other people's stories. Helping people out in any way I can, things I can make my sons feel better, things on the job, making someone's life a little easier. [F8]

I'm passionate about working and becoming a very strong individual, very feminine. [F3]

I'm passionate about nature and being outside, and with being with other people outside and connecting them with nature. [F5]

My girlfriend and music. [M2]

Music. I'm very passionate about music. And moving forward. New places. New states. Stuff like that. [M11]

Drawing. I really like to draw lot. I work in a hardware store, but I've been a graphic designer before, and a fine artist in the past. [M6]

Skateboarding. It's a really nice outlet for me. It's a good way to forget about everything else and just focus on one thing. [M12]

I'm passionate about the city and state I live in. Underground dance music and the culinary scene in Minneapolis. Even going to work, whether nighttime or daytime, I'm passionate about my job. [M9]

I like languages and international travel. [F10]

People and experiences. Being free, and having the lifestyle to be free. Being able to do whatever I want whenever I want. [M7]

## **DOMINANT BELIEF:**

***The purpose of life is to help one another and create a better and more just society.***

## **What's worth dying for?**

Anything that you would live for. My family. My husband. [F10]

I'd die for my husband. I'll die whenever I'm ready. That's life. [F3]

My wife. I would even die for my music career. Just go all out, can't be fearful of everything. Got to take an opportunity if you want it to live. [M2]

I guess it comes down to personal beliefs. Anything you believe in. I could commend anyone for dying for anything they believe in very strongly. Probably family. [M6]

Family. [M1]

Very, very close loved ones. [M11]

The people I love. I'd die for anyone I love. [M7]

Other people. The greater good. A difficult decision, but a multitude of people rather than just one person. [M12]

Freedom. Family and friends also. I think it's worth dying for something you sincerely believe in, whether it's politically or just something that you feel very strongly about. If you're educated and informed and can make a sacrifice like that, it's a very admirable thing. [M9]

Equality. [M4]

I got to have time to think about that one. [F8]

## ***DOMINANT BELIEF:***

**Strongly committed to family and loved ones.**

## **Right and wrong? Who decides?**

Bring it back to God, what God's will is. Subconsciously we all kind of know what is right and wrong, and there are rules and laws. [F13]

I think it's part of upbringing. I think religion is a big part of it. I'm not necessarily religious, but I've come from a religious upbringing and I think that's helped me find what's right or wrong. [M4]

I think it's taught from a young age. We grew up in a system where we were taught that X is wrong, Y is right. So it's basically what society tells us is right and wrong. Otherwise you see movies all the time, like Hunger Games, or something, other societies look completely like that. So, you know, it's the system that tells you what's right and wrong. Or, for some people, it's beliefs like the Bible. People follow that and stuff like that. So it's a mixture of personal beliefs and the system. [F21]

Obviously I follow the law. I don't want to go to prison. 80% is the law and 20% is with my religion and my faith and what that was like. I believe more in the law than in my faith because I think people can misconstrue what religion is and yet misinterpret things, especially when it comes from the Bible or something. I think a lot of people go a little wrong in that way. [F21]

Honestly, I think we can talk about it and debate about it, and then we can have police officers and law officials enforce what's right and wrong, but at the same time I don't think anyone really knows. Generally, people can

share their views on what's good and bad, but everyone has their own interpretations. [F19]

There definitely is right and wrong, but it's determined by society. Like, some societies kill their firstborn if they're not strong enough. We don't do that because we think it's wrong. It's cultural, but I think there are some things that are universally wrong, but for the most part those things just come from your societal context. I think a lot of it comes from people not wanting bad things to happen to them, so if I go and kill somebody's kid, that opens the door for somebody to do it to me. It's like a self preservation thing, I guess. [M17]

One person considers it right, and another person considers it wrong. There are some basically moral standards. Every kind of group has its own standards. The community decides what's right and what's wrong. If you wouldn't want something to happen to you, you probably shouldn't do it to someone else. [M1]

I think it's a moral kind of thing. People are born with nationalities compared with other teachings, compared to other creatures like animals and beasts that follow their instincts, so I think the sense of morality comes from nationality. I don't know if other animals get a bad feeling when they do something wrong, but I know for sure that people get a bad feeling. As people get older they kind of hide it or put it behind other things. We are born with knowing what we want. Like babies, they cry when they're hungry. Growing up, there are a lot of people around them, telling them things like you shouldn't do that, or that you have to think about other people, and there are a lot of other thoughts that disrupt your own. [F20]

I think it has to be everyone for themselves, but hopefully the opinion is coming out of education. [M4]

I think we need to determine that for ourselves. It's all based on your experiences, which is right now. Media definitely has a lot to do with it. [F18]

I think each individual person decides what's right and wrong for them. Obviously, there are things a majority of people will decide are wrong, but only a person individually can decide for them what will make them feel horrible about themselves or will make them feel good about themselves. [M12]

It's your decision. You decide. Lot's of buts. [M11]

There are grey areas. Yeah, there are people with morals and ethics and things like that. It depends. It can be situational. It depends. [M6]

There are people who cause arguments just because they're having a bad day. There's enough food, there's enough love, there's enough money to go around. We, as people, have to sacrifice our emotions and realize that there's something else to do for someone else in return. That is your happiness. [M2]

Growing up, going to school, we learn what's right and wrong. That why, for me, I never know if there's a black and white area. I'm always in the grey area. There's always an in-between, and that's where I'm kind of in. It's kind of like choosing ice cream flavors. You can have peppermint or chocolate or you can have a mixture of peppermint and chocolate. When I went to college, you learn that the human race is emotional. I'm pretty sure other animals are emotional, but we're really emotional, so from that aspect it's really sad if you do all the bad things. We all want to be happy. I think that's what we all strive for. [F24]

In this life, it's society's standards, through the government and conditioning of how parents raise their kids, generation to generation. It's common sense, like if you see a kid hitting another kid, you shouldn't do that. Like, if you see a homeless person, you shouldn't just ignore them like, oh no, I don't have anything for you. Give them some food instead of money because you don't know what their intuition is. Like with North Korea blowing up their missiles in our oceans. Obviously that's wrong. But our own country has been doing it for centuries and decades now, so it's a common thing. [F3]

It's different for every person. It depends on your religious views and your views on science. It's really specific to a person. [F16]

It all depends on the situation. You always have to consider other people's perspectives on it. It's important to look its other people because we come from diverse backgrounds. People have different experiences. I think it should be ethical. It should be bettering the world and bettering yourself. To me, what defines morality is taking the ends into consideration. If the majority of people feel a certain way, you should consider it but that doesn't mean you should act with the majority, because what's popular isn't always right. For me, it's just about how I feel about myself. If someone were to do this to me, how would I feel? I emphasize with the other person. I

think it's relative to each person. You can see that even in cultures. As a Western culture, you have a definitely different idea of what's moral versus a lot of different peoples. I think it's really on perspective. [F22]

Different cultures state what's nice and mean. Like in some cultures you can be waving at someone and it's considered an insult. If you smile, it's an insult. But over here, you wave, you smile, it's polite. So it's learning about different cultures and religions and people's abilities to communicate. Going about it that way helps you understand what' right and wrong, and then you can approach it accordingly without making quick judgments. Each individual has gone through certain moments in their lives that promoted a development of how they're able to think in certain ways. It's easier to generalize, but each person has come to that group. It's been difficult, it's been overwhelming at times, but just having an open mind to things and not shutting ideas out will help promote a healthy educational process and help us to get to know each other more intimately. I think it's a respect thing. You come to my culture and learn about my culture, and then adjust. I may have strong beliefs about certain things, but that doesn't mean I'm right. We can't be perfect, but at least we can try to be better in this society. [M23]

At the core there are fundamentals that are wrong, if it's malicious. [F5]

I like to think about this tactically. There are some things that are wrong, like rape. [M15]

About morality, it's very easy to see if you walk around with your eyes open that people are born into circumstances that determine far too much what happens to them the rest of their lives. What opportunities people are given are determined too much by their zip code and parents circumstances. If you're ignoring that, there's something fundamentally wrong with you. [M14]

No one can tell you really. There's so much that goes on in society, that many people have this feeling of needing to adhere to religion, like what the Bible says. I don't think someone else should be telling you what you should be doing with your own life and what direction you should be taking. [F8]

## ***DOMINANT BELIEF:***

***There are no absolutes except government law – everything else is relative to the situation – and there is no sin in the biblical sense.***

## **What happens after we die?**

I believe we will be resurrected and have eternal life. [F13]

Hopefully, go somewhere better. I'm a Christian so I believe in God and heaven. [M11]

I don't know. Hopefully I'll be going to heaven. [21]

I believe everyone has a certain path, but I don't know what the end looks like. I do believe that there is a heaven and hell, but then the whole logistics of who gets to go to either one. I think it's just beyond my comprehension, honestly. [F19]

I do think about that a lot. It's just so hard to tell. There are so many possibilities of what could happen. There's definitely something out there. I believe in a higher power and like going on to an eternity kind of. And then there's the other part of it. I believe in spirits and stuff so there's like a limbo you can get stuck in. [F18]

You know, I used to be really religious, but lately I've been questioning it. I think you go to a heaven, but it's whatever your heaven is. I think heaven is different for everyone. I was raised in a very strict Christian household, and now I'm figuring it out for myself. [F5]

I feel that there's another place that we go to. I believe there are two parts of us. We have our mass, which is our body. And we have our energy, which makes the connection, which makes the spark, which makes our thoughts happen. I think two things are going to happen. When we die, our mass rots or is cremated. And our energy has to go somewhere. Space is so big. There has to be something out there. I'll see you there. [M7]

I don't know. I honestly have no idea what happens. [F8]

So when you die, I'm not exactly sure what happens.

My own philosophy is that you should do what you can while you're alive. It's probably best just not to expect much. [F20]

No idea. [M1]

I don't know about our destiny, but I think you can control it more than most people think you can. [F16]

I have no clue. I think about it as little as possible. I'm a recovering Catholic, which means I'm not as concerned about after-life questions as I used to be. I'd much rather have an impact on things I can do here and now. [M14]

It really depends on whether I make a difference a lot. Once I start getting into the force and stuff like that. Karma is a negative word for me. I just think that in the end, if I made a difference, it will move on, and if I didn't make a difference, it doesn't move on, but like when I die, I die. By move on, I mean I do something that other people continue to do after I'm gone. [F16]

I don't know, and I think that's okay. I'm not a super religious person, but I'm interested in all the religions, the history and what they think happens after people die. It's an interesting mystery. You find out when you do die. [M12]

Well, there are just so many different nationalities and beliefs. You know, heaven, hell, reincarnation, different animals and trees. It's all about how your views are. It's a very touchy question to most people, so you have to put your own twist to it, like maybe we go to another universe. We don't know. [F3]

People think about you. You are remembered. Personally connected with other people. It might be people who have died before me, and reconnect with me. But no one can say. I don't know. I would hope there's something afterwards. That would be really cool. But if not, then we enjoy the time we have on earth. [M6]

I don't know. I guess I don't have a strong belief about what happens. I hope that when I die something I've done in this life can continue on in some way. But I don't know if my spirit is going to go anywhere. I plan a lot ahead. But I'm not thinking about what happens when I'm dead. I'm thinking about what I can do now. [M4]

I don't know. When I'm about to achieve my destiny, my earthly life, I don't have regrets. That's the goal. [M15]

I like to think more a Buddhist perspective that I'll hopefully be reincarnated. I believe that good things in your life will come back to you, but not animals. But I don't know. Depending on what you define as moral and right, if you do good, you'll receive good. You'll come back better than what you had before. Or if you were a terrible person, you'll come back worse or not at all. So again it depends on religion, culture, what you think. Even if you don't do so good in this life, there's always a chance to improve. There isn't one end-all, so you can continue to grow. I'll see where my life goes and I'll let you know. [F22]

It's completely subjective as to what happens after death. I'm a strong believer in what you're passionate about and what you believe will happen after death is what will happen to you after death. So if you are a strong believer in the Christian faith and you think that after death you go to heaven and you get greeted by St. Peter at the gate, that's what's going to happen to you. If you think you're going to be reincarnated, you're going to be reincarnated. What you believe is what's going to happen to you. That's my personal opinion. The logical part of my brain that believes in empirical evidence says that nothing is going to happen when we die. We're going to be dirt, we're going to decompose. I thought that for a very long time, but recently someone told me that if you reach the end of your life and there can be something or not something, which would you rather have? I think that's a very interesting question and it's been on my mind lately. I'm still sort of figuring it out. I think a lot of people are too preoccupied with this question of what happens after death. I'm inspired every day by the world around me. What can I do today? What can I do while I'm here. I think that's a more healthy and positive way of thinking. I honestly think that if more people lived in the present, and didn't worry about tomorrow, we'd have a healthier overall citizenship of the world and things wouldn't be as aggressive or capitalistic. [M9]

I've never been dead before. I don't think it's a very productive question. [M17]

## **DOMINANT BELIEF:**

***There is no hell – maybe some kind of heaven – but no one can know before dying.***

## **What do you think about Jesus and Christians?**

I'm a Christian and I've seen him work in my life. I can be a selfish person, I can be arrogant. I could have many opportunities if it wasn't for God, but He's protecting me from that, and led me to where I really needed to be. And I still ended up being successful, still ended up doing the career I wanted to. And really, in the industry, it's just about having the connections. If you're respectful to them, if you have something to offer to them, in return they may have the same thing for you. I have questions, too, even as a Christian, like, okay, this doesn't make sense about God or Jesus – is Jesus God? is God Jesus? – you know. I've had all of that. The one thing I do know is that He stands for love. And that's what I want to spread to society. It's like, you hate me, but I'm still going to love you. There's enough love to go around. [M2]

I'm Catholic. I think we have some core values. I see Catholicism as a more strict version of being a Christian. Sort of branches off of one another in a way. I follow my faith more than the religion. I'm not a perfect Catholic. [F21]

I used to go to church with my grandmother just to venture out. I really didn't know about religion. My mom was based off of a Catholic religion but she doesn't go with that. If you're a Muslim or Buddhist or all these other kinds of beliefs, or if you are this or that, all of these gods or teachers, or whatever you believe in, actually all go to one thing, that is the Creator. I don't know about a Creator. Apparently Adam and Eve were the first two people on earth, but is that really true? People say Jesus is just a man, but a very powerful man. To me, I just don't know. [F3]

When I was going to a Catholic undergraduate school, had monks, priests and nuns but, to use ridiculous language, they were pretty woke for a monastery, and they required theology classes. I remember the first day, the monk said, just so you know, the Bible is a series of stories, I don't expect any of you to think of this literally. Just the curiosity of all that and seeing that people of different backgrounds can approach things very well and it didn't have anything to do with their faith divisions. [M14]

I went to a private Catholic school growing up with nuns, and my mother is very religious, and my father is very religious. I personally have kind of lost sight of it.

If someone is religious I'm not going to bash them or force my own views on them. That's why I often have problems with religion, even my own family, and with people who approach me on the street and tell me what to believe. If religion helps you in some way, fine, as it does for a lot of people, that's great, but that's not where I find my own purpose and strength. So, I find that in the things I enjoy doing, the people I surround myself with, and the little things that make me happy, I don't need to rely on the comfort of this faith. [F8]

Lots of persecution in the past. It's not for everybody. I was raised Roman Catholic in the past. Like the Crusades, all that kind of bad stuff associated with it, and a lot of good with it at the same time. [M6]

I was raised Christian, and a lot of my views aren't any different than the kind of standard Christian. I do believe there are good things in every religion, but that one just doesn't resonate with me that much. For people who do believe in that, it's just a different view of life and doing good. It just depends on what religion you think is good. [F22]

Well, for me, growing up, I went to church every Sunday, and I was confirmed and baptized, and now it's like I'm left at the door. [F18]

I don't really have a problem with them. There's a lot of history there, like with violence towards certain kinds of people, but at its core I think the religion is perfectly clean. [M12]

I think of the same kind of things you grow up with, the same face of Jesus everyone is shown. I don't know. [F5]

We all have very similar views and we should respect their views as well. [F13]

I think that it's perfectly cool. A lot of my friends are religious. I was raised going to church and stuff. [M1]

It really depends, because some churches are accepting of new ideas and stuff like that, and moving on with modern culture, and some aren't, so it's really specific to the church. [F16]

I think religion is really fascinating, and how different cultures have their own beliefs and interpretations of the world. I honestly kind of go back and forth. I'm very

critical about the Christian faith even though I have to say that that's where many of my beliefs are based out of, but I really don't know what's right about these kinds of things because you can't really prove them. But then again, you can't not prove them, or prove that they're false. [F19]

I'm not a religious person. I think everyone is entitled to their own views. But personally I don't believe in a Christian afterlife. I don't have anything negative to the way they view the world, though. [M17]

Jesus is a loser. If God is so amazing, why would he send his son here to die? And why would he have his favorite son Lucifer die in hell if he's his favorite son? [M25]

## ***DOMINANT BELIEF:***

***Christians are tolerated, the church is irrelevant, and Jesus is not even part of the conversation.***

## **Other responses**

***Every relevant comment from the interviews has been documented in this transcript. Nothing has been left out. Following are some comments that do not fit into the categories above.***

*Do you believe in any religion?* Nope. [M25]

*What do you believe?* I do believe there's a good spirituality, and there's like karma, and there's an energy around us, but I don't believe that there's one controlling power. [M4]

*Do you believe in any particular religion?* No. I have a long and kind of complicated history with religion. I was not raised in a religious household, but I've sort of gravitated to Eastern spirituality and stuff, Buddhism, and also through friends, even things like the Catholic Church and more Western traditions. For me, it's like trying to learn everything you can from all of these religions and trying to create something that makes sense to me. [M9]

*Do you have a religion?* I'm also a Christian, that's why I also believe in the higher power. But it doesn't take over

my life, like where I think about it when I make decisions and stuff. I grew up Lutheran but I don't really specify a religion anymore because I don't have the time to think about it or go to church. [F18]

*What forms your views?* My family. And what city you live in. I have really liberal views. My family has more conservative views, but at the same time, they're pretty mixed, and I'm pretty connected with them. [F16]

*You say you've studied theology?* I took a theology course. It's very interesting because its not just like taking the Bible, it's more like actually studying it. I actually like the Bible. I don't really read it because, I read it sometimes, but not often, because I really don't have the time for that anymore, but it's very inspirational, and I like to get back to it when I'm really confused or need encouragement. I also try not to read it too often because I want not to just refer to something else to help me in life, but to refer to myself too. I don't meditate, but I just sit back and think about life quite a bit. [F20]

*What do you believe?* It's really hard for me. People should have the right to believe what they want to believe, and I think we restrict that a lot in our society. Like something controversial, like global warming, if some people think it isn't a thing, other people just shoot them down, like no that's wrong. If someone is willing to back up their claim factually, I think we should listen more, even if we think global warming is a thing, as I do. I think a lot of people are socially shot down because it's not socially acceptable to believe that. [F16]

*When you hear the name Jesus, what comes to mind?* Rules that I shouldn't break. [M7]

*When I say 'Jesus,' what do you think?* I don't not like the word. I mean, it's kind of neutral. I'm very accepting of everyone's religion. [M1]

*Are you a Christian?* I'm technically not Christian. That's not to say that I don't know anything about Christianity or that I don't believe in a God. I do believe in a God and I believe in a lot of the Christian morals too. I open my mind to other philosophies and beliefs. [F20]

*Are you familiar with John 3:16?* No. *Quoted.* Well, I believe in Jesus, that he came to be always with us, and Judgment Day comes and whatnot, and I believe in the Second Coming and stuff like that. Yeah, I believe in all of that I guess. It's all to be seen. We believe in all these things, and the thing is, you just gotta keep believing that what we have been taught is going to happen. It gives you comfort to have faith in something higher than us. [F21]

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## INTERVIEW METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Church Scouts commissioned [Steiger](#) to place a female and male millennial on the streets of Minneapolis and interview 25 other millennials passing at random. The interviews were conducted in an urban setting, close to the University of Minnesota in summer 2017. Respondents were engaged in conversation simply on the basis of age (appearing to be 18-38).

The conversations were recorded – listen at [www.churchscouts.org/audio/10](http://www.churchscouts.org/audio/10) – and all responses have been transcribed above. Chit-chat, hems-and-haws, 'like,' and extraneous content have been removed, but 100% of everything else is preserved here in the exact words of the respondents.

Each respondent is identified with a code: M=male. F=female. Assigned number enables tracking in the transcript.

### DIFFICULT COMMUNICATION PROBLEM for the church, based on beliefs above:

If they believe there's NO creator-God,  
NO absolute truth, NO sin, and NO hell,  
*then why need a Savior?*

**Future Briefings** will address the problem head-on and provide practical help for communicating the Gospel to Millennials and for engaging them with the church